

March 10, 2022
5:30 p.m.

The Fannin County Board of Education met in regular session with the following members present: Terry Bramlett, Chair; Mike Cole, Vice-Chair; Bobby Bearden, Lewis DeWeese, and Chad Galloway.

The meeting was called to order by Terry Bramlett, Chair.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve the consent agenda. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Approve the agenda.

Approve the Board meeting minutes from February 10, 2022, at 5:30 p.m.

Superintendent Michael Gwatney recognized Board members for their service and commitment to Fannin County. Each member received a certificate, gifts, and recognition from all schools.

Deputy Superintendent Sarah Rigdon reviewed summaries of recent activities at all five Fannin SGTs.

Fannin County Middle School Principal Mark Young presented school happenings.

Deputy Superintendent Sarah Rigdon provided an update regarding the leadership development initiative and introduced the candidates selected for the district's first "Aspiring Leaders" cohort. Dr. James Zoll, a professor from the University of North Georgia, was also present to congratulate each of the inductees. Those selected are: Chris Thigpen, Ashley Jacobson, Chuck Patterson, Amanda Housley, Kayla Majors, Scott Barnstead, Amanda McBride, Julie Thompson, Lauren Payne, and Brittany Waggener. The cohort will begin classes this summer at the University of North Georgia.

Director of Learning & Achievement Lucas Roof shared a district health update that included current COVID data. A notable change to procedure was discussed – the Department of Education has stopped requesting weekly submission of school COVID data. FCSS will continue the same processes of contact tracing. However, the system website will transition from daily COVID data updates to weekly updates provided on Friday.

There was no public comment.

Assistant Superintendent Darren Danner provided a facilities and construction update.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve recommendation to award mowing bid to Dependable Lawn Care, LLC. Areas to be mowed include: Blue Ridge Elementary, East Fannin Elementary, West Fannin Elementary, Fannin County Middle School, Fannin County High School, and the Fannin Ag Center for a monthly total of \$7,800 and a yearly total of \$54,600. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Chad Galloway, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve to postpone the April Board meeting from Thursday, April 14, 2022, to Thursday, April 21, 2022, and to relocate that meeting to the Fannin County School System Performing Arts Center. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve district financial reports for the period ending January 31, 2022. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Director of Finance Susan Wynn informed the Board that the SPLOST check received for January 2022 was \$692,115.31.

Director of Finance Susan Wynn shared an update with the Board about bank bids. The bank bids are currently being advertised on our website and the newspaper.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve an intergovernmental agreement with the Fannin County Recreation Department and Fannin County. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve summer meal contract with the Fannin County Recreation Department and Fannin County. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Chad Galloway, seconded by Mike Cole, to declare technology equipment as surplus. Items listed will be offered via online auction at GovDeals.com All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve technology equipment as salvage. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve transportation equipment as surplus. Items listed will be offered via online auction at GovDeals.com All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve transportation equipment as salvage. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve bus request from Mountain Education Charter High School (MECHS) to transport students to North Georgia Technical College in Clarksville. MECHS will be financially responsible for fuel and driver costs. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Deputy Superintendent Sarah Rigdon presented a local Board training update with training tentatively set for either April 21 or May 12. Thus far, the Board has completed six out of the twelve required training hours. This training is a required part of earning GSBA “Exemplary Board” status.

Deputy Superintendent Sarah Rigdon updated the Board on the annual internal review and survey which is completed as part of earning the GSBA “Exemplary Board” status. In addition to Board Chair Terry Bramlett and Vice-Chair Mike Cole, as well as Superintendent Michael Gwatney and Deputy Superintendent Sarah Rigdon, Sheriff Dane Kirby and Fannin County Commission Chairman Jamie Hensley will take part in this year's review. After the survey is completed, a date will be set to discuss the results of the survey.

Motion by Chad Galloway, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to go into Executive Session to discuss or deliberate upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee or to interview applicants for the position of superintendent; (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2)) **and** to discuss or vote to authorize negotiations to purchase, dispose of, or lease property; authorize ordering an appraisal related to the acquisition or disposal of real estate; enter into a contract to purchase, dispose of, or lease property subject to approval in a subsequent public vote; or enter into an option to purchase, dispose of or lease real estate subject to approval in a subsequent public vote; (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)) **and** to consider a matter involving the disclosure of personally identifiable information from a student’s educational records; (20 USC § 1232g). All members voted yes; motion carried.

No action was taken during Executive Session.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Chad Galloway, to resume the regular meeting. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the minutes of the Executive Session for February 10, 2022. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Chad Galloway to approve the resignations of Jimmy “Shan” Culpepper, Vicki Henry, Debbie Morgan, Khalisa Barbara Taylor, Dewayne Thomas, Tammy Thomas, and Temple Weinkle effective May 31, 2022. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve the resignation of Kristy Kouns effective May 31, 2022. Bobby Bearden, Terry Bramlett, Mike Cole, and Lewis DeWeese voted yes; Chad Galloway abstained; motion carried.

Motion by Chad Galloway, seconded by Mike Cole to approve the resignation of Vickey Rymer effective May 31, 2022. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Mike Cole to approve to rescind the recommendation of Holly Strickland effective February 11, 2022. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Chad Galloway, to approve G.W. Mathis as custodian effective March 11, 2022, pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve Graison Whitener as paraprofessional effective March 22, 2022, pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve Makenzie Moreland as nutrition substitute, pending completion of paperwork, background check, and training. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Chad Galloway, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve Jordan Ensley, Mackenzie Moreland, Kendall Postell, Lisa Raper, Linda Rubino, Bonnie Stanley, and Amy Zupancic as substitute teachers, pending completion of paperwork, background check, and training. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve Becky Pack as substitute clerical, pending completion of paperwork, background check, and training. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve Hobert “Dan” Brown as substitute custodian pending completion of paperwork, background check, and training. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Superintendent’s Comments:

Superintendent Gwatney thanked all in attendance and those viewing the meeting online. He thanked the night’s presenters and also recognized SRO Jim Burrell for his presence at the night’s meeting. He recognized Sarah Rigdon for her leadership with Aspiring Leaders and congratulated Vicki Henry, who was present representing Mountain Education Charter High School (MEC), on her retirement from the FCSS. He noted her outstanding contributions and the many wonderful memories that he has working with her at Fannin County Middle School during the 1990s.

Dr. Gwatney congratulated all of the Aspiring Leaders inductees and thanked the University of North Georgia for their partnership in this initiative. He recognized the FCSS students for their outstanding contributions and successes: girls’ basketball – region champs and Elite 8, wrestling – area champs, weight lifting-going to state competition, band – large group assessment superior ratings, artists – work on display for Youth Art Month at the Blue Ridge Mountain Arts Association.

In conclusion, Dr. Gwatney recognized the phenomenal Board members of Fannin County Schools. He thanked them for their service and recognized the administrators at each school for honoring the Board members with gifts for School Board Appreciation Week.

Board Members’ Comments:

Chad Galloway thanked everyone for participating in person or online. He thanked the schools for the gifts that they presented this evening. He stated that he is especially fond of the handwritten notes from students and has kept each of those for every year that he has served as a Board member.

Mr. Galloway stated that we have wonderful students in our community with big hearts. He concluded by saying that is a pleasure to serve on the Board.

Bobby Bearden stated that he appreciated everyone for coming to the meeting and ditto to the words said before him. He said that outside of worship, there is no other place he would rather be, and although he is not a politician, he is running for school board re-election. He thanked the night's presenters and wanted everyone present to know that he loved them. He reminded the principals that he is behind them 110%. In conclusion, Mr. Bearden reminded everyone that we may not see one another tomorrow, so it is important for all to know today that they are appreciated.

Lewis DeWeese told the Board members that had already spoken that they were a tough act to follow. He congratulated the Aspiring Leaders and thanked them for affecting the children of our county. They are a blessing in God's eye. He was reminded that there is no higher calling than being an educator and that the Good Lord takes a special liking to those that tend to children. Mr. DeWeese concluded his comments with his appreciation for the freedom to speak his gratitude and praise. Kids First!

Mike Cole thanked the schools for the Board appreciation gifts. He said he was humbled by getting to be a part of this Board. He thanked all of the leaders that have touched his daughter's life and looks forward to seeing the future leaders that will have those same impacts. He is excited about the Aspiring Leaders program! He shared a quote from Myles Munroe, "Leadership is the capacity to influence others through inspiration motivated by passion, generated by vision, produced by a conviction, ignited by a purpose." Mr. Cole concluded his comments by thanking all of the current leaders and asking God's blessing for them.

Terry Bramlett reflected on the cumulative years of service for the current Fannin County Board of Education members. He thanked all for attending the meeting. Mr. Bramlett reiterated the effect of educators on the lives of students. He then addressed Mrs. Henry and spoke of the positive influence and impact that she made with his children. It is a reminder that educators have influences that they may never know. Mr. Bramlett stated that he was honored to serve the students, his constituents, and the tax payers of Fannin County. The Board's hearts are about serving our students no matter what setting you may find them (public, meetings, Executive Session). It is a joy and honor to be a part of this Board.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, a motion was made by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Chad Galloway, to adjourn subject to being called into special session by the Chair when deemed necessary. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Terry Bramlett, Chairperson

Michael Gwatney, Superintendent

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