

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
JANUARY 20, 2004

The School Board of Alachua County, Florida, met in regular session duly called at 6 p.m. in the Boardroom, 620 East University Avenue, Gainesville, Florida. Present were: Barbara J. Sharpe, chairman; Tina Turner Pinkoson, vice-chairman; Jeannine M. Cawthon, Virginia S. Childs, F. Wesley Eubank, members; Mary L. Chambers, superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Sharpe, and she noted that Mrs. Turner will be participating by telephone from Colorado. She held a roll call and Board members present were Cawthon, Childs, Eubank and Sharpe, with Board member Turner present via telephone. The Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag followed.

APPROVAL OF
MINUTES

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved to approve the minutes of December 2, 2003, as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved to adopt the agenda for the meeting of January 20, 2004, as presented.

Add Item I.11., Student Case No. 04-03-X, and move to the end of the meeting for address by the student's attorney. Attachment D, Page 2, Item D—change the first vendor from Contrax Solutions, Inc., to Contrax Furnishings, Inc. Delete Action Items I.1. & 3., Superintendent's Contract and Proposal for Strategic Planning Annual Update Project, respectively.

The question was called on the agenda as amended.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

RECOGNITION(S)

Social Studies Teachers of the Year

Each year the Florida Council for Social Studies honors an elementary, middle and high school social studies teacher in each county as Outstanding Social Studies Teachers of the Year. These teachers are selected for their abilities to engage their students in meaning social studies lessons; their strength in developing strong student-teacher relationships, necessary to reach all students effectively; and their professionalism and leadership in the area of social studies. This year's outstanding social studies teachers for Alachua County are Aimee

Pricher, Lawton Chiles Elementary School; Charmaine Taylor, Kanapaha Middle School; and Kevin Purvis, Newberry High School.

National Board teacher Certification

Twenty outstanding teachers were recognized and presented certificates on achieving the National Board Teacher Certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards. A reception was held in their honor earlier in the day.

CITIZEN INPUT

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

- Consider delaying the closing of Prairie View Elementary School until the school year 2005-06.
- Consider keeping Prairie View open and rescind decision to zone no students to the school for the 2004-05 school year.
- Suggested the Board could be more pro-active by holding discussions on issues at the regular business meetings, rather than workshops and informal meetings.

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

PUBLIC HEARING

Amendments to Special Programs and Procedures for Exceptional Students Document – There was no public input.

Proposed Amendment to Policy 5.11, Student Attendance Zones/Areas/Choice – There was a request that the Board make an exception to the zoning of the students at Prairie View under this rule and allow students to be rezoned through another year.

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

SCHEDULED AGENCIES

ACEA Update

The ACEA president appealed to the Board to consider keeping Prairie View open. Need to think about east Gainesville and the infrastructure.

Former county commissioner and educator Tom Coward addressed the Board noting that the trend going on now seems to be going backward. He fought for equality education in the community for the benefit of the children. Education is an integral part of the development of the eastside of Gainesville. He urged the Board to form a task force of former teachers, staff and appropriate individuals to review the changes as it will be devastating to the children of the community to continue this trend.

Superintendent Chambers stated that in no way has the Board voted to close Prairie View. The goal is to have more students to fully utilize the school. Some initiatives being looked at are Head Start, Even Start, University of Florida Baby Gator East for faculty and staff, and choice opportunities for students. Mrs. Sandy Hollinger, deputy superintendent, is looking at other innovations, particularly, a “Structured for Success” choice school.

Mrs. Hollinger noted that the College of Education is very committed to wanting to collaborate with the district in eastside development as is Santa Fe Community College. Staff is looking at doing early childhood literacy, universal pre-k coming in next year, and a possible school choice program with students K-5, multi-age, working in the core academic areas. She will provide an update at the next Board meeting.

PRESENTATION(S)/
REPORT(S)

Planning/Financial Update

Mr. Terry Tougaw, director, Planning and Budgeting, noted that since passage of the class size reduction amendment, the district has been working diligently on a plan to meet the criteria. A memo was received from Commissioner Horne in December regarding the implementation of class size, compliance calculation and the data integrity issues. There were 32 school districts that had not met the class size reduction for the first year. Alachua County was one of those districts. After submitting corrections through the appeal process, as of tonight, the district is in compliance and no penalties are expected. The target for this year for grades PK-3 was 18.57, we are at 18.07; for grades 4-8 the target was 22, we are at 20.40; for grades 9-12 the target was 25, and we are at 22.92.

By 2009-2010 at the classroom level, there should be 18 students per class for PK-3; 22 for grades 4-8; and 25 for grades 9-12. But there are other requirements to be dealt with prior to getting to the classroom level.

Mrs. Childs noted that the district has gone below the numbers that it has to meet at each individual classroom on a district average, and the next hurdle is to meet the numbers on a school average and after that on a class by class actual count by 2009-2010.

Mr. Eubank requested a breakdown with the average by school and the range by classroom. This information would provide targets when talking about budgeting for next year. A determination could be made on how much of the class size reduction funds definitely need to be placed in reduction.

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs. Turner, with regard to Prairie View, wanted to assure the citizens this Board is committed to doing what is best for kids. As a Board, she would like to keep people informed as to what the vision and plans are for Prairie View, and feels updates are key to assuring this.

Mrs. Childs asked that an announcement be made about choice letters going out and the deadlines for applying so that the public is aware.

Mr. Tougaw noted that February 13 is the deadline for applications, and decisions will be made in March as this will be part of the allocation/budgeting process.

Over 22,000 letters will be going out, and anyone that feels they should have received a letter may call the zoning office at 955-7700 as to their choices or whether or not they should have received a letter.

It was pointed out that rising seniors, juniors, sophomores, and those going into the final grades at the various schools (elementary and middle) must fill out the exception form if they wish to stay in their currently zoned school.

Chairman Sharpe read her following comments into the record:

Sentiments of the Board's Chair only, on "Our 2003 Year in Review."

I want to make it crystal clear, that all public, private and media accolades regarding our 2003 Year in Review, are to be credited directly to you; principals, teachers and all staff. When it is read in the media, it needs to be understood what sources should be given credit, for the work done in the trenches.

As Chair, of the Alachua County School Board, November 2003, through November 2004, I would like to thank you, principals, teachers and all staff, for all of your efforts, the creativity, and the innovations that you have exhibited. With years of planning, brainstorming, and un-relentless tenaciousness, you truly have been the innovators, the motivators, and the dedicated facilitators for all of our children.

You have made our students, and our district, shine with many successes. It has been your work that has caused learning to flourish and achievement to occur.

You are the leaders that will assist our children to be honest, productive citizens and dedicated leaders of the future.

JANUARY 20, 2004

There have been many achievements and gains, made at all schools, and at all levels. We know that you have worked steadily, and diligently with our children to make learning a reality. We also know that a community working together to get the job done; can and will get it done.

When we speak of F.C.A.T. achievements, state averages, student gains, and all district accomplishments, we are speaking of parents, guardians, principals, teachers, all staff, community, business partners, and students.

As we continue our educational journey in this district, I want you to know, that we know, that you carry the torch, and you are out front leading our children in the direction of educational excellence.

Thanks for the kindness, love, dedication, extra efforts, understanding, thoughtfulness and caring, that you continue to put forth in teaching our children, and helping them to become the very best that they can be.

Again, my sincere thanks to you. Your work speaks volumes. My wish is for the Alachua County School District to become the Leaders in the state of Florida again, as we have enjoyed in the past. Having said that, I think that we as a district must move ahead and make the changes that are needed to make us number one of 15 in the state of Florida as opposed to 1 in 15 in the state of Florida.

*Barbara Sharpe
Chair, Alachua County School Board*

** I would like this letter to be distributed to all principals and teachers, a copy posted in the teachers' lounges, the bulletin boards, and read in principals' meetings.*

SUPERINTENDENT'S
CONTRACT

Chairman Sharpe noted that the Superintendent had requested her contract be deleted from the agenda. During discussion as to what the Board's next step should be, the chairman asked the Superintendent if pulling the contract from the agenda meant it will be deleted forever or will it come back to the Board.

Superintendent Chambers stated that it was never her intent that the contract come back up and that she is resigning effectively the end of her current contract.

Chairman Sharpe noted that the Superintendent is resigning as of her current contract, September 30, 2004.

Board Attorney Jim Lang agreed it would be appropriate to schedule Dr. Wayne Blanton, Florida School Boards Association, to meet with the Board on the process for a superintendent search.

Mrs. Turner pointed out that the last time the contract was placed on the agenda it was obvious there were three votes in favor of retaining Dr. Chambers through September 2005. As the Board discussed the issue, fellow Board members felt it was unfair to vote on the contract extension prior to going through the evaluation process. After having given my word to Dr. Chambers in regard to the way I would vote, in an effort to be fair, I moved to delay the vote until January. And it is now apparent to me the issue was not fairness, it was being on the losing end of a vote, and the feeling part of my personality profile, which you guys know is there, was used to provide an opportunity for the scenario to change, and it appears that past history and the current rezoning recommendations have influenced the decision in regard to Dr. Chambers' employment with our system. I just want to go on record saying that I think we have treated her unfairly by delaying the vote, going through the evaluation process, evaluating her performance with three new Board members on board and not giving her a chance to address the things that we said we thought she needed to improve on. I am embarrassed to be a part of this and think we have not treated her fairly, and I just wanted to go on record in saying that and apologize to her because somewhere along the line I feel responsible for delaying that vote.

Mr. Eubank suggested checking with Dr. Blanton to see if he is available to address the Board in workshop session prior to the Board meeting on February 3, 2004.

LEGISLATIVE
PRIORITIES--2004

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Child

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the 2004 Legislative Priorities as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5

AMENDMENTS TO
POLICY 5.11, SCHOOL
ATTENDANCE ZONES/
AREAS/CHOICE—FIRST
READING

These amendments will address growth and overcrowding in schools.

Motion by Mrs. Cawthon

Seconded by Mr. Eubank

Moved the administration's recommendation to schedule a public hearing 6:30 p.m., February 3, 2004, to consider the amendments to policy 5.11.

INTERLOCAL
AGREEMENT
CREATING ALACHUA
COUNTY RECREATION
COORDINATING
COUNCIL

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration's recommendation that the School Board approve the Interlocal Agreement Creating the Alachua County Recreation Coordinating Council and authorize the chairman to execute the agreement in substantially the form as presented.

DISTRICT FACILITIES
FIVE-YEAR WORK
PROGRAM

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

This program represents a five-year schedule of major repair, renovation, and capital outlay projects together with projections of available revenue. The district must submit this program annually and may revise the program at any time to reflect new project priorities and available revenue.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve the program for submission to the Department of Education.

It was noted that with regard to the COPs projects a resolution has been approved, but the district has not gone forward with the actual issuance of the COPs. Those are indicated in this program but there is no commitment to follow through with those as a project other than what would normally be required to further approve the COPs.

BID AWARD FOR
PROJECT SBAC CC632—
WESTWOOD MIDDLE
SCHOOL FOOD
SERVICE BUILDING

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the administration's recommendation to accept the low base bid of \$1,731,000 and Additive Alternate Numbers 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5 in the amount of \$226,900 and award a contract for construction totaling \$1,957,900 to J. A. Standridge Construction, Inc., Gainesville, Florida. Completion of this project shall be within three hundred five (305) consecutive calendar days from the date indicated in the "Notice to Proceed."

Mr. Ed Gable, executive director, Facilities, pointed out that Alternate Number 3 is for hurricane protection as part of the state statute that requires building enhanced hurricane protection areas in all schools in accordance with the County's Management Plan.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

BUDGET
AMENDMENTS

Budget amendments Nos. 6, 7, and 8 include all budget changes in the General Fund, Capital Projects Fund, and Special Revenue Fund, respectively, for the period October 1, 2003 through October 31, 2003.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Turner

Moved the administration's recommendation to approve Budget Amendments Nos. 6, 7 and 8 as presented

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Turner

Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved to approve the Consent Agenda as described in items 1-17. (See Supplementary Minutes Book.)

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CITIZEN INPUT(cont'd)

- Reconsider the decision of Prairie View Elementary School and take leadership in building cooperative interracial relations.
- Went through the period of being segregated and it has an affect on you, feels what the Board is talking about now will have an affect on another generation of people. Take this under serious consideration and delay the closing of Prairie View.
- Consider the impact on the students—place future of Prairie View on an agenda.
- Reconsider action taken and keep Prairie View as it is.

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Mr. Eubank

- Information provided during Rezoning was strictly driven by Free and Reduced Lunch – he feels by now the district should have demography information other than free and reduced lunch and this information would be very useful for the community.
- Prairie View Elementary School – Staff discussed having more information at the next Board meeting and he feels the Board may need to take a more proactive look at that and possibly schedule on the agenda in the future.
- Dr. Chambers took over in what was certainly one of the dark periods in this district when we needed someone with familiarity in the district and someone who could work with all the people that were here and to straighten out a lot of the problems we were facing at the time. I would like to commend her for the hard work she has put in trying to make this district much better, trying to heal some of the wounds, and I think she accomplished a lot of that and for that I am very thankful, and I would like to thank her.

Mrs. Childs

Throughout the zoning process, what she heard everywhere the Board met, from the mamas and grandmamas of all races, was that they wanted their elementary kids near by. What we need to look at, basically, is elementary. She agrees that for years and years minorities in this community were treated wrongly—kids were bussed all the way across town from east of Lincoln to Fort Clarke. She tried to get this changed over the years—it was not right. To do this again just for the sake of doing it would not be right either. Be sure we do what is right. We have a school that is in great shape and is totally under utilized. We cannot, as stewards of the public's trust or money, let a facility that is that good go so under utilized, and staff has been working very hard to look at ways of better utilizing the facility.

Mrs. Hollinger stated that, after Board approval, letters will be sent out to parents letting them know staff is thinking of a choice school at Prairie View modeled after a program called “Structured for Success” where they do multi-age classroom for 1st and 2nd, 2nd and 3rd and 3rd and 4th. We have had a lot of good success at both Littlewood Elementary and Glen Springs Elementary with multiage classrooms. We have approximately 90 children who walk into Prairie View and for choice we want to invite them and anyone else interested can attend. We also want to work in collaboration with the university and benefit from the expertise of their early childhood program.

Mrs. Turner

Informed the Board her calling card was up, and she thanked the Board for allowing her to participate in the meeting via long distance.

Mrs. Sharpe

Noted that she voted against the rezoning plan for a number of reasons. First of all, she felt the Board went against the recommendation of its Task Force and the diversity and socio-economic status. Secondly, she felt the rezoning plan was in direct conflict in many ways with the adopted policy. She could not support a rezoning plan that would send this district back into the 1950's. Busing was for equality. It is not a black and white issue. It is a socio-economic issue.

During a workshop while looking at ideas for Prairie View, she initially felt a developmental school PreK-12 would work, but realizing this was not realistic, she compromised with a PreK-5 or 6. She liked the idea of a multi-age group instruction (MAGI) school similar to P. K. Yonge. She also wanted to keep the students at Prairie View for another year while working to secure partnerships with UF, which the district already has, and include Santa Fe Community College.

Chairman Sharpe noted that when the district goes through rezoning or anything of this magnitude, it has to be well thought out and benefit all children.

Following discussion, it was clarified that staff would provide the Board with an update on Prairie View at the next Board meeting.

Board members also requested that a workshop be scheduled with Dr. Blanton the afternoon of February 3, if possible, to discuss options and the process of a superintendent search.

The Board recessed for the student's attorney to address the Board.

STUDENT CASE
NO. 04-03-X

Staff reported that the student is charged with assault and battery of a school board employee.

Motion by Mr. Eubank

Seconded by Mrs. Cawthon

Moved the Superintendent's recommendation that the student's suspension be extended through February 3, 2004.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting was adjourned at 8:45 p.m.