

SCHOOL BOARD PROCEEDINGS

The Avoyelles Parish School Board met in special session Tuesday, March 15, 2011, at 5:00 p.m. at the School Board Office with the following members present:

Van Kojis, President; Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., Vice-President; Freeman Ford, Darrell Wiley, James Gauthier, Shelia Blackman-Dupas, Michael Lacombe, Rev. Mary Hayward-Jones, and Cynthia "Cindy" Hill.

Absent: None.

1. A motion was offered by James Gauthier, seconded by Darrell Wiley, that the Board adopt the minutes of the regular meeting held Tuesday, March 1, 2011, as printed and mailed to Board members and published in The Weekly News, official journal of the Board.

Board Member Freeman Ford referred to Page 10, Item Number 6 of the Education Committee Report. Mr. Ford stated that he felt the minutes were misleading and recommended that the minutes be deleted or referred back to the Education Committee. Mr. Ford read statements taken from Item Number 6 which stated in part, "Superintendent Dwayne Lemoine recognized principals for the purpose of making a presentation regarding School Improvement Grants. The committee did not take any action". Furthermore, he said that the minutes stated, in part, that the Superintendent stated that Number 6 is for informational purposes only.

Mr. Ford stated that based on these assumptions, he had voted to accept that part of the Education Committee Report. He further stated that in Sunday's newspaper, The Avoyelles Journal, it stated that Mr. Lemoine stated that the Education Committee approved applying for the grants at a meeting held February 22, 2011. Mr. Ford said that this statement contradicts the minutes of the Education Committee. Also, Board Member James Gauthier, in his article in The Weekly News, states that three schools are applying for grants. Mr. Ford stated that the problem he is having that if the minutes of the Education Committee Report would have spelled out the grants being applied for at the full Board meeting, he would have had an opportunity to ask questions, especially if the committee would have approved applying for the grants, which was not reflected in the minutes.

Mr. Ford, therefore, questioned who approved applying for the grants? Mr. Ford said that this matter should have been approved by the full Board as was done in Rapides Parish. He further stated that he is not aware of any minutes or reports which reflect authorization for the Superintendent to apply for grants. Also, he questioned the criteria that will be used to place the remaining 22% of the teachers at Bunkie High School, whether a survey has been done by parents in assessing school year round at Bunkie Elementary School, and can the Board sustain the funding once these grants run out. Mr. Ford also stated that not knowing the criteria used at these three schools, how does the Board know what impact these changes would have with Singleton. Mr. Ford felt that these grants should have been authorized by the Board and the Board should have been given an opportunity to express their opinion. Also, he stated that the Federal Judge has recommended that the Board work together to achieve unitary status. He feels

that this is not happening as it should. Therefore, Mr. Ford stated that he cannot support the grant application process nor do the minutes reflect approval for the applications. Mr. Ford requested that the minutes of the Education Committee report be deleted from the minutes or referred back to the Education Committee for Board action.

Superintendent Dwayne Lemoine stated that the minutes of the Education Committee are accurate. Mr. Lemoine stated that if the local paper quoted or said that he said that the Education Committee approved the grants, that was incorrect. Mr. Lemoine further stated that he told the Education Committee that he was not asking for approval at this time because he is not aware of the amount the State or Federal government will fund these applications. Furthermore, Mr. Lemoine stated that Rapides Parish acted prematurely and that the Rapides Parish School Board voted to accept these grant proposals not knowing the dollar amount would be funded and how much it would be required of the district to sustain it once the grant funding runs out after three years. Also, Mr. Lemoine said that he told the Education Committee that he and his staff were writing these grants and that when or if the district receives funding, it would be brought before the entire Board in order that he may review with the Board what the grant proposals are and what funding will be required of this Board to commit to the grants. In conclusion, Mr. Lemoine said that he had every intention of bringing these grants back to the Board for approval.

Superintendent Lemoine stated that he and his staff write many grants and that the Board has given him authority to sign off and write grants for the district.

In conclusion, Mr. Ford stated that he felt the Board should have been made aware of the grant application prior to the printing of the news article.

In response, Superintendent Lemoine stated that was the intent of the Education Committee Report. Mr. Lemoine further informed the Board that Mr. Ford's point was well taken.

Board Member Shelia Blackman-Dupas stated that she also felt the Board should have been made aware of the grant application and that since the Board authorizes the Superintendent to write grants, the Board should be kept abreast of the grants. Mrs. Dupas said that the entire Board should be aware and that they should not find out about these grants in the local newspaper.

The motion was adopted by the following vote:

Ayes: Darrell Wiley, James Gauthier, Van Kojis, Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., Michael Lacombe, and Cindy Hill.

Nays: Freeman Ford, Shelia Blackman-Dupas, and Rev. Mary Hayward-Jones.

Board Members Freeman Ford and Shelia Blackman-Dupas stated that the reason they voted "nay" was because of reasons stated.

2. On motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Shelia Blackman-Dupas, the Board unanimously agreed to consider a matter under miscellaneous business concerning a proclamation for Retired Teachers Day due to time limitations.

President Van Kojis called for public comment and there being none, on motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Darrell Wiley, the Board unanimously agreed to add the item to the agenda under miscellaneous business.

On motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Shelia Blackman-Dupas, the Board unanimously agreed to endorse a proclamation proclaiming March 17, 2011 as Retired Teachers Day, as follows:

Avoyelles Parish School Board Proclamation

Whereas, Louisiana's retired teachers have devoted their careers to the education and training of literally thousands upon thousands of Louisiana's youth; and

Whereas, Louisiana's retired teachers have retrained and/or provided primary educational opportunities to hundreds of adults in the state who, for one reason or other, had fallen behind in the formal education needed for jobs and social skills; and

Whereas, Louisiana's retired teachers have rendered valuable service in diverse leadership roles to their communities and institutions throughout their careers and continue to render such services as retirees; and

Whereas, Louisiana's retired teachers represent the profession, which is given the basic responsibility for launching the careers of state and national leaders, and for laying the foundation for the welfare of all members of our society; and

Whereas, Louisiana's retired teachers have toiled ceaselessly to improve the quality of life in the state and nation, often in less than adequate circumstances and for less than adequate pay; and

Whereas, Louisiana's retired teachers represent a tremendous pool of experience and training which remains dedicated to the betterment of society everywhere; and

Whereas, Louisiana's retired teachers represent a loyal, patriotic, and concerned citizenry, which provides a dedicated and dependable support to the leaders in our communities, state, and nation; and now

Therefore, I, Dwayne Lemoine, Superintendent of Avoyelles Parish Schools, do hereby proclaim March 17, 2011, as Retired Teachers Day.

The motion was unanimously adopted by the Board.

3. Mrs. Mary Bonnette, Director of Finance, stated that the Finance Committee recently convened a meeting and decided to advertise for bids for property insurance. Mrs. Bonnette also stated that an Ad Hoc Committee recommended to select six insurance agents. Mrs. Bonnette further stated that after contacting the Board's insurance consultant, he recommended that it would be beneficial for the School Board to make a decision at tonight's meeting rather than the meeting scheduled for April 5, 2011.

Superintendent Dwayne Lemoine stated that in the Board's minutes, the Board had authorized five agencies, therefore, the minutes will reflect a change to six insurance agents.

In response to a question from Board Member Shelia Blackman-Dupas regarding the number of agents, Mrs. Bonnette stated that the Board's consultant contacted agents throughout the parish who would be interested in quoting property insurance.

On motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Michael Lacombe, the Board unanimously agreed to consider a matter under miscellaneous business in order to expedite the bidding process for property insurance.

President Van Kojis called for public comment and there being none, on motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Freeman Ford, the Board unanimously agreed to add the item to the agenda under miscellaneous business.

On motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Freeman Ford, the Board unanimously agreed to adopt the Ad Hoc Committee Report, as follows:

Ad Hoc Committee Report
March 10, 2011

An Ad Hoc Committee of the Finance Committee met on Thursday, March 10, 2011, at 10:00 a.m. for the purpose of selecting agencies to invite to bid property insurance for the fiscal year 2011-2012. The following members were present: Van Kojis, Board President; Mike Lacombe, Member of Finance Committee; Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., Chairman of Finance Committee; Dwayne Lemoine, Superintendent of Schools; and Mary Bonnette, Director of Finance.

The committee agreed to invite the following agencies: (1) Bordelon Insurance Agency, (2) Cottonport Insurance Agency, (3) Earl P. Lemoine Insurance Agency, (4) First Insurance Marksville Agency, (5) Union Bank Insurance Agency, and (6) Dupre Carrier Godchaux Agency.

The committee recommends adoption of this report.

The motion was unanimously adopted by the Board.

4. On motion by Darrell Wiley, seconded by Shelia Blackman-Dupas, the Board agreed to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing pending litigation over the potential Voting Rights violation and to discuss reapportionment. MOTION CARRIED.

The Board reconvened in open public session at approximately 5:45 p.m.

District Attorney Charles Riddle, III asked the Board to offer a motion to accept the stipulations as presented in order that he may submit to the other attorney and then to the Federal Judge.

On motion by James Gauthier, seconded by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., the Board agreed to accept the joint stipulations as presented to the Board in Executive Session, said stipulations to include obtaining an expert demographer and make a good faith effort to have a reapportionment plan by June 30, 2011. MOTION CARRIED.

On motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by James Gauthier, the Board agreed to employ Ms. Heather Urena, Demographer with Kisatchie Delta Planning Commission, and that the amount paid Ms. Urena should not exceed \$15,000.

The motion was adopted by the following vote:

Ayes: Freeman Ford, Darrell Wiley, James Gauthier, Van Kojis, Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., Rev. Mary Hayward-Jones, Michael Lacombe, and Cindy Hill.

Nays: Shelia Blackman-Dupas.

There being no further business, on motion by Freeman Ford, seconded by Darrell Wiley, the meeting was adjourned.