

SCHOOL BOARD PROCEEDINGS

The Avoyelles Parish School Board met in special session Tuesday, December 13, 2011, at approximately 5:05 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, Lizzie Ned, Michael Lacombe, and Cynthia "Cindy" Hill.

Absent: None.

1. Mr. Charles A. Riddle, District Attorney, addressed the Board regarding the Desegregation Order of the Avoyelles Parish School Board. Mr. Riddle stated that he and the Board members were in receipt of a document from Mr. Ryan Wilson, Attorney for the United States Department of Justice, which stated in part that the Justice Department does not oppose the District's motion for declaration of partial unitary status as to the Green Factor of Transportation. Mr. Riddle further stated that Federal Judge Dee Drell was in support as well as the Plaintiff, Mr. Allen Holmes.

In addition, Mr. Riddle presented an update report to the Board on the Green Factor of Facilities. Mr. Riddle stated that he filed with Judge Drell the proposed Capital Outlay Plan which the Board adopted on December 6, 2011. Mr. Riddle said that he also submitted the plan to the Department of Justice. Also, he stated that on December 11, 2011, he filed the proposal to implement the plan as well as a memorandum to indicate the Board's plan for future projects. Mr. Riddle pointed out that the Board had approved a five-year plan for implementation.

Mr. Riddle also noted that Dr. Frank Brewer with the United States Justice Department had submitted a 30-page report to the Board regarding facilities in the school district. Mr. Riddle noted that the report indicated several problems. He stated that his main objection indicated that Bunkie High School did not have an auditorium as the other two high schools. Also, Dr. Brewer had a problem with the fact that Marksville Elementary School and Bunkie Elementary School did not have gymnasiums compared to the other four elementary schools in the district.

Board Member Lizzie Ned also expressed concern regarding the facility at Bunkie Elementary School. Mrs. Ned stated that the facility was never built for a gymnasium and that it was a slab which was converted to a gymnasium. Mr. Riddle noted that the building meets the satisfaction of sports activities, however, the issue concerns whether the building should have bleachers for a school play, etc. For the record, Mrs. Ned did voice her complaint regarding the lack of a gymnasium at Bunkie Elementary School.

President Van Kojis stated that he has requested from the Mayor of Bunkie an intergovernmental agreement with the School Board for the use of the Haas Auditorium for any activities that the high school or elementary school would need and the council is voting on this issue at its meeting this evening.

December 13, 2011

District Attorney Riddle reiterated that from prior meetings with Federal Judge Dee Drell he would like for all parties to work collaboratively in their efforts to achieve unitary status.

Mr. Riddle discussed with the Board his plans to file "Teacher and Administrative Assignments" in January. Mr. Riddle requested that the Superintendent's secretary research the minutes to confirm whether the Board had adopted a resolution regarding the submission of "Teacher and Administrative Assignments" to the Court.

Vice-President Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr. questioned the progress of the Needs Assessment Committee. Mr. Riddle stated that the only outstanding items were the bleachers and expansion of the field house at Avoyelles High School.

Board Member Lizzie Ned stated that after reviewing the five-year time line for school improvements, many improvements have been made at Bunkie Elementary School, however, she stated that there are many more improvements which need to be completed. Mrs. Ned said that at the time she was on the Board there were a list of improvements which have not been completed. Mrs. Ned questioned the reason these projects have not been completed.

Superintendent Dwayne Lemoine stated that the five-year plan stipulates roof upgrades in Year 5. Mr. Lemoine said that further improvements at Bunkie Elementary School were not submitted by the principal to be submitted to the Needs Assessment Committee.

With regards to the "Transportation" Green Factor, Mr. Riddle stated that discipline was a concern. Mr. Riddle stated that once a factor is declared unitary, the Board must continue to adhere to all guidelines as approved by the Federal Court.

In response to a question from Vice-President Carlos Mayeux, Mr. Riddle stated that the Justice Department will have until January 20, 2012 to object or not object to the Five-Year Plan and to the construction.

Mr. Allen Holmes, Plaintiff, stated that Judge Dee Drell was very concerned about discipline. Mr. Holmes stated that the Board must be able to deal with discipline concerns throughout the entire school system. Also, Mr. Holmes stated that Judge Drell stated that he will address this issue with the Board at its next hearing.

Superintendent Lemoine stated that Judge Drell did direct Dr. William Gordon to begin researching this issue.

President Kojis questioned Mr. Riddle regarding the filing of a Board resolution regarding "Teacher and Administrative Assignments." Mr. Kojis stated that in the event the

Board did not adopt the resolution at a previous meeting, the Board will place this item on the agenda at their January 3, 2012 meeting.

Ms. Christina Robinson, Parent, addressed the Board regarding discipline concerns in the schools. Ms. Robinson stated that there are still problems in all three of the high schools which need to be addressed. Ms. Robinson further stated that she recently received a telephone call from a parent with discipline concerns. Superintendent Lemoine responded that this matter has been addressed. Ms. Robinson also stated that there are still problems and that she felt that disciplinary concerns are not unitary throughout the parish.

Superintendent Lemoine stated that each issue that is brought to his attention is addressed. Mr. Lemoine said that he would be willing to meet with Ms. Robinson, upon approval of the parent, in order to discuss that issue in an effort to present the school's side, the parent's side, and what is being done to solve the problem.

Mr. Holmes stated that he was very optimistic with the future of the Avoyelles Parish public school system. He felt that the passage of the recent tax propositions will be very beneficial to the system and felt that the Board should move forward in order to provide the best education possible to all children in the parish.

President Kojis reminded the Board that the hearing will be held in Judge Dee Drell's court on Friday, December 16, 2011, at 2:00 p.m.

2. Mr. Howard Desselle, Citizen of Marksville, was recognized by President Van Kojis. Mr. Desselle distributed a copy of a tract of land to each Board member. Mr. Desselle stated that his tract of land is approximately 52 acres and that he would like to offer this land to Marksville High School to be used as a practice field.

Board Member Michael Lacombe questioned the mode of transportation from Marksville High School to Mr. Desselle's property. Mr. Desselle responded that the distance is less than one mile.

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

President

Secretary-Treasurer

