

Minutes of Barnwell County School District Board of Trustees Meeting
Wednesday, August 2, 2023
(770 Hagood Avenue, Barnwell, South Carolina 29812)

Board Members Present: Chairperson Terry Richardson, Ronnie Brown, Becky Huggins, SGM Abraham Sexton, and Dr. Andy Sandifer

I. Opening Business

A. Call to Order, Reflection, Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, FOI Notice

Chair Richardson called the meeting to order at 4:08pm. SGM Abraham Sexton led the Reflection and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chair Richardson recognized local media in the audience, specifically Alex Whitbeck of The People Sentinel, confirming notice of the meeting as required by the Freedom of Information Act.

B. Additions, Deletions, and Approval of Agenda – Chair Terry Richardson

Chair Richardson asked if there were any additions or deletions to the proposed agenda. Chair Richardson asked board members if there were any objections to approving the agenda as presented. A motion was made by Dr. Andy Sandifer to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Becky Huggins. Hearing no objections, the agenda was unanimously approved.

C. Approval of July 25, 2023 Board Meeting Minutes – Chair Terry Richardson

Chair Richardson asked if there were any additions or deletions to the proposed minutes. Chair Richardson asked board members if there were any objections to approving the minutes as presented. A motion was made by SGM Abraham Sexton to approve the minutes as presented. The motion was seconded by Mr. Ronnie Brown. Hearing none, the minutes were unanimously approved with no objections.

II. Superintendent Report – Mr. David Corder and Dr. Crystal Stapleton

Mr. David Corder and Dr. Crystal Stapleton provided an overview of the consolidation plan. Dr. Stapleton referenced the next steps for consolidation and current actions were detailed in the work session held prior to the regular meeting. Mr. Corder explained the two districts were working closely with Mr. Augustine from the Barnwell County Career Center. It was also explained that the Finance and IT departments from both districts were putting information together to determine what needs to be merged.

III. **New Business**

A. Approval of Facility Study – Action Item

Dr. Crystal Stapleton explained that a RFP (Request for Proposal) was previously bid out and procured by Barnwell School District 45 for a Facility Study. The purpose of the study is to analyze current facilities and to assist in determining future facility needs. She further explained details were shared in the work session held prior to the meeting. Dr. Stapleton requested that since the RFP was already procured to add an addendum to include Williston and Blackville. A motion was made to incorporate Williston and Blackville into the current Facility Study begun by Barnwell School District 45 by Mr. Ronnie Brown. The motion was seconded by Dr. Andy Sandifer. The motion was approved unanimously. [Please note at this time, Chairperson Terry Richardson asked if the press was appropriately notified. Both Dr. Crystal Stapleton and Mr. David Corder responded yes.]

B. Determination of Regular Board Meeting Day and Time – Action Item

Chairperson Terry Richardson explained the board had reviewed the calendar to schedule regular monthly meetings. He requested a motion to set the regularly scheduled board meetings for the fourth Tuesday of each month to begin at 6:00pm. Mr. Richardson explained a meeting would not be held December 26, 2023. He explained that the monthly meetings would rotate between Barnwell, Williston, Blackville and the Barnwell County Career Center. Dr. Andy Sandifer made the motion to schedule the monthly meetings for the fourth Tuesday of each month beginning at 6:00pm. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. There were no objections and the motion was approved.

C. Approval of Board Member Compensation

Chairperson Terry Richardson explained that board members are compensated for their work and that there were funds available to cover the compensation for the transition board. He asked for a motion for compensation. Mr. Ronnie Brown made a motion to accept the suggested compensation by the Legislative Delegate of \$450 per month. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. There were no objections and the motion was approved.

IV. **Executive Session**

Chairperson Terry Richardson explained there was a need for an executive session. Ms. Becky Huggins made a motion to go into executive session after a five minute break. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton and approved unanimously.

Ms. Becky Huggins made a motion to come out of executive session at 5:15pm. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion was approved unanimously. [Announcement about next meeting occurred following this motion. Please note this was slightly out of order.]

Chairperson Terry Richardson read the following statement:

The Barnwell County School District Board of Trustees have carefully and thoroughly considered its options for selecting the District's first superintendent, including the possibility of conducting a superintendent search with the assistance of an executive firm. We have now settled on a decision that, in our opinion, would result in an outstanding, experienced administrator being appointed who is very familiar with Barnwell County.

Act No. 92 of 2023 providing for consolidation requires the current Barnwell County School District 45, Barnwell County Consolidated School District and Barnwell County School District 80 to commence the essential preparations necessary to achieve an efficient and well-organized consolidation of the districts. Thus, rather than expending the time, effort, and expense of employing interim leadership until June 30, 2024, we believe it is in the best interests of the newly consolidated District to have the benefit of leadership from a veteran educator and an individual who is familiar with Barnwell County.

Dr. Crystal Stapleton, who is currently serving as the Superintendent of Barnwell School District 45, is an excellent candidate for Superintendent-Elect and Superintendent of the new District effective July 1, 2024. She has worked successfully as both Interim and Superintendent of Barnwell School District 45 since 2017. Prior to becoming Superintendent in Barnwell 45, Dr. Stapleton served as an Assistant Principal, Director of Curriculum, and Assistant Superintendent in Barnwell 45. She also worked as a teacher and administrator in the former Williston School District 29. Dr. Stapleton is currently the Chair of the South Carolina State Board of Education and serves on the Board of Directors of the Barnwell Innovation Center.

The Board believes by selecting Dr. Stapleton for both interim leadership and the Superintendent of Barnwell County School District, the consolidation of the County is in great hands.

The Board would also like to publicly express our appreciation to Dr. Stapleton for agreeing to serve in these capacities.

Ms. Becky Huggins made the following motion:

Mr. Chairman, I move that the Board names Dr. Crystal Stapleton as Superintendent-Elect of the Barnwell County School District, effective immediately, and Superintendent of the Barnwell County School District effective July 1, 2024.

At this time, I also move that we authorize you as Board chair, in consultation with the District's legal counsel, to negotiate and execute an agreement with Dr. Stapleton, regarding such positions, as discussed with the Board in executive session.

The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion passed unanimously.

Following the approval of the motion, Chair Richardson asked Dr. Stapleton if she would like to make any comments.

Dr. Stapleton shared her appreciation for the support of the board and thanked the board members for the honor to serve. She stated she was looking forward to the exciting work to come and for the opportunity to serve her community and schools.

V. Adjournment

A. Announcement of Next Meeting

Chair Richardson announced that the next meeting will be held on Tuesday August 22, 2023 at the Barnwell County Consolidated School District in Williston. The address is 12255 Main Street Williston.

B. Meeting Adjournment

Chair Richardson asked for a motion to adjourn. Dr. Andy Sandifer made a motion to adjourn. The motion was seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. There were no objections to adjourning. The meeting adjourned at 5:18 pm.

Chair

 TR Richardson

Clerk

 Abraham Sexton