

MINUTES BOARD MEETING

September 10, 2018

REGULAR MEETING

At 7:00 p.m. on September 10th, 2018, Mr. Milner convened the regular meeting of the district Board of Education. Board members present were, Ms. Whittaker, Mr. Reynolds, Ms. Boone, Mr. Hartsfield, and Mr. Frazier. Mr. Moore was absent. School administrative personnel present were Dr. Guess, Mr. Webb, Mr. Hayden, Mr. Branch, Dr. Johnson, Ms. Keaton, Mr. Tietz, Ms. Dunn, Ms. Shaw, Ms. Bailey, Ms. Davis, Ms. Wilson, Ms. Sanders, Ms. Cage, Ms. Williams, and Ms. Howington. The press was not in attendance.

OLD BUSINESS

Minutes. The minutes of the last regular meeting were unanimously approved 6-0 on a motion by Ms. Boone and a second by Mr. Reynolds.

Financial Statement. Dr. Guess presented the financial statement for the month of August, reporting \$1,352,980.94 in revenue and expenditures of \$1,115,244.72 the non-activity funds, leaving an ending balance of \$6,399,987.17. The board unanimously voted 6-0 to approve the district financial statement for the month of August as presented on a motion by Mr. Hartsfield and a second by Mr. Reynolds.

NEW BUSINESS

State. Dr. Mike Hernandez, State Superintendent for the Office of Coordinated Support and Service from the Arkansas Department of Education addressed the financial status of the district. Dr. Hernandez stated he met with Mr. Milner, Norma Walker, and Dr. Guess to go over data. He went through slides and had an informed discussion to go over the financial data. He showed we are having a downward trend on the legal balance, which is alarming to the state. He pulled reports from my school data and showed the trends. He explained when students drop, you would expect staff to drop and that has not happened. He stated we need to have a plan and execute the plan to make sure the district doesn't fall into trouble. He stated the situation is not complete panic mode yet, but serious. Mr. Reynolds asked if most of the expenses were capital improvements and bonuses. Dr. Hernandez stated it was some of the problem, but not all. He stated the bonuses and capital expenditures are not budgeted for 2018-2019 and we still have a deficit, so we need to look at staffing.

Ms. Boone asked if the drop in students and increase in personnel caused the problem. Dr. Hernandez stated that classified staff and certified non-teaching staff have not helped. As students decrease, staff should as well.

Mr. Hartsfield asked if the reports were available at any time. Dr. Hernandez stated yes. Mr. Hartsfield stated he knew hiring had gone up, but wanted to look at these reports in the future.

Mr. Reynolds stated it is a catch 22 because teacher aides have helped test scores and we have to be aware of what cost it is to get rid of stuff. Dr. Hernandez said yes, you need to look at standards and what is affordable.

Dr. Guess stated that the budget has no fluff in it and we are spending all categorical and federal funding. He stated not only do we have to stick with a tight budget, but we have to look at a loss of 80 kids for next year.

Ms. Boone stated it doesn't take a rocket scientist to see we need to lose staff and our test scores aren't shooting fireworks, so we need to look at classified and others.

Ms. Whittaker asked what our plans are. Dr. Guess stated we have to hold our expenses down and look at all things for example, transportation, staff, etc. He stated Norma has worked hard to give a tight budget.

Mr. Hartsfield stated Dr. Guess has made strides such as waiting on hiring until we look at numbers and who we can move around. He stated it has been alarming because he knew we were spending more than we were taking in.

Dr. Hernandez stated you want to provide the best education possible, but have to look at what you can do monetary wise. He stated it is not fun and it is not easy. He stated the state wants to be supportive, because they do not want to take us over but they have to look at trends.

AMI. The application for the Watson Chapel School District to participate in the Alternative Methods of Instruction Plan was provided in advance for the boards review.

Dr. Guess stated Ms. Williams put in hard work to come up with a plan. Dr. Guess explained how AMI worked. He stated teachers and students do not have to make up days, but other staff will have to make up the time. He stated we will engage AMI the first day missed.

Mr. Hartsfield asked if this was if school was dismissed or for partial days. Dr. Guess stated the district only engages if the whole day is missed.

On a motion by Mr. Hartsfield and a second by Mr. Frazier, the board voted 6-0 to have AMI for the district.

Annual Financial Report & Budget. The district will file its annual financial report for the 2017-2018 and the budget for 2018-2019 electronically on September 30th. On a motion by Mr. Hartsfield and a second by Mr. Reynolds, the board voted 6-0 to file the annual financial report and budget.

PPC REPORT & CPPC

Frankie Hemphill stated the new representatives for the PPC. Edgewood-Renaye Eastwood, L.L. Owen-Jarhea May, Coleman-Jodi Sloan, Jr High-Lillian Hemphill, and Sr High-Frankie Hemphill. Frankie Hemphill stated the PPC had 3 things they wanted. 1. Be paid in August. 2. Be paid twice a month on the 1st and the 15th. They stated they polled teachers and 101 teachers want twice a month. They stated they did not have Coleman's

results yet. 3. A red flashing light to help in the crosswalk to promote safety. Lillian Hemphill stated a police officer ignored the crossing guard. Mr. Hartsfield asked if the Highway Department was responsible and Dr. Guess stated they would have to approve it and we would have to buy it. Lillian Hemphill stated it would be a onetime cost. Frankie Hemphill stated the districts payroll clerk is 2nd to none and could handle it. Mr. Reynolds asked Norma Walker if it could be done. She stated that it could not be changed throughout the school year and the district would have to hire additional staff. Ms. Baily asked if classified could be polled and Frankie Hemphill stated there is not a classified PPC.

BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

None.

PERSONNEL

I have received a letter of resignation from Cozetta Fuller, Nashia James, and Herman Vaughn Jr. The board needs to consider employing 3 Elementary Teachers and a Bus Driver.

1. Catherine Powell as an Elementary Teacher
2. Jamie Reid as an Elementary Teacher
3. Delores Walker as an Elementary Teacher
4. Melvin Wilkes as a Bus Driver

Executive session started at 7:47 and ended at 8:13. On a motion by Mr. Reynolds and a second by Mr. Hartsfield, the board voted 6-0 on Dr. Guess employment recommendations.

SUPERINTENDENT UPDATE

Dr. Guess stated he did not think anything needed to be added. He thanked the staff for what they have done.

ADJOURNMENT 8:15.

Respectfully submitted by, Dr. Jerry Guess and Norma Walker

Kevin Moore,
Board Secretary