

SCHOOL BOARD PROCEEDINGS

The Avoyelles Parish School Board met in special session Tuesday, May 24, 2011, at 5:30 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.

An Invocation was offered by Rev. Mary Hayward-Jones, Board Member.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America.

1. A motion was offered by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by James Gauthier, to adopt the minutes of the regular Board meeting held Tuesday, May 3, 2011, and the minutes of the special Board meeting held Wednesday May 11, 2011, as printed and mailed to Board members and published in The Weekly News, official journal of the Board.

Board Member Freeman Ford stated that he was in favor of adopting the minutes of May 3, 2011, however, after the vote he will offer a motion to rescind the first part of the motion as stated in Item Number 19 of the School Board Proceedings of May 3, 2011. Mr. Ford stated that this motion was made in error and felt that the records should be corrected for future reference.

On motion by Freeman Ford, seconded by Shelia Blackman-Dupas, the Board agreed to rescind the part of the motion as stated in Item Number 19, as follows: "On motion by Freeman Ford, seconded by James Gauthier, that the Board schedule a special School Board meeting on May 24, 2011, at 6:00 p.m. to adopt the reapportionment plan". MOTION CARRIED.

The motion to adopt the minutes was adopted by the following vote:

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

Board Member Freeman Ford requested that the minutes reflect that he voted "nay" to adopt the minutes of the May 11, 2011 School Board meeting and that he voted "aye" to adopt the minutes of the May 3, 2011 School Board meeting.

2. On motion by Darrell Wiley, seconded by Shelia Blackman-Dupas, the Board granted permission to advertise for the positions of custodians and food service technicians. MOTION CARRIED.

3. On motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Shelia Blackman-Dupas, the Board granted permission to receive proposals for the annual financial audit for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2011. MOTION CARRIED.

4. President Van Kojis addressed the Board regarding a reapportionment plan for the Avoyelles Parish School Board.

A motion was offered by Freeman Ford, seconded by Shelia Blackman-Dupas, that the Board allow Ms. Heather Urena with Kisatchie Delta Regional Planning to present her proposed School Board reapportionment plan to the public at the public hearing to be held on May 26, 2011 for review and comments. MOTION CARRIED.

Ms. Heather Urena stated that the maps are a working plan and that any small modifications that will be made will be to accommodate State law for non-visible lines.

Board Member Michael Lacombe stated that Ms. Urena had advised the Board that she would have provided revised maps to them since last week. Mr. Lacombe said that the Board members are receiving these maps at tonight's meeting, therefore, it would be difficult for the Board to make a decision at tonight's meeting.

District Attorney Charles Riddle stated that he received a telephone call from Board Member Shelia Dupas regarding the fact that Mrs. Dupas was concerned about the percentages in her district. Mr. Riddle said he contacted Ms. Urena and asked her to work with Mrs. Dupas regarding her concerns, therefore, he stated that at the time you change one district you have to change other districts. Furthermore, Mr. Riddle stated that the minority districts must change with the Federal Court requirements in order for the plan to be approved. Also, Mr. Riddle stated that Ms. Urena has been working diligently on the plan. Mr. Riddle strongly urged the members to review the working plan proposed by Ms. Urena at tonight's meeting.

President Kojis noted that he also had complaints regarding his district, however, his complaints were not addressed.

Ms. Urena stated that the Voting Rights Act of 1955 is about everyone in a jurisdiction and that she is trying to be fair to all individuals in Avoyelles Parish as well as the incumbents. Ms. Urena stated that she must follow State law as well as precinct construction. Ms. Urena stated that the process is time consuming and that she is working diligently on a proposed plan for the Board's approval.

Mr. Riddle further stated that the Board must adopt a plan with three minority districts that will adhere to the Voting Rights Act. Furthermore, Mr. Riddle stated that he asked Ms. Urena to address complaints from the members in a manner that will be acceptable under the Voting Rights Act and by the Federal Court.

Ms. Urena addressed questions from members of the Board. She also provided individual maps to the members as well as provided two large maps for viewing.

Board Member Shelia Dupas expressed dissatisfaction with Ms. Urena's proposed maps. She stated that she expected Ms. Urena to have provided the Board with more than one plan for their consideration. Ms. Dupas further stated that Ms. Urena is working for the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury as well as the School Board and that she is being paid twice for the basically the same plan. Furthermore, Ms. Dupas stated that it is extremely difficult to work with Ms. Urena.

President Kojis encouraged the Board members to review the proposed maps as prepared by Ms. Urena which will be on display at the School Board Central Office.

President Kojis reminded the Board that there will be a public hearing on the reapportionment plan on Thursday, May 26, 2011, at the School Board Office. In addition, Mr. Kojis announced that there will be a special School Board meeting on Tuesday, May 31, 2011, at 4:00 p.m. for the purpose of discussing the proposed reapportionment plan.

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

AVOYELLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

Van Kojis, President

Dwayne Lemoine, Secretary-Treasurer