

Marked Tree Board of Education
Regular Monthly Meeting
June 21, 2021
6:00 p.m.

The Board of Education met in a regular monthly meeting on May 21, 2021 at 6:00 p.m. in the Elementary Cafeteria. Members present were: Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr., Ms. Jessica Fernandez Ms. Vickie Green and Ms. Dana Ashcraft. Members absent Mr. Ryan Blankenship. President Jessica Fernandez called the meeting to order.

Media Notified.

I. REVIEW AND APPROVE MINUTES OF REGULAR MONTHLY BOARD MEETING MAY 17, 2021:

Ms. Vickie Green made a motion to accept the recommendation of Superintendent Matt Wright to approve the minutes of the May 17, 2021 Regular Monthly Meeting . Motion was seconded by Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. All voted in favor.

II. REVIEW AND APPROVE FINANCIAL STATEMENT:

The financial report was presented by Superintendent Matt Wright. Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. made a motion to accept the financial report as presented. Motion was seconded by Ms. Dana Ashcraft. All voted in favor.

III. CONSIDER TRANSFER OF FUNES TO BUILDING FUND:

Ms. Vickie Green made a motion to accept the recommendation of Superintendent Matt Wright to transfer up to \$400,000 into the building fund. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. All voted in favor.

IV. CONSIDER POLICY UPDATES FOR 2021-2022 SCHOOL YEAR

Ms. Dana Ashcraft made a motion to accept the recommendation of Superintendent Matt Wright to approve the ASBA recommended policy changes for the 2021-2022 school years. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. All voted in favor.

V. CONSIDER BOND REFINANCING:

Mr. Michael Dobbs of First Security Beardsley discussed tax exempt rates versus taxed rates when refinancing bonds. Rates now are at 1.92% maybe 1.8% somewhere in the middle. He explained school districts are allowed to refund or refinance a bond issue provided that they do not extend the term of the bond. The current bond goes to February 2047. Also, the district must receive \$100,000 in savings or 5% of the remaining payments. We like to have at least a 3% savings. This would be about a \$400,000 savings with \$262,000 savings to be in the FY22 school year and around \$71,000 in the FY23 school year and after that from \$100 to \$1,000 per year savings. This is an unrestricted savings. If the board were to approve the application it would then be submitted to ADE for the commissioner's approval in October the board would sign the closing documents. The current bond is 2.9% it is a 2019 bond at that projected rate of 1.92% after the savings the payments will eventually go back to the \$370,000 payments. If the rates go up and can't realize the savings we can just cancel the application with no obligation to move forward. Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. made a

motion to accept the recommendation of Superintendent to submit an "Application for a Permit to Issue Bonds", with related documents, for \$7,375,000 in Refunding Bonds to the State Department of Education and to employ First Security Beardsley as Fiscal Agent, and to authorize the Superintendent of Schools to accept or reject the best bid submitted in connection with the public sale of the proposed bonds in consultation with the fiscal agent. Motion was seconded by Ms. Dana Ashcraft. All voted in favor.

VI. ANNUAL FINANCIAL REVIEW:

Mr. Michael Dobb of First Security Beardsley gave an annual financial overview for the district. He stated that there is an increase of just over 3,000,000 assessed value for 21-22 school year that is around \$3,000 per mill for 14 mills that is \$42,000 current millage of 39.5 mills is ½ mill above the state average. He stated that in the event the bond is not refinanced in October that the bond payment will increase to \$372,103 in the FY22 school year but if the bond is refinanced in October the payments will not increase to \$371,845 until FY24. The district's short term finances have paid out in FY21. He projected the minimum foundation funding for FY21 to be \$3,340,420, ALE to be \$17,232, ELL to be \$718, ESA funding to be \$424,137, Professional Development funds to be \$16,743 bonded debt assistance 13206. The wealth index for the district is 32.02%. He pointed out that there looks to be no less funding available for FY22 versus FY21. He stated that the overall financial picture looks really solid and stable.

VII. COVID UPDATE PLAN REVIEW:

Superintendent Matt Wright informed board members the State requires that the district update its plan every 6 months. The problem with that is the digital learning plan has been submitted but remains unapproved at this time. The plan must be reviewed to remain in compliance. He stated that he does not anticipate many changes to the plan. The district plans to partner with certain places for testing sites. The district will purchase all supplies the students need and assure that it remains at school. The district plans to use all waivers available to ensure that students eat free and continue restricting visitors to the building to ensure the students are protected. The COVID hotline will remain utilized for contact tracing and all state standards will be observed. Superintendent Matt Wright reported 6 cases of COVID in Poinsett County. At this point the District would not require students to wear mask but if the number of cases were to rise the mask requirement would be observed. The district will not screen students as they enter the building unless the need arises. From February to the end of the school year there was only one case on campus. The district will continue using the protocols in place and in July recommendations on the use of the mask will be announced. The district will plan a voluntary vaccination for students to ensure the students have access to health care. Ms. Vickie Green made a motion to accept the recommendation of Superintendent Matt Wright to approve the updated COVID plan. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. All voted in favor.

VIII. CONSIDER ARP ESSER FUNDS PLAN AND STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE

Superintendent Matt Wright explained using the funds to create a safer environment for students which included new HVAC systems, new sinks and soap dispensers for the bathrooms and a new bus to alleviate overcrowding and the spread of germs Also set aside 20% of the funds to address student learning laws; and supporting educators and staff wellbeing; to compensate for extra duties due to COVID and provide technology they need in case the need arises to work from home. Ms. Dana Ashcraft made a motion to accept the recommendation of Superintendent Matt Wright to

approve ARP ESSER Funds Plan and Statement of Assurance. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. All voted in favor.

IX. DECLARE OPEN BOARD POSITION:

Superintendent Matt Wright informed board members that Mr. Ryan Blankenship resigned his seat on the board and Ms. Dena Swink and Ms. Judy Sharp are both present and interested in serving on the board. It was requested that each person submit a summary of qualifications at the next scheduled board meeting. Ms. Vickie Green made a motion to accept the resignation of Ryan Blankenship and declare his seat vacant and to authorize Superintendent Matt Wright to accept a summary of qualifications from the two interested parties. Motion was seconded by Ms. Dana Ashcraft. All voted in favor.

X. CONSIDER SCHOOL ELECTION DATE FOR 2021/2022 SCHOOL YEAR:

No action was taken.

XI. PRINCIPAL REPORT:

Elementary Principal Lisa Gray reported that summer school is underway serving about 40 students and there will also be two weeks in July. She reported that in the past it was only for a half day but this year they have been going for a whole day. She reported that she had been working with the district leadership team and next week all of the faculty will be in training similar to national training but will be held within the district's own building to curb the expense of it.

High School Principal Lucas Guenrich introduced himself and reported that summer school also started at the High School doing credit recovery for grades 9 thru 12. He stated they are serving around 25 students per day. Principal Guenrich also reported that the leadership team members have been coming in working.

XII. PERSONNEL:

- a. Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. made a motion to accept the recommendation of Superintendent Matt Wright to hire Ashlyn Crawford as high school teacher. Motion was seconded by Ms. Vickie Green. All voted in favor
- b. Ms. Dana Ashcraft made a motion to accept the recommendation of Superintendent Matt Wright to hire Caleb Miller as Resource Teacher. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ira Lee Whitfield, Sr. All voted in favor.

XI. OTHER BUSINESS (from BOARD MEMBERS):

No other business was discussed.

President Jessica Fernandez adjourned the meeting.

Ms. Jessica Fernandez
Board President

Ms. Dana Ashcraft
Board Secretary