

September 12, 2019
6:00 p.m.

The Fannin County Board of Education met in regular session with the following members present: Lewis DeWeese, Chair; Chad Galloway, Vice Chair; Bobby Bearden; Terry Bramlett; and Mike Cole. All members were present.

The meeting was called to order by Lewis DeWeese, Chair.

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the consent agenda.

Approve agenda and Board meeting minutes from August 8, 2019 – 5:30 p.m. and 6:00 p.m. and August 23, 2019 – 5:30 p.m.

All members voted yes to approve the items on the consent agenda; motion carried.

Assistant Superintendent Darren Danner shared a facilities update.

Assistant Superintendent Darren Danner and United States Forest Service District Ranger Andy Baker gave an update on the Toccoa Property.

Director of School Nutrition Candice Sisson shared information on School Nutrition and presented Shake It Up Awards.

Director of School Nutrition Candice Sisson reviewed the selection process for Fannin County's Teacher of the Year (TOTY) Program, presented the 2021 TOTY nominees, and reminded the Board of the annual banquet, which will be held on September 24, 2019, at 6:00 p.m. at Willow Creek Falls.

Career Technology and Agriculture Education (CTAE) Director Patricia DuBois presented information on CTAE pathways and accomplishments. Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA) Advisor Lauren Owenby and several of her students shared information on their recent trip to the national conference.

Public Comment: There was no public comment.

Deputy Superintendent Betsy Hyde reviewed School Governance Team meetings. **(See attached.)**

East Fannin Elementary School (EFES) Principal Matt Price presented on EFES School Happenings.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve the district's financial report for July 31, 2019. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Dr. Gwatney stated the SPLOST check received for July 2019 was \$567,371.08.

Finance Director Susan Wynn informed the Board of the annual Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) audit.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Terry Bramlett, to approve revised Board Policy DCK – Level of Budgetary Control. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve FY 2019 Budget Amendment #7. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve the budget for FY 2020. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Chad Galloway, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the School Quarterly Financial Reports. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Terry Bramlett, to approve a resolution regarding Board compensation. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve the purchase of eight network switches, along with fiber modules and redundant power supplies, to be purchased for Fannin County High School from MDSI for \$42,432.52. This purchase will be made with SPLOST funds. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Chad Galloway, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve technology hardware as salvage. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Mike Cole, to Approve a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Fannin County Department of Public Health (FCDPH) to provide a facility, if needed, as a result of a local health emergency, effective from October 1, 2019, through October 1, 2020, which may be renewed on an annual basis if mutually agreed upon by both parties; and to approve a MOU with the FCDPH to provide scoliosis screenings of public school children in the at-risk population, ages 10–15 years. The terms of this agreement shall be for the period of one year commencing on October 1, 2019. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve the transportation requests from the Fannin County Recreation Department (FCRD) to use a bus on October 18, October 21, and November 26, 2019 while Fannin County School students are on holiday. The bus will take students on trips to area destinations. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve the purchase of one 61-passenger special needs equipped school bus from Peach State Freightliner Bus Sales of Georgia. The purchase price is \$99,950.00. The Georgia Department of Education is providing bond bus funds for \$77,220.00. The remaining \$22,730.00 will be paid from SPLOST funds. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Terry Bramlett, to approve the Fannin County School System Vision, Mission, and Beliefs. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve the Fannin County School System Strategic Plan. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Assistant Superintendent Robert Ensley reviewed local Board training selections. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve Holly Ross as a Title I Parent Liaison. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Terry Bramlett, to approve Nathaniel Cody Payne for the Maintenance Department pending completion of paperwork and background checks. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Chad Galloway, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve Brian Davison and James Fetsko as substitute bus drivers pending completion of paperwork and background checks. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Colle, to approve Norin Monteagoudo as a substitute teacher pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve Kimberly Watkins as a substitute custodian pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Superintendent's Comments:

Superintendent Dr. Michael Gwatney began with a moment of silence to remember the 2,977 killed in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. He appreciated members of the military and public safety for keeping us safe and thanked School Resource Officer Tracy Summers (who was present), as well as all of the other school resource officers.

Superintendent Gwatney remembered former transportation employee and friend James Curtis who passed away on September 11, 2019.

Superintendent Gwatney recognized all schools for receiving Georgia Accrediting Certificates, and he and Sarah Rigdon presented the certificates to principals.

Superintendent Gwatney asked Director of Instructional Services & Policy Sarah Welch to speak about the recent "Read with Malcolm" literacy event, and she presented the three elementary school principals with an autographed copy of Malcolm Mitchell's book *The Magician's Hat* for placement in their respective media centers.

Superintendent Gwatney appreciated Superintendent of Mountain Education Charter High School Captain Wayne Lovell for his words of thanks for the United States of America. He also lauded Andy Baker for his service to the district, and he recognized Patti DuBois, Lauren Owenby, and FCCLA Students for their presentations.

Superintendent Gwatney recognized EFES Principal Matt Price for his presentation and commended him for the work on the EFES Car Show. He acknowledged all School Nutrition Managers for their hard work and the excellent job they do serving our students.

Superintendent Gwatney thanked Candy Sisson for providing information on the Fannin County Teacher of the Year selection process and the announcement of the nominees. He acknowledged Susan Wynn for her work on the budget and working with the Board to roll back the millage. He commended Heather Finley and Scott Mathis for working with the Fannin County government on cyber security. He stated he is proud of our district and what is being done to keep kids first. All are working for the future of Fannin County.

Board Members' Comments:

Mike Cole appreciated the vision that is in place for the district. He commended Denver Foster for implementing a full size bus with handicapped seating so that all students have the opportunity to travel together. He recognized principals for the great job they do and for bringing STEM into the classrooms. Mr. Cole repeated a statement, "Your body can't go where your mind has never been," and he reinforced that without a vision, you perish. He referenced a quote by Albert Einstein stating,

“Imagination is more important than knowledge,” and then he detailed that imagination will cause you to seek out those who have the knowledge to help achieve your goals. He stated that he sees the vision of people reaching out to obtain knowledge. He reflected on a time that he was able to imagine being part of the Board; he believed in it enough that he is now on the Board. He stated that he works hard as a Board member, and he is honored to be with fellow board members and a great leader who sharpens him and makes him a better leader. He stated that he strives to be a leader who sharpens others.

Mr. Cole stated that he is thankful for Mrs. Doss and the great job she does. He is appreciative of Mr. DeWeese and the wisdom he imparts, even when he may not know that others are listening. Mr. Cole is thankful to be a part of the Board. The Technology Department that keeps the system rolling is amazing. All those hard workers in the cafeteria who take care of things awe him; he knows many of them, how hard they work, and he appreciates them. It is a great school system, and he is glad to be a part of it.

Bobby Bearden thanked those attending the meeting. He stated that he is excited about the new stadium lights and the fact that they will be there for 25 more years. This will allow FCSS to have band concerts, football games, etc., and there will be good lighting.

Mr. Bearden stated that he was listening to Congressman Doug Collins on the radio earlier in the day. Mr. Bearden simplified Congressman Collins’ comments by stating, “Everybody in the world is mad at us for what we got,” which is exactly what Captain Lovell said earlier. Mr. Bearden stated that “We have got it made, and everybody in the world ain’t got it, so they are mad at us. I think that is what Doug said. That’s what I got out of it.”

Mr. Bearden stated that the Toccoa Property is truly a blessing for the Fannin County School System. He asked Ms. Sisson to pass along to Nutrition managers that all five Board members are excited for Nutrition. He commended Mr. Price on a great presentation and stated that he likes the wild cat. Mr. Bearden gave Mrs. Wynn a thumbs up for another exceptional job. He told Mrs. Rigdon that she had done an exceptional job. He congratulated all of the principals for their certificates. He stated that he is glad to be here.

Mr. Bearden stated that he had watched *Master Chef* on the previous night. They asked this guy “Where you from?” and he said “Epworth, GA.”

Terry Bramlett wants all in the room to know how much he appreciates them and that he holds them in high esteem. He commended all for bringing so much to the table and stated that it is an honor to get to sit on the Board and watch them work. He appreciated Mr. Danner for his walk down memory lane and stated that the comparisons of the facilities over time was great and had him reflecting on Captain Lovell’s statement about how much we take for granted. The Board identifies a need, they work on it, they plan, they implement, and then they move on to the next project and continue down the road. He commented that the comparison of facilities only showed changes to the outside of the buildings and not the inside; the infrastructure and technology updates that cannot be seen are remarkable. All of the advantages that have been provided for our students make being on the Board such a pleasant experience.

Mr. Bramlett commended Mrs. Rigdon for her work on the strategic plan as outstanding and such an important part of our success. He stated that the plan is not just for Board of Excellence, it is a road

map, and he is pleased that we do not make the plan and put it on a shelf and then five years later make another plan; the plan is implemented, and that is a key element in our success and our growth.

Mr. Bramlett thanked Mr. Foster for his work and expressed that the new bus will be a great addition to the fleet. He thanked Mrs. Wynn for an excellent job. He stated that to have students win state competitions, move on to national competitions, and win again from little Fannin County, Georgia makes him very proud. He stated that the success of our students is the ultimate indication of our success, and he appreciated the students for representing the district so well.

Chad Galloway thanked everyone for being at the meeting and appreciates all of the hard work that is being done. He stated that he totally agrees with everything said. He is impressed with all who represent the school system, and he wished to brag on the Fannin County Board of Education more. Mr. Galloway stated that he had received comments from community members that the Board looks like they rubber stamp things by all nodding together and appearing to be all in unison, never arguing or disagreeing. He wants the community to know that this is not the case. Others do not see the time put in by Board members or hear the communications that occur during executive sessions where things are worked out so they can come back to the meeting and be unified.

He expressed it is a pleasure to work with four other men and a great leader who gives so much information. They do not just receive information on one night; they receive information every day of the week. The amount of information that they receive and the communication with Dr. Gwatney is not seen or heard by others. All that is seen is the meeting where they are all in unison trying to do the best thing for each student. He stated that it is an honor to be on the board with the men who all have their hearts in it. He personally never knew how much time was involved in being on the Board until he served; he thought it was one night each month. He stated that being a Board member grows on you; it gets in your heart, takes on new meaning, and gives you something about which to brag. It is an honor to be on the Board, and he is truly thankful.

Lewis DeWeese thanked Stan Helton for his assistance in acquiring the Toccoa Property. He commented on Captain Lovell's conversation, his talk, his speech, his witness, his testimony, his enthusiasm, his love, and his compassion. He stated that the fact it is welcomed here at a Fannin County Board meeting, and that he is not out of place, indicates that he is right at home with the people. Mr. DeWeese said Captain Lovell knew that he had the liberty to speak. That is part of the greatness of our system. It is the root and foundation, and I am proud to be a part of it.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, a motion was made by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Chad Galloway, to adjourn subject to being called into special session by the Chair when deemed necessary. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Lewis DeWeese, Chairperson

Michael Gwatney, Superintendent

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