The Ouachita Parish School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, October 8, 2024, at twelve (12:00) o'clock p.m. at its regular meeting place, the Ouachita Parish School Board office.

*Note: There were no comment cards completed for any agenda business item addressed in this meeting. Additionally, there were no remote requests for any agenda business item addressed in this meeting.*

Presence of the following members was verified through roll call: Tommy Comeaux, Shere May, Mike Batey, Jerry R. Hicks, Harold McCoy, Dabo Graves, and Greg Manley.

President Tommy Comeaux called the meeting to order as he welcomed the visitors and guests, followed by the presentation of colors by Ouachita High School NJROTC, Pledge of Allegiance by Dabo Graves, and the Invocation offered by OPHS student Kaya Wright.

Greg Manley made the motion, seconded by Harold McCoy, to approve the minutes of the September 17, 2024 regular meeting as written. Motion carried without opposition.

Shere May made a motion to approve a revision to the agenda with the addition of Permission to Bid Item #1, Jerry Hicks seconded the motion, motion carried without opposition. Jerry Hicks then made a motion to approve the revised agenda, seconded by Shere May, motion carried without opposition.

Mr. Guice stated there was nothing for the Personnel Report for this meeting.

Mr. Comeaux introduced Aline Smead with the first Item of Business, Special Recognitions. Sterlington Elementary became the fourth school in Ouachita Parish School district to receive the distinction from the U. S. Department of Education as a Blue Ribbon School. The school and faculty were recognized as a 2024 Blue Ribbon School for narrowing the achievement gaps for all student groups, including exemplary work with special education students. They are one of only 7 schools in the state to achieve the honor, and one of 356 school in the nation.

The 2nd Item of Business, Update on Ouachita Parish 4-H and National 4-H week presented by Bethany Corona from the local 4-H office. She informed the Board that the 4-H program for Ouachita Parish area has grown from 18 clubs to 59 clubs in the last year, with growth in all of their programs. Ms. Corona informed them that statistics show students in the 4-H program are 5 times more apt to graduate college, 4 times more apt to give back to the community and 2 times more apt to be leaders.

Tommy Comeaux introduced Rice Gregory with the 3rd Item of Business, revised update on completion of construction of Sterlington Middle School. Mr. Gregory stated the concession stand, stadium and bleachers are now complete and released for occupancy. He also informed the Board that the grounds were looking good, with a little more work needed. He stated the Punch list still needed verification and waiting on the No-Lien Certificate and Consent of Surety. Mr. Gregory advised the Board to let the contractor finish the project and expect a one-year warranty on the entire project.

Mike Batey introduced Item #4 by making the motion to consider renaming Central Elementary Gym in Honor of Alvin Britton, Sr. Mr. Alvin was a long time employee of the Ouachita Parish School System as well as an upstanding citizen and dedicated supporter of the students in the Calhoun and surrounding communities. Shere May seconded the motion, which carried without opposition.

Curtis Pate introduced Item #5, Consider and approve 2024-2025 Pupil Progression Plan. The changes were outlined and given to the Board ahead of time for their review. Jerry Hicks made a motion to approve the changes as presented, seconded by Shere May. The motion carried unanimously.

Item #6, Consider and select architect for remodeling of restrooms and additional hallway at Central Elementary, introduced by Mike Batey making a motion to select TBA and Associates as the architect. Jerry Hicks seconded the motion. Motion carried unopposed with Shere May abstaining stating

“I am recusing myself out of an abundance of precautions as I have a family member employed by a related company, but if I could vote it would be yes.”

Regina Mekus introduced Item # 7 Financial Report for period ending August 31, 2024. She stated the General Fund Balance was $30,082,690 and the District #1 M&O Balance was $30,791,621. Ms. Mekus informed the Board the MFP count was down 235 students, which equals 1.5 million dollars. She also reminded everyone the State Stipend is to be distributed on October 11, 2024 for all Regular employees as of September 18, 2024. The amounts will be $2000 for certified staff and $1000 for support staff.

Steven Hemphill presented the next agenda Item #8, Construction/Renovation Projects Report. The Board discussed and accepted the report as presented.

Purchasing Agent, Jared Peters, presented the Evaluation of Bids beginning with item #1, 2-25 RHS Fieldhouse Additions and Renovations. He recommended the board approve the lowest responsive bidder, Grindstone Construction in the total amount of $1,625,000 with East Side bond as the funding source. Harold McCoy made the motion to accept this bid, seconded by Dabo Graves. Motion carried without opposition. Item #2, 3-25 Swartz Upper Roof Replacement bid opening has been pushed back until October 22nd. Due to this, Mr. Peters is asking the board to approve the lowest responsive bidder on the project once the bid opens on October 22, 2024, explaining this would allow the architect and the awarded contractor time to get the project moving forward without waiting until the November board meeting. Dabo Graves made the motion to approve the lowest responsive bid on October 22, 2024, seconded by Harold McCoy. Motion carried unanimously.

In the President’s Report, Mr. Comeaux announced the next meeting would be on November 12, 2024 at noon.

In the Superintendent’s Report, Mr. Guice announced that it is National Principal Month, Fall Break is October 14-18, the Employee of Distinction banquet will be October 29, 2024 and the Monroe Chamber luncheon will be November 4, 2024, with more information on these coming later.

There being no further business, Jerry Hicks made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike Batey. Motion carried and adjourned at 12:38 p.m.

**OUACHITA PARISH SCHOOL BOARD**

Tommy Comeaux, President

**ATTEST:**

Todd Guice, Secretary

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