

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF ALACHUA COUNTY, FLORIDA
APPROVED MINUTES OF REGULAR BOARD MEETING
October 17, 2006

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: F. Wesley Eubank, Chairman; Virginia S. Childs, Vice-Chairman; Tina Pinkoson, Eileen F. Roy, and Janie S. Williams, members; W. Daniel Boyd, Jr., Superintendent; and James F. Lang, attorney for the Board.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Eubank, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag, led by representatives of student government at Mebane Middle School.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES Motion by Mrs. Childs Seconded by Mrs. Williams

Moved to approve the minutes of the Board meeting of October 3, 2006, as presented.

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

ADOPTION
OF AGENDA

The following changes were made to the agenda:

- Item G., delete Florida Education Pledge
- Item I.1.: change 2006-07 to 2007-08
- Item 1.2.: delete Chimera Technical Arts Charter School application. (Application was withdrawn.)
- Item I.4.: revised recommendation for Interlocal Agreement With City of Newberry Parks and Recreation Department to Manage the DSP.
- Consent Agenda Items H.2., H.3., H.8. and H.9. are being pulled for discussion but not separate vote.

Motion by Mrs. Childs Seconded by Mrs. Pinkoson

Moved to adopt the October 17, 2006, meeting agenda as amended.

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

RECOGNITION

RETIREES

The Board and Superintendent recognized employees for their years of dedicated service.

SCHOOL BUS DRIVER
AND SCHOOL BUS
ATTENDANT OF THE
YEAR, 2005-06

For 2005-06, Edith Miles was named School Bus Driver of the Year and Edward Jackson was named the School Bus Attendant of the Year. The Board and Superintendent recognized them on their achievement.

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were no Board member or Superintendent announcements.

CITIZEN INPUT

A Head Start parent expressed thanks to the Head Start program and the School Board for the opportunity that Head Start provides to become an influence in the community.

CONSENT AGENDA

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson Seconded by Mrs. Williams

Moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented in items 1 – 9, with discussion to be held on items 2, 3, 8 and 9.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-0
[Mrs. Williams was out of the room during the vote.]

Mr. Ed Gable, Executive Director, Facilities, responded to questions on Consent Agenda Items H.2., H.8. and H.9. Mr. Wayne Hackett, Purchasing Director, responded to questions on Item H.3. He was requested by Mrs. Roy to research the detail on previously paid mowing services.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

PROPOSED 2007-08
SCHOOL CALENDAR –
FIRST READING

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson Seconded by Mrs. Roy

Moved the Superintendent's recommendation to schedule a Public Hearing for 6:30 p.m., November 7, 2006, to consider the proposed 2007-08 School Calendar.

Mrs. Roy commented that she is pleased with the calendar as presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

CONTRACT FOR
PURCHASE OF REAL
PROPERTY

Mr. Gable reported that there has been a site analysis of the property, several physical inspections, and two appraisals, which averaged \$2,665,00

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson Seconded by Mrs. Childs

Moved the Superintendent's recommendation to authorize execution of the Option for Purchase of Diamond Sports Park (DSP) and direct staff to assemble appropriate documentation for closing of the purchase.

Citizens addressed the Board with comments including:

- Opposition was expressed to the purchase of DSP, believing it should be used for projects on the facilities work plan.
- A recommendation was made to defer the decision until the cooperative agreement for park management has been reviewed.
- The Board was commended for pursuing this great opportunity. Gainesville Sports Organizing committee has offered their assistance to make this endeavor successful.
- This is the most forward-thinking move that's been done in this county in a long time. The facility is needed and has been offered to Alachua

- County for the past fifteen years without them taking advantage of it.
- City of Alachua Recreation commends the School Board for the purchase, citing the needs of the schools. It will help with the overtaxed schedule of the City of Alachua recreation facilities, and that of other municipalities.

Mrs. Roy objected to the purchase of DSP and stated the following for the record:

1. "The public, whom we all serve, was not involved in the decision. We did have a workshop on the subject. It was entirely positive for buying the sports park. It was held in the middle of the day when most people could not come that might be interested. We've had no public hearing and very little public discussion of this particular item. In fact, this is the first time, other than the time that it was presented the first time to us on August 15, that we have discussed this in a true public meeting. So I don't think it's had adequate public comment and discussion. Especially when we cut someone off who wants an extra thirty seconds.
2. The decision was rushed. We still don't know enough about this purchase to make an informed decision. I've looked over the contract and I've seen no studies about the environmental impact of constructing a school here. I don't know that we've taken soil samples, whether we've evaluated the property for sink holes and carst topography that would prevent a school from being built there. I don't know about the wildlife, about the water and sewer and wastewater considerations, road concurrency. Are these things being done in a rushed, last minute way? I haven't seen any documents from the Department of Community Affairs on these matters. I have had some people who are agents for developers tell us that there is no problem with road concurrency, but I know that it has to be done by the Department of Community Affairs.
3. I'm interested in the liability for the period of time that the School Board owns the property before it someday is built on. Does the Board pay for this coverage? I don't know. Will the Board receive any profits from the operation of the park to help defray expenses? I don't know the answers to these questions. We haven't had any discussion on them. And, therefore, to vote on something where we don't know the answers is presumptuous. I wonder why there was no bidding process to give every citizen who might have property to sell in this particular area, an equal opportunity. We could have advertised a need for a particular number of acres and I would submit that undeveloped property is better for a school in any case. DSP requires management.
4. The School Board did not take into account the role of the County in the approval of a new school or its desire to buy the property itself.

The County Manager clearly told us, this Board, that the County Commission did not approve of the location of a school there. And that it was “Buyer Beware.” In other words, we could buy it, but we could maybe not ever be able to build a school there. And that the urban services line would have to be moved. A new high school has enormous implications for development and must ultimately be approved by the County Commission. And I will say here that we seem to have violated our own interlocal agreement, which says *“when the need for a new school site is identified in the five-year facilities work program”*—which, it has not been in our five-year facilities work program—*“the school planning advisory committee will develop a list of potential sites in the area of need.”* That wasn’t done. *“The list of potential sites for new schools will be submitted to the local government with jurisdiction for an informal assessment regarding consistency with the local government comprehensive plan.”* That’s the Comp Plan for the County. That was not . . . well, it was presented to the County and the County said “No.” But we still went ahead with it. So, we’re not following what we have, ourselves, set forth in our interlocal agreement. The County Manager clearly told the Board that the County Commission was taking steps to buy the property itself. It has been said by the Chairman that the only option to preserve the park for the public’s use was for the School Board to go ahead alone. But I don’t think this is true as we all heard Mr. Reid’s statements to the contrary at the August 15 Board meeting. To those who say that the County does not really want the property, I ask, why did the County pay an appraisal if it wasn’t interested in buying the property? And I believe that the County is much more capable of running the facilities as a sports facility than the School Board is. This is something entirely new for the school system.

5. The reasons the School Board wants the park are not clear to me. We will not need a new high school for at least fifteen years. I think we’re agreed on that. The School Board is not in the business of providing adult recreation, the County is. And the County, as I said, is infinitely more qualified to run the park as a sports facility than the School Board.
6. The School Board cannot afford this purchase. After announcing to the community how needy we were and how we need the sales tax to bring our facilities up to par, we can just plunk down 2.5 million? Why don’t we use that money to build Williams Elementary a new media center? Which isn’t going to get one for five years. Or many of the other pressing needs in the district.
7. The process by which we got this far was wrong. We have procedures for a reason and that’s to protect the public’s interest. First of all, the Board was not adequately informed and we still aren’t. The Chairman did not discuss the idea to buy DSP with the

Board before approaching the County Manager with the idea. The Board gave the Superintendent permission only to get more information. Without further direction, a down payment was made.

The news media was informed about the down payment on DSP before the Board was informed. That's not right. That's backwards. The decision was made on someone else's timetable, to the detriment of public policy. The School Board, in my opinion, violated the intent of our own interlocal agreement in the selection of a site. The School Planning Advisory Committee should not be presented with a sales promotion to buy a piece of property. They should not be expected to hear about it and then make a decision about it within two hours. That's not what the interlocal agreement intended.

8. Locating a school there will encourage sprawl development. And that is also in our interlocal agreement, which says that we should not do anything that will encourage urban sprawl.
9. And finally, I believe the School Board should use its leverage to get property donated. The developers in the area who will stand to gain tremendously by the location of a school could chip in and buy the property and then allow the School Board to bank it. We should not have to buy or take money out of our capital improvement budget to buy something that we could get donated if we tried. And we never have even tried to get property donated. As Ms. Koenig says, most big developments do contribute property as a condition of development. And we didn't go for it, we're just eager to buy it.
10. In light of all this, I'd like to make a motion to defer the purchase of the park to get more information, to perform the necessary tests, and to allow for public discussion.

Motion by Mrs. Roy

Moved to defer the purchase of the park to get more information, to perform the necessary tests, and to allow for public discussion.

Motion died for lack of a second.

While Mrs. Childs stated that she did not want to address Mrs. Roy's comments point by point, she did counter several statements, as follows.

1. She disagreed with Mrs. Roy's statement that the Board was not adequately informed. Mrs. Childs stated that she feels adequately informed.
2. She does not want to leave the mistaken impression that Williams is not going to get a new library for five years. It is her understanding that the Board votes on the priorities each year. The decisions for the next five years have not been made.
3. The problem with conforming to the interlocal agreement was that

the DSP opportunity arose before the agreement was finalized.

Mrs. Childs comments:

- The Board has had a long-standing practice of land-banking for schools in this community. Had that practice not been invoked by past Facilities Director Fred Sivia, we would not have Hidden Oak, Wiles, or Kanapaha. Having the land saved for these schools proved to be a wonderful opportunity. The land purchases were wise, even though during that time there were also insufficient capital outlay funds for the District needs. As a District, decisions have to be made to look to the future. She feels that it is a shortcoming of the Board that there has not been a diligent effort in the past eight years to locate possible land to bank.
- It is not true that we do not need a new high school. If the District had the money right now to build a high school, it would be filled up and would ease the overcrowding at SFHS, BHS, GHS, and EHS. Eventually, the population will force the state to provide the money to build.
- The community needs to make available more after-school and weekend activities for young people. She sees the DSP purchase as a wonderful opportunity to partner with other agencies to provide an outlet for positive activities for kids. It would coordinate with the wellness efforts the Board is making on behalf of the children.
- She is proud of the giant step the District is taking for management of the DSP, by working on a cooperative effort with another agency, for the good of the community.
- Since the September 5 meeting, when the Board voted to pursue the DSP opportunity, numbers of citizens have approached her, all in support of the project.

Mrs. Pinkoson's Comments:

- She sees this as a win-win situation. Good leaders plan for the future. A park will be kept open for the children of this county, by working cooperatively with another municipality.
- She commended staff for seizing the opportunity, providing adequate information and time for adequate discussion. She believes the public is well aware of the issue and would be at this meeting if they did not support it.

Mr. Eubank's comments:

- Soil tests and other engineering data are available for those who wish to see them.
- The purchase is not 'land speculation,' since there is a plan for it,

not an intention to sell it.

- He corrected a statement that he ‘approached the County Manager,’ stating that he did not approach the County Manager.
- He does not know why the County had an appraisal done, but the County told Diamond Sports Park owners last April that they were not interested in buying it. The County has not approached DSP with an interest even now, should the School Board not purchase it. DSP does have an alternate buyer, but it is not the County.
- Concerning liability, inquiries have indicated that the cost will be negligible.
- The County is not in the recreation business; that is why they said they did not want to purchase DSP. They don’t do active recreation; they do passive.
- As to a charge of no public input, he has had dozens of people approach him with positive comments about going forward with the purchase. The only negative comments he has heard have been from the two people in the audience tonight and one Board member. It is the Board’s job to do what is best for the future of the school system and he believes that is what they are doing with the purchase of DSP.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1

- Yes - Mrs. Childs
- Mr. Eubank
- Mrs. Pinkoson
- Mrs. Williams
- No - Mrs. Roy

INTERLOCAL
 AGREEMENT WITH
 CITY OF NEWBERRY
 PARKS AND
 RECREATION
 DEPARTMENT TO
 MANAGE THE
 DIAMOND SPORTS PARK

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson

Seconded by Mrs. Williams

Moved the recommendation to authorize the Superintendent to negotiate an interlocal agreement with the City of Newberry Parks and Recreation for the maintenance and management of the Diamond Sports Park property.

Citizens addressed the Board with the following comments:

- Requested that the Board discuss the process by which the interlocal agreement is to be developed and provide opportunity for public comment in that process.
- Will the Superintendent sign off on the agreement or will it be a Board decision?

Mrs. Roy:

- Why is it essential that the interlocal agreement be with Newberry?
- Why was there not a bid process for park management?
- She can’t vote for this agreement, having no details.

Mr. Eubank stated that this item authorizes the Superintendent to enter into negotiations only. The contract will then go to the Board for a vote.

Mrs. Pinkoson believes there would be no better agency to run DSP than Newberry Recreation because of their Director's experience with DSP.

Superintendent Boyd clarified that there is no agreement at this time but he hopes the Newberry City Commission will support it because of Newberry's proximity to DSP and Mr. Blalock's experience. He hopes to have the agreement prepared for the next Board meeting. At that time, all the details will be presented.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 4-1

Yes - Mrs. Childs
Mr. Eubank
Mrs. Pinkoson
Mrs. Williams
No - Mrs. Roy

CITIZEN INPUT

Hal Brady, City of Alachua Recreation Director, stated that Act IV is a long-standing group of all the small towns in the County, with the City of Gainesville also involved. Act IV concurs that Newberry is the best agency to run DSP, it will assist them in any way and supports this project.

BOARD MEMBER/
SUPERINTENDENT
REQUESTS

Superintendent Boyd reported that the County Commission has requested a joint meeting with the School Board. After considering dates suggested by the County, November 21 at 1:30 p.m. was agreed upon.

The Superintendent thanked the Board for giving him the privilege of working with the DSP opportunity. He thanked staff and attorneys for their professionalism and expeditious handling. He stated that this purchase is one of the most gratifying things he has been able to do in his career, and he is confident that the future of the students of Alachua County will be well-served by the Board's purchase of this future educational site.

Mr. Eubank thanked the Superintendent for being far-sighted on this opportunity.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion by Mrs. Pinkoson

Seconded by Mrs. Williams

Moved that the meeting be adjourned.

The question was called.

Upon Vote: Motion passed 5-0

The Chairman declared the meeting adjourned at 7:16 p.m.