

FINAL BUDGET HEARING

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

September 7, 2023

6:00 P.M.

The meeting was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Mrs. Karema D. Dudley; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; Mr. Charlie D. Frost; and Mr. Steve Scott. 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 6:04 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Mr. Charlie D. Frost.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION NUMBER 23-01 (reaffirmed at final budget hearing) and FDOE Form ESE 524

Fund Source: General Fund and Capital Project

Amount: Refer to millage rates and amounts stated on the Resolution

Mr. Frost stated that he was concerned that the budget information was not provided to Board members in a timely manner.

In response to Mr. McMillan's question on the reason for just receiving the budget information, Mr. Mays stated that it is hectic to write down a budget than it is to write up a budget. He stated that the budget could be amended throughout the year. He apologized for the lateness.

Following Mr. Mays reading of resolution number 23-01, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve resolution number 23-01. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

5. APPROVAL OF THE 2023 – 2024 FINAL BUDGET – RESOLUTION 23-02

Fund Source: All Funds Budget

Amount: Refer to final budget

Following Mr. Mays reading of resolution number 23-02 and an overview of the budget for fiscal year 2023-2024, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve resolution number 23-02. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

6. APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 23-03 CATEGORICAL FLEXIBLE SPENDING

Fund Source: General Funds
Amount: To Be Determined

Mr. Mays stated that House Bill 5101 revised section 1011.62(17)(a), Florida Statutes, (F.S.), previously s. 1011.62(6)(b), F.S., removing the requirement for the Categorical Flexible Spending Resolution. He stated that in addition, the bill added maintaining and expanding career and technical education instruction as approved purposes for using the categorical flexible spending option. He stated that agenda item #6 was for informational purposes only.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. APPROVAL OF RESOLUTION 23-04 – BOARD’S INTENTION ON USE OF GENERAL FUNDS

Fund Source: General Funds
Amount: N/A

Following Mr. Mays reading of resolution number 23-04, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley made a motion to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve resolution number 23-04. The motion was seconded by Mr. Steve Scott and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. Small School District Council Consortium

Fund Source: General Fund
Amount: \$3,250.00

Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to accept the Superintendent’s recommendation to approve agenda item #9a. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Items preceded by an (*) asterisk were removed from the consent agenda and moved to the discussion portion of the agenda.

*9. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

b. 2023 – 2024 Student Code of Conduct

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: \$0

Mr. Frost stated that he was concerned about student disciplinary actions not be stricter. He stated he recruited three students that returned to the district. He stated that he wanted to make sure the disciplinary policy is not relaxed. He requested a workshop to further discuss the Student Code of Conduct.

Mr. McMillan stated that he has read the Student Code of Conduct in its entirety. He stated that the district needed to do a better job of enforcing the disciplinary policy.

Mr. Key stated that revisions have been made to the Student Code of Conduct Handbook. He stated that a zero tolerance offense would be handled at the school level first.

Mrs. Dudley stated that on page #59 under minor offenses, the use of offensive language should not be extracted/removed from the policy.

Mrs. Tiffany Buckhalt stated that the offensive language portion is being moved to the intermediate level.

Mr. McMillan stated that an explanation was needed for the yellow highlighted sections of the Student Code of Conduct Handbook.

In response to Mrs. Dudley's concern regarding referrals being put in focus, Mr. Key stated that some of the referrals are still being put on paper. He stated that school-based management is used for handling discipline issues.

Mr. McMillan stated that there needed to be uniformity when it comes to the name, Student Code of Conduct or Code of Student Conduct.

Mr. Charlie D. Frost made a motion to defer action on agenda item #9b until a workshop is held. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

*8. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

a. Rostan Professional Services Agreement Amendment 5

Fund Source: FEMA Reimbursement

Amount: Based on Services Required (Not to Exceed the Contract Limit)

In response to Mr. Scott's question what services were being provided by Rostan, Mr. Key stated that Rostan is working on appeals relating to FEMA claims. He stated that FEMA funding must have projects attached.

In response to Mr. McMillan's concern regarding progress reports, Mr. Key stated that quarterly meetings are held with Rostan.

Mr. Mays stated that before payment is released, Rostan must have deliverables. He stated that documentation could be provided to the Board.

Dr. Sylvia Jackson stated that Rostan was hired to recoup FEMA monies for the district. She stated that quarterly meetings are held. She stated that the contract with Rostan is on an annual basis.

Mrs. Dudley stated that she was concerned about not receiving reports on spending the money. She stated that she wants the Board to be good stewards.

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #8a. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

b. Unified School Improvement Grant (UniSig) 2023 – 2024

Fund Source: UniSig

Amount: \$1,118,225.00 Total

Mr. McMillan stated that there are corrections to the UniSig grant and he requested to speak with Ms. Lisa Robinson.

Following discussion, Mr. Leroy McMillan made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #8b with corrections by Ms. Lisa Robinson. The motion was seconded by Mr. Charlie D. Frost and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

10. SCHOOL FACILITY/PROPERTY

a. Selection of CM-At Risk for New Quincy K-8 School

Mr. Frost stated that he would like to abstain from voting because he was not present during the architectural firm presentations.

Mrs. Minnis stated for the record that there has been no discussion among the Board members regarding the selection of the architectural firms. She stated that the Board members would discuss the raw data and rank the firms. She stated that the data has been in her possession. She stated that there are no specific rankings on the presentations. She stated that once the ranking is made, the Board would then authorize the Superintendent to proceed with negotiating a contract/agreement.

Mr. McMillan asked Mr. Frost to give his input on the rankings. Mr. Frost stated that he would like to abstain from giving any comment and voting because he was not present for the presentations..

Mrs. Minnis stated that according to Statute, a vote has to be recorded for every Board member present.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board had two options for ranking the firms; use the tally sheets or use comments to make a decision.

Following discussion, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley made a motion to use the tally sheets as the ranking method for selection of the CM-At Risk for the New Quincy K-8 School. The motion was seconded by Ms. Cathy S. Johnson and carried unanimously.

Mr. McMillan stated that the rankings for the CM-At Risk for the New Quincy K-8 School was as follows: 1) AllState Construction; 2) Culpepper Construction Company, Inc.; and 3) Ajax Building Company, LLC.

Mr. Leroy McMillan made a motion to authorize the Superintendent to start negotiations with AllState Construction. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

Mr. Hudson shared with the Board a facilities update. He stated that portable cooling units have been installed at Havana Magnet School. He stated that the district is working with Pro Playground to get a design and bid for playground equipment for all schools.

Ms. Johnson stated that there are some items that needed repairing at Havana Magnet School: kitchen area needed cooling; and a gasket for the inside cooler. She stated that a generator was needed at Havana Magnet School.

Mr. Key stated that he is working with the county to purchase a generator for Havana Magnet School because it is used as an emergency shelter. He stated that only two schools have generators. He stated that there is not a lot of funding flexibility to purchase generators. He stated that the district has to move towards getting a ½-cent sales tax. He stated that there is a plan in place for emergency situations. He stated that the county is in charge of emergency shelters.

Ms. Johnson stated that now is the time to discuss an emergency backup plan for all schools.

11. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that he has access to Rostan statements. He stated that no one in the district office have been told not to talk with the Board members. He stated that he is changing how he communicate with the Board.

12. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mr. Frost stated that he recently refereed a basketball game and one of the other referees applauded the coach at Gadsden County High School for how he and the players conducted themselves at a recent game. He stated that the Board needed to implement a policy to have all staff leave in an emergency situation along with the students. He stated that the district needed to make sure all staff is safe.

Ms. Johnson stated that there are some safety issues that needed addressing at Havana Magnet School.

In response to Ms. Johnson's concern about a Capital Improvement Plan, Mr. Key stated that there is no Capital Improvement Plan. He stated that the district has a 5-Year Facilities Work Plan. He stated that the district use PECO funds. Ms. Johnson requested a workshop to discuss the facilities work plan.

Mr. Scott stated that his concerns and issues were presented at the previous Board meeting. Mr. Key stated that he is working on responding to Mr. Scott's issues and concerns. He stated that he would provide evidence and documentation with the responses.

13. The meeting adjourned at 8:31 p.m.