

Board Governance Committee
Minutes
February 28, 2006

Present:

Commissioner Henley
Commissioner Elliott
Commissioner Powell (arrived 6:10 p.m.)

Linda Dunsmoor, Board Staff

Commissioner Henley convened the meeting at 6:04 p.m.

The meeting opened with a discussion of Board staff. Commissioner Elliott would like to look at this topic from a broad perspective rather than by using staff job descriptions. She would like Board Governance to look at the inefficiencies of the School Board process and how the process can be enhanced to better engage the community. Commissioner Elliott cited the Board packet provided on the Friday preceding Business Meetings and said appropriate staff is needed -- legal, financial and research analysts -- to hold the District accountable by examining the resolution packet. She recommended that Board Governance take up Policy 2111, "Board Member Authority." She also said the policies of the Board should reflect the stands that Board members took as candidates.

Discussion moved to a retreat for the Board of Education. Commissioner Powell said that the retreat would provide a good opportunity for the issues raised by Commissioner Elliott to be discussed. The Board's annual goals may need to be re-established at a retreat, at which the mechanics of how the Board does business could also be discussed. Commissioner Powell suggested the conversation begin with a critique of how business is being done now -- what tasks are a waste of commissioners' time, what are an inappropriate use of time, etc. Commissioner Elliott suggested that it is the Committee's role to look at these issues and it is up to the Committee to have the initial discussion. Commissioner Powell said a retreat could bring out what is important to individual BOE members and then eventually get to a group consensus. All commissioners agreed that any goals and/or tasks identified at the retreat need to be kept on the front burner. Commissioner Elliott said that in addition to revisiting the Board goals, she would also like to see a Personnel Committee created. The system as it stands, she said, does not work well for her.

The committee topic then moved back to Board staff. Commissioner Elliott said that the questions she has on resolutions packets cannot be answered in the time allotted. She noted that she has tried to get her questions answered, but preferred not to be specific about what questions have not been answered. Commissioner Powell said that the Board staff doubled in July and that she could not justify adding new staff. Commissioner Henley then suggested the committee begin looking at the staff job descriptions, saying he is detail-oriented and wanted to go through them. While going through the staff job descriptions, Commissioner Powell noted that Ms. Rohring is particularly adept at prepping committee members on financial and other details of reports submitted to committees. Commissioner Elliott questioned whether staff members, based on the job descriptions/education requirements, are capable of doing the analysis she needs for her due diligence.

ACTION ITEM: Provide salary ranges for Special Assistant and Confidential Secretary positions.

Committee discussion returned to the retreat. Ms. Dunsmoor will locate a variety of venues throughout the city for the retreat other than Central Office or one of the district school buildings. She will also poll Board members

on behalf of Commissioner Henley regarding what type of framework they prefer: Weekend or evening, two short days or one long day, etc. Commissioner Elliott stated her preference for one long session on a Saturday, off-site.

ACTION ITEM: Poll Board members and identify venues/determine costs for retreat.

Business Meeting Communications:

Committee members discussed and approved a proposed 'guide' to the Board meetings that can be included with the resolutions index for audience members. The guide and index will be displayed prominently at Business Meetings. Commissioners also discussed "streaming" Board meetings live through the district website or televising them. Commissioner Powell would like to see the resolutions index posted on the Board website on the Monday preceding Business meetings.

ACTION ITEM: Ms. Dunsmoor to get details from Communications Department about "streaming" Board meetings and/or televising them. Also to find out how early the resolutions index can be made available.

April Meeting:

Committee members set their April meeting for April 24, 6 p.m., Second Floor Conference Room.

Meeting adjourned 7:30 p.m.