

## SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

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

April 9, 2013

4:00 P.M.

This workshop was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Isaac Simmons, Chairman; Mr. Roger P. Milton; Mr. Charlie D. Frost; Mr. Judge B. Helms; and Ms. Audrey D. Lewis. Also present were Mr. Reginald C. James, Superintendent and Secretary to the Board; Mrs. Deborah Minnis, Attorney for the Board; and others.

1. CALL TO ORDER

The workshop was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Isaac Simmons, at 4:00 p.m.

2. ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

a. Merging of Havana Elementary School and Havana Middle School

Mr. Shepard shared with the Board the following power-point presentation with information on the merging of Havana Elementary School and Havana Middle School. He stated that Havana Elementary School currently has the following: grades Pre-K thru 5<sup>th</sup>; plus or minus 27 acres; eight permanent buildings; nine relocatables; total square feet permanent 72,815; total square feet of relocatables 5,718; capacity at 100% (721); current enrollment of 499 (374 in Pre-K/3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 125 in 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> grades; 39 permanent classrooms; 10 relocatable classrooms. He stated that Havana Middle School currently has the following: grades 6<sup>th</sup> thru 8<sup>th</sup>; 50 acre site; nine permanent buildings, total square feet 103,489; capacity at 90% - 517; current enrollment – 175 (6<sup>th</sup> grade 75, 7<sup>th</sup> grade 46, and 8<sup>th</sup> grade 54); 27 classrooms. He stated that the proposed new Havana K-8 School will have 824 student stations (374 K-3<sup>rd</sup> grade, 62 4<sup>th</sup> grade, 63 5<sup>th</sup> grade, 75 6<sup>th</sup> grade, 46 7<sup>th</sup> grade, and 54 8<sup>th</sup> grade). He stated that 35 classrooms are needed to accommodate 674 students. He stated that the proposed budget for the new 16 classroom addition for Havana Middle School would be \$5,102,813.20.

Mr. James requested Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Wood create a power-point presentation to show the pros and cons for merging Havana Elementary School and Havana Middle School. He stated that public meetings will be scheduled to discuss the merging of Havana Elementary School and Havana Middle School.

During the discussion of the merger of Havana Elementary School and Havana Middle School, Board members asked questions, shared their concerns, and made comments.

b. Use of Capital Outlay Funds

Mrs. Wood shared with the Board the following financing options for the new Havana Middle School Wing: 1) approximately \$5 million funds are needed; 2) no internal, state, or federal funds are currently available for additional wings or major remodeling; 3) external financing in the form of a bank loan is required; 4) the district currently collects and budgets \$2.07 million of capital outlay revenues; 5) state law allows up to 75% of the capital outlay collection to be used to service a Certificate of Participation (COP) loan; 6) a \$5 million, 15 year, COP loan would have annual payments of approximately \$421,000 and an estimated interest rate of 3.00%, given current market conditions; 7) a \$5 million, 20 year, COP loan would have annual payments of approximately \$354,000 and an estimated interest rate of 3.50%, given current market conditions; 8) commercial banks are aggressively lending to local governments for up to 20 years. Bank loan expenses are less than half of the expenses of a publicly offered bond issue; 9) the district's finance team would consist of the Assistant Superintendent, School Board Attorney, Facilities Director, Financial Advisor, Bond Counsel and the bank with the best bid and their counsel; and 10) a loan could be closed within 60 to 90 days after Board approval if the project scope and costs are known. She stated that the following are financing options for the bus purchases: 1) approximately \$500,000 to \$1,100,000 is needed for buses; 2) external financing in the form of a bank loan is required; 3) a loan could be secured by a covenant to budget and appropriate as authorized by Section 1011.14 of the Florida Statutes; 4) a \$500,000 five year bank loan would have annual payments of approximately \$106,000 and an estimated 1.5% interest rate, given current market conditions; 5) a \$1,100,000 five year bank loan would have annual payments of approximately \$231,000 and an estimated 1.5% interest rate, given current market conditions; 6) given the short five year life of the loan and a good credit, the district should receive several strong bids; 7) the district's finance team would consist of the Assistant Superintendent, School Board Attorney, Financial Advisor, Bond Counsel, and the bank with the best bid and their counsel; and 8) a bank loan could be closed within 45 to 60 days after Board approval.

Following discussion, the Board agreed to move forward with the merging of Havana Elementary School and Havana Middle School, and the purchase of new buses.

Mr. Milton stated that he wanted to make sure the current buses are used to the fullest extent before getting rid of them.

Mr. Shepard informed the Board that there are 27 acres of vacant land in Havana.

Mrs. Wood updated the Board with information on the receivables for financial statements. She stated that some vendors are not paying as agreed. She shared with the Board a proposal to restructure the contract with Honeywell. She stated that the Honeywell contract could be re-negotiated to do a maintenance agreement. She stated that it will benefit the district to use monies in a different way.

Following discussion, Board members agreed to terminate the current contract with Honeywell, and re-negotiate for a full maintenance agreement.

Mr. Shepard stated that Mr. Douglas Harris has requested the Board modify his lease agreement on the Midway Property to allow him to purchase 10 acres with \$4,000 down. He stated that Mr. Harris has also requested the Board finance the remaining for 72 months at 1% interest.

Following discussion, Board members agreed to continue the lease agreement with Mr. Douglas Harris on the Midway Property until a decision was made to sell the property.

Mr. Shepard stated that he attended a meeting with the County Manager regarding the Brownfields Grant. He stated that through the Brownfields Grant, the Board will have the opportunity to tear down building #6 at Gadsden Elementary School at no cost. He stated that the only stipulation would be to put a playground area when building #6 is torn down. He stated that the Board would provide 20% in-kind services. He stated that the Brownfields Grant is a \$200,000 grant.

c. Audit Ended June 30, 2012

Mrs. Wood shared with the Board an overview of the findings for the internal funds audit. She stated that the "Redbook" requirements and immaterial bookkeeping issues were discussed with the Principal and Bookkeeper. She also shared with the Board the following summary of successive audit findings: 1) Adult General Education Courses; 2) Information Technology Disaster Recovery; 3) Information Technology Security Controls; and 4) Allowable Costs/Cost Principles Federal State.

3. ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. James stated that the district won the appeal with the Traneisha Galloway Charter School. He commended Mrs. Minnis for her work on behalf of the district with the Traneisha Galloway Charter School Appeal. He stated that he would present to the Board information regarding the Common Core Transition.

Mr. Simmons stated that the Florida School Boards Association will be offering workshops on Common Core.

Mr. Milton stated that he recently attended the ASCD Conference in Chicago. He stated that the workshops were very informative and everyone worked together.

Mr. James stated that the district needed to pursue the ½ cents sales tax. He stated that the ½ cents sales tax will be on the 2014 ballot. He stated that TCC was still interested in the partnership with GTI. He thanked everyone for their support of Dr. Robert Bryant. He stated that the building dedication was a success.

4. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Frost stated that he was proud of the process in which the Board handled the last student hearing.

Ms. Lewis stated that the Florida Youth Challenge Program in Starke, Florida is a method that could be used as an alternative placement for student expulsion by the Superintendent. She requested that a district staff meet with The Florida Youth Challenge Program at Carter Parramore Academy to gather more information. She stated that the Superintendent, Deputy Superintendent, and Ms. Raynak (Supplemental Education Services) understand the Parent Trigger Bill. She requested that Title I funding be spent as a supplement to utilize staff as parent liaisons to boost morale.

Mr. Helms congratulated the Superintendent on Dr. Bryant's service Sunday, April 7th at Mt. Calvary Church. He announced that the Willie Ruth Williams Scholarship Fundraiser will be held on May 5th, 6:00 p.m. at First Elizabeth M.B. Church. He stated that Ms. Williams' daughter has requested all Board members partake in the program. He stated that the district will be in trouble if not equitable with sports. He stated that a Common Core Training will be held in Blountstown. He stated that the FHSAA Board of Directors will soon change according to the Legislature.

Mr. Simmons announced that workshops with Neola are scheduled for Wednesday, April 17th at 1:00 p.m.; and Thursday, April 18th at 10:00 a.m. He thanked Mrs. Wood and Mr. Shepard for a very informative workshop.

Ms. Lewis commended the Superintendent and staff for a job well done on the building dedication for Dr. Robert Bryant.

5. The workshop adjourned at 7:15 p.m.