

MARION COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES

MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT CONFERENCE ROOM

719 North Main Street – Marion, South Carolina 29571

January 18, 2022

Board Members Present: Chairperson- Ogleretta White, Mrs. Nadine Foxworth, Mrs. Susan Pridgen, Rev. Cynthia V. Brown, Mr. Levant Davis and Mrs. Linda Neal.

Board Members Absent: Vice-Chairperson Patricia Atkinson

Call to Order & Notification of Board Workshop: The Board meeting was called to order at 6:04 p.m. by Chairperson-White. In accordance with the S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (d) as amended, the local media was notified of the time, date and place of the meeting. Mrs. Hopper stated that the media was notified of the meeting and a copy of the agenda was also provided.

Invocation: The invocation was given by the Reverend Jeremy Bethea, Pastor of Historic Mt. Olive Baptist Church of Mullins, South Carolina.

Welcome to Staff and Visitors Present: Chairperson-White welcomed the staff to the January 18, 2022 meeting.

Establishment of Quorum: Chairperson-White verified that a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda: Chairperson White asked for approval of the agenda. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Mr. Davis to approve the January 18, 2022 agenda; and the vote was unanimous. (Chairperson-White, Mrs. Neal, Rev. Brown, Mrs. Foxworth, Mrs. Pridgen and Mr. Davis).

Approval of Minutes: Chairperson White asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of December 16, 2021, Special Meeting of December 22, 2021 and the Ethics Workshop / Audit Review of January 13, 2022. Mrs. Neal moved, seconded by Rev. Brown to approve the minutes with the necessary corrections; and the vote was unanimous. (Chairperson White, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Pridgen, Mrs. Foxworth, Rev. Brown and Mrs. Neal).

60 Seconds in MCSD and Palmetto Middle School: Mr. Franklyn McInnis assisted Dr. Regina Gilchrist, Principal of Palmetto Middle School as she highlighted various events that had taken place with staff and students.

South Carolina School Board Recognition Month: Dr. Kandace Bethea presented words of appreciation to the Board on behalf of staff, students and numerous families for their critical role in the schools, the community and for their long hours of hard work and support. A small token was given to them at the end of the meeting.

South Carolina School Board Ethical Principles Signing: Dr. Bethea acknowledged the signing of the Ethical Principles as an initiative through the South Carolina School Board Association that reminds Board members of their commitment made as Board members. Chairperson White posed for a picture with the signed poster that would be posted on the district's social media and also sent to the SCSBA.

Reports from Administration / Review and Action Items:

Finance Report for December 2021: Mrs. Donna Sullivan provided the financials for the month of December as information. After a brief discussion, the Board thanked Mrs. Sullivan for the finance report.

Facilities/Operations Report: Mr. Leon Sturkey gave a brief operation's update to the Board on the following items: The frequent changes in DHEC Regulations, the eleven new buses the district received since 2020 and three more additional ones to arrive. Beginning in August 2022, each bus will be equipped with the Traversa System that will notify parents when the bus is late. The Sherriff Department applied for grants through the Department of Safety for SRO officers and North Mullins Primary and Academy for Early Childhood Learning grants were approved for an SRO. Lastly, he communicated with the Chief of Police and the Sherriff to obtain some assistance in securing our students at Johnakin Middle and Marion High School due to the absence of crossing guards. They agreed to assist when possible.

Human Resources Report / Updates – Mrs. Paula Grant stated that an executive session would be needed for personnel actions and a RFP has been issued for our Substitute Services contracts. Chairperson White inquired about services with SCWORKS. Mrs. Grant stated that we post some of our classified job descriptions with them and also use that as a recruiting tool.

Superintendent's Update: Dr. Bethea began her Superintendent Updates to the Board by stating that there was a smooth transition back to school from the holiday break. She briefed the Board about, the Career Students, the Annual Audit, recent happenings in MSCD such as the Spelling Bees at the Middle and Elementary schools. During the Annual Delegation Day which was held on January 5, 2022, Dr. Bethea was able to communicate with the Delegation to report the needs of the district as well as the goals and objectives before they returned back in Session.

Dr. Bunch gave an overview on the partnership that the district has with Florence Darlington Technical College that will allow students to take courses preparing them for career ready opportunities. A number of programs will be open to our students as earlier as fall and students will be able to take many of these courses while they are at the High Schools on their computer with a live instructor. Businesses are contributing funds to the program to help prepare students for career ready jobs with the possibility of sign-on bonuses after completion of the program.

Dr. Bethea thanked Dr. Bunch and continued her presentation updates. She gave a briefing on Department updates, the Wellness Program, funding for Student Behavior and her conversation to the Delegation about the possibility of receiving some Capital Funding and funds for a three year old program and other needed concerns. She also informed the Board about a debriefing that she would be having on Wednesday at noon in reference to whether the District would attend in person on Friday due to the possibility of inclement weather.

Review and Action: Dr. Bethea presented the Out-of-State travel for Marion High School Varsity Boys Basketball Game to be held in Charlotte, North Carolina on January 30, 2022 to the Board for approval. Chairperson White asked for a motion to approve the overnight travel. Mrs. Foxworth moved, seconded by Mrs. Pridgen to approve the travel as recommended by the Superintendent; and it was approved. (Chairperson White, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Pridgen, Mrs. Foxworth, Mrs. Neal and Rev. Brown).

Public Participation: There was no public participation.

Board Updates - Sign-On Bonus: The Board inquired about a sign-on bonus. Dr. Bethea

suggested that there be a sign-on and retention bonus. Chairperson White asked for a motion to approve. Mrs. Foxworth moved, seconded by Rev. Brown to authorize Dr. Bethea to proceed with establishing a procedure for the Sign-on and Retention Bonus; and it was approved. (Chairperson White, Mr. Davis, Mrs. Pridgen, Mrs. Foxworth, Mrs. Neal and Rev. Brown).

Property Sale Funding Usage (Britton's Neck School): Dr. Bethea suggested that the sale be finalized prior to any decisions being made first and then we'll look at getting input from our schools. The process of how the sale was going was recommended for executive session.

Board members asked that the following items be placed on the next month's agenda: SROs, discipline policies and the follow-ups, Bullying Policy and follow-up procedures, the COVID Guidelines and procedures and whether there is a need for metal detectors in school.

Redistricting: Attorney Boykins provided an update on redistricting. He informed the Board that Senator Williams has introduced legislation that essentially accepts the recommendation that the Board made pushing back the election to the second Tuesday in May. Once that is adopted, you will receive confirmation.

Dates - to Remember - Conference / Meeting Reminders/ Board Comments: Chairperson White reminded members of the upcoming dates and events. She also reminded them if they were attending, of the email sent from the SCSBA in reference to not enforcing social distancing at the event.

Executive Session: Chairperson White asked for a motion to go into executive session for Legal briefing, Contractual Matters and Personnel. Mrs. Foxworth moved, seconded by Mrs. Neal to approve this request; and the Board voted unanimously to approve (Mr. Davis, Mrs. Neal, Rev. Brown, Mrs. Pridgen, Mrs. Foxworth and Chairperson White).

Open Session: Chairperson White asked for a motion to come out of executive session. Mrs. Foxworth moved, seconded by Mr. Davis to come out of executive session back into open session; and the Board voted unanimously to approve. (Mrs. Pridgen, Rev. Brown, Mrs. Foxworth, Mrs. Neal, Mr. Davis and Chairperson White).

Chairperson White stated that no action was taken in executive session.

Chairperson White extended an invitation for Board members to make any necessary statements if need be. Mrs. Neal presented a letter excusing herself from voting in reference to personnel actions.

Mrs. Pridgen made the motion to accept the personnel actions and addendum as presented with the exception of employee A.3.a who will reported to the South Carolina Board of Education for breach of contract, seconded by Mr. Davis; and the motion passed 4 for (Mr. Davis, Chairperson White, Rev. Brown, and Mrs. Pridgen), 1 nay - Mrs. Foxworth and 1 recuse – Mrs. Neal.

Adjournment: Chairperson White asked for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Mrs. Neal to approve this request; and the vote was unanimous (Rev. Brown, Mr. Davis, Chairperson White, Mrs. Pridgen, Mrs. Foxworth and Mrs. Neal). The Meeting adjourned @ 8.27 pm.