

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA  
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING  
October 3, 2000

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in regular session duly called at 7 p.m. in the Boardroom, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Bill Cake, chairman; Barbara Sharpe, vice-chairman; Judy Brashear, Bev Carroll, and Chester Leathers, members; Mary Chambers, acting superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sharpe, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

APPROVAL OF  
MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mr. Cake

Moved to approve the minutes of September 19, 2000, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Brashear

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of October 3, 2000, as presented.

Place Recognition—Special Recognition of Faye Cake, prior to Board Member Announcements; and pull Consent Agenda item C. 9, Annual Renewal of Group Programs (Health, Life and Cafeteria/125 Plan) and Approval of Depository for the Cafeteria/125 Plan, for separate consideration.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

RECOGNITION—  
SPECIAL RECOGNITION  
OF FAYE CAKE

Chairman Sharpe recognized Ms. Faye Cake, assistant superintendent, Human Resources, for her many years of dedicated service to the Alachua County school system. The Board extended their best wishes to Mrs. Cake and presented her with a memento in honor of her exceptional career in education.

Mrs. Carolyn Kitchens, former School Board member, announced that a Faye Cake Staff Development Scholarship Fund has been established in Mrs. Cake's honor for her contributions as an outstanding educator.

BOARD MEMBER  
ANNOUNCEMENTS/

Mrs. Brashear and Mrs. Carroll commended the Community Involvement Office for the production of a factual "Just the Facts"

DISCUSSION

handout about the school system, which is being distributed and recognized in the community as a useful resource.

Chairman Sharpe also thanked the Community Involvement Office for getting the “word” out about the district.

She also announced that she has received calls related to the November 7, 2000, School Board meeting suggesting the Board cancel the meeting due to the general election.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to cancel the November 7, 2000, School Board meeting due to the general election.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CITIZEN INPUT

The following concerns/suggestions/recommendations were presented by teachers, employees, students, parents and citizens for Board consideration:

- Increase the salary supplements paid to teachers who coach sports teams, advise academic clubs, mentor other teachers, direct marching bands and attend Camp Crystal with their fifth-graders.
- Pay cost of living.
- Negotiate for bonuses.
- Lobby and recruit community businesses to bring more money into the district.
- Do away with sliding scale of compensation.
- Oppose paying Dr. Marazza any money.
- Treat employees fairly.

Chairman Sharpe recessed the meeting and then reconvened.

Mrs. Brashear explained that the Citizen Input portion of the meeting is not the proper forum for Board members to respond to citizen concerns because state law prohibits Board members from discussing collaborative bargaining issues. She suggested an informational session to discuss these issues and have a meaningful dialogue.

The following continued to address the Board:

- Several students urged the Board to provide teachers with fair salary increases.
- A maintenance department employee expressed concern that new hires come into the system making more money than current

- employees with extensive experience—less experience, more money.
- The Mebane Middle School Band Director expressed concern with the amount of time it has taken to renovate the band room due to a fire/safety hazard and urged that the band room be a top priority.
  - An Archer Community School teacher presented the Board with a petition from concerned teachers and staff related to the 2000-01 School Board employee contract negotiations. The Board was urged to:
    - Provide employees with fair compensation.
    - Support guaranteeing teachers one step for each year worked.
    - Reasonable compensation for each year of continuous service.
    - Compensate teachers for extra-curricular activities and Camp Crystal.
    - Develop a written policy forbidding the hiring of career service employees from outside the county at salaries greater than those of more experienced school board employees.
    - Immediately adopt the proposed ACEA contract.
  - A community activist urged the Board to approve the purchase of the King Food Store property next to Williams Elementary School.
  - A citizen requested the Board incorporate the following changes to the School Improvement Planning Guide prior to adoption:
    - Include key legislation related to School Improvement, i.e. the A+ Plan and School Recognition money;
    - Comply with new school improvement laws (24.121), as well as implementation of the State System of School Improvement in Education.
    - Include the School Board policy on standards for school improvement plans.
    - Update the School Board policy on school advisory councils.
  - Recruit more math and science teachers due to critical shortage.
  - An Eastside High School teacher provided the Board with state teacher salary comparisons and pointed out the low salaries in teacher pay as compared to other counties in the state. Also noted that Alachua County teachers have the highest number of degrees in the state.
  - A citizen suggested the Board assign schools different nights to attend board meetings; expressed disappointment in the lack of Board members attending community events and urged more Board involvement in the community. Suggested the Board meet with the three new legislators in Tallahassee to discuss concerns and request the money that is necessary to fund education in Alachua County.

Mrs. Carroll suggested the Board assign a member to the Chamber Board. She noted that she is assigned to the CEO Board and attends

those functions. She had asked last year that the Board schedule time after the election to meet in a breakfast setting with Alachua County legislators.

Chairman Sharpe informed the Board that she was the representative for the Chamber two years ago, but when Dr. Marazza came on board he wanted to be the representative, but did not attend the meetings. She noted that she was unable to attend the Take Stock in Children celebration, of which she is a member of the scholarship foundation, due to her attendance at a three-day forum for Board members.

- A HARV mechanic urged the Board to provide raises for HARV mechanics.
- An ACEA field representative reported on the positive and successful experience of the collaborative bargaining process, which began during the 1999-00 school year, with joint teams meeting monthly. Several districts have incorporated the collaborative bargaining method and invite school board members and superintendents to the joint training meeting before the collaborative bargaining process begins. It assists school boards to understand how things are developed before they are brought to the Board. Made the following requests for Board consideration:
  - The district's collaborative bargaining teams are currently reorganizing for the 2000-01 school year to begin training and the Board was invited to attend the collaborative bargaining joint training sessions.
  - Need entire 6% to fund the new salary schedules, which are critical both for teachers and career service employees.
  - Need to take care of the inequitable situation with HARV mechanics.
  - Applaud the Board's efforts to purchase the King Food Store property next to Williams Elementary School.
- Urged the Board to provide fair compensation for ESE para-professionals who have been receiving cuts for the past three years.
- A custodial employee expressed concern with the manner in which grievances are handled and low morale.
- A Gainesville High School teacher urged the Board to provide adequate computer equipment for teachers in the classroom.
- A citizen expressed concern with the administrative salary schedule and requested the Board justify the unreasonable salary advancements of administrators.
- The president of the ACEA expressed concern that the supplements were not in the September 15<sup>th</sup> pay checks and urged the Board to listen to the concerns presented by so many employees.

- A citizen urged the Board to agree on a severance package for Dr. Marazza, or terminate him at the Special Board meeting on October 4, with savings going to pay for teacher supplements.

Dr. Mary Chambers, assistant superintendent, Business Services, reported that staff and teachers have worked cooperatively throughout the summer on many important issues, including salaries. She stated that it will take everyone working together to address these issues-- salaries, facilities, class sizes, custodians, etc. She also pointed out the importance of the Board trying to balance the needs of the district. She pointed out that there are differences between salaries and bonuses, and no one agrees with the way the legislature has determined how teachers and staff receive bonuses and others do not. The district has tried to minimize that area and show where the 8% really would come from, but also show what the real salary and benefit increases would be.

Mr. Tom Wittmer, staff attorney and chief negotiator, provided the following specific facts related to the ongoing collective bargaining process:

He reported that the collaborative bargaining teams have been meeting since last June on salaries and other language items that come up as regular openers for both contracts--career service and teachers. On August 23, 2000, the School Board made an offer of a 6% overall increase in salaries, which equates to about \$4,274,000 for the teacher unit, and \$1,446,000 for career service employees. Also included is the cost of a 36% increase in health and life insurance. When you add that on top of the salaries, the offer is about 6.8%. On top of that there are new legislative initiatives this year for supplements, bonuses and various combinations of things the legislature has provided. Those are paid out to employees for the most part and are benefits to employees, which works out to 7.9%.

He stated that this is by far the most generous compensation package this Board has been able to offer in at least the last ten years. As of this point, the district has not received an acceptance of this offer from ACEA and the district does not have a specific counter offer, but talks are continuing. He pointed out that salary structures have been developed for both units and this is a golden opportunity year. He noted that the new salary structure for teachers will address many of the problems mentioned this evening. He referred to the Teach-In memo, which questioned steps and earning less than the step paid the year before, and felt this would correct that problem because there will not be multiple years on one step and the district is working very hard to make that work.

He reported that the Career Service unit also has a new salary structure that will allow employees who are being paid below the market minimum to make their salaries more competitive. The district will also be able to retain and recruit people and it will also be fair to current employees. An agreement has not been reached on specifically how the schedules will distribute the dollars, but the district is working on that and is optimistic that it can be done.

He reported that other outstanding issues include the HARV Mechanics, the guaranteed step question, stipends and supplements. The Board has never stated that it is opposed to an increase in stipends or supplements and it needs to be part of the compensation package. He stated that this is what the Board has offered and those dollars can be distributed when there is an agreement. The Board has taken the position that they are not fighting the employees and are trying to work with them. He feels that the Board has made a very generous offer and is committed to working and solving these issues as soon as possible.

The Board took a break and reconvened.

BID AWARD FOR  
PROJECT SBAC CE432—  
WILLIAMS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL  
STUDENT SERVICES  
REMODELING

Mr. Ed Gable, director, Facilities, reported that bids for the construction of this project were received September 26, 2000. The only bid submitted exceeded the established construction budget.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Brashear

Moved the administration's recommendation to reject all bids and authorize staff to re-evaluate the project, revise to accommodate budget parameters, and schedule a rebid as appropriate.

Mr. Cake urged staff to proceed expeditiously in rebidding this project.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

OPTION TO PURCHASE  
REAL PROPERTY  
ADJACENT TO  
WILLIAMS  
ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Mr. Tom Wittmer, staff attorney, reported that the Board received an option from Shahriar Heshmet to purchase real property adjacent to Williams Elementary School. The property is located at 1133 SE 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. The purchase is recommended in the interest of student safety.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to exercise the option and approve the purchase of the property.

Responding to a question from Dr. Leathers related to the differences between the appraisal vs. the purchase price, Mr. Terry Tougaw,

assistant superintendent, Facilities/Transportation, stated that staff has negotiated with Mr. Heshmet numerous times and staff recommends the purchase price of \$75,000 (\$20,000 over the appraised value). He noted that the district would also receive some of the equipment, which is located inside the building in addition to the property itself. Also, staff has met with the City Manager and he is ready to recommend at the October 23, 2000, City Commission meeting that the City share in half of the purchase price of the property.

Responding to Dr. Leathers, Mr. Tougaw explained that this money is being used from capital outlay dollars and cannot be spent on salaries.

Mrs. Carroll felt it important to remember when the School Board steps in the price of the property tends to increase. She did not agree that the Board should spend more than the appraised value, but does agree if the City is willing to contribute half for the property, which in turn will correct an issue for the community and Williams Elementary School. She noted that the Board is not in the habit of purchasing eyesores for communities and she does not want to make it a habit, but this has been a long-running issue. She pointed out that if this property were sold under its current zoning, nothing would change because it has to have a different use. It is not possible to have boarded-up houses nor properties of this nature around schools and expect them to be safe, due to the type of people that are attracted to these properties. She stated that the Gainesville Police Department has exhausted efforts to reduce crime and loitering in this area. In a combined effort, the Board is trying to do what is best for the property around this school, and two governmental bodies are working together to accomplish this.

She thanked Mrs. Brashear and Mr. Bear Bryan, Security Chief, for their roles in making this purchase a reality and also thanked members of the community. She noted that meetings to discuss uses for the property would be scheduled to have input from the staff and the community to do what is best for the students of Williams Elementary School.

Mr. Tougaw reported that in the negotiated agreement the owner has until December 15 to vacate, but it may be earlier.

Mrs. Brashear thanked Mr. Tougaw and Mr. Bryan for all their efforts and also thanked the neighborhood and task force members for their involvement. She suggested the Board pursue the need to change the statewide law that prohibits cities from regulating the sales of packaged liquor near schools and keeps city governments and police departments from keeping this type of facility away from schools. She indicated that two city commissioners have indicated they would make certain

the City assist the School Board with the purchase of this property. She also spoke with the Mayor and she also indicated that she felt the City Commission would vote 5-0 in support because this would solve problems for the City, the Police Department and Codes Enforcement Department.

Chairman Sharpe stated that four years ago Williams Elementary School teacher Sherry Boyd Wade brought this issue to the Board's attention. She noted that there are some ordinances that protect schools, but this particular ordinance failed to protect Williams Elementary School. She pointed out that the district is paying a lot more for other property than the appraised value, and that should not be a hindrance. As the Board has previously discussed, if there was a need for the school district to purchase land adjacent to any school, the Board would do all it could to purchase that land. In earlier discussions the City indicated a willingness, if possible, to help the Board purchase this property. She stated that she spoke with Mr. Bryan this afternoon and the City is still willing to lend their support pending Board approval.

Dr. Leathers stated that even though he is dissatisfied with the price, he feels this is an exciting opportunity to collaboratively work together with the City.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

2000-2001 SCHOOL  
IMPROVEMENT GUIDE

Mrs. Sue Griffith, reported that this guide assists the 44 school sites with the implementation of School Board Policy 2.42, School Advisory Councils (SACs). She pointed out that this has been a very important document since 1992, and Alachua is one of the few districts that puts this amount of effort in assisting SACs and schools to be successful with the implementation of the school improvement process.

Mrs. Griffith informed the Board that June 1, 1999, is the most recent amendment to the Guide. School Board policy 2.42, School Advisory Councils addresses defining functions of SACs, membership, nominations, election terms, compliance with Sunshine Laws, duties of SACs, approval of school improvement plans and resolution of disputes and training. She reported that this Guide would be copied and presented to each SAC member after Board approval. She noted that other related documents included in the Guide are: Page 38, a summary of SB 1956 and the A+ Plan, which includes a chart for the grading of the A+ law and schools have the full content of the A+ law, and Senate Bill 1956.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Dr. Leathers

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the 2000-2001 School Improvement Guide as presented.

Responding to a question from Dr. Leathers, Mrs. Griffith stated that schools used the Strategic Planning brochure when they developed their implementation plans.

Dr. Leathers commended Mrs. Griffith for her thoroughness and her efforts.

Mrs. Brashear pointed out that Alachua County has one of the best School Improvement Guides in the state.

Responding to a question from Mrs. Brashear, Mrs. Griffith stated that there is no substantial legislation missing from the Guide, and the rule for spending money has not been included, but is addressed at principal meetings.

Mrs. Brashear suggested that a paragraph be included on the bonus money guidelines for SAC members that do not attend principal meetings.

She also urged the Board to continue to set their own goals and expectations for students and suggested including them as a page in the Guide.

Mr. Cake thanked Mrs. Griffith for her efforts and diligence in complying with state law.

Mrs. Carroll felt it would be helpful, for the lay person, to put a box in the document that indicates the Guide can be viewed in full on the internet site, etc.

Mrs. Griffith briefly reviewed the training that is provided for parents, and the business community.

Mrs. Carroll suggested including budget and curriculum training for SAC members who are not aware that they do have input into the curriculum and budgeting process.

Chairman Sharpe thanked Ms. Griffith for her efforts and for developing one of the best working documents in the state of Florida.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to approve the Consent Agenda as described in items 1-20, with the deletion of item 9., Annual Renewal of Group Programs (Health, Life and Cafeteria/125 Plan) and Approval of Depository for the Cafeteria/125 Plan. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ANNUAL RENEWAL OF GROUP PROGRAMS

Dr. Chambers stated that this item was pulled at the request of ACEA due to concerns of it being placed on the Consent Agenda. She noted that the Board has been discussing this issue for months. Blue Cross/Blue Shield has been working with the insurance committee and they determined what issues are driving the high insurance rates and there appear to be no huge anomalies except experience utilization. The district anticipates working with Blue Cross/Blue Shield and employees and everyone is committed to looking at cost containment measures to get these rates under control.

She stated that renewal contracts with Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Florida (Health), Canada Life (Life), and Fringe Benefits Management Company (Cafeteria/125), and the approval of South Trust Bank (depository), which will be used by the management company in connection with administration of the Cafeteria/125 Plan are recommended.

Motion by Mrs. Brashear Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to renew the contracts with Blue Cross Blue Shield of Florida (Health), Canada Life (Life), and Fringe Benefits Management Company (Cafeteria/125), and approve South Trust Bank (depository) to be used by the management company in connection with administration of the Cafeteria/125 Plan.

The question was called. Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBERS/  
SUPERINTENDENT  
REQUESTS

Mr. Cake pointed out that there are a group of employees, Administrative, Professional/Technical, that are not part of the bargaining unit and these are employees the Board has to look out for. He suggested they should receive their retroactive pay raises as the Board has bargained. He recommended the Board direct the Superintendent to initiate the retroactive pay for these employees at the next Board meeting for approval.

Dr. Chambers confirmed that the employees that are not part of the bargaining unit includes administrators and professional/technical employees and she will present their salary schedules at the next

meeting for Board approval. She reported that the raise for career service employees is the same as Professional/Technical employees. In the past the 6% raise could be placed on the Professional/Technical salary schedule in accordance with the recommendation from the consultants, and the Board has already approved as to how those salaries will be indicated on the salary schedule. The administrative salary schedule represents a 3% overall. She noted that the district is in the process of getting people back on line based on their experience.

She reported that the Board is trying to address the two new salary schedules and there are some differences in how employees will be paid. The concept being looked at in bargaining is that people will be placed on the salary schedule, and over time the experience level would work out for people who are too high or too low.

Responding to Mrs. Brashear's question, Mr. Gable reported that the Mebane Middle School band room renovations should be completed within two weeks.

Mrs. Carroll reminded the Board to begin renegotiating with the Board's Lobbyist; schedule an Executive Session for 8 a.m., October 4, 2000; and suggested the need to lobby in Tallahassee for more funding.

Chairman Sharpe stated that since she has been on the Board, the Board has worked very hard to give teachers what the Board has to give and the Board values teachers. She expressed serious concerns with the manner in which issues are presented and the Board is not able to respond due to unfair labor practices. She pointed out that it also does not help when the Governor and Education Commissioner send out notices indicating they are providing districts with enough money to give 8% raises, but they do not indicate what is included, and that is unfair to Board members.

Dr. Leathers stated that continued communication is very important.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 10:40 p.m.