

Minutes of Barnwell County School District Board of Trustees
Special-Called Meeting
Tuesday, September 10, 2024
(9286 Marlboro Avenue, Barnwell, SC 29812)

Board Members Present: Chairperson Terry Richardson, Ronnie Brown, Becky Huggins, SGM Abraham Sexton, 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 6:00pm. SGM Abraham Sexton led the Reflection and the Pledge of Allegiance followed.

Chair Richardson confirmed the media was notified.

B. Approval of Agenda – Chair Terry Richardson

A motion was made by Dr. Andy Sandifer to approve the agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Ronnie Brown. The agenda was unanimously approved.

II. Information Items

Dr. Stapleton reiterated SGM Abraham Sexton’s remarks in the Reflection acknowledging the team of people that works for the school district. She asked all employees of the district to stand and be recognized, and she thanked everyone for accepting every challenge that comes their way.

Chair Richardson stated that he agreed and he wanted to make everyone aware that Barnwell County School District is currently the largest employer in Barnwell County.

A. Next Steps in regard to Barnwell County School District Facility Plan

Dr. Stapleton shared the following overview of the BCSD Facility Plan.

- From the beginning of this consolidation, the Board has been tasked with creating a transition plan to have one consolidated high school and career center.

Phase 1- Completion of an In-depth Facility Study

- Work on Phase 1 began August 2, 2023, immediately as the Transition Board began their work. Throughout the Fall of 2023, the board was updated by M.B. Kahn and SSOE regarding the facility study being thoroughly conducted countywide.

Steps for Phase II of the Facility Plan were approved at the January 2024 Board Meeting.

- Through an approved selection process, the board members chose SSOE for Architectural/Engineering Services and H.G. Reynolds for Construction Management At-Risk services to move forward with a new comprehensive high school and career center.
- The firms used needs assessments and facility studies to determine options and recommendations to present to both the board members and to the community in a community meeting.
- SSOE and H.G. Reynolds, after analyzing facility studies and conditions, presented four options to you for consideration, but the Board only focused on options 1 or 2 with the priority of having a new facility.
 - Option 1: Build new comprehensive high school/career center on neutral site
 - Option 2: Build new comprehensive high school/career center on current BHS site with demolition of BHS
- Following the presentation of options for the comprehensive high school and career center, the board made it a priority to do their due diligence to gather all information needed to make an informed decision.
 - This is what has been happening since June 2024. There have been numerous individual meetings with county leaders, leaders in economic development, etc.
 - The board had public participation on the agenda at all regular board meetings, as well as encouraged community members to email with any ideas or concerns they may have.
 - There have been multiple board work sessions with information presented from our contracted firms and answers to any questions that had been asked throughout the process.
- The board looked more closely at the pros/cons that have been shared with them regarding Options 1 and 2.

Revisiting Funding

- Funding Available for project from State:
\$120 million (10 million + \$10 million + \$5 million)
- The board has been analyzing all possible funding sources to determine how the district could make Option 1 work without utilizing a loan that would burden the district and without raising taxes.
- The board has been able to allocate additional funding to the project to make Option 1 work, while also keeping a minimum of three months operating costs in the district's General Fund Reserve (one month is required by the state.)

Next Steps... Considering Property

Considerations included:

- Some costs are able to be cut from the original estimates based on the land being considered.
- The board considered the center of the county and a radius around that when presented with possible properties.
- The board considered visibility and other factors.
- The board considered the possibility for future expansion to have everything housed on one site- academics, athletics, CTE focused programs, etc.- and be able to expand in the future.
- Civil engineers have looked at land options and provided insight as to what is viable and what is not. (i.e. flood plains, wetlands, etc.)
- The OSF will visit the site with a representative of the school district, a representative from the Department of Transportation and the design professional if available, to determine factors that make the site suitable or unsuitable for use as a school.
- When requesting consideration for a site, the district would furnish a boundary map of the property with any applicable wetlands or flood zones shown.
- The site visit will be documented on the Form F2A Evaluation for Approval for Site Acquisition and sent to the district. In addition to DOT, the OSF may request the input of other state and local agencies to take into consideration.

III. **Executive Session**

Chair Richardson asked for a motion to go in to Executive Session to discuss negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and receipt of legal advice.

Motion made by Becky Huggins to go into Executive Session to discuss negotiations incident to proposed contractual arrangements and receipt of legal advice at 6:16pm and seconded by SGM Abraham Sexton. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chair Richardson asked for a motion to come out of Executive Session. Motion made by SGM Abraham Sexton to come out of Executive Session at 7:05pm and seconded by Ronnie Brown. The motion was approved unanimously.

Motion made by Becky Huggins that stated: *I move that we authorize the Superintendent to proceed with the property transactions discussed in executive session, with all documents being made available to the public once the transactions have been completed.*

The motion was seconded by Ronnie Brown. The motion was approved unanimously.

IV. **Adjournment**

A. Meeting Adjournment

Chair Richardson asked for a motion for adjournment.

A motion for adjournment was made by SGM Abraham Sexton at 7:06pm. The motion

was seconded by Becky Huggins. There were no objections to adjourning.

Chair TR Richard

Clerk Alan Sinton