

Williamsburg County School Board of Trustees
Board Meeting Minutes
Monday, July 25, 2022 – 6:00 PM
Public Service Administrative Building – Council Chambers 1st Floor
201 W. Main Street – Kingstree, South Carolina 29556

Members Present: Marva B. Cannon, Rev. Jerry L. Dicks, Heyward Baker, Rev. Martin Cunningham, Rev. Alfred Darby, Mack Burgess, and Carletta Scott Isreal

Member Absent: Mike Floyd and James Dukes, Jr.

Others Present: Brandon Alter, Kimberly Mack, Janie C. Burgess, Mack H. Burgess, Travoy McCullough, Ernest Young, Carolyn G. Lemmon, Maurice Morris, Delores Williams, Elneisa Burgess, Trister Stuckey, Mackenize Burgess, Brian McKnight, Michael Barrinear, Kelvin Wymbs, Vernal Fulton, Virginia Fulton, and Ervin Richardson

Zoom Video Conference Call: Lorene Bradley, Celeste McIntosh, QMHP, Debra Keels, Donna Palmer, Ernestine B. Scott, Sherry Fulton, Natasha Graham, Name

The meeting was called to order by the Chair, Marva B. Cannon at 6:00 pm. The secretary confirmed the Establishment of Quorum, and the chair confirmed the Notification of Media.

Welcome

The chair welcomed all present to the meeting.

Moment of Silence

Ms. Cannon asked all persons to observe a Moment of Silence.

Thought of Today

Carletta Scott Isreal shared the Thought for Today.

Approval of Consent Agenda

A motion was made to amend the agenda by M. Cunningham and seconded by Rev. Alfred Darby to add the development of a letter to Superintendent Molly Spearman for the date of transition. The motioned was carried, 4 voted to add to the agenda and one abstention. Chair stated the item will be added under Board Items.

Pledge of Allegiance

All persons were asked to recite the Pledge of Allegiance.

Swearing in of Board Member

Mack Burgess was sworn in by Judge Williams to represent District 2 on Williamsburg County School District Board of Trustees. Mr. Burgess joined fellow board members on the dais and was welcomed by the chair. She presented Mr. Burgess with a copy of Robert's Rules of Order and his personal name plate.

Public Participation

Mr. Martin Cunningham, board member, thanked the chair for amending the board meeting agenda. He expressed concerns about the school district, persons working on benefit of our children, and questioning the hidden agendas of groups. He referred to Superintendent Molly Spearman visit to C. E. Murray High School on Thursday, July 21, 2022. He asked why board members nor parents were notified of this meeting? The chair stated that she was notified of the meeting the day before and the media was present. The chair stated we are taking notes and will notify him with a written response to his comments. Rev. Cunningham further stated his opinions and concerns about the State Department and its strategies in school districts taken over by the state.

Rev. Alfred Darby, board member, agreed with comments made by Rev. Cunningham. He also asked the question about when the school district will be transfer to the school board? In addition, he asked about the availability of funds at the time of the transfer, fund balance, and other related information to ensure all matters are in order.

Review of Section B Board Policies

The chair stated that section B of the Board Policies which focused on Board Governance was reviewed by this board. The policies have been updated and aligned with local and state law. The SC Department of Education approved section B of the Board Policies which are posted on Williamsburg County School District website.

Rev. Cunningham asked if the policies were approved by the board before being posted on the school district website. The chair shared that all policies and procedures were approved by SC Department of Education due to control of the school district. Rev. Cunningham asked for the minutes to reflect, "That it seems as though we are being used as puppets. All the decisions are being made by her [Superintendent Molly Spearman] and nothing is being brought to us, we don't have any type of power, any type of operating power, but we are going to be used like puppets. The public are to know what's going on and who is representing them." The chair thanked Rev. Cunningham for his comments.

Action Items

Approval of Meeting Minutes – A motion was made by Rev. Jerry L. Dicks seconded by Rev. Alfred Darby to approve board minutes. The motion was carried unanimously.

Legislative Update

Heyward Baker, Legislative Liaison, provided the board with an overview of various bills and provisos impacting public education and board governance. He informed the board that 277 bills were introduced this past legislative session with 262 signed into law by the Governor [Henry McMaster]. Mr. Baker further shared that one bill was vetoed and sustained, five bills were vetoed and overridden, three pending bills, and one bill awaits the Governor's signature. Mr. Baker highlighted the following bills signed into law: S0969; S0167; S0202; S0201; S0203; S0231; S30006; H3589; H3609; H0946; S0945; H3002 (pending) and H30004.

Board Items

The chair shared that Superintendent Molly Spearman visited the school district on Thursday, July 21, 2022, and she was invited to attend by Dr. Rose Wilder, Superintendent of Williamsburg County School District. The purpose was to visit the new C. E. Murray Elementary and Middle Schools to monitor the progress in preparation for the new school year. The chair shared that this meeting was not open to the

public. There were approximately twelve persons who toured the school along with Superintendent Spearman and no formal agenda was provided or invitation to this meeting. The chair that during the round table discussion, Mrs. Spearman stated the reasons for the State of Emergency were resolved and no reason for the state to remain in the school district. The transition of the school district will be returned to the school board, but no specific date for this transition was stated. The chair stated that Mrs. Spearman shared that the transition will be in a few months, sooner than later. The chair quoted the superintendent, "Definitely before she leaves office." The board will be required to submit monthly progress reports to SC Department of Education for continued support to the school board and district. The chair reiterated when the SC Department of Education declares a State of Emergency, the local school board has no authority or decision making authority. The state superintendent and the appointed superintendent makes all decisions for the school district.

Absent Board Members

The chair shared that James Dukes, Jr., Vice Chair, was absent due to family member illness and Mike Floyd was absent due to work responsibilities.

Board Email Address

The chair provided each school board member with a Williamsburg County School District email address. Dr. Wilder offered the school district's Technology Department to assist board members in accessing their email account, if needed.

Request of Letter to Superintendent Molly Spearman

The chair asked Rev. Cunningham to draft the letter to Superintendent Spearman. Rev. Cunningham consented to draft the letter.

The chair opened the floor for board members to share any information with the body. Various board members provided reflections and concerns based on their individual perspectives.

The chair recognized Mr. Ervin Richardson, Region 5 Director, South Carolina School Board Association (SCSBA) serving Williamsburg, Florence, Darlington, and Clarendon Counties. He stated the services provided by SCSBA to local school boards. Mr. Richardson shared he was available to support the local school board.

Rev. Cunningham asked for the minutes to reflect the following statement: "I am consistently stating who we represent? We represent the children and the parents." He continued to express his concerns about the private meetings and issues with SC Department of Education.

Update from the District

Dr. Brian McKnight, Director of Student Services/Director of Transportation, walked board members through Williamsburg County School District Crisis Management Guide. He stated the purpose of the guide was to ensure that WCSD had an understandable, workable protection system plan in place to protect – students and staff members in the event of any disaster or threat that involve the school community. Dr. McKnight further stated that the guide was a generic, general guideline for the safety of our children. The guide include the following subheadings: introduction and use of the guide; emergency contact numbers; emergency services; utility companies; emergency equipment list; crisis management team; annual start up procedures for all schools; crisis team checklist; roles of school personnel; how to identify a crisis

lockdown procedures; fire procedures (level II or III); bomb threat and explosion procedures (level I, II, III); tornado, severe weather, hurricane procedures (level I, II); earthquake procedures; hazardous materials incident procedures (level I or Level III); utility emergency procedures (level II, III); crime reporting procedures against persons/property (level I, II, III); student disturbance procedures; unwanted intruder/suspicious person procedures (level I, II); student runaway or abduction procedures (level I, II); student possession of weapon on campus (level I, II); death or serious injury on campus by violence (Level III); death on campus (natural causes, accidental, or suicide); hostage situation procedures (level III); communicable diseases guidelines for handling body fluids in schools (level I, II); accidental/serious injury/illness procedures (level I, II, III); off-campus emergencies (level I, II, III); building search procedures (designated personnel); and bus accident procedures. The chair thanked Dr. McKnight for the presentation and asked about active shooter? Dr. McKnight provided information about biannual drills held in the fall and spring of each year, and virtual trainings scheduled for staff with SLED for September 7 and 8, 2022.

Michael Barrineau, Director of Maintenance, provided an overview on the status of the school merger between C. E. Murray and Kingtree High School. He confirmed that all projects will be completed prior to August 15, 2022. Mr. Barrineau highlighted various projects to improve the schools throughout the district to include painting, office furniture, and signage changes. Rev. Cunningham asked about the cost of the projects and Mr. Barrineau will provide information to Dr. Wilder to share with the board. Rev. Darby asked about the malfunction H/VAC unites at Kingtree High School from this past school year and Mr. Barrieneau provided updates on addressing this matter. He also shared with the board challenges faced due to the shortage of supplies. The chair thanked Mr. Barrineau for his report.

Dr. Kelvin Wymbs, South Carolina Department of Education (SCDE) Liaison, shared Mrs. Molly Spearman's sentiments on the leadership of the board and highly praised Dr. Rose Wilder. In addition to the legislative delegation and staff. He shared his sentiments as well with about the leadership team, staff and students across the district. He assured board members that the school will be ready on August 15, 2022. Rev. Darby asked for finance report on state expenses on building and grounds. Dr. Wymbs will provide this information in writing. In addition, he shared the positive spirit of the students and cited the band as an example. The chair thanked Dr. Wymbs for his report.

Rev. Darby asked for the minutes to reflect, "I will not be dictated by any board member on what to say, I represent the people. Secondly, slavery ended in 1865 with the 13th amendment, thank you."

Adjournment

A motion was made by Rev. Jerry L. Dicks and seconded by Heyward Baker to adjourn the meeting. The motion was carried unanimously. The meeting was adjourned at 7:21p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:

Board Secretary: _____
Carletta Scott Isreal, Board Secretary

Date: _____

Board Chair: _____
Marva B. Cannon, Board Chair

Date: _____