

**Meeting Minutes**  
**Monday, December 11, 2023**  
**Regular Board Meeting at 5:30 P.M.**  
**Location of Meeting: GISD Administrative Board Room, 1615 St Lawrence St.**  
**Gonzales, Texas 78629**

**Board Members Present:** Ross Hendershot, III, President  
Justin Schwausch, Vice President  
Josie Smith-Wright, Secretary  
D'Anna Robinson  
Ashley Molina  
Gloria Torres  
Sandra Gorden

**Board Member Absent:**

**Item #1. Call to Order**

The Board of Trustees of the Gonzales Independent School District met Monday, December 11, 2023, at the Administrative Office Board Room, Gonzales, Texas. President, Ross Hendershot, III called the meeting to order at 5:30 P.M.

A quorum was declared with 7 members present.

**Invocation, Pledge, Mission Statement**

Josie Smith-Wright gave the Invocation. Sandra Gorden led the Pledge to the Flag, and Gloria Torres read the Mission Statement.

**Item #2: Public Comments:** There were 2 individuals with Public Comments

- Lisa Blackwell-GE Cafeteria Manager  
Ms. Blackwell came before the board to request a raise for all GISD Food Service Employees. FS employees have been told that the raise has been approved so they were questioning why has the increase had not been applied.
- Adriana Perez-HS Cafeteria Manager  
Mrs. Perez came before the board requesting a raise for the Food Service Department.

**Item#3: Recognitions:**

Recognitions were presented by Veronica Johannsen, Chief of Administration, Communications, & Safety and Joey Rivera, Athletic Director.

Ms. Johannsen presented the Student Recognitions and Staff Recognitions. Coach Rivera recognized the Athletes of the Month.

**Item #4: New Business/Action Items:**

**A. Discuss and Consider Action to Approve the Consent Agenda**

1. Budget Amendments
2. Minutes: November 13, 2023, Regular Board Meeting  
November 17, 2023, Special Board Meeting

Amanda Smith, Chief Financial Officer, reviewed the budget amendments. There were three adjustments to the Budget Amendments that Ms. Smith presented to the board.

- Increase "other local revenue" and function 11 by \$4,700 each: Winter Wonderland Donations (\$50 from Torres Insurance, \$250 from Texas Poultry Supply, \$500 from Walsh Gallegos, \$500 from GVTC, \$500 from Gonzales Healthcare Systems, \$100 from Chief Gregory Brooks, \$100 from Officer James Macias, \$100 from Joann Leifeste, \$100 from Kridler Boys Mowing, \$500 from Baker Boys, \$2,000 from Monthalia Methodist Church)
- Increase function 11 (\$6,520) & function 12 (\$30, 915) for 2022-23 unfulfilled purchase commitments (GHS & GNA Furniture)
- Increase "Other Local Revenue" by \$33,653: Excess Property Sale Proceeds

Justin Schwausch made a motion, with a second from Josie Smith-Wright, to approve the consent agenda, as presented.

The motion carried 7/0.

B. **Discuss and Consider Action to Approve the Annual Financial & Compliance Report for Fiscal Year Ended August 31, 2023 and the Engagement Letter from Singleton, Clark, & Company, PC for the 2024 Fiscal Year Audit**

Amanda Smith, Chief Financial Officer, came to the board to seek approval of the Annual Financial Audit Report and the Engagement Letter. Ms. Smith introduced the lead external auditor, Preston Singleton, with the district's auditing firm, Singleton, Clark, & Co.

Mr. Singleton presented the audit report, including the approach their firm takes to ensure the financial statements are accurate, and highlights from the annual financial report to the board. Highlights included that the district has approximately seven months of expenditures in fund balance. Given the minimum recommendation is three months, the district is in good standing. He also mentioned that there were no findings or questioned costs reported. He concluded his presentation by praising the Business Office for a job well done.

Dr. A praised Mrs. Smith and the business office stating they were the best business office he'd ever worked with.

Justin Schwausch made a motion, with a second from Gloria Torres, to approve the annual financial report and engagement letter, as presented.

The motion carried 7/0.

C. **Discuss and Consider Action to Approve an Amendment to the Lease Contract with the Texas Department of Public Safety Clarifying Terms for Maintenance Costs**

Amanda Smith, Chief Financial Officer, recommended and sought approval to an amendment of a previously approved Lease with the Texas Department of Public Safety for the building located at 1711 N. Sarah Dewitt Dr. Upon receipt of the previously approved agreement, GISD received notification from DPS that they were prohibited from performing maintenance on a leased facility. The amendment clarified that GISD will perform the routine maintenance of the building and DPS will reimburse the district costs incurred outside of routine maintenance and normal wear and tear.

Justin Schwausch made a motion, with a second from Sandra Gorden, to approve the amended interlocal agreement, as presented.

The motion carried 7/0

D. **Discuss and Consider Action to Approve the Purchase of One Regular Education School Bus and One Special Education School Bus and Associated Budget Amendment**

Gene Kridler recommended to the board the purchasing of one regular yellow school bus and one special needs school bus and the Associated Budget Amendment.

Ms. Smith-Wright asked if we had other busses from Thomas Bus Gulf Coast.

Josie Smith-Wright made a motion, with a second from Ashley Molina, that the approve the purchase of one regular school bus from Longhorn Bus Sales, LLC and One Special Needs bus from Thomas Bus Gulf Coast and Associated Budget Amendment, as presented.

The motion carried 7/0.

E. **Discuss and Consider Action to Approve the Interlocal Agreement with Region 13 Education Service Center for 2023 Bond Program Management**

Dr. Elmer Avellaneda, Superintendent of Schools, recommended the approval of the Interlocal Agreement with Region 13 Education Service Center for the 2023 Bond Program Management. R13's Program Management service will provide project accounting, project plan review, and project management. Their team will provide transparency via monthly board presentations and public meetings to share program progress and details with our taxpayers.

ESC 13 is already a partner with GISD and was recently engaged to support the District during the Pre-Bond phase. R13 utilizes the services of Sledge Engineering, LLC(SE) as their preferred partner and professional engineering firm to support District's facilities needs.

Josie Smith-Wright asked a question about the total fee. Mr. Hendershot answered the question for her stating it was 2.85% of the project costs.

Mr. Sledge also answered questions from board members.

Justin Schwausch made a motion, with a second from D'Anna Robinson, to approve the interlocal agreement, as presented.

The motion carried 7/0.

F. **Discuss and Consider Action to Approve the Ranking of Offerors and Delegate Contract Negotiations to the Superintendent for the Architectural/Engineering and Construction Administration Services for the November 2023 Bond Construction Program**

Casey Sledge with Sledge Engineering, LLC presented this action item. The district solicited and received fourteen A/E proposals for the November 2023 bond construction program.

A committee comprised of ten individuals met twice to review proposals and interview firms. That committee narrowed down and ranked the firms they believed were most qualified to provide A/E services to the district.

Five firms were interviewed November 16, 2023 and of those five firms interviewed the committee unanimously agreed upon a ranking and listed the top 3 firms in order 1-3. The committee recommends that the board consider approval of that ranking. If approved the next step would be to move forward with the top-ranking firm and start negotiations to be the architect and engineer for our bond program. If negotiations are not reached with the first firm we would move in order to the next. The rankings in order are VLK Architects, GBA, IDG+.

Mr. Schwausch asked if Mr. Sledge had worked with all three firms. Mr. Sledge response was that he worked with one firm extensively but was familiar with all three.

Mrs. Robinson asked for clarification about the order of firms.

Justin Schwausch made a motion, with a second from Sandra Gorden, to approve the ranking and selection of the highest ranked offeror and delegate to the superintendent the ability to negotiate the contract, as presented"

The motion carried 7/0,

G. **Discuss and Consider Action to Approve the Method for Construction Services for the 2023 Bond Program**

Dr. Elmer Avellaneda came to the board seeking approval for the Method for Construction Services for the 2023 Bond Program.

The Texas Government Code, Chapter 2269 states that the governing body of a governmental entity that considers a construction contract using a method authorized by the chapter, other than competitive bidding, must determine which method provides the best value for the governmental entity before advertising it.

Methods for construction services authorized under the Texas Government Code, Chapter 2269, are competitive bidding, competitive sealed proposals, construction manager-agent, construction manager-at-risk (CMAR), design-build contracts, and job order contracting.

Gonzales ISD successfully used the CMAR method for both the 1998 and 2013 bond programs. The administration recommends using CMAR again.

Justin Schwausch made a motion, with a second from Gloria Torres to approve the construction manager at risk method for the 2023 bond program construction projects, as presented.

The motion carried 7/0

H. **Discuss and Consider Action to Approve a Resolution Declaring Intention to Reimburse Project Expenditures and Associated Budget Amendment**

Amanda Smith, Chief Financial Officer, came before the board seeking approval of a Resolution that will declare the districts intent to reimburse project expenditures with bond proceeds. This resolution was discussed at the December 4, 2023 Board Workshop. It was described by Mrs. Smith as an accounting tool that will allow the district the flexibility to move forward with voter approved projects associated with the 2023 Bond Program. GISD would initially fund the eligible projects with General Fund monies and once the bond proceeds are received in the district we could reimburse the General Fund for the projects that were previously funded. GISD and many other districts have successfully used the method in the past. These projects have to be bond project eligible and Procurement Laws and Procedures will apply. The board would have to review and approve any high-dollar purchase that would be made.

Mrs. Smith recommended that the budget be amended as needed rather than the whole not to exceed amount of \$5M.

Mr. Hendershot asked about the language that was on the resolution and Mrs. Smith confirmed that it was the ballot language from the November Bond Election.

Ashley Molina made a motion, with a second from Gloria Torres to approve the resolution declaring intention to reimburse project expenditures and Associated Budget Amendment as presented.

The motion carried 7/0

**Item#5 Reports:**

A. **Financial Report**

The Financial Report was presented by Amanda Smith, CFO.

B. **Superintendent Reports**

Presented by Superintendent, Dr. Elmer Avellaneda

Enrollment as of 12/8/23: 2565

Daily Average Attendance for the District (November): 92.5%

**Item#6 Board Business:**

**Board Correspondence:** No Correspondence

**Dates of Interest:**

The month of December	
December 18, 2023	New Hire Christmas Party
December 22, 2023	Student and Staff Early Release
December 25, 2023- January 5, 2024	Winter Break
January 25, 2024	1 Yr Update for Strategic Planning

**Item #7 Adjourn to Closed Session:**

Under Texas Government Section [551.071](#) (Consultation with Attorney), Code Section [551.072](#) (Deliberation Regarding Real Property), [551.73](#) Deliberation Regarding Prospective Gift, Texas Government Code Section [551.074](#), (Personnel, to deliberate regarding the appointment, employment, evaluation, reassignment, duties, discipline, or dismissal of a public officer or employee), Texas Government Code Section [551.076](#) (Deliberation regarding implementation of Security, personnel or devices) and Section [551.082](#): School Children; School District Employees; Disciplinary Matter or Complaint, Section [551.083](#): Certain School Boards; Meeting Regarding Consultation with Representative of Employee Group, Section [551.084](#): Investigation; Exclusion of witnesses from a hearing.

The board went into a closed session at 6:33 P.M.

**Item #8 Reconvene to Open Meeting:**

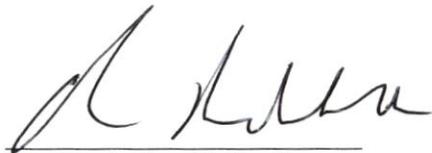
The Board will take appropriate action on items, if necessary, as discussed in the Closed Session. The board returned to an open session at 8:27 P.M.

A motion was made by Josie Smith-Wright, with a second from Ashley Molina, to approve the Superintendent Evaluation Instrument as presented.

The motion carried 7/0.

**Item #9 Adjourn**

There being no further business, President Hendershot adjourned the meeting at 8:28 P.M.



Ross Hendershot, III, President  
Board of Trustees



Josie Smith-Wright, Secretary  
Board of Trustees