

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

December 20, 2022

6:00 P.M.

This meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Mrs. Karema D. Dudley; Mr. Steve Scott; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; 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 Pastor Jean Alexis of Word Alive Ministries in Quincy.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

The Superintendent recognized the following individuals: Ms. Zola Akins of Greensboro Elementary School for being chosen Assistant Principal of the Year – she was presented with a plaque and flowers; Ms. Valarie Jones of West Gadsden Middle School for being chosen Principal of the Year – she was presented with a plaque and flowers; and Delta Sigma Theta Sorority for the ESTREAM 3rd Grade Summer Reading Program at George W. Munroe Elementary School; The Superintendent and Board congratulated Ms. Akins, Ms. Jones, and the members of the Gadsden County Florida Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc. for their achievements.

Ms. Johnson recognized the Midway Head Start students who were very attentive when she read to them.

Mrs. Dudley recognized Mrs. Sandra Robinson and Mr. William Hunter on their retirement. She stated that she wants to recognize all retirees. She also recognized Mrs. Brown, ESE Director, and members of the Gadsden County Florida Alumnae Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.

Mr. McMillan stated that he visited Havana Magnet School to judge Christmas doors. He recognized the Head Custodian for taking pride and ownership of the school. He stated that the head custodian was concerned about the leaves that had blown into the door.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. The motion was made by Mr. Charlie D. Frost, seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. November 1, 2022, 5:00 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- b. November 22, 2022, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- c. November 22, 2022, 5:30 p.m. – Organization Meeting
- d. November 22, 2022, 6:00 p.m. - Regular School Board Meeting

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

6. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

- a. Personnel 2022 - 2023

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

- a. Purchase Order Request for Lawrence Commercial Systems

Fund Source: FEMA Project #77055
Amount: 13,800.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Purchase Order Request for Max Fencing and Construction, LLC

Fund Source: FEMA Project #103015
Amount: \$13,980.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

- b. Gadsden County High School Boys Varsity Basketball Team Out-of-State Game Request

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- c. Strategic Continuous Improvement Plan 2023 – 2027

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- d. Purchase Order Request for Kimbrel Electric, LLC

Fund Source: Fund: 110, Object Code: 310 and Function: 7900
Amount: \$2,500.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Items preceded by an asterisk (*) were removed from the CONSENT agenda at the beginning of the meeting and acted upon during the DISCUSSION portion of the agenda.

- *6. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

b. 2022 – 2023 School Year Calendars

Mr. Frost clarified that this was a new revised calendar. Mr. McMillan stated that the revised school year calendar was to provide January 2nd as a national holiday. Mr. Frost asked what was the difference in this calendar and the one approved at the beginning of the year. Mr. McMillan stated that the addition of January 2nd was being observed as New Year’s Day, a national holiday.

Mrs. Dudley stated that teachers need planning time prior to the students return.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve agenda item #6b. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

*7. BUDGET AND FINANCIAL TRANSACTIONS

a. Budget Amendment #2

Fund Source: 4200 Federal Fund
Amount: \$819,087.00

Ms. Judith Mandela, President of GCCTA, stated that at the last school board meeting she was told there would be something to show ESSER funds and she wanted to know if it was available.

Mr. McMillan stated to Ms. Mandela that the Board would get back with her.

Mrs. Dudley stated that because Mr. Mays wasn’t at the meeting, the Board could not answer her question regarding ESSER funds.

Ms. Mandela stated that the budget report was vague and she was concerned.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

*8. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

c. Request to Sign Constructor Agreement with Southland Contracting, Inc. and Issue\ Purchase Order in the amount of \$880,168.28

Fund Source: FEMA Project #77055
Amount: \$880,168.28

Mrs. Mandela stated that it has been over 2-3 years since talking about the facilities that are part of the schools to close. She stated that it is surprising to her that the district is spending \$880,000 to remodel the maintenance building when it has been asked for years to clean the schools that students are in. She stated that since the new school will not be finished until 2025 that means students and teachers stay in those deployable conditions. She stated that for the board to continue to not allow schools to be tested for hazardous items is close to criminal negligence. She asked the board to consider having a company come in to test for contamination, come in and clean/refurbish so students can be safe and feel proud about the condition they are in.

Mr. Key stated that the maintenance building is one of the buildings that FEMA gave money to repair. He stated that this money is not coming from funds that can be used at different sites and the district is still waiting on funding for Carter Parramore Academy and Greensboro Elementary School from FEMA. He stated that FEMA has released the district to use the money for maintenance/facilities.

In response to Mr. Frost's concern whether FEMA money was tied to other sites, Mr. Key stated it is tied to other buildings but not to schools.

Mrs. Dudley stated that the adjustment to the timeline of opening the school being changed to 2025 means the board must maintain the existing schools, and the board will make sure to adjust as needed so buildings are safe/clean. She stated that the board has made improvements but still have some more to be made.

Mr. Key stated that in October certain individuals from the Department of Education (DOE) visited James A. Shanks Middle School. He stated that he met them and walked through and as a result of that meeting DOE said for the district to only handle the safety of that building and do not put any major funds into that school, because the district is heading in the right direction of building a new school. He stated that the district is taking small steps but making progress compared to what the district was doing years ago.

Ms. Johnson stated that Ms. Mandela's points are valid and the board need to do something to improve James A. Shanks Middle School. She stated that ESSER funds may be used. She stated that she does not agree with employees hiring employees.

Mr. Frost stated that he did not agree with the statement that the board is not doing anything to upkeep James A. Shanks Middle School. He stated that the board is doing something. He stated that credit needs to be given to the board for what is being done.

Mr. McMillan stated that it appears to him that some individuals you just cannot satisfy. He stated that he wants to serve the community. He stated that we need to be constructive and quit gripping.

Following discussion, Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #'s 7a and 8c. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

*9. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. Gadsden Technical College Out-of-State Field Trip Request

Fund Source: N/A

Amount: N/A

In response to Mr. McMillan's concern about who was paying for the field trip to Las Vegas, Mr. Saxton stated that the funding source was through FBA and presented Mrs. Kerwyn Jones-Wilson to give an explanation.

Mrs. Jones-Wilson stated that fund raising activities would be held to raise money for the 7 individuals to attend. She stated that she was soliciting the board's support.

Mr. McMillan stated that he was concerned about 4 chaperones for 3 students. Mrs. Jones-Wilson stated that the chaperones are paying for themselves and the students did fund raising. She stated that the request is only for the board's permission to attend. She stated that no funding will be provided by the district.

Following discussion, Mr. McMillan made a motion to approve agenda item #9a with no funding provided by the district. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

10. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Superintendent Key recognized Ms. Linda Smith, Secretary at Carter Parramore Academy, chosen by her school as the School Related Employee of the Year and the district winner School Related Employee of the Year – she was presented with a plaque and flowers.

11. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mrs. Dudley stated that she attended the FSBA Conference and was enlightened and moved by some of the things such as: (1) a panel of students to help make decisions. She stated that she wants to have a student board member at each meeting to speak as the voice of the students. Mrs. Minnis stated that it only requires putting the process in place. (2) she would like to see a student come to the board meeting to do the pledge. She stated that she wants to include students in the process of school board. She stated that the board represents the public and sometimes misinformation and miscommunication goes into the community and she thinks live streaming meetings would help the public. She stated that the board currently operates like there is no technology and that is a disservice to the community.

Mrs. Karema D. Dudley made a motion to broadcast live meetings starting the January. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson. The motion did not pass. Mr. McMillan, Mr. Scott and Mr. Frost voted “nay.” Mrs. Dudley and Ms. Johnson voted “aye.”

Following Mr. Scott’s request for the superintendent and board to schedule a retreat to discuss the district’s plans, he made a motion for the retreat to be held in January, seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

Mr. Frost stated that Bainbridge High School has a very nice facility across from a large charter school. He stated that there are different people for different things.

Mr. McMillan stated that at the swearing in ceremony there was injustice done to Judge Garner for the words “So help me God” not being part of the oath. He stated that he wants the oath to include “So help me God” at all swearing in ceremonies.

Mrs. Minnis stated that isn’t allowed because of the separation of Church and State.

12. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.