MINUTES

SCHOOL BOARD FINANCIAL WORKSHOP

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

May 26, 2026

4:30 P.M.

The workshop is open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; Ms. Stacey S. Hannigon; 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 Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan at 4:33 P.M.

2. Financial Information

   •2026 – 04 Board Revenue Summary Report

   •2026 – 04 Board Expenditure Summary Report

   Mrs. Bruner provided the revenue and expenditure summary reports. She stated that for the current fiscal year, we previously reported that we were reduced by over a million and a half dollars from the second calculation to the third calculation. She stated that we just received the 4th calculation on Friday and we were reduced to about $300,000. She stated that in an already struggling financial situation where we were planning our expenditures, then our budget gets reduced. Mr. McMillian stated that we are $1.5 million reduced and then for the 4 calculation reduced $300,000. Mrs. Bruner stated that our general fund expenditures will be impacted, and not our grant funded expenditures. She stated that our revenue piece was cut and then cut again further. She stated that our revenues aren't going to match our expenditures. She stated that we have more expenditures than we have revenues. She stated that was the financial piece that was brought to the Board’s attention when we said we're projecting that at the end of this current fiscal year that we're going to fall below 2%. She stated that we're currently projecting it to still be below 2% and more than likely in the negative. Mr. McMillan wanted to know why the funds were cut. Mrs. Bruner stated that the recalculations of our FEFP funding from the State was based on student enrollment. Mr. Frost wanted to know if it would tell how many students the district lost. Mrs. Bruner stated that it doesn't tell us the exact number of students we lost. She stated that we actually received an increase in the scholarships and got money back when they recalculated and recalibrated those scholarships. She stated that did not offset the reduction in the student FTE count. Ms. Johnson wanted to know what was the plan for the loss we are experiencing. She wanted to know if there would be a special meeting to discuss and have conversations about where we're going to cut in order to fall back within our budget. Mrs. Bruner stated that at this point, we don’t have that opportunity. She stated that we will have to reach out to the State and present to them our projection, here's how much we think that we need, and then the State will have to make us whole. She stated that there have been several counties in the same situation. She stated that for the next fiscal year you have to present to the State a plan. She stated that the consolidation of some of these schools with the closing of Shanks Middle School really helped us. She stated that we'll have some other things that we're going to present to finalize the tweaks to our staffing plan. Mr. Scott wanted to know if the State end up giving us money to balance our budget and 0 out, where is it taken from to payback. Mr. Bruner stated that it would be a direct appropriation from the State, so it would be outside that FEFP process. She stated that it would be here's the amount that would make you balance out and start at 0. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know what department for appropriations. Mrs. Bruner stated that the Department of Education. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know what source of funding would that be, how it is labeled. Mrs. Bruner stated that she was not sure. She stated that we have not had this done before. She stated that the green spot thus far is we have in the past said we're projecting a financial emergency and then we're able to correct from there. She stated that because Ms. Kathy is on the board and has been working with these other counties that they do have funding available for this purpose. She stated that there are a number of counties that are in our situation. She stated that the sooner we can get to the State with a number, the better because it's going to probably be like a first come, first serve and when they run out of funds, there will be no funds available. She stated that the funds are calculated with the expenditures and revenues. She stated that certain funds that we receive as a district that are not spent in that current fiscal year, can be rolled forward to the next year. She stated that the others just get swept back to zero and then we get re-appropriated in the next year for whatever amount. She stated that the calculation is audited by the Auditor General's office, and that is the audited fund balance that we start each new year. She stated that the only way to build a fund balance from 0 is to spend less than we receive. She stated that's why we've already projected for next year and spoke with all of the departments and letting them know even though we're going to give you this amount, you're only going to be allowed to spend at the rate you receive. She stated that we can't guarantee from the calculations that it won't happen again. She stated that when we got cut in the prior fiscal year, we were fortunate that our recalculations kept us right in line. She stated that we didn't lose a lot, we didn't gain a lot, we stayed right in line but this year, we saw that significant decrease. Ms. Hannigon stated that we are at a crossroads of sorts as a district with everything, all the moving parts that we're dealing with right now. She stated that the building of the school, the relocating of students, HVAC systems that need repair, and buildings that are dilapidated. She stated that she was hopeful that at some point we're going to have a full-fledged conversation about the finances of the district going into the next fiscal year. Mr. McMillan stated that he don't want anybody to think that we're in the condition we're in because of gross and negligent spending. He stated that it's because we are losing students. He asked Ms. Hannigan what were her expectations out of this budget meeting. Ms. Hannigon stated that she was concerned that with everything that we are looking at going into this new fiscal year, that we are not having more in depth conversation regarding the finances of our budget. She stated that there are lot of moving parts, but there is a level of fiduciary responsibility right here for the five board members who are elected. Mr. Scott stated that it's ironic that the State would take money away from us, but then if we wind up going in the hole, they'll give us money to balance it back out. Mr. Key stated that there's a couple of things that has actually been said probably the last two years. He stated that he has made mention of it time and time. He stated that we are losing kids and it has impacted us. He stated that one of the things that is going to help this year is the closure of James A Shanks. He stated that when we're combining, we're actually helping the budget. Mr. Frost stated that a lot of districts are faced with the same decisions about closing schools. Mrs. Bruner highlighted the items in the packet. She stated that agenda item #7b are direct purchase orders for items under the construction plan that are part of the guaranteed maximum price. She stated that because they are being pulled out into a direct purchase order, we're able to get the tax savings and it exceeds the threshold. She stated that the other agenda item #7c is related to purchase orders that have been outside that guaranteed maximum price. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know about construction reimbursement for the new school. Ms. Bruner stated yes, whatever is spent on construction we get the money back from the State. She stated that in statute, any expense must be timely and within the drawdown process. She stated that the drawdown process actually takes two months. She stated that you request it in the first month and then they send it to you in the second month. She stated that preplanning must be done in advance. Ms. Hannigon asked about the direct purchase orders. Mrs. Bruner stated that the purchase orders are outside of the guaranteed maximum price. She stated that it will be coming from the same funding source for building the school. The Board has to approve those purchase orders. Mrs. Bruner stated that the TRIM (Truth in Millage) schedule needed Board approval. She stated that the State gives us the schedule and that's what's included in the supporting document, and based on when the property appraiser certifies the tax rolls. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know how many budget workshops would be scheduled. Mrs. Bruner stated that it will be part of this process. She stated that we'll schedule at least one if not two in June.

3. Facilities Update

Mr. Hudson stated that he wanted to begin saying that everything was an emergency and number one priority right now. He stated that everywhere, anywhere from you know dealing with the OPPAGA audit to trying to successfully get this half cent sales tax to trying to prevent a stage from being ruined. He stated that the maintenance department is trying to make adjustments and deal with things. He stated that Mr. Isaac McCall and Mr. Torrance Bell are doing an excellent job stepping in to fix the HVAC system issues. He stated that we're going to continue to try to do what we can to provide them with the support that they need to be successful and keeping the district with proper air quality. He stated that the lead electrical position wear many hats, just to name a few of them they handle all of the fire alarm systems, all the security, all our sprinkler systems, all the low voltage working hand in hand with technology. He stated that the grounds crew is dealing with the weather, raining a lot. He stated that they were a little bit behind because of the rainy weather. He stated that because testing was going on, there were limited times that they could cut the grass. He stated that they are trying to persevere and make sure they get caught up. The maintenance department has to be a force of readiness for the district. He stated that they are doing a good job and we appreciate them. He stated that he will share with the Board pictures of the new track at the high school at the next meeting. Mr. Key wanted know where are in the process of getting an abatement cost for the 500 West King Street location. Mr. Hudson stated that he has reached out to Southern Earth Sciences to provide an estimated cost. Mr. Scott stated that for years, he has been trying to get the Board to get rid of that property either through Quincy Main Street or even getting an appraisal. He stated now that the buildings are falling apart, and walls are coming down. He stated that the community people are asking him if the district has liability insurance. Mrs. Bruner stated yes. Mr. Scott wanted to know are we going to get any interest in that property now with buildings falling down. He stated that this is something we should have taken care of at least a couple of years ago, if not four years ago and we still do not have an appraisal of the property. He stated that we don't have anything moving in the direction of getting rid of that property. Mr. Key stated that back in the March, April, or May, one of those meetings, he thought that they concluded the advertisement for RFP (Request for Proposal) for a realtor. He stated that was the route the Board decided to go with to get a realtor, not to get it appraised. Attorney Minnis stated that she has one realtor. She stated that we are doing all of the RFP's for all the realtors to submit their qualifications and then it will come before the Board to select the realtor that you want to use to sell your property. Mrs. Bruner stated that she can provide the updated schedule that has been posted on the district's website. She stated that the Board will be the one to select and review information for the realtor. Mr. Scott stated that he has been contacted by the community and suggested that they have an interest in the bricks from James A. Shanks Middle School and the buildings that are being torn down from the old Quincy High School. Mr. Key stated that it was actually mentioned by someone today from the Leaf Theatre asking about purchasing some of the chairs that are available. Mr. Frost stated that he appreciates Mr. Hudson and the maintenance staff. He stated that the department is understaffed and you are doing the very best you can working with what you have. Ms. Johnson stated that the track at the high school looks really great. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know when the RFP closes for the realtor. Mrs. Bruner stated that June 15th. Mr. Frost wanted to know when the building will be torn down for the construction at Shanks. Mr. Hudson stated July 6th. Mr. McMillan wanted to know what was being done about the AC system at Carter Parramore Academy. Mr. Hudson stated that the issue needs to be discussed further. He stated that he thinks that it probably will not be a good option to put that much into Carter Parramore Academy. He stated that the long haul is waiting for those main buildings are trying to revamp that HVAC system. He stated that it would be quite expensive. He stated that the cafeteria area should be running and operating efficiently. He stated that is on a different unit. Mr. McMillan wanted to know how many students were at Carter Parramore Academy and Gadsden Central Academy. Mr. Key stated about 37 students. He stated that 34 of those students are to return back to their home school this year. He stated that there are 3 students who are supposed to remain at Carter Parramore Academy and the rest are supposed to return to their home school. Mr. McMillan wanted to know if we are talking about shutting it down or what. Mr. Key stated that those are conversations that we're currently having because of the number of kids that we have. He stated that is something that has to come back to the Board. Mr. McMillan wanted to know if it was required by law to keep an alternative school. Mr. Key stated that has not researched the issue, but thinks no, you don't have to. Attorney Minnis stated that no, you don't have to, but if you decided to have an alternative school there is certain criteria that you have to meet. She stated that you must have a self-contained ESE facility. Mr. McMillan stated that we need to make some decisions on that really soon. He stated that he did not want to continue to have staff and students in a building that don't have AC. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know about the daycare area. Mr. Key stated that the daycare is not required because currently right now we have no students who have a child to attend the daycare. He stated that it is mainly staff kids who attend the daycare. Ms. Hannigon stated that with staff utilizing the daycare, is there AC where the children are. Mr. Key stated yes, that's a different AC unit. He stated that could be something that we can utilize for our employees. He stated that the fee was $200, which is a lot cheaper than paying at any other daycare.

4. Educational Items by the Superintendent

   Mr. Key stated that when he mentioned insurance monies, he was talking about insurance monies to deal with maintenance issues that we have in our current buildings.

5. School Board Requests and Concerns

   Mr. Scott stated that his concerns for the fund balance being below 2% below, and the gym site have already been addressed, but not to his satisfaction.

   Ms. Johnson inquired about the school grades. Mr. Key stated that school grades will come out in July. He stated that he will give updates on how the schools performed.

   Ms. Hannigon stated that there are about 8 contracts on the agenda for the 6:00 p.m. meeting. She wanted to know if the attorney has reviewed the contracts and agreements. Ms. Minnis stated that she has reviewed some of them but not all of them. Ms. Hannigon wanted to know if the agreements targeting teacher certification was working. She wanted to know if the teachers are utilizing it for the dollar figure that we're putting out for staff. She wanted to know if it was effective, or do we need to look at different companies. Mr. Key stated that it is working for those who are utilizing it because currently he was in an education course to renew his certification. He stated that for those who are actually utilizing it, not just starting but actually finishing the courses. Ms. Hannigon stated that considering the quotes that we seek out, is it based on the number of staff that we anticipate utilizing it. or what are the quotes based on. Mr. Key stated that he can get the number of the people who are utilizing it and share with the Board.

6. The workshop adjourned at 5:44 P.M.