

SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

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

March 27, 2024

2:00 P.M.

This workshop is open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mrs. Karema D. Dudley, Chairwoman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, Ms. Cathy S. Johnson, Mr. Steve Scott, 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 workshop was called to order by the Chairwoman, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley, at 2:05 p.m.

2. Opening Prayer

The opening prayer was led by Mr. Leroy McMillan.

3. Pledge of Allegiance

Recited in unison.

4. Discussion of New K-8 School Property

Mrs. Dudley thanked everyone for attending the workshop.

Mr. Rick Baker, DAG Team Member, stated that members of the Fitzgerald Collaborating Group would share with the Board a power-point presentation outlining a site comparison with pros and cons between the James A. Shanks Middle School site and the Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd. and Key Farms site. Ms. Erika Hogan and Mr. Donald Gray shared with the Board the following information: Pros for the James A. Shanks Middle School site - Project Funding - secure funding; Project Schedule – estimated construction documents completion by end of 2024 with immediate start on existing site and building design; Design Status – schematic design (SD) complete - \$480,000, architectural site masterplan complete - \$30,000, civil engineering masterplan complete - \$35,000, special facility negotiation – excess cap. Resolution - \$30,000, total design fee spent to date \$575,000; Con – no expansion acres for additional facilities/ball fields; Pro – property is secured/owned; Cons – pool site acquisition is still pending, Cultural Resource Assessment Survey required - \$30,000, and King Street ROW turn lanes reduce acreage; Pros – site survey complete - \$19,000, wetland delineation services complete – \$2,000, and Geotechnical and ESA complete - \$19,000; Con – additional Geotech required for storm pond - \$16,000; Pros – EHPA Gym -existing base building for enhanced hurricane, and Protection Area (EHPA) renovation - \$8M; total expenditures spent to date - \$8,615,000; and total additional required \$46,000. He stated that the Cons for the Martin Luther King Jr. Road and Key Farms Road included the following: Project Funding – potential requirement for DOE Facilities resubmittal to Special Facilities Committee - \$30,000 approx. fee required; Project Schedule – minimum 2-month time delay to acquire property and estimated construction documents completion 1-year after property acquisition – mid late 2025; Design Status – requires revisions to SD Phase Drawings - \$200,000; Pros – Design Status – viable site for existing SD design concept, no construction necessary on active campus, 55.67 acres of developable land, and expansion potential for additional facilities/ball fields; Cons – Property Ownership – property not secured/owned, cost unknown, special facilities negotiations

required for site relocation, potential utility impacts on Martin Luther King Jr Blvd. turn lanes, and unknown water, sewer capacity, unforeseen conditions, \$500,000 minimum property acquisition cost; Property Analysis – site survey not complete - \$65,000 (larger site), wetland delineation services not complete _ \$10,000, and Geotech and ESA not complete - \$35,000, \$110,000 approximate fee required; EHPA Gym – no existing gymnasium onsite, and new facility assumed EHPA same capacity as existing James A. Shanks Middle School gym - \$10M approximate cost for new facility; total expenditure - \$0; and total additional required - \$10,840.000 funding needed through SD Phase and anticipated cost for new gym.

Mr. Steve Huddle, Chief of Staff for Senator Corey Simon, addressed the Board and stated that changing the location to build the new school will not put the funds at risk.

Mr. TJ Lewis, Gadsden County Economic Development Council, stated that the county was waiting for the Board to make a decision on the land property.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she was concerned about whether the citizens were informed of the new K-8 school.

Mr. McMillan stated that he would not vote to build the new school on the James A. Shanks Middle School property. He stated that it was not a good site.

Mrs. Dudley stated that quality is extremely important. She stated that the Board need to spend more time discussing the new school.

Board members asked questions, shared their concerns and made comments during the site comparison showing the pros and cons between the James A. Shanks Middle School site and the Martin Luther King Jr Road and Key Farms site.

Mrs. Denise Hannah, citizen, addressed the Board to share her concerns regarding the new school being built on the Key Farms property. She stated that there were concerns why the county was giving the School Board property from an unknown source. She stated that she did not want the new school built on the Key Farms property because of the traffic coming off Martin Luther King Jr Blvd to Ninth Street. She stated that the Board should revamp and look for more property to build the new school. She stated that the residents were not asked about the location to build the new school.

Ms. Johnson stated that she wants to do what is best for the county. Mr. Scott stated that he was concerned that there was not any citizen input. Mrs. Dudley stated that she wanted to schedule another workshop to further discuss the location of the new K-8 school.

Mr. Isaac Simmons, citizen and former Board member, addressed the Board and stated that the Board needed to take their time and do it right when making decision. He stated that the Board represents the citizens. He stated that where the Board is now, they should have been at this point long before now. He stated that the Board need to make sure the Director of Facilities is involved in planning the new school.

5. Educational Items by the Superintendent

Mr. Key stated that James A. Shanks Middle School was not the only option to build the new school. He stated that Carter Parramore Academy and Stewart Street Elementary School properties were discussed. He stated that the committee brought to the Board the option to build the new school on the James A. Shanks Middle School property. He shared with the Board an appraisal report for the pool property. He stated that he has concerns about the county and a donation vs. \$1.5 million property value. He stated that a delay can cost the district a problem. He stated that the funding cannot just continue to sit there and nothing is being done. He stated that he and district staff are speaking to stakeholders about the new school at community meetings.

6. School Board Requests and Concerns

None.

7. The workshop adjourned at 4:10 p.m.