

MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2005, 6:30 P.M.
BRADLEY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Muscogee County School District was held on Tuesday, February 22, 2005, 6:30 p.m. in the conference room at the old Bradley Library.

The following Board Members were present: Mary Sue Polleys, James Walker, Brenda P. Storey, Philip T. Schley, Pat Hugley Green, Fife M. Whiteside, John Wells, Naomi Buckner and Joseph Roberson.

Others present: Robin Pennock, Deputy Superintendent of Education, Chuck Staples, Legal Counsel, Del Parker, Treasurer, Brenda Dozier, Assistant Superintendent for Student Services, Peggy Connell, Chief Academic Officer, Myles Caggins, Assistant Superintendent for Business Affairs, Don Cooper, Chief Human Resources Officer, Billy Kendall, Administrative Assistant, Mark Rice from the Ledger-Enquirer and other media.

Dr. Polleys recognized visitors in the audience, a group of assistant principals who are taking a course in preparing to be a principal, Mr. and Mrs. Halouska representing the Friends of the Libraries and League of Women Voters; Joe Coley, Chair of the Citizens Construction Committee, former Board member Owen Ditchfield representing Concerned Citizens of South Columbus, John Lincoln, representing St. Elmo Gifted Program and Leadership Columbus participants. Dr. Polleys acknowledged that Dr. Pennock was sitting in for Dr. Phillips who is being delayed at the Atlanta Airport after returning from a conference.

Dr. Polleys called the meeting to order with a moment of silence for Ida Houston, a long time educator. This followed with an invocation and pledge of allegiance to the flag led by students from Mathews Elementary School. The Character Education word for February is diligence.

The following recognitions were presented: Muscogee County School District Spelling Bee Champion, Rigdon Road Elementary GA/NCLB Blue Ribbon School, Columbus High School for: NASA Experiments in Space; NASA Educator of the Year, Fulbright Exchange Program, State Wrestling Championship; State Cheerleading Championship; Georgia School Food Service Association President-Elect and the ABCD Award.

Dr. Polleys acknowledged those who wanted to speak on the public forum; Mrs. Patricia Felton, a South Columbus Elementary parent concerning her daughter and Mr. Bennie Parker, a citizen who spoke regarding the Shaw site for a new elementary school.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved official actions taken at the regular Board of Education meeting held on January 18, 2005 and called meetings held on February 3, 2005 and February 14, 2005, as amended.

Mr. Walker made a motion, seconded by Mr. Wells to modify the agenda to include an addendum item.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board approved Choosing the Best Way Sex Education Program. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) opposing, (Ms. Buckner).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved a summer school calendar for middle and high school.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously approved Financial Statements for six months ending December 31, 2004.

Upon motion of Mr. Whiteside, seconded by Dr. Schley, the Board approved a contract to Energy Systems Group to install certain energy performance saving devices including HVAC, lighting retrofits, water conservation devices, and control system upgrades, not to exceed \$8,319,437.00. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) opposing, (Mrs. Green).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board approved the purchase of Destiny Software Program by Follett for enhancement of media services and to provide a textbook management system. The cost for the 52 school site locations would be \$178,172.00 over a two-year period. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) abstaining, (Mrs. Green).

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously awarded a contract in the amount of \$32,400.00 to Netifice, low bidder to provide 9MB of Bandwidth to the Internet for Non-E-Rate eligible locations.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously approved Title I to purchase a Professional Development and Access to the Co-nect Exchange web site Program for Eddy Middle School in the total amount of \$22,500.00.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved a proposal from Hatcher, Stubbs, Land, Hollis, & Rothschild, LLP to represent the Muscogee County School District in legal matters.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved a proposal from the PTSA at Shaw High School to replace the seats in the auditorium. This approval includes assistance from the Plant Services Department to remove and dispose of the current seats before installing the new ones.

Mr. Wells made a motion, seconded by Mr. Walker to approve a contract to Holley Construction Company, low bidder in the total amount of \$2,156,000.00 for the construction project at Benning Hills Elementary. Mr. Roberson offered a substitute motion to defer accepting the bid until the “Board can look at the feasibility of a new elementary school for that community and growth in that area.” The motion was seconded by Mrs. Green. Mr. Roberson continued, “From my analysis the school development approach in South Columbus is that for most of our schools revitalization, adding to or renovating is the solution and we contend that when you renovate this is one level of enhancement but it is not a new school. I would like for the Board to look at the possibility of a new school. It is more feasible to build new. It would help the citizens to have greater trust in the Board of Education and this is at stake.

The Fort Benning community is saying the quality of education and schools are important to them. The citizens are saying we want a new elementary school, and that they don't want their community to be marked for renovation. We must be visionary and bold." Mrs. Storey commented, "We met with these parents and I gave them my word and my word is no less in South Columbus than in North Columbus. I can't support a delay." Mr. Walker commented, "We went to the meeting at Fourth Street and pretty much swore that we would renovate these schools. This is what the people wanted. I gave my word to do what the citizens wanted us to do." Ms. Buckner commented, "When we were deciding whether to combine Muscogee and Benning Hills. For some reason the Board decided to have meetings with members of the community. When there is a decision to build a growth school, the Board commissioned the City to go out and it was decided a new school is needed. I'm going to vote to continue the renovations but I still think that we need a new school." Dr. Polleys commented, "It was on the Walk and Talk tours of the Board and some business leaders asked why we didn't talk to these people now. We agreed to that to talk to the communities in order to respond to those groups who had formed to defeat the project." Mrs. Green commented, "The construction budget is \$2.3 million dollars. What can people expect when all of this is done?" Mr. Hecht commented, "The project design status on page 118 of the agenda describes what is included." Mr. Whiteside commented, "They brought us new housing starts and permit information. It seems to me that we should look at the most crowded schools. I did the schools site by site to figure the number of students in each school and where the overcrowding was. The schools that were mostly over-crowded were in the northwest. The logical location would be in the area that we are talking about tonight, the Shaw area. I don't have any commitment about the location." Mr. Wells commented, "If Mr. Roberson wants some support for delaying the school then I would like to do that." Dr. Polleys commented, "The Board has made a commitment to finish all the old projects before we start any new. If we vote to delay this project then all other projects will be delayed." Mr. Roberson commented, "I'm simply asking that we defer acceptance of the bid so that we can get more information. I appreciate someone's word and integrity but this Board is called upon to provide the best education possible. We're more aware about Fort Benning and more informed about that area now than we were then. We need a positive model that is more collective that I feel will be more inclusive than attacking and exclusive." Dr. Polleys called for a vote on the substitute motion to delay the contract for Benning Hills until additional information can be presented. The vote was (6) opposing and (2) affirming (Mr. Roberson, Mrs. Green) and (1) abstaining, (Ms. Buckner). Dr. Polleys called for a vote on the main motion to award the contract for Benning Hills. The vote was (7) affirming and (2) opposing (Mr. Roberson, Mrs. Green).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board approved the use of a portion of land located at Shaw High School as the location for New Elementary School #6. The vote was (6) affirming and (3) opposing, (Mr. Roberson, Ms. Buckner, Mrs. Green). It was the consensus of the Board that Mr. Hecht contact Richard Bishop concerning the road site and present this information at the March work session.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board awarded a contract to Alexander Contracting Company, low bidder in the total amount of \$1,546,762.00 for construction at the American Way Extension and New Road “A” to serve New Elementary #5 and New Middle #5 at the North site property including engineering fees, testing fees and contingency. Mrs. Green commented, “I want a point of clarity and correction. Since we are talking about promises, the Board’s own concerns that it addressed and I’m reading from the 97 SPLOST under contract and in progress before contracting for any new construction projects funded by the new SPLOST.” Ms. Buckner commented, “I want it clear that we have talked about perception but under contract and in progress, we’re not just saying in South Columbus.” Mr. Roberson commented, “I want to be clear that the Board has previously said that it will not start with 2003 SPLOST projects until the 1997 SPLOST projects are complete?” Dr. Polleys commented, “This is not true and we have the commitments made in writing.” Dr. Polleys called for a vote. The vote was (6) affirming and (3) opposing, (Mr. Roberson, Ms. Buckner, Mrs. Green).

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board awarded a contract to Darton Roofing, Inc., in the amount of \$131,690.00 sole bidder for re-roofing a porting of the Columbus Museum and allocating \$64,358.00 from the FY05 Capital Projects Fund-Not-Project-Related Account to help fund this project. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) opposing, (Mr. Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board approved tentative budgets and funding plans for proposed New Elementary #5, New Middle #5 and New Elementary #6 as presented. The vote was (6) affirming and (3) opposing, (Mr. Roberson, Ms. Buckner, Mrs. Green).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved change order No. 1 in the amount of \$39,733.04 to be deducted from the original contract for construction at Kendrick High. This approval is contingent upon the completion of all contracted items by Ra-Lin & Associates, Inc.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board approved change order No. 4 in the amount of \$124,094.88 to be added to the original contract for the construction project at Wynnton Elementary School. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) opposing, Mr. Whiteside.

Mr. Whiteside asked for clarification regarding the addendum and on the contracts to various vendors for the School Nutrition Program. Mr. Askew summarized the attachment regarding the bids that were received. Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Walker, the Board unanimously awarded contracts to various vendors for food and supplies in the School Nutrition Program to include meat, frozen foods, and supplies.

Dr. Polleys asked if there were any items on the consent agenda that the Board would like to discuss.

Mrs. Green asked a question regarding Item E on the consent agenda, Estimated SPLOST Balance, “If the SPLOST is in a deficit at June 30, funds from the General Fund will have to be transferred to the Capital Projects Fund to fund this deficit balance. It’s saying that this will come out of our General Fund, is that correct?” Mr. Parker commented, “Yes this is like a loan from the General Fund.” Mrs. Storey commented, “The money to re-pay it comes from the SPLOST collection since we only started to collect in April of 2004. If we run short on the money then we can borrow from the General Fund and then the collection from the SPLOST will come in and the General Fund can be re-paid.” Mrs. Green commented, “The 1997 SPLOST came in short.” Mr. Parker said that this is an information item.

Mr. Whiteside asked for a separate vote on item D-6, Best Buy Grants for Key Elementary. Mr. Whiteside commented that this is a grant that impacts on his wife and would be inappropriate for him to vote on it.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board approved a new budget for Best Buy Grants for Key Elementary School in the amount of \$5,000.00. The vote was (8) affirming and (1) abstaining, (Mr. Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey the Board unanimously approved the following consent agenda items with the exception of item D-6:

- Human Resources Report (Appendix A).
 - Workers’ Compensation Settlements; #9531-\$10,000; #6675-\$10,000 (3-months medical); #3486-\$19,000; #1771-\$10,000.
 - Grant, \$50,000 for reading program at Columbus Public Library from AFLAC.
 - New budget FY05 State Pre-school.
 - New budget Title I FY05 comprehensive School Reform Eddy Middle, \$23,773.
 - New budget Title I Distinguished School for Benning Hills, (\$40,560); Downtown, (\$50,700); Forrest Road (\$40,500).
 - New budget Double Churches, Diverse Power Foundation, \$1,775.
 - New budget FY05 Rule 10, Relations with other Agencies, \$20,000.
 - New budget Best Buy Grant, Columbus High, \$2,500.
 - Estimated SPLOST balance.
 - Audit of Financial Statement of 1997 SPLOST Capital Projects Fund.
 - Sales Tax Construction Program Report.
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- Report on Transfer from FY03 SPLOST Critical Needs.
- FY97 Sales Tax Construction Program Report.
- Report on Transfers from Capital Projects and Debt to SPLOST Fund to cover scope changes.
- Report of change orders/changes in project contingencies.
- Status report for projects under construction.
- Report on system-wide technology plan.
- Report on forecasted revenue collections.

Mr. Whiteside asked that a budget for Jordan High School's construction project be presented to the Board at the March work session. Mr. Whiteside also commented, "with there being discussion on the topic of promises made, promises kept, the Board needs to comment on the commitment that was made during the 2003 sales tax." Mr. Whiteside asked that the writing of the commitment be made available at the next board work session so that it can be put on the table.

Ms. Buckner asked that the Board have discussion regarding a procedure for handling parent complaints. Dr. Pennock commented that this can be handled at the Board Retreat.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to go into executive session for student discipline appeals.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mrs. Green, the Board unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

Upon motion of Mr. Walker, seconded by Mr. Whiteside, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the March meeting.

Charles T. Staples
Legal Counsel