

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
February 6, 2001

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: Chester Leathers, chairman; Bill Cake, vice-chairman; Bev Carroll, Jeannine Cawthon and Barbara Sharpe, members; Mary L. Chambers, superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

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

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve the minutes of January 16, 2001, as presented.

Mrs. Sharpe requested a revision to page 9, third paragraph, to read: "Teachers need to teach the way students learn."

Dr. Leathers requested a revision to page 3, fourth paragraph, to replace law enforcement with juvenile justice.

The question was called on the minutes as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of February 6, 2001, as presented.

Delete Action Item H.4., Bid Award for Project SBAC CE 432—Williams Elementary School Student Services Remodeling.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BOARD MEMBER
ANNOUNCEMENTS/
DISCUSSION

Mrs. Sharpe requested continued prayers for Gainesville High School student and March of Dimes Chain Reaction member Ben Monaghan Estes who is very ill.

She reported that she attended the National School Boards Association Federal Relations Network Conference and the 2001 Leadership Conference in Washington, D.C., with Superintendent Chambers and briefly highlighted the priority issues for the upcoming year: Elementary and Secondary Education Act; federal funding for education; vouchers; special education; school construction and

renovation; and state block grants vs. local school district consolidation program. Issues pertaining to Florida include: school construction and renovation needs; IDEA; Medicaid; immigration, vouchers.

Superintendent Chambers also briefly reported on issues presented at the conference and noted that she will be providing principals and teachers with a study entitled “Thinking K-16,” which is in line with the current Florida initiatives. Other issues discussed were increases in Title 1 funding; use of Title 1 funds for preschool and early childhood education; flexibility at the local level on the use of Title 1 funds to help create a systematic approach and support for instructional programs, which this district has already accomplished through strategic planning.

Mrs. Sharpe also pointed out that there is confusion in Congress as to what is local control. The district needs to make sure what is meant by local control is that districts want the money to come to the local school districts as they know best how to distribute those funds.

Mrs. Carroll congratulated Eastside High School student Christopher Olsen for scoring a perfect 1600 score on his SAT exam and requested Board recognition at a future meeting.

Mrs. Grace White, Public Information Officer, informed the Board that the Annual Back to School conference will be held Saturday, February 10, 2001, 8:30 a.m. at Kanapaha Middle School.

Chairman Leathers made the following announcements:

- The Board was updated on the Strategic Planning process at an extensive Board workshop.
- He visited Gainesville High School and met with Students United to Reform Education (SURE) with Representative Perry McGriff.

SCHEDULED
AGENCIES—MARCH OF
DIMES CHAIN
REACTION YOUTH
LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Student members of the March of Dimes Chain Reaction Youth Leadership Council invited the Board to attend the Annual Health Conference for at-risk Middle School students, at the Reitz Union, March 6. They also challenged the Board to raise money for healthy babies and join schools and principals in the WalkAmerica on March 24, 2001, to raise money for healthy babies.

Mrs. Sharpe was presented with a WalkAmerica T-Shirt in recognition of raising over \$600. All other Board members were encouraged to raise at least \$100 and they would be presented with a T-shirt.

Mrs. Sharpe challenged the Board members by offering to share part of the \$600 to get them started.

ALACHUA COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
FOUNDATION VISION
TASK FORCE REPORT

Mrs. Cawthon urged Board members to join her and walk on the School Board WalkAmerica team.

Ms. Melissa Murphy, Volunteer Board member, Alachua County Public Schools Foundation, provided the Board with a status report of the Vision Task Force and the mission of the Foundation.

Primary Mission:

- Continue current level of incentive, need and merit-based scholarships
- Continue to support the Take Stock in Children Program, a student/mentor and scholarship program.

Recommended New Areas:

- Sponsoring low-income elementary school and possibly Pre-K students for school-based after-school enrichment programs.
- Sponsoring need-based scholarships for students to participate in educational enrichment and summer programs.

Secondary Mission:

- Faye Cake Staff Development Scholarship program
- Offer scholarships to the three finalists in the Teacher Recognition Program to attend a summer institute at the Fla. Center for Teachers.
- Offer annual “Challenge Grants” to provide “seed money” and financial support to create or expand school-based programs in support of school improvement plans and district strategic plan.

She also noted that the Foundation recommended flexibility in order to address future needs and donor desires in the areas of reading, leadership training, dropout prevention, mentoring and technology.

Mrs. Sharpe commended the Vision Task Force and Foundation Board of Directors for their efforts.

RECOGNITION—
SUNSHINE MEDALLION
AWARD—SPRING HILL
MIDDLE SCHOOL

The Board recognized Spring Hill Middle School (SHMS) for having been awarded the Sunshine Medallion Award by the Sunshine State Public Relations Association (SUNSPRA) on winning first place for its promotional video entitled “Welcome to SHMS.”

SPRING HILL MIDDLE
SCHOOL BETA CLUB

The Board recognized Spring Hill’s BETA Club members for receiving various awards at state-level competition.

The regular Board meeting was recessed and a Public Hearing convened.

2001-2002 SCHOOL
CALENDAR

Mr. Gunnar Paulson, president, Alachua Education Association (ACEA), reported that following the last Board meeting flyers have been sent out related to the proposed 2001-2002 School Calendar and

over 30 signatures were received from teachers at Eastside High and Westwood Middle schools with the following concerns:

- Prefer not to celebrate Veterans Day on Monday, November 12
- Not in favor of starting school a week earlier
- Workday in January
- Christmas break go through January 7
- Educationally sound that the students do not come back from winter break for two days.
- Memorial day is one of six paid holidays
- Eastside High School wants to know when grades are due and do not want grades due when they get back from winter break
- Prefer to see it put back one year to adjust to a new calendar.
- Many teachers give tests prior to winter break.

Several parents and students requested the Board consider the following suggestions:

- Begin school closer to Labor Day.
- Too hot to begin school a week earlier
- Board should consider asking teachers and students for their input prior to developing a proposed calendar
- Should have exams in January due to many cultural events that occur in December.
- Urged the Board to synchronize the school calendar with the rest of the country.
- Preferred winter holidays to run Monday through Friday rather than Wednesday through Thursday due to childcare arrangements and to facilitate holiday travel.
- Urged the Board to continue to begin school the third or fourth week in August.

A parent addressed the Board in support of the proposed calendar and in favor of students taking exams prior to winter break.

The Public Hearing was adjourned and the regular board meeting reconvened.

CITIZEN INPUT

The following suggestions/recommendations were presented to the Board for consideration:

- A citizen expressed concern with the alarming increase in school crime and provided statistical information from the Deans Misconduct Report.
- A citizen urged the Board to consider rotating Board meetings to other towns to allow for larger participation by the public.
- The president of the ACEA addressed the Board on legislative issues and noted that local control should be given to each school

district. Urged everyone to hold the Governor accountable and let their voices be heard.

- A citizen invited the Board to attend the Drug Summit scheduled March 2, 2001.
- A Buchholz High School parent expressed serious concerns with drug use running rampant on campus and urged the Board to use sniff dogs in the school system.
- A citizen urged the Board to continue to allow citizen input to be televised and also requested an amplifier for the hearing impaired.
- A teacher from Rawlings Elementary School urged the Board to not to remove the opportunity for citizens to address the Board in an open forum for different views and suggested a telephone bank.
- A Gainesville High School student requested feedback on the proposal presented to the Board to allow a student to sit as a Board member.
- Several students from SURE thanked the Board for their efforts over the past three months and updated the Board on conditions at Gainesville and Eastside High schools and offered the following solutions:
 - Cleaner campus
 - Smaller classes
 - Energetic teachers
 - Modern schools
 - Bathroom renovations
 - Showers
 - Auditorium seating
 - Lockers
 - Sewer covers
 - Lunch area renovations
 - Bathroom renovations

Mrs. Carroll responded to several of the issues presented:

Citizen Input--She stated that it was never the Board's intention to eliminate Citizen Input, but the Board is looking for ways of being more responsive to citizen concerns and trying to eliminate the failure of being able to communicate immediately when citizens present concerns to the Board.

She suggested a break following Citizen Input and requested staff develop a feedback system to citizens within 24-48 hours. The Board would then receive notification that the citizen has been contacted and there has been a solution, or staff is working toward a solution. Also a staff member could also be in attendance to provide citizens with the name and phone number to contact regarding their concerns.

Increase in Violence—Class and school size, and lack of parental involvement.

Cleaner Schools—There is a need to have a better reporting mechanism in place to keep schools clean.

Mrs. Carroll stated that the Board has made band-aid solutions to several of the concerns presented due to lack of funding.

Mrs. Sharpe stated that three to four years ago she raised the issue of having a SWAT team that would go around to schools and take care of things that did not cost a lot of money, and her request went unanswered. However, it was answered at the last workshop where she was informed that we do have a “Strike Force” that will go to the schools and take care of some of issues raised this evening. She stated that she is proud to say that this Board has always done the very best it can with the money available. The Board is not always able to fix everything and cannot fix things that have been broken for years. She stated that the record will show that this Board has done everything possible to upgrade as many facilities as possible.

She stated that the state of Florida put education on the back burner and everything shifted to public safety, which reduced the amount of money that should have been for education. The Governor’s budget will create a shortfall, but the Board will continue to do as much as possible and will continue to make progress.

Chairman Leathers informed the public that the concern related to Citizen Input is not on the agenda and has not come up for vote. Superintendent Chambers and staff will present the Board with a recommendation.

Superintendent Chambers commended the many students that addressed the Board with their concerns and comments. She stated that the Board and Superintendent have the responsibility to insure that there is a process and procedure to address concerns, and it is staff’s responsibility to listen to citizens and develop recommendations for the Board to take action. She stated that staff is working on current issues and recommendations will be presented in the near future. She announced that she will recommend on the next agenda that the Board enter into a contract to hire a safety and security expert to assist with discipline programs in the schools.

ADMINISTRATIVE
APPOINTMENT(S)

Superintendent Chambers recommended the Board approve the appointment of Mr. Keith Birkett, director, Business Services

Budgeting, as Deputy Superintendent for Planning, Budgeting, and Systems Accountability, acting, effective February 7, 2001.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the superintendent's recommendation to appoint Mr. Keith Birkett as Deputy Superintendent for Planning, Budgeting, and Systems Accountability, acting, effective February 7, 2001.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

RESOLUTION NO. 01-03
SCHOOL VOLUNTEER
MONTH

Mrs. Grace White read Resolution No. 01-03, declaring the Month of February, 2001, as School Volunteer Month.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved to approve Resolution No. 01-03, declaring the Month of February, 2001, as School Volunteer Month.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

RESOLUTION NO. 01-04
STUDENT SERVICES
WEEK

Mrs. Grace White read Resolution No. 01-04, declaring the week of February 4-10, 2001, as Student Support Services Week.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll

Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved to approve Resolution No. 01-04, declaring the week of February 4-10, 2001, as Student Services Week.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

AMENDED NOTICE OF
TAX FOR SCHOOL
CAPITAL OUTLAY FOR
ADVERTISEMENT

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the Amended Notice of Tax for School Capital Outlay for advertisement and scheduling a public hearing February 20, 2001, to adopt the amended advertised projects.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BID AWARD FOR
PROJECT SBAC CB632—
WESTWOOD MIDDLE
SCHOOL ADDITION
AND RENOVATIONS

Mr. Ed Gable, director, Facilities, reported that bids for the construction of this project were received on January 18, 2001.

Motion by Mr. Cake

Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the administration's recommendation to accept the low base

bid of \$2,449,000 and Additive Alternate #1 in the amount of \$38,685 and award a contract for construction totaling \$2,487,685 to J.A. Standridge Construction, Inc., Gainesville, Florida, with completion of this project to be within two hundred seventy (270) consecutive calendar days from the date indicated in the "Notice to Proceed."

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

BID AWARD FOR
PROJECT SBAC
CA838—HAWTHORNE
HIGH SCHOOL HVAC
EQUIPMENT AND DUCT
WORK REPLACEMENT,
PHASE I

Mr. Gable reported that bids for the construction of this project were received on January 23, 2001.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to accept the low base bid of \$327,637 and Additive Alternates #1, 2, 3, and 4 in the amount of \$130,436 and award a contract for construction totaling \$458,073 to General Mechanical Corporation, Daytona Beach, Florida, with completion of this project to be within one hundred eighty (180) consecutive calendar days from the date indicated in the "Notice to Proceed."

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

PROPOSED REVISIONS
TO JOB DESCRIPTION—
FIRST READING

Superintendent Chambers reported that job descriptions for Information Resources Director and Human Resources and Development Specialist are being revised to more accurately reflect assigned duties and responsibilities.

Motion by Mrs. Carroll Seconded by Mrs. Sharpe

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the proposed revisions as presented for advertising.

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

STUDENT CASE
NO. 00-61NP

Dr. Jim Scaggs, staff attorney, reported that the student was reassigned to the Alternative Center as a result of a Level IV violation of the Code of Student conduct. A hearing was held on December 20, 2000.

Motion by Mrs. Sharpe Seconded by Mrs. Carroll

Moved the hearing agent's recommendation to confirm the assignment of the students to the Alternative Center.

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

STUDENT CASE
NO. 01-01-NP

Dr. Scaggs reported that the student was reassigned to the Alternative Center as a result of a history of disruptive behavior. A hearing was

one for April or May.

Chairman Leathers stated he is in support of holding a meeting and requested the Superintendent present a recommendation.

Superintendent Chambers stated that the strength of strategic planning and the strategic planning team was to utilize members of surrounding communities and the district to ensure that we supplement the Strategic Plan and not interfere with the progress being made within the current planning process. She noted that if these meetings would augment or enforce strategic planning, she is in support of scheduling a meeting and inviting members of the strategic planning team to participate.

BOARD MEMBERS/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

There were no requests.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 9:50 p.m.