The Ouachita Parish School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, May 9, 2023, 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.

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 Comeaux called the meeting to order as he welcomed visitors and guests, followed with the Invocation offered by West Monroe High School student Nathan Gulde, and Pledge of Allegiance led by Mike Batey.

Shere May motioned, seconded by Mike Batey, that the Board approve the Minutes of April 11, 2023 as written. Motion carried unanimously.

Upon motion by Harold McCoy, seconded by Shere May, the Board approved the Agenda. Motion carried by all members. A subsequent motion by Jerry Hicks was presented to amend the agenda and approve the amended agenda as presented. The motion was seconded by Mike Batey, and unanimously approved.

During the Personnel Report, Dr. Coker reported the following newly appointed positions: Twainna Calhoun, Personnel Supervisor; Dr. Carrie Ferguson, Title I Supervisor; Doll Ann Johnson, Sterlington High Principal; Dan Lane, West Monroe High Principal; Dejaniero Davis, Riser Middle Principal; Megan Hicks, Pinecrest Principal; Leslie Sumler, Calhoun Elementary Principal; Tammy Sampognaro, Riser Elementary Principal; Cambra Wilkes, Sterlington Elementary Principal; and Tabby Truxillo, Coordinator of Public Information.

Additionally, Dr. Coker listed the following positions to be opened at the conclusion of the Board Meeting: Principals (2) - Good Hope Middle and Ouachita Junior High; Assistant Principals (6) - Sterlington High, West Monroe High, East Ouachita Middle (two), Riser Middle, and Sterlington Elementary; Curriculum Coordinators (5) – East Ouachita Middle, Pinecrest, Riser Middle, Calhoun Elementary, and Riser Elementary; Coordinator of Curriculum and Instruction for Middle/High Math (Instructional Team);

Reading Interventionists (2) – Boley Elementary/Highland Elementary and Calhoun Elementary/Central Elementary; Master Teacher – Robinson Elementary; and Title I Coordinator.

President Comeaux introduced the first item of business—Special Recognitions. Communications Coordinator, Aline Smead, joined by Superintendent Coker recognized the following student and employee successes:

1. Ka'Mya Harris, Ouachita Parish High School: National History Day Senior Individual Exhibit State Winner going to nationals in Maryland in June.

2. Benjamin Forbes, Sterlington High School: Perfect Score on ACT as a sophomore.

3. Nathan Gulde, West Monroe High School: Perfect Score on ACT as a junior (now a senior).

4. Na'Shaya Puckett, Richwood High School: Awarded the prestigious Gates Scholarship and the President's Volunteer Service Award. The scholarship is awarded for demonstration of leadership and personal success to help awardees reach their maximum potential. The President's Service Award is given for outstanding volunteer service.

5. Austin Matthews, West Ouachita High School: Awarded Best Sci-Fi Fantasy Film for his short film, A Tabletop Journey, from Film Prize Jr, which is the south's largest student film festival.

6. Kendall Parker, West Ouachita High School: Received a Founders Circle Award for her short film, Something for Your Mind. WOHS represented the only school from Northeast Louisiana to participate. (Kendall was absent due to testing and Mr. Housley, teacher, accepted her award.)

7. Renee' Lashley, Occupational Therapist, Student Support Services: Louisiana School Health Service Provider of the Year Finalist: Award acknowledges school health service providers who demonstrate superior provision of health services in schools and support the expansion of health services in schools.

8. Janssen May, West Ouachita High: Named 2023 Gordon Reynolds Secondary School Athletic Trainer of the Year.

9. Brittany Ellis, George Welch Elementary: Named 2023 Semifinalist for Louisiana Teacher of the Year will compete for state title.

10. PAEMST are the highest honors bestowed by the United States government specifically for K-12 teachers. Honorees are chosen to represent their state at national competition. Both of these ladies will compete in math in their respective divisions.

a. Lainey Hodge, Sterlington High School: Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching 2023 State Finalist.

b. Jaimie Mosley, Riser Middle School: Presidential Awards for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching 2023 State Finalist.

The next item of business was introduced and the Board heard from Mr. Newt Briggs regarding changing plans for timber sales for the 640 acres located below Luna. Due to the slopes (average 25%) present on the property and the safety recommendations for the machinery to be used, Mr. Briggs recommended a timber removal/regeneration cut and replant. President Comeaux opened the floor for questions or comments, and after brief discussion, called for a motion. Dabo Graves made a motion to approve the cut as recommended, seconded by Mike Batey. The motion carried unanimously.

Business Director Regina Mekus requested Business Item 3 Cooperative Endeavor Agreement with Innovative Network of Knowledge be tabled for a future meeting due to the continued negotiations of the contract. Dabo Graves motioned to table the item, seconded by Mike Batey, and the motion was approved with full vote of the Board Members.

Regina Mekus presented a Resolution to levy millages on the 2023 tax roll on all property subject to taxation by Ouachita Parish School Board. The millages proposed were not changed from the previous year and stand at the following for Parish of Ouachita School Board Taxing District: Constitutional 5.18 Mills and Maintenance and Operation 24.15 Mills, and for East Ouachita Parish School District Taxing District: East Ouachita Bond 36 Mills. Greg Manley made a motion to adopt the Ad Valorem Tax Millage for 2023

as presented through the Resolution. Shere May seconded the motion, and the item passed unanimously through roll call vote.

Business Director Regina Mekus presented her monthly 2022-23 Interim Financial Report for the period ended March 31, 2023. For the ninth month of the fiscal year, we are ending the period at 121% of budgeted fund balance in general fund ($40.1 million). District M&O balance stands at $29.3 million, or 115% of where the district was at this time in 2022. Ms. Mekus reviewed the sales tax funds on the first page of the report updating that 1968 ½-cent Sales Taxes are at 105%, 1995 1-cent Sales Taxes are at 110%, and West Ouachita 1-cent Sales Taxes are at 120% of where they were last year. Referring to the third and fourth pages Ms. Mekus reminded the Board that these figures were comparative of the last three years for their information. The final page compares the fund balances and annual excess in standing for the current budget. Ms. Mekus concluded her report and Shere May moved, seconded by Harold McCoy, that the Board approve the 2022-23 Interim Financial Report for the period ended March 31, 2023 as presented. Motion unanimously carried by all members.

Director of Construction and Maintenance Steven Hemphill provided the Board with the Construction/Renovation Projects Report. The Board discussed and accepted the report as presented.

Mr. Comeaux announced that Business Item 7 would be moved beneath Items X and XI to allow for completing Evaluation of Bids and Permission to Bid items prior to the possible consideration of Executive Session for Item 7.

Interim Purchasing Agent Waylon McCormick presented Evaluation of Bid items individually. Regarding Bid No. 35-23 Copy Paper, Mr. McCormick relayed the shortage of paper which is causing hardship to the companies, as well as higher costs for the district. He recommended the lowest responsive bids for items 13-30 of Jackson Paper Company and for items 41-43 of Economical Paper Company. Greg Manley motioned to accept the recommendations, seconded by Jerry Hicks. Motion passed unanimously. Regarding Bid No. 36-23 Ouachita Parish High School Parking Overlay and 37-23 Ouachita Parish High School Office Remodel, Mr. McCormick asked the Board to grant permission to accept the lowest responsive bidder upon opening the bids on May 16 and to report the result in the June Board Meeting in order to not delay beginning construction.

Board Members asked questions and had a short discussion of these items, and Dabo Graves motioned to grant permission to Mr. McCormick as requested. Greg Manley seconded the motion and the items passed unanimously. Regarding Bid No. 40-23 Bathroom Remodels (Drew, Kiroli, and Riser Middle), Mr. McCormick submitted the recommendation for the lowest responsive bidder of Don Leach Construction at $992,200.00. Jerry Hicks motioned to accept the lowest responsive bidder, seconded by Shere May. The motion carried unanimously. Regarding Bid No. 41-23 Central Elementary/Waste Treatment and Bid No. 42-23 Calhoun Elementary/Waste Treatment, Mr. McCormick recommended the lowest responsive bidder of San-Tech, Inc. Board Members had a brief discussion regarding the difference in budgeted amount and actual bid, which was determined to be caused by needing additional machinery at Central Elementary along with increasing prices of materials. Having no further discussion, Mike Batey motioned to approve the bid as presented, seconded by Shere May. The item carried unanimously.

Four Permission to Bid items including Bid 39-23 Drew Elementary Parking Lot, 44-23 Surplus Vehicles/Equipment, 45-23 School Buses (9), and 46-23 Classrooms/Restrooms/Site Improvements (Sterlington Elementary) were presented together for approval. After a brief discussion by the Board regarding each item, Greg Manley motioned to approve the items for bid. Dabo Graves seconded the motion, and the Board unanimously voted to approve.

Returning to Business Item 7 Discussion and Consideration of Motion to go into Executive Session under the Provisions of LSA-R.S.42:17(A)(2) to Discuss Correspondence Received From the Freedom From Religion Foundation, Greg Manley made a motion to enter Executive Session to discuss the item. Jerry Hicks seconded the motion and Ms. Mekus performed a roll call vote that affirmed the motion unanimously. The Board Members dismissed to Executive Session at 12:51 p.m. Approximately, 1:50 p.m., President Comeaux called the meeting back to order. Jerry Hicks motioned, seconded by Harold McCoy to resume regular session of the Board Meeting. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote by Aline Smead.

In his report, President Comeaux thanked the Board Members for attending commencement ceremonies throughout the district. He called for the next Board Meeting to be Tuesday, June 13, 2023 at 12:00 noon in the Board Room of the Central Office.

Superintendent Coker reminded the Board about changes in the graduation ceremony schedules necessitated by weather and sports playoffs.

There being no further business, Greg Manley made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Mike Batey. Motion carried and meeting adjourned at 2:05 p.m.

OUACHITA PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

Tommy Comeaux, President

ATTEST:

Don Coker, Secretary
/as