

**Minutes of Regular Meeting of the El Dorado School Board  
December 12, 2011**

The directors of the board met on the above date at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Room, School Administration Building, 200 West Oak Street, with Vicky Dobson presiding. Other directors present were Wayne Gibson, Larry Holder, Renee Skinner, Susan Turbeville, Will Vance and Todd Whatley. Also attending was Supt. Bob Watson, Rhonda Simmons, Shirley Billingly, Bonnie Haynie, Tim Zylks, Angie Drummond, and Lou Ann Voris.

Mrs. Dobson asked if there were any corrections or additions to the minutes of the meetings held November 14 and December 1. On a motion by Wayne Gibson, seconded by Susan Turbeville, and carried on a 7-0 vote, the minutes were approved.

The board reviewed the monthly bills. After some discussion and on a motion by Larry Holder, seconded by Renee Skinner, and carried on a 7-0 vote, the bills were approved for payment. A list of bills paid and monthly financial statement are on file in the business office.

The board approved the transfer of a student to the Parkers Chapel School District.

Mike Cobb, of the firm Cobb & Suskie, C.P.A., presented the district's annual audit report. He stated it is a good report and there are no issues and no findings of non-compliance. The district has lots to be proud of explaining that he had toured the new high school and thought the district had certainly nailed the timeless look. He explained the district's balance sheet shows \$2.9 million in cash in the General Fund - \$6.5 million total and \$8 million in net worth – which doesn't show building and equipment – just amounts in funds. The district's financial numbers are about the same as last year with a good handle on revenue available. The district is \$2.2 million in the black, he noted.

Mr. Cobb explained that in prior years, the district had some issues with federal programs but all the items have been resolved and did not reoccur. The district pulls together as a team to accomplish goals and you make decisions based on the good of the group as a whole, he noted. This doesn't happen by accident but starts at the top and works its way down, he told board members. He also pointed out the district looks well-positioned to handle challenges. He explained there is enough cash to operate at least thirty days – if everything were to shut down.

Angie Drummond presented a request from the Personnel Policies Committee for their consideration to allow a payroll deduction for interested employees to join the Lion Oil Federal Credit Union. She explained that offering the service is a benefit to employees who choose to have a portion of their check automatically transferred to Lion Oil Federal Credit Union to participate in savings or loan programs. She said the school district would have to agree to be a corporate sponsor for the employees to participate in the program and asked for the board's consideration. After some discussion and on a motion by Larry Holder, seconded by Wayne Gibson, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the services to offer district employees the choice of doing business through payroll deduction with Lion Oil Federal Credit Union.

Mr. Watson spoke with the board about a hard decision and after prayer decided to approach the board about partnering with a service that will provide technical support, engineering, and centralizing the district's technology system. VARtek's mission is to be the best provider of managed technology solutions for enhanced learning in the K-12 marketplace. Mr. Watson noted the district currently has a fine group of technicians that do a great job but in order to be progressive with technology we need a support system to meet future needs. VARtek company officials visited with the board last month about their services. Mr. Watson said the administration has visited with VARtek extensively and feels comfortable that they can provide services to keep the district progressive with technology. If the board chooses to contract with VARtek, the district will be paying the company about \$890,000 for the next five years for the service.

Mr. Watson stated the district now spends about \$400,000 annually for tech support and a \$490,000 increase for the support will mean the district will have to readjust the budget to determine ways to afford the service. The district currently receives about \$6,100 per student and with a possible loss of anywhere between thirty and fifty students from one year to the next, the district could lose anywhere from \$175,000 to \$365,000 in revenue. He noted the district will pay an additional \$180,000 next year to honor the teacher salary schedule and that he wanted the board to be aware of the district's financial status before they voted on entering into a contract with VARtek. The district will get additional funds – about \$100 per student from the state – and he feels local revenue will be up next year.

Adjustments that will have to be made to trim the budget will be discussed during the January meeting, Mr. Watson said. One of the major problems with the district's technology system now is the need for additional bandwidth. South Arkansas Telephone said they can offer more bandwidth at a cheaper rate – their assessment is about one million dollars for construction and then a monthly fee. In the past, the district has had to make some difficult decisions concerning school closings in order to stay within the budget and he said even if the board voted not to go with VARtek, some adjustments would have to be made to stay within the budget and provide sustainable technology for the district. Mr. Watson said attrition will provide some added funds next year and we can handle this by making cuts in other areas. What we need now is bandwidth and infrastructure. Mr. Watson said that we want to do the best we can for our students. VARtek people are engineers and they are very good at what they do, explaining that they deal solely with K-12 schools. After some discussion and on a motion by Larry Holder, seconded by Renee Skinner, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the district to contract with VARtek Services to provide support, engineering, and centralization of the district's technology system.

Mr. Watson visited with the board about a new state requirement regarding facilities. He said thirty minutes prior to the regular January board meeting that copies of the district's facilities plan will be discussed and on hand to view.

Mr. Gibson talked with the board about his term ending as president of the Arkansas School Boards Association and noted that he had a great time serving in that position.

The meeting adjourned to an executive session to discuss personnel matters, then reconvened to an open meeting. On a motion by Susan Turbeville, seconded by Renee Skinner, and carried on a 7-0 vote, it was

RESOLVED, That the board hereby approves the superintendent's recommendations concerning the acceptance of resignations and the employment of new personnel.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.