

CHEROKEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 1

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

BOARD MEETING

SEPTEMBER 14, 2009

The Cherokee County School District No. 1 Board of Trustees met in regular session on Monday, September 14, 2009 at 7:00 PM in the Board Room at the District Administrative Office. Board members present were Chair Mr. Billy Blackwell, Vice Chair Mr. Donnie Lee Smith, Secretary Mrs. Amanda Knowles, Mrs. Lindley H. Auton, Mr. Barry E. Bailey, Mr. Willie J. Crosby, Mr. Mike A. Ellis, Mrs. Robin D. Harper, and Ms. Cheryll D. Smith. Administrators present were Superintendent Dr. William B. James, Assistant Superintendent for Curriculum & Instruction Dr. Linda C. Sellars, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Mr. William A. Jones, Director of Educational Programs Mrs. Page McCraw, and Director of Finance Mr. Ben Childs. Mrs. Andrea White from Duff White & Turner LLC was present. News media present were Mr. Scott Powell - Gaffney Ledger and Mrs. Janet Spencer – Spartanburg Herald-Journal.

In accordance with South Carolina Code of Laws, Section 30-40-80(d), as amended, the following have been notified of the time, date, and agenda of this meeting: The Blacksburg Times, The Cherokee Chronicle, The Gaffney Ledger, the Shelby Star, the Spartanburg Herald-Journal, Radio Stations WEAC-AM and WFGN, WSPA-TV, WYFF-TV, and WSOC-TV.

Chair Mr. Billy Blackwell called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM and recognized the news media present. Mrs. Knowles led in the opening prayer. The Gaffney High School AFJROTC made the presentation of colors. Attendees observed a moment of silence to honor Lance Cpl. Christopher Scott Fowlkes who passed away on September 10, 2009 from injuries suffered while supporting combat operations in Helmand province, Afghanistan.

Approval of the Board Agenda was the next item on the agenda. **Mrs. Knowles made the motion to approve the agenda, seconded by Mr. Smith. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

Regular Board Minutes dated August 10, 2009 were presented for approval. **Mr. Crosby made the motion to approve the minutes as presented, seconded by Ms. Smith. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

School Board Policy BCBI - Public Participation was the next item on the agenda. No one requested to address trustees according to policy.

Executive Session – Update from legal Counsel was the next item on the agenda. Mr. Blackwell called for a motion to go into executive session to receive advice from the attorney related to potential claims against the District involving the matter of the athletic trainer position at Gaffney High School. **Mrs. Auton made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Harper. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion. The executive session began at 7:04 PM and ended at 8:24 PM.** Mr. Blackwell said trustees had been in executive session to receive advice from the attorney related to potential claims against the District. He called for a motion to return to regular session. **Mrs. Auton made the motion, seconded by Mrs. Knowles. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion.** Mr. Blackwell called for a motion from the floor. **Mrs. Harper made the motion to direct the administration to meet with Mrs. McDaniel tomorrow to discuss the board's conclusion of the athletic trainer position. Ms. Smith seconded the motion. The following trustees voted in favor of the motion: Mrs. Auton, Mr. Bailey, Mr. Crosby, Mrs. Knowles, Mr. Blackwell, Mrs. Harper, and Ms. Smith. The following trustees voted in opposition to the motion: Mr. Ellis and Mr. Smith. The motion passed by a majority vote.**

Report from Personnel Committee – Mr. Blackwell provided a report from the committee meeting held Tuesday, August 24, 2009. The Personnel Committee met to discuss the certification issue for the athletic trainer at Gaffney High School. The consensus of the committee was to secure legal counsel on this matter. **This item was presented for information only; no action was taken.**

The next item on the agenda was Curriculum and Instruction Update. The schools have reported all ordered textbooks have been received. The district was notified on September 2, 2009 that effective immediately no math, English, science, and social studies textbook orders will be filled by the state book depository. Other content books may be ordered from the depository only if they are in stock. The district can purchase textbooks as needed from the publishers with local funds. Training for the transition from SASI to Power School will take place through September 23. Mr. Robinson has been personally involved in this training and working long hours to maintain services and equipment in the schools as well as keeping the InTouch parent information system working through this transition. All field trips are being carefully reviewed. The principals have been asked on several occasions to limit field trips and to make sure field trips support the instructional program. The flexibility of funds legislation specifically requires a reduction in the amount of travel for staff and for student activities. The administration has been informed by Spartanburg Community Actions that the Cherokee County Head Start Grant has tentatively been approved. The grant would bring \$536,000 in services and staff in addition to a substantial amount of start up funds for 3-4-year-old kindergarten classes, infant/toddler care, teacher assistants, a director, etc. Specific information regarding the district's responsibilities will be presented to the board for approval. Questions were addressed regarding the number of students attending the learning center, the procedure used to assign students to the center, security concerns, the process to register for the Adult Education program, and field trips. **This item was presented for information only; no action was taken.**

The next item on the agenda was Administrative Services Update. Director of Finance Mr. Ben Childs presented the Monthly Financial Update. The General Fund has received 4% of the budgeted revenue for 2009. The General Fund has expended 4% of the budgeted expenditures.

The ending fund balance as of July 31, 2009 is \$4,310,068. This figure includes year-to-date revenue, transfers from State/Federal funds less year-to-date expenditures and transfers to other programs. The preliminary projected fund balance as of June 30, 2009, is \$3,505,168. A total of \$47,343,459 has been received in one-cent sales tax revenue through July 2009. A total of \$37,030,344 has been paid as principal and interest on bond indebtedness through this same period. The Food Service budget had a negative **ending** cash balance of \$710,353 as of July 31, 2009. The report also included budgeted expenditures, encumbrances, and remaining balances on current building projects by location. Trustees also discussed the recent 4% budget cut from the State and the administration's recommendation to absorb the budget cut. Dr. James advised trustees that classrooms will not be affected by the most recent budget cut. He informed trustees some vacated positions that were included in the budget approved in June 2009 have not been filled, the district has limited travel and monitors expenditures daily, tax collections are better than anticipated, and other steps have been taken to ensure the district remains solvent. Dr. James recommended posting the assistant principal position at Ewing Middle School and the Coordinator of Pre-School/Special Education position. Both positions were funded in the current budget. While someone has temporarily been assigned to Ewing, he recommended that the position be posted and Dr. Wooten be permitted to interview for the position. Dr. James said there had been significant cuts to the Information Management Services department this year. The current reassignment of an Information Management Services director and the loss of other positions in the department have resulted in an overload of work for some personnel in the department, which includes working late hours as well as a backlog of maintenance/upkeep on equipment. In addition, the department is coordinating the training of the conversion to Power School. While the training will be complete within a month or so, the department will also be responsible to troubleshoot the systems once Power School is installed. After lengthy discussion regarding the budget update, recent budget cuts, reassignment of staff, work loads, classroom loads, reduction in district office personnel, reassignment of responsibilities, and requirements to meet local maintenance of effort funding, the consensus of the Board was to post only the Coordinator of Pre-School/Special Education position and require other staff to assume additional responsibilities so that services would not be impacted. **This item was received for information only; no action was taken.**

Ratification of Claims was the next item on the agenda. **Mr. Smith made the motion to approve claims, seconded by Mrs. Auton. All trustees voted unanimously for the motion.**

No report was necessary for Transportation, Maintenance, or Food Services. The newly installed doors at Granard Middle will be painted and maintenance will repair the exposed or sharp fencing around the concrete area at the learning center. **This item was received for information only; no action was taken.**

Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Mr. William A. Jones presented Personnel Matters for consideration. **Mr. Smith made the motion to approve personnel matters, seconded by Mr. Ellis. All trustees voted unanimously for personnel matters as presented.**

The next item on the agenda was announcements. Dr. James reminded trustees of upcoming events. The Annual Cherokee County Chamber Retreat is scheduled for Thursday, September 17th through Saturday, September 19th. Dr. James will not be attending the retreat or making a

presentation this year. Ken Darr with Lyles, Darr & Clark, LLP mailed the district a copy of the recorded deed from the district to convey the Limestone Learning Center property to Limestone College as recorded in Deed Book 24 at Page 2448. The district has also received and signed the original quitclaim deed for execution to convey the property on Academy Street to the Town of Blacksburg. The quitclaim deed was mailed to Ken Darr for execution on September 1, 2009. The next scheduled board meeting is Monday, October 12th.

An agenda item for the next board meeting will be delegates to Delegate Assembly. The South Carolina School Board Association's annual business meeting will be held on Saturday, December 5, 2009 at 2:00 PM. The meeting will be held at Hilton head's Crowne Plaza Hotel. The district will be allowed 3 delegates to attend. Please advise Mr. Blackwell or Mrs. Lemmonds if you would like to attend as a delegate this year.

Other Matters

Mrs. Auton asked if the quitclaim deed to convey the Academy Street property to the Town of Blacksburg was researched in-depth to ensure there would be no problems with the title transfer. Dr. James said the attorney had completed the necessary research and the deed was properly executed. Mrs. Auton said there was a Web Site where people could pay for using textbooks on line. She asked again for the seating grid for the new stadium so trustees could review the seating chart and compare the assignments to the prior seating chart. While she is aware it cannot be an exact duplicate, it seems long term fans should have received comparable seats at the new stadium. She asked if Apache, the drug dog, was still making routine walks through the schools and Dr. James confirmed that this is still being done. She thanked the administration for their hard work and efforts to maintain stability even with the budget cuts. She offered her condolences to the families of district personnel who have passed away recently. She said there was an on-going effort to collect American flags and line the travel route when the motorcade brings the body of Lance Cpl. Fowlkes home to Gaffney. She encouraged everyone who could to line the travel route to honor this fallen soldier.

Mr. Bailey echoed the sentiments already expressed and thanked everyone for the good jobs they were doing in the district.

Mr. Crosby thanked administrators and district employees for a smooth start this year. He thanked everyone for their extra efforts during these difficult financial times.

Mrs. Knowles echoed the same sentiments. She asked if 4th and 5th grade students at Limestone-Central were eating in the classroom. Trustees were informed these students have been eating at their desks to reduce overcrowding in the cafeteria and to increase instructional time. The food is delivered to the classroom in Styrofoam plates and students are given the same choice selections as students who eat in the classroom. Some trustees felt the classroom environment was not the appropriate area to serve lunch. Mrs. Knowles also asked who would handle touch-up painting in the schools and when the work would be done because some areas looked horrible.

Mr. Smith commended the initiative to honor Lance Cpl. Fowlkes. He asked the administration if the school district would continue to use the pool at Limestone College and Dr. James

confirmed this agreement was in place. He asked if maintenance requests were being completed on a timely basis and if a continuous list was maintained and updated. A date is assigned to the work order by the computer and work orders are signed and dated by the school principal when completed. Principals have been instructed to notify the superintendent if work orders are not completed on a timely basis. He asked trustees to inform him of any specific problems or concerns. Mr. Smith commended the administration for a great job with the budget but encouraged the administration to be aware of areas that were overstaffed/overbooked. He asked to see the building layout for the alternative school, what programs were housed there, and the number of administrators located in the facility.

Mr. Ellis apologized for the length of the executive session and with the way some things were done at the meeting. He thanked district personnel for a job well done.

Ms. Smith extended sympathy to the Fowlkes family and to the families of district personnel who have passed away recently. She thanked the administration, principals, teachers, and staff for their commitment in the district and said she appreciated them.

Mrs. Harper offered her condolences to the personnel lost and to the Fowlkes family. She asked that students be permitted to bring bottled water or juice to school to avoid the spread of germs during the flu season. She asked that the Board Policy on public participation be re-visited and be on the agenda at the next board meeting. She commended the administration for doing a wonderful job with the budget, which is the largest budget in the county. She does not want the classroom to be impacted by budget cuts or lose any more teachers.

Mr. Blackwell echoed comments already expressed. He commended the administration for their work on the budget and said the district needed to cut wherever possible. He agreed to revisit the public participation policy and said there was an issue at the meeting tonight. He referred this item to the Special Needs Committee to review before the next board meeting. He instructed Mrs. Auton to meet with the committee and bring a recommendation to the board at the meeting on October 12th.

Mr. Blackwell called for a motion to adjourn. **Mr. Crosby made the motion, seconded by Mr. Smith. All trustees voted unanimously to adjourn.** The meeting adjourned at 9:45 PM.