

REGULAR SCHOOL BOARD MEETING

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

January 26, 2021

6:00 P.M.

This meeting 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. Mr. Charlie D. Frost was present via telephone conference. 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 meeting was called to order by the Chairman, Mr. Leroy McMillan, 6:03 p.m.

2. OPENING PRAYER

The opening prayer was led by Rev. Charles Morris, Pastor of New Bethel A.M.E. Church.

3. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Recited in unison.

4. RECOGNITIONS

Mrs. Dudley acknowledged the food service staff. She stated that she has a different level of respect for food service workers.

Mr. Scott congratulated all the Teacher of the Year and School Related Employees of the Year winners for each of the schools.

Mr. Key recognized the food service workers at Stewart Street Elementary School and George W. Munroe Elementary School and other staff who helped out during the time with staff being quarantined. He thanked School Board Member Dudley for her support and assistance with the food service staff at Stewart Street Elementary School.

ITEMS FOR CONSENT

Mr. McMillan entertained a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to approve the remaining consent agenda. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Karema D. Dudley and carried unanimously.

5. REVIEW OF MINUTES

- a. December 15, 2020, 4:30 p.m. – School Board Workshop
- b. December 15, 2020, 6:00 p.m. – Regular School Board Meeting

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

6. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

- a. Personnel 2020 – 2021

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

7. AGREEMENT/CONTRACT/PROJECT APPLICATIONS

- a. SubAward Agreement between County of Gadsden Board of Public Education and Florida Gulf Coast University Board of Trustees

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: \$23,507.00

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- b. Exceptional Student Education Policies and Procedures (SP&P)

Fund Source: IDEA
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

- c. Request Approval to Purchase Document Management System

Fund Source: Project Restart Grant
Amount: \$81,453.00 (Cost breakdown: \$57,453 for 3 years of service, then the cost becomes \$19,151.00 in year four (4), \$24,000 is a one-time fee for 120 hours of Training.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

8. STUDENT MATTERS

- a. Student Expulsion – See back-up material

Case #11-2021-0051

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

9. SCHOOL FACILITY / PROPERTY

- a. Board Consideration for the Sale of 852 Lincoln Drive

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

10. EDUCATIONAL ISSUES

a. Rename Parent Services

Fund Source: N/A
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

11. CONSIDERATION, PROPOSAL, AND/OR ADOPTION OF ADMINISTRATIVE RULES AND RELATED MATTERS

a. Pre-Kindergarten Program Specialist Job Description

Fund Source: Head Start
Amount: N/A

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

Items preceded by an (*) asterisk were removed from the CONSENT agenda at the beginning of the meeting and moved to the DISCUSSION portion of the agenda.

*6. PERSONNEL MATTERS (resignations, retirements, recommendations, leaves of absence, terminations of services, volunteers, and job descriptions)

b. Extension of COVID-19 Leave

Fund Source: General Fund
Amount: Based on Utilization

Mr. Scott stated that the Board would like to continue to voluntarily provide two weeks of paid leave to workers who become sick with COVID-19. He stated that as a district, we are devoted to supporting our employees through these challenging times. He stated that the Board will continue to follow the district's current guideline to apply for COVID-19 leave. He stated that if COVID-19 leave has already been used, personal/sick leave must be utilized. He stated that if the employee has not used the COVID-19 leave and need to use it due to contracting the virus, it will still be available for their use until March 31, 2021. He stated that the employee must submit supporting documentation from a physician or the health department, and must include the specific dates of quarantine. He stated that all documentation must be submitted to the Human Resource Department. He encouraged leave sharing among employees. He stated that the pandemic is affecting everyone in different ways.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Superintendent will review the district's leave sharing policy.

Mrs. Mandela stated that it was a great idea for leave sharing among employees. She stated that teachers are still concerned about the level of protection for them if they contract the virus while at work. She stated that the GCCTA MOU is currently in place. She stated that employee benefits must be bargained. She stated that leave issues need to be clarified. She stated that teachers are in the midst of a pandemic. She stated that GCCTA is requesting to have a conversation with the district. She stated that GCCTA want to be partners with the district.

In response to Mr. McMillan's concern regarding whether or not leave issues needed to be bargained, Mrs. Minnis stated that FFCRA is not a bargaining issue, but employee leave on the books is a bargaining issue.

Mr. McMillan stated that the Board is partnering with GCCTA. He stated that leave can be extended beyond March 31st if needed. He stated that GCCTA is requesting to be included in the decision making of anything that relates to leave and working conditions.

Mr. Key stated that the district is assessing the option to extend the COVID-19 Families First Coronavirus Response Act (FFCRA) through March 31, 2021, even though the new pandemic relief bill passed by Congress last month no longer requires employers to offer this assistance. He stated that the district is not mandated to extend the leave. He stated that he is concerned about teachers.

Mr. Frost stated that teachers will be without coverage if the bargaining takes five or six months. He stated that bargaining will leave teachers without coverage.

Mr. Key stated that the Board can go back and correct teachers leave. He stated that school districts are doing different things to handle COVID-19 leave.

Mrs. Mandela stated that she understands that this a subject for bargaining, but it is also a change from the GCCTA MOU.

Mr. Key stated that he will review the GCCTA MOU.

Mr. Gary Russ, Teacher at James A. Shanks Middle School, thanked the Board and Superintendent for the opportunity to assess the option to extend the COVID-19 FFCRA through March 31, 2021. He pleaded with the Board and Superintendent to extend the leave until June.

Following discussion, Mr. Steve Scott made a motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendation to approve agenda item #6b. The motion was seconded by Mr. Leroy McMillan and carried unanimously.

ACTION REQUESTED: The Superintendent recommended approval.

12. FACILITIES UPDATE

Mr. Hunter stated that 240 work orders were submitted in the month of December. He stated that the current facilities projects include the following: 1) Administration Building – emergency generator installation (Restart Grant), and IT file storage portable installation (Restart Grant); 2) Warehouse – emergency generator installation (Restart Grant), and new food service cooler and freezer (Restart Grant); 3) Gadsden Technical Institute – install new heaters in Small Engines and Welding labs, and replace the mechanical system for office and classroom in building 10; 4) Gadsden County High School – stage repair, gym floor repair, HVAC system inspection and repair to correct major hammering problem, HVAC controls upgrade phase I, and auto bus gate installation (S & S Grant II); 5) Havana Magnet School – entry door replacement; 6) Gadsden Elementary Magnet School – install remote entry to exterior doors with cameras (S & S Grant II); 7) Carter Parramore Academy – cafeteria heat exchanger replacement; 8) James A. Shanks Middle School – building 1 sewer line replacement, replace sidewalks from sewer line repairs, and new sidewalk from faculty parking to main entry; 9) George W. Munroe Elementary School – improve storm water swale between buildings 11 & 12 to address flooding issue, plant removal for safety, and building 15 faucet replacement; 10) Greensboro Elementary School – door replacement buildings 1 and 3; 11) West Gadsden Middle School – chiller No 2 maintenance and repairs, finalize HVAC controls upgrade, and auto bus gate installation (S & S Grant II); 12) Hurricane Michael Recovery – funded through the Restart Grant, completed installation of temporary roofing at George W. Munroe Elementary, James A. Shanks Middle School and Gadsden Technical Institute. Every portable was shingled at Greensboro Elementary School, George W. Munroe Elementary School, and 3 portables at Stewart Street Elementary School. The insurance claim should be finalized through mediation by the end of the month, and FEMA awards are still pending. Continuing to work with consultants toward resolution; 13) currently involved in the following grants – Safety and Security Grant Phases I & II, Restart Grant, CARES Grant, and the Head Start Grant. He stated that the maintenance

department challenges include – staffing continues to be a problem, need to support and implement a good solid apprentice program within the maintenance department, these positions need to have real advancement opportunities and should be career positions; and one of the biggest challenges faced is short and long range planning. Because the primary tasks for facilities planning are to support educational efforts, input from all departments are required to be sure all facility needs are met; it is the tool used to identify renovation projects or a possible new school, facilities planning also provides a gauge to prioritize funding, it is the tool needed assuring concurrency between the school district, state and local government for traffic management, storm water management and utilities, without facilities planning, we are simply responding to immediate needs (reactive), and with proper facilities planning equipment replacement can be scheduled to avoid down time (proactive).

13. EDUCATIONAL ITEMS BY THE SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Key stated that COVID-19 numbers are up. He stated that this week was Literacy Week. He stated that there was a water main break at James A. Shanks Middle School. He stated that he visit and monitor schools weekly and have conversations with principals. He stated that district structure changes include Mrs. Tammy Farlin – Academics, Dr. Sylvia Jackson – Support Services, and Human Resource and the Principals reporting directly to the Superintendent. He stated that on Wednesday, January 27th at 4:00 p.m. until Monday, February 1st the Skyward system would be down for maintenance to improve efficiency.

14. SCHOOL BOARD REQUESTS AND CONCERNS

Mrs. Johnson requested N-95 masks for staff if funding was available with the CARES monies. She stated that safety comes first.

Mr. Key stated that he is waiting on an order of N-95 masks to arrive.

Mr. Frost stated that he appreciated Mr. McMillan for being Chair. He thanked Mr. Key for leading the district in the right way. He stated that there are a lot of minority owned businesses in Gadsden County.

Mr. Scott requested a workshop to review the district's 5 and 10 year facilities plan. He stated that a plan was needed for the district's schools. He stated that the Board needed to look at the vacant properties in the district. He stated that the Legislature will look at the number of schools that are vacant. He proposed the sale of Gretna Elementary.

Mr. Frost stated that Gretna Elementary School should be reopened to house students from Gadsden Elementary Magnet School. He stated that he did not want to sell Gretna Elementary. He asked how many people could attend the workshop.

Mr. Scott stated that a zoom meeting could be held to discuss the facilities plan. He stated that there are different ways to have meetings in pandemic times.

The Board scheduled a workshop to discuss the district's facilities plan on Tuesday, February 9th at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. McMillan encouraged Board members to come to the workshop with realistic ideas. He stated that the Board needed to replace some schools. He stated that student populations are declining. He stated that he received a call from Mrs. Fitzgerald to get her mortgage payment reduced. He stated that he responded to her that her request was the Board's decision. He stated that the Board needed to make some decisions on vacant properties.

Mrs. Mandela shared with the Board some of the teacher concerns in regards to working in a pandemic. She stated that there is an ongoing issue with receiving requested information in a timely manner. She stated that the district need to respond to requests in a timely manner.

In response to Mr. McMillan's request if salary information was public information, Mrs. Minnis responded yes.

Mr. Mays stated that Mrs. Mandela's request was acknowledge as received. He stated that the requested information will be provided when salary increases are updated.

Mr. Key stated that he has placed some demands on the finance department and the request could have slipped. He stated that the information will be provided to Mrs. Mandela.

Mrs. Mandela stated that she learned through FEA that all districts were awarded more money through the new CARES Act funding. She stated that Gadsden's estimated proportion of the new CARES Act funding is \$11,896,014.53. She stated that this is the perfect time to plan for the coming year. She stated that GCCTA want to be partners with the district.

Mr. Frost stated that staff should speak with their administrator first when they see something wrong on the school campus.

Mrs. Wood stated that if property is sold, monies have to be used for capital outlay.

Mrs. Tammy Ceasor, Owner of Angel Care, addressed the Board to request the purchase of district property to house an assisted living facility. She stated that she is a licensed mental health provider.

Apostle Lerther Jones Yhap, Evangelistic Conference Center Outreach Ministries, addressed the Board to request the continuation of the use of the Old Southside School Building located at 852 Lincoln Drive in Chattahoochee, Florida. Apostle Yhap stated that she provides the following services to the community: food pantry, clothes closet, Christian book store, seminars (diabetes, cancer, high blood pressure, and domestic violence); Baby Think It Over Program, piano lessons, assist in paying light bills, and feeding the homeless and addicted. She stated that she has been providing community service for 20 plus years at the Old Southside School. She thanked the Board for allowing her to use the building and would like to continue the use of it.

Mr. McMillan recessed the meeting at 7:40 p.m. to convene in an attorney-client session to discuss a pending litigation matter.

15. The Board recessed the meeting at 7:40 p.m. to convene in an attorney-client session to discuss a pending litigation matter at 7:45 p.m. The Board adjourned the attorney-client session at 8:05 p.m.; and reconvened the regular meeting at 8:07 p.m.; and adjourned the meeting at 8:09 p.m.