

MINUTES OF THE **OPEN SESSION OF A SPECIAL MEETING** OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION, THORNTON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 205, COOK COUNTY, ILLINOIS, HELD ON **MONDAY, JULY 11, 2011** IN ROOM 1630 AT THORNWOOD HIGH SCHOOL, 17101 SOUTH PARK AVENUE, SOUTH HOLLAND, ILLINOIS, BEGINNING AT 7:30 P.M.

The meeting was called to order by the President pursuant to notice.

PURPOSE OF
MEETING

A copy of the meeting and certification by the Secretary are a part of the official minutes.

The meeting was called to order at 7:30 p.m. On roll call, Members Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence, answered. Members Robinson, K. Williams and T. Williams were absent. Dr. Stacey McJunkins, Interim Superintendent; Dr. Betheny Lyke, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources and Community Relations; Mrs. Maria Brunson, Director of Information Technology; Mrs. Leslie Morris, Coordinator of Business Services; Mr. Brad Beilfuss and Mrs. Dorith Johnson, Co-Principals of Thornridge High School; Mr. Tony Ratliff, Principal of Thornton High School; Mrs. Darcelle Williams, Principal of Thornwood High School; Mr. Ken Wendorff, Faculty Association President; Mrs. Deborah Scaletta, Faculty Association Executive Director, and Mr. Anthony Bass, District 205 Legal Counsel, were also present.

ROLL
CALL

In the absence of the President, Vice President Edward Crayton was appointed President *Pro Tem*.

PRESIDENT *PRO*
TEM

Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Approve the Charges for Removal of Board Officer** as presented by Mr. Burton who stated the charges are not to remove a Board member from the Board but removal from the office of President. He read the charges as follows:

APPROVAL OF
CHARGES FOR
REMOVAL OF
BOARD OFFICER

- You have failed to recognize that a board member has no legal authority as an individual and that decisions can be made only by a majority vote at a public board meeting;
- You placed the former Superintendent on administrative leave;
- You requested that the Human Resources create job descriptions and contracts for Board representatives over Finance, Human Resources, Curriculum and Superintendent offices;
- You established an external transition team for the Interim Superintendent and have allowed the team members to attend and participate in summer school leadership team meetings with possible financial cost to the District;
- You have allowed members of the external transition team for the Interim Superintendent to have access to school buildings without following the process applicable to visitors to the District;
- You have allowed members of an external transition team for the Interim Superintendent to have access to the school computer system at Thornwood High School without approval from the School administrators;
- As of June 27, 2011 you have continued to allow members of an external transition team for the Interim Superintendent to work for District 205 after the Board explicitly stated to you at the June 8, 2011 closed session meeting to stop the use of any workers of the external transition team;
- You have allowed Board members and other persons to have access to the District's storage facilities where personnel records and other confidential records are stored;
- You have obtained access to personnel files through the Interim Superintendent;

- You have attempted to become a signatory on all purchase orders issued by the District;
- You have directed that all memos from the Superintendent be approved by you;
- You submitted a contract for the Interim Superintendent with a June 8, 2011 signing date, although the contract had not yet been approved by the Board of Education;
- You have interfered with the hiring and operational decisions of the District administration;
- You have acted to have your name put on Thornton Township High School District 205 checks;
- You have allocated office space in the District office and school buildings for your personal use without Board approval;
- You have taken possession of the former Superintendent's computer equipment without Board approval;
- You have continued to allow the external transition team to function after receiving directives from the Board to cease operations, and
- You have repeatedly and deliberately acted in violation of other Board of Education Policies and practices.

APPROVAL OF
CHARGES FOR
REMOVAL OF
BOARD OFFICER,
Con't.

On roll call, Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed. President Pro Tem Crayton stated to the public that these are charges and Mr. Williams will be allowed time to respond to said charges.

Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Set a Hearing Date** on the Charges for Removal of Board Officer for July 14, 2011 at 7:30 p.m. at Thornwood High School. On roll call, Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

SET DATE FOR
HEARING OF
CHARGES

At 7:46 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded to go into **Executive Session** to discuss the appointment, employment, compensation, discipline, performance, or dismissal of specific employees of the public body or legal counsel for the public body, including hearing testimony on a complaint lodged against an employee of the public body or against legal counsel for the public body to determine its validity, and personnel issues. On roll call, Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

EXECUTIVE
SESSION

At 8:56 p.m., Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded, to **Return to Regular Session**. Members Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

RETURNED TO
REGULAR SESSION

The Board stated that this is a trying and difficult process and it is the business of the Board to move the District forward; there is nothing personal in the proceedings of this meeting. It is incumbent upon the Board to ensure the number one priority which is the education and success of the children of District 205.

BOARD COMMENTS

The following individuals spoke during Public Participation:

- Helen Randall (Harvey): 1) asked when school starts; 2) stated that teachers need to be in place for the new school year; 3) hopes the Board comes together and will support each other, and 4) stated four members do not need to call a meeting because they are the majority. 1) Dr. Lyke responded staff begins on August 15, freshmen start on August 16 and all students will be in school on August 17; 4) Mr. Burton responded that four members need to call a meeting to be considered a special meeting.

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION

PUBLIC
PARTICIPATION,
Con't.

- Rose Taylor (Dolton) asked when and who investigated the charges being brought against the Board president. The Board responded that the charges were obtained from administration and staff.
- Peggy Taylor McDonald (Dolton) asked if someone was hired to investigate the charges. Mr. Burton responded no.
- Jeanita Eaves (Harvey) said God bless everyone.
- Donald Luster (Dolton) stated he is appalled at what is going on; that the community voted for change and the Board needs to come together in the best interest of the children.
- Michael Smith (Dixmoor) stated he will be sending out a newsletter that the Board has not upheld what they were voted in to do; the Board needs to keep their integrity.
- Felita Crayton (Dolton) stated: 1) the oath taken by Board members states they will represent the people to the best of their ability; 2) she has not seen evidence that children come first; 3) she would stand up to the charges if she had done nothing wrong; 4) if she must comply with volunteer policy rules to enter a school building, so should everyone, and 5) the district needs to move ahead and hire teachers for 2011-2012.
- Lloyd Kelly (Dolton) stated: 1) the 1-2-3 campaign was his concept; 2) Mr. Crayton wanted to approve air conditioning for Thornton, and 3) Mr. Williams voted to apply for a grant only. Mr. Crayton responded that most of Mr. Kelly's comments are not true.
- Latrise McHaskell-Muhammad (Calumet City) stated she has been trying to interview to teach in District 205. She has credentials to teach Special Education and has not been contacted for an interview. Dr. Lyke met with Mrs. Muhammad at the meeting.
- Fahim Leon Muhammad (Calumet City) spoke regarding college fairs and communication issues with the Thornwood career counselor.
- Cathy Bendell (Dolton): 1) asked if schools are ready to open in August; 2) stated there are too many substitute teachers, and 3) Thornridge is no longer a freshman academy and there is money to keep teachers in place. Mr. Crayton responded: 1) everyone is working at a fast pace to open schools; 2) it is the desire of the Board to hire the best full-time teachers, and 3) correct.
- Irene Bibbie (Harvey) stated this situation is pathetic; a split Board will never work. Her children graduated from Thornton and college because of the Board that was in place at that time. The interim superintendent should be given a chance.
- Darius Randle (South Holland) spoke in support of Mr. Williams and about injustice.
- Vivienne Williams (Dolton) asked: 1) will the charges will be posted on the website; 2) what made Mr. Crayton change his mind about bringing charges against the President; 3) are the new vocational programs put into place, and 4) has the 1.5 GPA for extracurricular participation been raised to 2.0. Mr. Crayton responded: 1) Yes; 2) he knows more now; Mrs. Lawrence responded: 3) vocational programs are currently in progress; 4) it has not been addressed yet.
- Evelyn Sorrell (Dolton) stated the Board is a group and business needs to be taken care of.
- Andre Smith (Dolton) stated that District 205 has been failing for the last ten years. He pleaded for the Board to reconsider their vote against the President.
- Kierra Williams (South Holland) asked if it is legal to remove a Board president from his seat. Her brother stated he hopes he doesn't have to go to school here because for the two years that his father has been on the Board, you people have not set a good example for the children to follow.
- Lorraine Shipp (South Holland) is extremely disappointed about the changes taking place; how can a judgment be made against a person in just 60 days.
- Janet Thomas Tyler (Harvey) stated she understands education. Everyone has a different voice in education. Questions should be directed to the superintendent; not the Board.
- Mr. Crayton commented that all the Board wants is resolution and for seven Board members to work together.

Mrs. Lawrence stated the Board moves to incorporate in the charges a request for relief that the accused member be discharged of his duties from the position of presidency only. It must be clear that the discharge is for the position of President, not as a Board member. On roll call, Members Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

AMENDMENT TO
CHARGES FOR
REMOVAL OF
BOARD OFFICER

Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Approve the Law Firm of Canna and Canna as Special Counsel for the Administrative Hearing.** On roll call, Members Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
SPECIAL COUNSEL
FOR
ADMINISTRATIVE
HEARING

Mr. Burton moved, Mrs. Lawrence seconded to **Approve the Administrative Leave of Interim Superintendent Dr. Stacey McJunkins,** effective July 12, 2011. On roll call, Members Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

APPROVAL OF
INTERIM
SUPERINTENDENT
ADMINISTRATIVE
LEAVE

Mr. Burton announced the **Appointment of Dr. Betheny Lyke,** Assistant Superintendent for Human Resources and Community Relations, to be responsible for the day-to-day operations of District 205 based on Board Policy regarding succession of authority in view of the departure of Mr. Gress and Mr. Truesdale.

APPOINTMENT OF
PERSONNEL

At 10:52 p.m., Mrs. Lawrence moved, Mr. Banks seconded, to **Continue the Meeting to July 14, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.** On roll call, Members Banks, Burton, Crayton and Lawrence voted aye; nay, none; motion passed.

MOTION TO
CONTINUE
MEETING

President *Pro Tem*

Secretary/Recording Secretary

rp(spec brd mins 7-11-11)
REGULAR SESSION