

MENA SCHOOL BOARD MEETING  
December 16, 2008

MINUTES

The Mena School Board met in regular session on Tuesday night, December 16, 2008 with the following members present: Robby Hines, Randy Horton, Will Robbins, Robert Crawford, Edd Puckett, Clint Montgomery and Kyle Cannon.

President Robby Hines called the meeting to order and asked Edd Puckett to open the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of the November Board meetings were reviewed. Kyle Cannon made a motion to approve the minutes as read. Robert Crawford seconded the motion and the motion carried.

In the Superintendent's report, Dr. Gathright reported it has been a busy month with the Thanksgiving holidays, Target Assessments, various meetings, band concerts, choir concerts, elementary musicals, basketball games, and regular school days.

Mena School cafeterias served around 1000 guests for its Thanksgiving meal. Cordia Sprague and the cafeteria staff did an outstanding job in preparing and serving our students and their guests for this meal.

The district ACSIP was approved after Kimberly Pymn made some changes to reflect new guidelines. The approval will allow funds to begin to flow to the various schools from Title I, NSLA, and other federal and categorical sources.

Ken Marshall has completed the Cycle 3 Report. The verification and cross-checks require a great deal of time but ensure the accuracy of our records.

The retirement reception for Tom and Becky Parker was well attended and appreciated by them and their family. We wish them both the best in their retirement.

Dr. Sharon Rowland's retirement party is December 16 from 4-5 p.m. at Holly Harshman. We wish her the best and also appreciate the many years she has contributed to the education of students in Polk County.

Tonya Thacker, counselor at MHS, received her National Board certification in November. This is a great honor that requires a great deal of hard work. Paulette Crawford is the only other National Board certified teacher in our district.

Nine Mena Bearcat football players were recognized for their efforts this year. All conference was: Tyler Dennis, Josh Vaughn, Jake Bunch, and Mack Edwards. Honorable mention was: Wes Schuller, Matt Robbins, David Jumper, Josh Thompson and Daniel Wood.

Gene Hawk is coordinating activities and plans toward the move of the building from Hatfield to Mena for ALE. Other buildings at Hatfield are being advertised for sale to be moved. Inquiries from neighboring districts are being addressed about various other elements of the Hatfield campus. Progress on the playground equipment's relocation to Holly Harshman is slower and more costly than expected.

East Boundary has been widened and is the more appropriate width for our buses for the future route that we hope to take with the new high school. The city is also going to install a box culvert/bridge at intersection of Morgan and Dallas to accommodate the large water flow in that area and to preserve the street.

The City of Mena, the Arkansas Highway Department representative, Ronnie Duckett, and Diann Gathright met to discuss options for streets to the new high school. Unless the school and city do most of the work, the process will be very long. Even with the city/school matching funds, we may be looking at five years for major highway improvements including traffic lights or 4-way stop signs.

Dr. Diann Gathright participated in two Scholastic Audits that the Board permitted this year. Information learned at each site will continue to strengthen programs and services at Mena.

New elements are being designed for the district website to include daily calendars of events and new information of help to parents.

Each building was asked to volunteer to run the gates at basketball games this season. The buildings had five games each. Their efforts to give a minimum of this hour and a half are appreciated by the district.

Semester tests will be during the week of December 15.

Many activities were provided for Mena Public School students this month. They included the following: elementary choir presentations; choir presentation at the Arkansas State Capitol; choir concerts for MMS and MHS; multiple appearances by choirs in the community; band concerts for the beginner, MMS, and MHS bands; the Christmas Parade with various

groups featured; band contests in which Mena did well; special projects of service to the community by each school and several groups; the completion of football and volleyball seasons and the beginning of basketball seasons; basketball tournaments; and special projects of National Honor Society, FBLA, FFA, FCCLA, and a variety of other clubs.

First National Bank sponsored the basketball tournament December 5-6. Community support is vital to and is greatly appreciated by the programs of Mena Schools.

Bruce Coville, author of children's books, was in the district on December 10 to talk with the students and teachers about aspects that he utilizes in his writing. His work in our district is the result of a grant written by Karen Purvis, Jimma Holder, and Kimberly Pymn.

Letters have been sent to parents of students who pay for lunches to reacquaint them with the guidelines for federal meal plans. An increase in people who utilize this program is a benefit to our district since NSLA and Title I funds are tied to this count. With economic times more difficult, this is a way to help families in the district and to providing additional funding without costing the local citizens any additional funds. Students who utilize this program have the same processes as those who do not and are not identifiable to the other students.

Letters are also being drafted to invite students to return to our district who are being home-schooled. Mena Schools provide a quality education, and each school would like to involve home-schooled students in the academic programs available.

It is the season for illnesses. Our staff and their families are no exception. The district has a number of staff members ill in hospitals and at home, family members who need attention, and deaths of loved ones. The staff is working hard to be in their classrooms or other duties unless it is absolutely not possible. They are in our thoughts as they approach the holiday season under these stressful situations.

Diesel costs were at \$1.94 the week of December 1-5.

Craig Boone is coming to review the placement of the building and to discuss heating and cooling options the week of December 15. He is making significant progress on the drawings for the building.

CDs for the new high school matured and were re-bid. Chambers Bank had the higher rate on \$2 million last month, and Diamond Bank was awarded the bid on \$1.5 million this month. Union Bank has the balance of the investments. Additional bonds will be sold in January 2009 and will be bid for investment until needed for the construction following the sale.

Nathan Stone is reworking the district web-page to include a more thorough calendar of events that is easily accessible. It will reflect activities for all schools on one page. Individual school calendars will continue to be accessible on the building pages.

The Professional Development Committee led by Kimberly Pymn is coordinating training for district employees on January 5 when we return from the holidays. The majority of the day will focus on a variety of technology topics and practice ranging from the use of calculators to web-page design. Mena employees will lead the trainings. They include Molly Lindsey, Karen Purvis, Larry Lindly, Nathan Stone, Nena Land, Tyra Hobson, Elizabeth Coogan, Judy Burnett, Judy Kropp, Karen Parnell, and Daphane Burnett. Two coordinators from DeQueen-Mena Education Cooperative are also assisting with the training in the use of calculators in instruction. Dr. Diann Gathright will present the first day of Pathwise training with the remaining two days broken into four evening workshops. Pathwise is required of teachers who want to supervise interns from the various universities and who mentor novice teachers in the district. It will also form the basis of the new district teacher and administrator evaluation system and will be required of all teachers in the district during the next two years. Students will begin the new semester on Tuesday, January 6, 2009.

Board President Robby Hines presented Tonya Thacker a plaque in honor of becoming a National Board Certified Teacher. Mrs. Thacker thanked the Board and explained the very involved process of becoming National Board Certified.

The Board, at the request of the petitioner, heard in open session the hearing for consideration of expulsion of MHS Junior, Chip Burkett Jr., for violating the student conduct code policy concerning drug paraphernalia. After a lengthy discussion, Robert Crawford made the motion to uphold the expulsion for the current Fall Semester and directed ALE placement for the Spring Semester. The motion was seconded by Randy Horton. The motion passed 6-1 with Will Robbins representing the dissenting vote.

Financial reports were reviewed. No action was necessary.

After reviewing the November bill list, Clint Montgomery made a motion that bills be paid. Will Robbins seconded the motion and the motion carried.

With no further business the meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

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Robby Hines President

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Will Robbins, Secretary