

SCHOOL BOARD WORKSHOP

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

May 25, 2021

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; Mrs. Karema D. Dudley; Ms. Cathy S. Johnson; 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 4:30 p.m.

2. Financial Information

Mr. LaClarence Mays stated that the district is closing out this year's budget and beginning the process for opening the new fiscal year budget. He stated that the TRIM timetable will soon be presented to the Board. He stated that the final budget for fiscal year 2021 – 2022 will be presented to the Board in September for approval. He stated that the internal accounts at the school level will become a part of the school activity accounting to allow inspection of all records in one place without going to the individual schools.

In response to Mr. Scott's question if moving the school level internal accounts to the school activity accounting would remove audit findings, Mr. Mays stated yes.

In response to Ms. Johnson's concern about how much has been spent in the CARES Act and what can be spent, Mr. Mays stated that he could provide a budget narrative, expenditures and what the CARES 1 and 2 monies could be used for.

3. Facilities Update

Mr. Hunter stated that the construction committee recommended that the best site for the new Pk-8 school would be Shanks Middle School. He stated that the Pk-8 school would be within the Quincy city limits. He shared with the Board a spreadsheet showing the estimations and funding sources for the portables. He stated that the dates of submission must be followed for the portables. He stated that there has been preliminary conversation with DOE and they are willing to be on board if the district do their part. He stated that it would be a great idea to look at options for consultants that know how to write grants. He stated that there would need to be a contract with an architect for conceptual services.

Mr. Key stated that this was one of the original Board items that was pulled in order to have conversation and get an understanding of what Clemons, Rutherford & Associates will do. He stated that it is very important at this stage to have community involvement and support.

Mr. Greg Kelly with Clemons, Rutherford & Associates shared with the Board a power-point presentation of images and projects from other school districts.

In reference to Mr. Frost's concern regarding whether or not the color schemes would affect the cost, Mr. Kelly stated no, there would not be a change in the price.

In response to Ms. Johnson's question regarding if there was a bid for this project, Mr. Hunter stated that a bid was placed about three years ago and Clemons, Rutherford & Associates was the architect currently on contract from that bid process. He stated that at the next Board meeting he will provide a proposal from Clemons, Rutherford & Associates for approval of a purchase order to create tools to provide to the public (conceptual service). He stated that at some point there will be a bid to build.

Ms. Johnson stated that for the record that she felt like the Board was working backwards. She stated that she was asking a lot of questions because she wanted to make sure the bids get out so the Board would have more than one builder to choose from. She stated that she has previously requested the Board go to the community prior to getting to this point.

Mr. Hunter stated that this process is only to provide the tools to go to the community and at the correct time there will be a bid for the architect.

Mr. Key stated that there are requirements that must be done prior to approaching DOE.

Ms. Johnson explained that she thinks the Board should have gone to the community first and then work with the commissioners and parents to ensure this is what the community wants. She stated that the stakeholders must buy in to what the Board wants or there may be some resistance.

Mrs. Judith Mandela, GCCTA President, addressed the Board to ask for clarification of conceptual design.

Mr. Hunter stated that conceptual design is the visual tool used to present to the community for support. He stated that the Board will select the architect. He stated that Clemons, Rutherford & Associates has provided a quote for them to do conceptual services and after Board approval, Clemons, Rutherford & Associates will be brought in on the meetings. He stated that the Purchase Order is ongoing for services when needed not a one-time payment.

Mr. Hunter shared with the Board GEMS site improvement plans. He provided several layouts for portables and stated that either site (GWMS or WGMS) will work, but he needed direction from the Board soon on the layout and location. He stated that he needed to research the walkway and electrical.

Mr. Key stated that there was a meeting earlier with the GEMS parents and their consensus was to relocate to West Gadsden.

Mr. Scott stated there had been a meeting at CPA with parents to discuss reasons for moving GEMS as well as the amount it would cost to remodel GEMS. He stated that during the discussion of GWM and WGMS, the parents liked the WGMS location because it is a newer school with more options. He stated that the parents voted and it was probably 60% of the parents recommending WGMS, and only 2 parents recommended GWM. He stated that his recommendation would be if the Board do what the parents want, then the Board should go with WGMS for the location of GEMS. He stated that he told the parents that he would relay the message to the Board, but it was not just his decision.

Mrs. Farlin stated that the conversation with the GEMS parents had just started and parents made the entire decision based on the opportunity of safety to environment. She stated that the GEMS parent meeting was a very positive meeting.

Mr. McMillan asked if the GEMS site improvement plans could be placed on the agenda tonight.

Mrs. Minnis suggested holding the GEMS site improvement plans for a separate meeting to allow the public an opportunity to come.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board could schedule an emergency meeting to take action on the GEMS site improvement plans. He asked Mr. Key to follow up on scheduling a meeting.

Mr. Hunter stated that the reason for the placement as recommended in his handout was because of the infrastructure of the sewer on plan 1b and it also is shorter on electrical.

Mrs. Mandela asked why was there a need to move from the current GEMS location, if there was a plan to close the facility, and she wanted to know the cost to remodel to bring GEMS up to code.

Mr. Key explained that the estimated cost for basic remodeling was over \$3M and that would not bring GEMS up to code because the building is too old.

Mr. Hunter stated that the GEMS building was built in 1927 so it is ADA, safety, indoor quality, insulation, and located in a historical district which must be remodeled in a historical guide. He stated that the plans are not to have students in the building.

Mr. Frost asked that all the reasons to relocate GEMS be placed so the public can read and understand the reasons for moving GEMS.

Ms. Johnson asked what was the additional cost for the walkway and fencing for 1b of the GEMS site improvement plan.

Mr. Hunter stated that he hasn't priced everything and can't until a site is selected. He stated that plan 1b will be cheaper than 1a.

4. Educational Items by the Superintendent

Mr. Key stated that a Special Board Meeting will be scheduled for Tuesday, June 1st at 6:00 p.m. for the Board to discuss and act on GEMS Improvement Site Plans. He stated that he will travel to Jackson County on June 15th to visit their new school. He stated that the recruitment fair was not well represented. He requested the Board's approval of four new vehicles. He stated that Dale Earnhardt can provide the vehicles for a little more than state contract and can be ready for pickup by Friday (May 28th) of this week. He stated that Coggin is on state contract but it will take 6 months to get the vehicles. He stated that the vehicles would be used to transport coaches and players to baseball and softball games.

5. School Board Requests and Concerns

In response to Ms. Johnson's concern regarding individuals dialing into the Board meetings not being able to hear, Mr. Key stated that he will get the issue worked out.

6. The workshop adjourned at 5:42 p.m.