

Muscogee County School District
Columbus, Georgia

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
MONDAY, APRIL 21, 2003, 6:30 P.M.

MINUTES

A regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Muscogee County School District was held on Monday, April 21, 2003, 6:30 p.m. in the conference room at the Bradley Library.

The following members were present: Mary Sue Polleys, Chairman, James Walker, Vice Chairman, Brenda P. Storey, Philip T. Schley, David E. Ebron, Fife M. Whiteside, John Wells, Naomi Buckner and Owen Ditchfield.

Others present: John A. Phillips, Jr., Superintendent of Education, Charles T. Staples, Legal Counsel, Del Parker, Treasurer, Brenda F. Dozier, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Robin Pennock, Chief Academic Officer, Billy Kendall, Administrative Assistant, Bill Hortman, Associate Superintendent and representatives from the media.

Dr. Polleys called on Mr. Wells as Finance Chairman to conduct the first public hearing on the property tax digest. Mr. Wells commented that under O.C.G.A. §48-5-32.1, the Board is required to conduct a public hearing regarding the "Notice of Property Tax Increase." Mr. Wells read into the record the press release, "A new law, which went into effect in 2000, requires the Muscogee County to advertise and hold hearings if the District intends to benefit from growth in the property tax digest. New construction as well as reassessments of existing properties will result in an increased digest that will produce more revenue. The District is not increasing the millage rate but growth in the digest will produce an increase in tax revenue of approximately 3.0 percent. The advertisement required by the new law must include the exact percentage of the increase in property taxes due to reassessments. That calculation will not be available in time for the Muscogee County Board of Education to make the legally required certification of the millage rate for the 2004 fiscal year. As a good faith effort to comply with the new law, O.C.G.A. §48-5-32.1, we are publishing the estimated percentage increase in property taxes that would be due to both reassessments and additions to the digest due to normal growth. We think this percentage will exceed the percentage defined in the new law."

Mr. Wells asked if there was anyone present that would like to speak to the Board. Mr. Jim Evans, a local business owner and resident spoke regarding the budget, surplus property, construction projects and taxes. Mrs. Storey commented that she would like to clarify the fact that, "some of the surplus property that the school district owns was acquired years ago and in acquiring the property some of it for as little as \$600, there is a reversionary clause in it that says the property will go back to the families if the property is not used for school purposes. The school district cannot sell that property and our attorney is now working on some of the problems that we face in holding that property." Mr. Wells asked if there was anyone else to speak regarding budgetary matters. There was no one else to speak. Dr. Polleys called the public meeting adjourned and went on with the regular board agenda.

Dr. Polleys called the meeting to order with an invocation and pledge of allegiance to the flag led by students from St. Mary's Road Elementary School. Dr. Polleys recognized visitors in the audience.

Dr. Polleys called on Mr. Whiteside to present a resolution. Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously voted to amend the agenda to hear an off the agenda item.

Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved a resolution recognizing the special relationship the public school system has with Fort Benning, and owing a debt of gratitude to the soldiers who serve at and from Fort Benning expressing respect, sorrow and gratitude for what has been done and what is being done. Mr. Whiteside added that this resolution will be amended to include those that the public as of now may not be aware of pending notification of families. (Appendix B)

Dr. Polleys called on Mr. Ditchfield. Mr. Ditchfield commended Mark Rice for the positive reporting of an article in the newspaper on Sunday regarding the JROTC Program.

Dr. Polleys called on the following for special recognitions: Mr. Saulsbury, Principal at Carver High for Carver High JROTC Awards and FBLA State Awards; Mr. Seifert, Principal at Hardaway High for Hardaway JROTC Awards; Dr. Mallory, Principal at Northside High for the State Award in Design; and Mr. Caggins for School Nutrition and Transportation accomplishments.

Dr. Polleys called on Dr. William B. Howell, President of the local Rainbow Push Coalition who spoke to the Board regarding zero tolerance policy, and improving public schools by healing relations between parents, teachers and students.

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved official actions taken at the regular meeting held on March 17, 2003 and a called meeting held on March 31, 2003.

Upon motion of Mr. Ebron, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the appointment of Mr. Steven Wicks as Curator of Collections and Exhibitions at the Columbus Museum.

Upon motion of Mr. Ebron, seconded by Mr. Ditchfield, the Board unanimously approved the change of job status for Mr. James Tanksley from Acting Director to Director of Plant Services.

Upon motion of Mr. Ebron, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously approved the removal of acting status to that of principal for Ms. Kay Dowis/Eastway Elementary; Mr. Terry Baker/Martin Luther King, Jr. and Ms. Dawn Upshaw/River Road for the 2003-2004 school year.

Upon motion of Mr. Ebron, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved the change of job status for Mr. Melvin Blackwell from interim to that of Assistant Principal at Columbus High.

Upon motion of Mr. Ebron, seconded by Mr. Ditchfield, the Board unanimously approved the suspension of the current board committee governing structure for six months and replace it with one work session on the second Monday of each month.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved the 2003 Elementary Academic Summer School.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved a pilot program to be offered to high school students, beginning April, 2003 entitled "Online Learning for Credit Recovery."

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved the textbook adoption for Elementary Language Arts/Reading from Macmillan/McGraw-Hill Reading 2003 for grades K-5.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved the textbook adoption for Middle School Language Arts, grades 6-8.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved the continuation of Georgia's Choice for (9) schools.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved financial statements for eight months ending February 28, 2003.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved change orders #39 (\$1,000.00) and #40 (\$4,050.00) with the total amount being transferred from the City and added to the original contract for the North Site Project.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the contract renewal of a professional employee whose name was not included on the original re-election list for 2003-2004.

Mr. Wells asked to withdraw item P that was answered at the beginning of the meeting with a resolution supporting the troops at war.

Mr. Wells made the motion, seconded by Mr. Ditchfield to approve the consent agenda. Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously approved a substitute motion to approve the following consent agenda items with the exception of item E-4:

- Personnel Report (Appendix A)
- Resolution Supporting Troops (Appendix B)
- Audit of financial statement SPLOST Capital Projects Fund for six months.
- Lease upgrade Xerox 6135 DocuTech machine in Printing Department.
- New budget Chattahoochee Valley Library, Valley Reads Program from Columbus Cultural Arts Alliance, \$1,845.00.
- New budget JTPA Summer Youth Program grant, \$39,741.00.
- Budget adjustment Relations with Other Agencies, FY03 Rule 10.
- Budget adjustment Contingency Reserve for Property & Casualty Insurance Consultant, \$1,250.00.
- Budget adjustment Contingency Reserve for computer labs, \$31,120.00.
- Budget adjustment Contingency Reserve for scope change in contract for custodial services at Northside, \$2,971.30.
- Budget adjustment, additional funds, \$8,347.00 for Homeless Grant.

- Budget adjustment, Instructional Division, Even Start and Technology/Career Education.
- Confirmation purchase order to Turner Plumbing, Heating & Air, \$34,379.00, installation of storm and sanitary sewer line at Hardaway.
- Purchase order, Summit Systems, \$15,735.11 cabling at Jordan.
- Purchase order, Summit Systems, \$14,583.40, cabling at Shaw.
- Purchase order, Summit Systems, \$85,000.00, cabling at Daniel Alternative School.
- Contract awarded, Computer by Design, \$66,801.00 to install a system at Chattahoochee Library.
- Contract agreement with Columbus Technical College for a portion of Daniel site to be used for parking.
- Financial Assistance grant, \$815.00.

Mr. Ebron made the motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteside to approved item E-4 regarding a budget adjustment to fund a purchase order for a scope change in the contract for custodial services at Northside High School. Mr. Whiteside asked for clarification because he remembers in December, the Board approved a low bid for the floor maintenance at Northside High and the work has typically been done by in-house employees. The problem is that there was a delay in allowing the maintenance company access to the classrooms. Mr. Caggins confirmed. Dr. Phillips commented that some of the rooms and hallways were in deplorable condition and the contractor was not given the rooms in a reasonable manner for him to maintain. After a some discussion, Mr. Ebron made a motion, seconded by Mr. Whiteside to approve the budget adjustment in the amount of \$2,971.30 from the contingency reserve for a scope change in the contract for custodial services at Northside High. The vote was (7) affirming and (2) opposing (Whiteside, Polleys).

The Board noted the information item regarding the updated Student Behavior Code and Discipline Policy Booklet.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously voted to go into executive session to discuss a property acquisition and a personnel matter.

The Board discussed a resolution authorizing the Muscogee County School District to enter into a contract for the purchase of approximately 15 acres at the old Sears location for a purchase price of \$2,600,000. Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Whiteside, the Board approved this resolution in executive session. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) opposing, (Buckner). A copy of said Resolution is appended to these minutes. (Appendix C)

Upon motion of Mr. Ditchfield, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Ebron, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular meeting of the Board.

Charles T. Staples, Legal Counsel
Hatcher, Stubbs, Land, Hollis, & Rothschild