

SCHOOL BOARD PROCEEDINGS

The Avoyelles Parish School Board met in special session Tuesday, January 25, 2011, at 5:00 p.m. at the School Board Office with the following members present:

Van Kojis, President; Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., Vice-President; Freeman Ford, Darrell Wiley, James Gauthier, Michael Lacombe, Rev. Mary Hayward-Jones, and Cynthia "Cindy" Hill.

Absent: Shelia Blackman-Dupas.

The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag of the United States of America led by Board Member Michael Lacombe.

An Invocation was offered by Vice-President Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr.

1. A motion was offered by James Gauthier, seconded by Darrell Wiley, that the Board adopt the minutes of the regular meeting held Tuesday, January 4, 2011, as printed and mailed to Board members and published in The Weekly News, official journal of the Board.

Board Member Freeman Ford referred to the School Board Proceedings of January 4, 2011, Pages 2-3 regarding his comments. Mr. Ford requested that his comments be included in the minutes of the meeting. Mr. Ford stated that he was in agreement with Board Member James Gauthier's comments which stated, in part, that Mrs. Lizzie Ned served the Board very well for four years and that she won the election with 77% of the vote which is more than any member received on the Board. Mr. Ford stated that he was also concerned that the citizens of District 6 will not have Mrs. Ned to represent them on the Board.

In addition, Mr. Ford stated that Mrs. Ned is a fine person and it is very unfortunate that this situation occurred. Also, Mr. Ford said that one court order stated that she does not reside in the district to serve and as a result there is pending litigation in Federal Court which is not resolved. Mr. Ford further stated that it is his guess that should Mrs. Ned win her case, there will be a special election which will be open for all of the citizens of District 6. Mr. Ford stated that he would have liked for Mrs. Ned to return to the Board, but her seat was vacated effective December 31, 2010.

Mr. Charles Riddle, III, District Attorney, stated that it is his recommendation that a special election be called for October during the regular election, and regardless of the decision of the Federal Judge, the election will be held at that time. Also, Mr. Riddle stated that the 2010 census is almost available, therefore, in 2011 the School Board will have to address reapportionment anyway and it may be very possible that during the regular reapportionment process that District 6 would include the location of where Mrs. Ned resides.

Mr. Ford further stated that it is his hope that in the event the lines are redrawn and if there is a special election that Mrs. Ned will run again and that she will be victorious in her challenge for the seat.

The motion to adopt the minutes, as corrected, was unanimously adopted by the Board.

2. President Van Kojis addressed the Board regarding setting the date for a special election for Avoyelles Parish School Board Member, District 6.

Mr. Charles A. Riddle, III stated that he recommended that the Board call a special election in the Fall of 2011. Mr. Riddle cited reasons, as follows: (1) The expense would be less, and (2) Since 2010, the census was completed and the Board should receive the figures for Avoyelles Parish within the next couple of weeks. Therefore, calling the election in the Fall, there is a possibility of the issue concerning Mrs. Lizzie Ned could be resolved. Mr. Riddle recommended that the Board set the date of a special election for Avoyelles Parish School Board Member District 6. Mr. Riddle recommended that the election date would be October 22, 2011 (Primary) and November 19, 2011 (General) with the qualifying dates of September 6, 7, and 8, 2011.

A motion was offered by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Cindy Hill, that the Board set the election date of October 22, 2011 with the qualifying dates of September 6, 7, and 8, 2011 for Avoyelles Parish School Board Member District 6; and further that the District Attorney will notify the Federal Judge of the Board's intent to call the election on October 22, 2011.

Board Member Freeman Ford referred to a letter dated January 7, 2010 from Ms. Angie Bouy, Administrator, Elections, Commissions, and Publications with the Secretary of State's office. Mr. Ford stated that his main concern was that the Board went before Federal Judge Dee Drell and Judge Drell's decision was to allow Mrs. Lizzie Ned's attorney until Friday, January 21, 2011, to provide a memorandum. Mr. Ford stated that the desegregation order may supercede this issue, should Judge Drell find evidence. Therefore, Mr. Ford stated that he felt the Board's decision to adopt a resolution was premature and further he felt that the Board should await a decision from Judge Drell.

Mr. Charles A. Riddle, III stated that the Federal Judge specifically requested for briefs in order to determine whether there any violation of the Voter Rights Act. Mr. Riddle stated that Judge Dee Drell will not rule in the desegregation case, which is a separate suit. Secondly, Mr. Riddle stated that the Secretary of State would excuse the ten days for the Board to call the election and that he stated that this item be placed on the agenda at this time in view of the scheduled meeting.

Board Member Ford stated that he felt the Board should postpone the issue until a ruling is rendered by Judge Drell.

Mr. Riddle stated that he felt that the Board would be in good standing since the matter was addressed at the special Board meeting. Also, Mr. Riddle stated that this matter could also be overturned by the Federal Court.

The motion was adopted by the following vote:

Ayes: Darrell Wiley, James Gauthier, Van Kojis, Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., Michael Lacombe, and Cindy Hill.

Nays: Freeman Ford.

Abstained: Rev. Mary Hayward-Jones

3. Mr. Steve Marcotte, Maintenance Supervisor, stated that the Board has received a grant from the Avoyelles Parish Police Jury to update the Marksville High School Gymnasium. Mr. Marcotte said that the Federal Judge has granted permission for the Board to begin the process of advertising for bids.

On motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Freeman Ford, the Board granted permission to advertise for professional services for the Hazard Mitigation grant for the retro-fit for Marksville High School Gymnasium. MOTION CARRIED.

Board Member Michael Lacombe questioned the repair and upkeep of the gymnasium after the completion. Mr. Lacombe asked who would be responsible to repair any damages.

Mr. Charles Riddle stated that the State of Louisiana has now formulated a plan that when property is damaged that was used as an official evaluation center, the State will reimburse the public body for these damages.

4. On motion by Freeman Ford, seconded by Darrell Wiley, the Board agreed to go into Executive Session for the purpose of discussing a personnel matter.

The Board reconvened in open public session at approximately 5:49 p.m.

5. Rev. Mary Hayward-Jones requested that the minutes reflect her vote as “abstaining” as per the resolution offered in Item Number 2.

Mr. Charles Riddle ruled that Rev. Jones may change her vote as per her request.

There being no further business, on motion by Carlos A. Mayeux, Jr., seconded by Darrell Wiley, the meeting was adjourned.

6. On motion by Freeman Ford, seconded by James Gauthier, the Board reconvened its meeting in open public session. MOTION CARRIED.

On motion by Freeman Ford, seconded by Cindy Hill, the Board agreed to accept the charges against the employee as discussed in Executive Session. MOTION CARRIED.

Mr. Brian F. Blackwell, Attorney, addressed the Board regarding his client. Mr. Blackwell stated that his client had a specific recollection of receiving a letter from the

Superintendent on December 7, 2010, stating that her leave request had not been approved. Mr. Blackwell requested a clarification regarding his client's current status and the type of leave which his client was approved since it has a significant impact on his client's financial standpoint.

Superintendent Dwayne Lemoine stated that the employee was placed on administrative leave with pay which was immediately after the investigation and report of the incident. Also, Mr. Lemoine stated that the employee applied for an extended sick leave which was accepted and she is now under administrative leave with pay, however, she requested a sick leave which means she is still an employee of the district and she is under sick leave until the Board renders a decision on her hearing. In conclusion, Mr. Lemoine stated that if for some reason the employee is requested to return to work, the employee's status will return to administrative leave pending the outcome of a hearing.

There being no further business, on motion by Freeman Ford, seconded by Darrell Wiley, the meeting was adjourned.

AVOYELLES PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

VAN KOJIS, President

DWAYNE LEMOINE, Secretary-Treasurer