

SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

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

January 25, 2022

4:30 P.M.

The workshop was open to the public and electronically recorded.

The following Board members were present: Mr. Leroy McMillan, Chairman; Mr. Steve Scott, Ms. Cathy S. Johnson, Mrs. Karema D. Dudley, 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. The Call To Order

The workshop was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, at 4:30 p.m.

2. Financial Information

Mr. Keithen Williams, Project Manager for Rostan Solutions, LLC, shared with the Board information on the district's contract and appeal discussion. He explained the following two options (a third being nothing) available following FEMA Region IV's denial of the district's 1st Appeal for George W. Munroe's project: Option 1 – FEMA 2nd Appeal – If/as directed, Rostan would prepare a 2nd Programmatic Appeal to FEMA HQ. The anticipated burden/expense of this appeal is expected to be minor, as no new information/arguments can be introduced at this stage. He stated that the pros are inexpensive and Rostan is able to administer the appeal, if desired. Rostan also has the institutional knowledge of the project's history to concisely and carefully craft the appeal. He stated that the cons have several drawbacks/dangers to a FEMA 2nd Appeal. Posture – FEMA is basically reviewing its own work; it is not actually sitting as a neutral third party. Many 2nd appeals are not successful, although Rostan staff has recently won a second appeal, and has been successful in the past at the HQ level. He stated that the timing – FEMA HQ - does not adhere to its own timelines, so a waiting period of 6 – 8 months or longer to receive a decision is not uncommon. He stated that the administrative record is closed and typically is a hindrance, but not so much in this case because all the data has been provided. He stated that billing – time and materials under a professional services agreement. Reimbursable as Category Z Management costs if successful. Option 2 – Disaster Recovery Reform Act (DRRA) Arbitration – The district would file a notice of arbitration with the Civilian Board of Contract Appeals (CBCA), a neutral third party that is outside of FEMA/DHA. Rostan cannot file and execute the arbitration as its corporate form (Limited Liability Company) prevents it from engaging in the practice of law. Rostan can provide a list of firms that have been successful in the past. He stated that the pros are fast and before a neutral third party. He stated that this would prevent FEMA from reviewing its own work. Usually over in 90 – 120 days. He stated that new evidence and arguments can be introduced, unlike a 2nd appeal. He stated that the cons – DRRA Arbitration takes place in an adversarial legal setting. He stated that district staff may be called to testify as to the facts and specifics of the matter being arbitrated. This testimony can be aggressive and withering. He stated that billing is dependent on the firm engaged, and can be billed both time and materials or in a contingency arrangement. Legal fees are not reimbursable under a Category Z PW. He stated that a list of firms can be provided to the district for its review if desired.

Board members and the Superintendent asked questions, shared their concerns and made comments during the discussion of the options available to the district following FEMA Region IV's denial of the district's 1st Appeal for George W. Munroe Elementary School's project.

Dr. Paulette Richmond Hart, Network Consultant Marketplace, shared with the Board information on Network Consultants' Marketplace Executive Leadership Coaching and Consulting. She stated that the Network can help school leaders build solutions specific to their school's unique culture and challenges. She stated that the company strengthens organizations and communities by matching subject-matter experts to address identified needs and enhance human capital to build organizational capacity. She stated that coaching can help strengthen leaders as they navigate daily responsibilities and lead academic programming. She stated that it's an excellent way to support leaders who are transitioning into a new role or for those who would benefit from external lens to help uncover blind spots and achieve school or district goals. She stated that the Network discover pathways as leaders in human development, and change management. She stated that the coaches are dedicated to discovering the shared needs of schools and districts. She stated that the Network will partner with subject-matter experts to create and deliver services that will positively impact desired outcomes. She stated that the Network will ensure fidelity by recognizing when it comes to shifting mindsets around an organization's climate and culture, "train – and – go" models can quickly fade. She stated that instead their commitment to clients ensures success through training, side-by-side coaching, virtual coaching, and process monitoring. She stated that the Network provide diversifying training. She stated that their team of employees have a diverse research-driven strategy and mechanism to transfer new knowledge into daily practices for staff and students. She stated that the Network will partner and collaborate with its partners. She stated that the team understands the value of viable partnerships. She stated that's why they offer numerous opportunities to build collaborative models with leaders that will lead to capacity-building and sustainable outcomes. She stated that the Network has a key component of service to collect data and monthly analytics. She stated that with immersive data, school leaders can easily see the impact of services and have additional data to help inform decisions. She stated that the Network services include the following: systems of support; leadership and educator effectiveness; teaching and learning improvement; administration and financial management support; thought leadership – change management – climate and culture – action planning (needs assessment); curriculum development & pedagogy – data analysis – literacy – social emotional wellness; and federal programs – compliance – monitoring – grant writing and the Cares Act. She stated that the Network Consultants Marketplace is a network for consultants and communities that believe all their collective network and circle can provide opportunities that outnumber their individual capacity. She stated that strengthening organizations and communities by matching subject matter experts to address the identified needs and enhance human capital to build organizational capacity. She stated that the Network services will address diverse needs of teachers and the staff who support them. She stated that coaching can accommodate groups of teachers with common conditions or for those with individual needs.

Board members and the Superintendent asked questions, shared their concerns and made comments during the presentation of the Network Consultants' Marketplace.

3. Facilities Update

Mr. Hunter stated that the maintenance staff is doing a great job. He stated that he was thankful for ESSER II funds. He stated that the control systems are being updated. He stated that Stewart Street Elementary School is being repurposed with ESSER II funds. He stated that last Friday (January 21st) was the last day to submit a RFQ for the new school. He stated that architect presentations will be presented to the Board next month (February).

4. Educational Items by the Superintendent

Mr. Key stated that the district's service vehicles are being replaced on a five-year rotation. He stated that the service vehicles are available to Board members to use for travel.

5. School Board Requests and Concerns

None.

6. The workshop adjourned at 5:44 p.m.