

## SPECIAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

GADSDEN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD  
MAX D. WALKER ADMINISTRATION BUILDING  
35 MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. BLVD.  
QUINCY, FLORIDA

July 11, 2023

6:00 P.M.

The meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Mrs. Karema D. Dudley; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; Mr. Steve Scott and Mr. Charlie D. Frost. Also present were Mr. Elijah Key, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board; Mrs. Deborah Minnis, Attorney for the Board; and others.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, at 6:00 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Mr. Charlie D. Frost.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. PROPOSED TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 – 2024

Mr. Mays shared with the Board the notice of budget hearing. He stated that the Board will soon consider a budget for fiscal year 2023 – 2024. He stated that a public hearing to make a decision on the budget and taxes will be held on July 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. He stated that the proposed operating budget expenditures of the district are 2.14 percent less than last year's total operating expenditures. He stated that the revenue is broken down from the past year and upcoming year expenditures. He stated that the family empowerment grant is a projected loss at 5M. He stated that the proposed Required Local Effort (including prior period adjustment millage) is 3.2750; basic discretionary operating millage is 0.7480; basic discretionary capital outlay is 1.500; and total millage is 5.5230. He stated that the total expenditures, transfers and balances were \$70,510,116.69. He stated that the notice of school capital outlay will soon be considered for a measure to impose a 1.50 mill property tax for the capital outlay projects listed herein. He stated that the tax is in addition to the School Board's proposed tax of 4.0230 mills for operating expenses and is proposed solely at the discretion of the School Board. He stated that 1% of the 1.5 would be retained for the new school. He stated that the capital outlay tax will generate approximately \$3,590,133 to be used for the following projects: construction and remodeling; maintenance, renovation, and repair; motor vehicle purchases; new and replacement equipment, computer and device hardware and operating system software necessary for gaining access to or enhancing the use of electronic and digital instructional content and resources, and enterprise resource software; payments for educational facilities and sites due under a lease-purchase agreement; payments for renting and leasing educational facilities and sites; payment of premiums for property and casualty insurance necessary to insure the educational and ancillary plants of the school district; and payment of costs of leasing relocatable educational facilities. He stated that the tax roll should be certified by July 19 and the districts will receive FEFP funding. He stated that money is being set aside for payment to the Department of Education. He stated that motor vehicle purchases are new and monies are allowable for safety issues such as purchasing a car for the Safety Coordinator that would be noticeable. He stated that all items allowed

for purchasing under the 1.5 mill is actually using .5%. He stated that 1% would be saved in a separate account to earn interest. The Board stated that the 1% requirement to the State should be paid when it is due.

5. REQUEST PERMISSION TO ADVERTISE THE PROPOSED TENTATIVE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023 – 2024

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to advertise for the proposed tentative budget for fiscal year 2023 – 2024. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

6. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that the administrator's training was very good and the district is looking to have a great year. He stated that the district is responsible for all students and need to make sure no student is left behind. He stated that a 3-day Educator's Conference would take place July 24, 25<sup>th</sup> and 26<sup>th</sup> at the Holiday Inn on Graves Road in Tallahassee. He stated that teachers would be compensated for attending the training.

7. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Ms. Johnson requested a workshop, retreat and an executive session. She stated that she is serious about Spanish being taught in the early grades.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she attended the Leadership Training. She stated that Ms. Weeks and her team did an amazing job with planning. She stated that she learned a lot. She stated that the New Teacher Academy is scheduled for July 25, 26 and 27. She stated that the work is being done and she is excited. She stated that the district needs an Employee Assistance Program to help staff and students deal with mental health issues. She stated that some teachers and staff are burnout. She stated that a retreat was needed to discuss the district's vision and goals.

Mr. Scott stated that a news report showed that 44% of teachers are in schools. He stated that not all the information was addressed from Mr. Frost's concerns at the May Board meeting. He stated that the Board is entitled to an external audit on the FEMA insurance money received and spent. He stated that vacant positions needed to be filled. He asked Mrs. Minnis if the public could be provided a list of employees not recommended back if a request was made, she responded yes if the public records law existed.

Mr. McMillan stated that he has an issue with the way the Superintendent answered the concerns from the May Board meeting.

Mr. Key stated that anything provided to the Board is also available to the public. He stated that the non-reappointment list is not created by the district, but at the schools. Mr. Scott stated that he wants to know who was not recommended back and if schools have, the list then Human Resources should have the list. Mr. Key stated that there is a teacher shortage across the nation. He cautioned the Board about creating a non-reappointment list that would be available to the public. Mr. Scott stated that he just wants to know who was not recommended back. Mr. Frost asked that each school send him the list of employees not recommended back. Mrs. Minnis stated that the law require Board action on recommendation by the Superintendent. She stated that the teacher contract would expire and the Board is only acting on the Superintendent's recommendation. Mr. Scott asked Mrs. Minnis if those individuals whose contract ended are eligible to receive unemployment, Mrs. Minnis stated yes if their contract ends. Mr. Scott asked what reasons would allow those persons to receive unemployment, Mrs. Minnis stated that everyone would receive unemployment unless they did something severe.

Ms. Johnson stated that she wants a workshop to discuss collective bargaining contracts. She stated that she wants to make sure teachers are treated fair. Mrs. Minnis stated that grievances are not for the Board to handle in the initial process.

Mr. Key asked Dr. Sonya Jackson if the district has hired any employees that were not recommended back, Dr. Jackson responded yes. Mr. Key stated that he has only rejected two.

Mr. McMillan discussed the packet of information provided by the Superintendent. He stated that he took offense to the way the packet of information received and the response. He stated that the community thinks there is a fight between the Board and Superintendent. He stated that every teacher is important. He stated for a fact that teachers are not getting the support they need to become better teachers from the Director of Professional Development. He stated that he wants Ms. Weeks to present to the Board. He stated that the district must do things differently. He stated that the Board and Superintendent are not communicating effectively. He stated that he will bend over backwards to work with the Superintendent, but he will not be disrespected and expects to get the information requested.

Mr. Frost stated he has been with several Superintendents and he has never heard so much about day-to-day operation. He stated that he has always been able to speak with the Superintendent and work together on issues.

Mr. McMillan agreed with the other Board members that a retreat was needed. He instructed Mrs. Davis to schedule a retreat.

Mrs. Minnis stated she has been with Gadsden County since 1991 and has seen many changes. She stated that she remains quiet unless the Board is heading the wrong way. She stated that she truly feels dedicated to Gadsden and she wants to be part of the team. She stated that the Board could call her at any time.

Mr. McMillan stated that Mr. Steve Winn, Lobbyist, informed him that the Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy has a new leader and she wants to work with the district. He stated that she has offered to start a Fireman I course for seniors to provide them with a certificate. He stated that the seniors would be eligible for employment at a fire station. He stated that the new leader also wants to start a dispatch course and correctional officer course. He asked the Board to think about the new course offerings from Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy.

Mr. McMillan stated that Chattahoochee High School is a liability to the district. He stated that the building is going down and the payments are few, far and in-between. He stated that it is time to foreclose on Faith Apostolic Christian Tabernacle. Mr. McMillan made a motion to foreclose on Faith Apostolic Christian Tabernacle and start the proceeding as soon as possible. Mr. Scott stated that the Board need to know what would be done with the school when foreclosed. Mr. McMillan stated that the City of Chattahoochee wants the facility. Mr. Frost stated that he wants to make sure the Board does not sit on this. He stated that he will not vote to give the property away and wants to handle it the same way the Gretna property was sold. He stated that he would not vote to take from the church and give to someone that has money. He stated that he wants to make sure the Board has a plan. Mr. McMillan rescinded his motion and will speak with the City of Chattahoochee and get back with the Board. Mr. Frost stated that if the property is up for sale then anyone could purchase it.

Ms. Johnson stated that she wants to review the district's organization chart, mission and vision statement, and have leaders speak at the retreat. Mr. McMillan stated that it would not be the right time for leaders to speak at the retreat because the Board wants to work on its relationship with the Superintendent.

8. The meeting adjourned at 7:38 p.m.

The Board convened in executive session to discuss collective bargaining issues at 7:40 p.m.; and adjourned at 8:40 p.m.