

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

March 23, 2021

6:00 P.M.

This meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Mr. Steve Scott; Mrs. Karema D. Dudley; 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 Mark Moore of Calvary Baptist Church.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

None.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. Key removed from the agenda item #9a –Gadsden County Public Schools Organizational Chart 2021 – 2022. He added to the agenda item #11a – Disposal of Gretna Elementary School Property.

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

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. February 23, 2021, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- b. February 23, 2021, 6:00 p.m. – Regular School Board Meeting
- c. March 10, 2021, 10:00 a.m. – Special 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 2020 – 2021
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
 - b. 2021 – 2022 School Year Calendars
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
7. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS
 - a. Contracted Services with Soliant Health and Gadsden County School Board
Fund Source: FEFP dollars
Amount: \$55.00 per hour
ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
8. SCHOOL FACILITY / PROPERTY
 - a. Annual Certification of Facilities Data
Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A
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 moved to the DISCUSSION portion of the agenda.

10. CONSIDERATION, PROPOSAL, AND/OR ADOPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND RELATED MATTERS
 - a. Adoption/Approval of Policy Revisions
Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to approve agenda item #10a. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.
11. FACILITIES UPDATE
 - a. Disposal of Gretna Elementary School Property

Captain Bob Wilder from the Gadsden County Sheriff's Department addressed the Board to request that the Gretna Elementary School Property be donated to the Sheriff's Department. He stated that the school is very useful. He stated that they have been using the school for active shooting training as well as other trainings.

In response to Mr. Scott's question to Captain Wilder whether or not the Sheriff's Department had a monetary offer, Captain Wilder stated no there was no monetary offer at this time.

Mayor Jeffery McNealy, City of Gretna, addressed the Board and introduced other council members: Mayor Pro-Tem Evelyn Goldwire, Councilman Gary Russ, and the Gretna City Manager Mr. Antonio Jefferson.

Mayor Evelyn Goldwire shared with the Board a power-point presentation. She stated that the City of Gretna need partners and they will pursue the citizens and other groups input to buy into this endeavor. She stated that they want a civic center style facility. She stated that the Gretna Elementary facility will be open immediately by using community events. She stated that the Gretna Elementary facility is being use by law enforcement for trainings. She stated that they would use it for other programs. She stated that the City of Gretna has being using Gretna Elementary School property for events the last year. She stated that they want to use the Gretna Elementary facility for other outdoor events like the May Day event. She stated that they will also use the facility for commercial use to develop several types of workstations, new business training center, rental office space, and meeting rooms. She stated that as an economic development the facility will be used as a multi-use center to create jobs and will be a job retention center. She stated that the City of Gretna Council knows it will cost money, but they want to consider what it will take to get the Gretna Elementary facility up to par. She stated that Gretna Elementary is a passion for her and that there are a lot of opportunities for the City of Gretna.

Mr. Frost stated that he didn't want to close Gretna Elementary. He stated that he supports the City of Gretna.

In response to Ms. Johnson's question to Mayor Pro-Tem Goldwire whether or not there was a monetary offer, she stated that the City of Gretna has a \$50,000 offer.

Mrs. Dudley stated that the City of Gretna has great ideas for the facility. She stated that she was concerned about competition from a charter school. She stated that a non-charter school clause would need to be included in the contract.

Mayor Jeffery McNealy stated he would guarantee that the Gretna facility will not become a charter school.

Mrs. Tammy Graddy Ceasor (Angel Care Assisted Living) addressed the Board to request the purchase of the Gretna Elementary School property. She stated that she owns a 16 bed assisted living facility and she wants to use the Gretna facility as an assisted living mental health facility. She stated that she has an offer to put on the table. She stated that she only needs a portion of the Gretna facility and will work with other entities to share the use. She stated that she is currently at Chattahoochee High School and she needs to expand. She stated that she has an offer of \$260,000 ready to pay with a cashier's check.

Ms. Annie Berry addressed the Board on behalf of Mrs. Ceasor. She stated that there will be job opportunities for citizens of Gadsden County.

Mr. Key stated that in the Board meeting on February 23rd, the Board directed that for sale sign be placed at Gretna Elementary School so the property may be disposed of. He stated that as of today, there have been one cash offer of \$260,000 by Mrs. Tammy Ceasor, and three offers of interest from local municipalities (Sheriff's Department, City of Gretna, and the Board of County Commissioners). He stated that on February 23rd the Board stated that action would be taken to dispose of the Gretna property at this meeting. He recommended the Board take action to dispose of the Gretna Elementary School property.

Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the highest cash offer in the amount of \$260,000 from Angel Care Assisted Living to dispose of the Gretna property. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema Dudley. The motion carried with Mr. Scott, Mrs. Dudley and Mr. McMillan voting “aye”. Mr. Frost and Ms. Johnson voted “nay”.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Gretna Elementary School property will be disposed of by selling the property to Angel Care Assisted Living.

Mrs. Minnis stated that she will work on the contract to sell the Gretna property to Angel Care Assisted Living.

Mr. Hunter shared with the Board the following facility updates: completed sidewalk construction at James A. Shanks Middle School, and Stewart Street Elementary School; working to get price for sidewalk from the Administration Building to Gadsden Technical Institute; received and set generators. He stated that the generators need to be commissioned.

Mr. Key stated to Mr. Hunter that he wants to make sure the district use companies with solid reputations.

Mr. Hunter stated that local companies are used whenever possible. He stated that he will continue to contract with local businesses and keep track of a list.

Mr. McMillan stated that the district purchase fuel from a company in Panama City. He agreed that the district should be using local companies. He stated that if we do business with local companies, they will be willing to help the district.

12. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key requested the Board schedule a one-day Retreat to discuss the district’s vision, find ways to increase salaries beginning with the teachers. He stated that teacher salaries (\$38,115) are the lowest in the state and that is not acceptable. He stated that he will be looking at what cuts can be made at the district as well as the school level. He read a thank you card from the family of Ms. Maggie Bradwell Conyers who recently passed.

Mrs. Judith Mandela, President of GCCTA, addressed the Board to share her concerns. She stated that Senate Bill 48 is a companion bill in the House. She stated that in her opinion Senate Bill 48 will devastate public schools. She stated that one of the components added this year is that any student will be allowed to use the empowerment fund whether or not they attend public schools. She encouraged the Board to speak on this issue when they have an opportunity. She stated that Senators want to hear from public employees. She stated that Decatur County voted on a penny sales tax, and Thomas County expanded a tax referendum. She stated that she thinks the School Board should consider the tax avenue. She stated in many districts the union and School Board work collaboratively to get a sales tax referendum passed. She read a statement from the Governor and his request for a one-time bonus payment to First Responders for their service during the pandemic. She stated that the district should be receiving an estimate of \$20,000,000 from the CARES Act. She stated that employees have made sacrifices and been at the forefront to make sure children are served.

13. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Frost encouraged everyone to get to know the Board members and the Superintendent. He stated that the district is moving toward a new beginning and refreshing direction.

Mr. McMillan stated that the retreat will be a good thing and a time for Board members and the Superintendent to bond.

Ms. Johnson expressed her gratefulness for staff being afforded the opportunity to be vaccinated. She encouraged everyone to continue to be strong.

Mr. Key thanked Dr. Sylvia Jackson for coordinating the COVID-19 vaccination for staff.

Mr. Scott stated that he has been serving on the Planning and Zoning Commission for more than two years. He suggested Ms. Johnson be his replacement. He stated that a letter needs to be submitted to the Planning and Zoning Commission with the replacement for Ms. Johnson to serve.

Ms. Johnson agreed to serve as the Board's representative on the Planning and Zoning Commission.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she will make decisions that are right for Gadsden County. She stated that the district is moving in the right direction. She stated that she is concerned about teacher salaries. She encouraged Mrs. Mandela to speak with the teachers to have them stay with the district.

Mr. McMillan stated that he received a letter from the Sawdust Community Outreach, Inc. requesting a portable building to be placed at the Sawdust Park for community use. He stated that the portable will be used for tutorial programs for youth in the community. He requested the Board address the Sawdust Community Outreach, Inc. request at a later time. He thanked the members of the Sawdust Community Outreach, Inc. for coming and sharing their concerns with the Board.

14. The meeting adjourned at 7:05 p.m.