

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF MONROE COUNTY

Workshop and Special Meeting Minutes

A.J. Henriquez Adm. Bldg.

May 5, 2009, 10:00 am

PRESIDING: Andy Griffiths, Chair

PRESENT: Steven Pribramsky; Debra Walker; Duncan Mathewson; John Dick; Randy Acevedo, Superintendent and School Board Attorneys Richard Collins and Dirk Smits

WORKSHOP AGENDA – Time Certain 10:00 a.m.

Update from Forensic Investigator—Mr. Fechter updated the Board on his work since the last meeting. He virtually has completed all the field work with minor follow up. He plans on submitting the final report shortly and the findings have not substantially changed since last week. Nor, has he uncovered anything that would alter that since last week. He is assisting the state auditors and state attorney with cash receipts and quantifying missing funds back further to 2002. He is looking at the numbers for the HOB concession stand and will provide documentation for that. Additional work was done with vocational education department with Jim bell and conducted interviews and inspected grounds and inventories stored in a secured warehouse. Nothing changed with the Maintenance Department and as samplings were completed of cards v. purchases v. work orders nothing was found that was unusual. He met with Ms. Dolin with the travel agency. Mr. Fechter received limited information as she is not a hands on day to day manager. She can pull documentation this week. To her knowledge, she has not sold a non-refundable ticket from her agency. And she is not aware of refunds or credits for employees as alleged. Dr. Walker questioned the time limitations on receipts and how far back the state attorney can actually go back to ascertain a figure. Concerning the inventory in vocational education formalized accounting list should be kept. The monies used to track these stems from FEMA monies and grants. This would be proper area for the Internal Auditor to track. Mr. Henriquez reminded the Board of the loss of tools with Hurricane Wilma and explained how the loss of the tools were reimbursed by FEMA. Dr. Henriquez former FEMA coordinator for the district confirmed that was so. The Superintendent stated the threshold for inventory is \$1000.00 and anything less is considered consumable and not inventoried per statute.

Update on Sigsbee Charter and Letter of Understanding - Mr. Fraga drafted a preliminary contract with Sigsbee as a starting point. Sigsbee presented their own draft to Mr. Fraga. Sigsbee was reluctant to sign the LOU and has outlined their needs to include inventory and infrastructure and allow the employees a leave of absence with benefits. Ms. Lesley Crabbs addressed the Board highlighting the follow up letter stating they are ready to open but are uncomfortable with the LOU wording referencing the closure of the school during the next 15 months. Mr. Smits explained why the wording was placed in the LOU. The attorneys are to meet to refine the LOU so that it is agreeable to both parties and to be brought back to the next meeting for adoption. Mr. Griffiths wants an automatic mechanism stating the school will close without further board action if the charter is not open within the next 15 months. Commander Jim Olive urged the Board to permit the Charter to move forward. Mrs. Higgs spoke in favor of a private public partnership to get the

charter started and urged the Board to collectively provide direction. Mr. Fraga stated there were issues that could not be addressed and that we can work jointly but that Sigsbee was asking for things that the District did not provide to the charters. Captain Holmes reiterated its support of the Charter and did state they can join the LOU if it is appropriate.

Mrs. Herrin urged the Board to make a final decision to allow for district principals to proceed with staffing their schools. Dr. Walker asked Mr. Acevedo to place a budget discussion on the next agenda. Mr. Fowler addressed the concern over notification dates to the teachers. The Board is in agreement that Sigsbee will be kept over for one more year as a mainstream public school. Mr. Fowler asked if the teachers can expect to be rehired. Mike Henriquez stated it would be up to the principal on renewals and non-renewals. Mr. Collins was tasked with exploring the option of creating a Direct Support Organizations in the interim so the cooperative relationship can begin.

Discussion on the Resolution Regarding Superintendent Randy Acevedo – Mr. Acevedo made clear that does not intend to take leave or resign. He has done nothing wrong. He has not neglected his duties in any way and worked harder to continue to keep the district moving forward. He is committed to working hard and working together to move district forward and address any issues that should arise from any of the audits. He was not a part of any of the alleged charges against his wife and wants to use the team approach to continue to move the district forward.

Mr. Pribramsky discussed his proposed resolution he presented to the Board for approval asking for the Governor to suspend Superintendent Acevedo. He stated he was approached by concerned parents over a situation with the student elections at KWHS and comments were made which were inappropriate and is concerned that the children are being affected and this is why he brought it forward. He stated he'd delay the resolution until the audit's findings are released. He is concerned about the upcoming graduation and parents are upset and this places the families in a moral dilemma at graduation. Dr. Mathewson welcomed the Superintendent's remarks and helped him to wait to see what the findings are and what actually happened. Dr. Walker stated that the newly hired attorney would take advice from him on taking action on a public official after being completely informed and after the audit. Mr. Dick stated he was approached by individuals about the Evenstart grant and went forth to the Superintendent with his concerns. And, looked over new information recently obtained and mirrors exactly what we are seeing in the Adult Education situation. He states the same type of purchases were made and this will control his decision today and feels there should have been some awareness of the situation. Mr. Pribramsky would like to add this discussion after receiving the audit report. Mr. Griffiths reminded the Board that they have been logical and prudent collectively as a Board and would not want to see the Board divided as they work through this crisis and personally does not want to be a contributing party to sensationalize the situation causing distraction of the Board's main mission. He is in favor of delaying the discussion but looks forward to having it at the appropriate time. Mr. Fowler is concerned about leaving the cloud out there for the community to talk about. He urged the Board to remove the cloud from the Superintendent and let him do his job as the Governor would step in and remove him if there are charges to be made making the Board's resolution useless. Mr. Michael Halpern, Superintendent Acevedo's attorney addressed the Board. He stated that the message we were sending out to the children was that the mob mentality is dangerous and we

should teach them that a man is innocent until proven guilty and not guilty because the newspaper says so. He spoke on Mr. Acevedo's behalf. He asked how we can put the proper internal auditing procedures in place so that the errors of the past are not repeated. He thanked the Board for their attention. Dr. Henriquez addressed the Board telling the Board they have done the right processes in getting to the bottom of the situation coming back to one person being involved and reminded the Board none of the investigation has implicated the Superintendent and urged the Board to withdraw the resolution indefinitely unless the audit findings warrant to resurrect itself and if it doesn't then it should not be brought to light again. This incident proves the procedures and process did break down and implored the Board to work collaboratively to put a system in place to never have this happen again. Mr. Pribramsky never wanted this to appear that the Superintendent was guilty of anything and agreed with Mr. Halpern and Dr. Henriquez. Mr. Pribramsky withdraw his resolution indefinitely unless the audit finding prove otherwise necessitate its return. Dr. Walker stated the Governor is well aware what is happening in Monroe County. Mr. Henriquez quoted the statute on removal of public officials. Mr. Griffiths' contact in the Governor's office confirmed this many, many times.

Mr. Griffiths questioned the procedure for which legal is tasked with work by one individual board member and expects that the fees associated with this failed resolution; if it does not see the light of day again; will not be borne by the district. Mr. Smits explained the procedure. Mr. Pribramsky offered to pay for the fees if there is an objection to legal fees to this request. Mr. Collins asked for clarification on this procedure. If what he is hearing that legal needs 3 board members to approve legal work requested by one board member, then he feels further thought should be given on the how process should work. Mr. Griffiths suggested a threshold. The Board agreed to agenda legal services fees discussion for a future meeting.

CITIZEN INPUT

Leon Fowler would like to officially withdraw his prepared remarks.

SPECIAL ACTION ITEMS

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent,

Dr. Walker moved, and Dr. Mathewson seconded the board approve

Invoices from Vernis & Bowling invoice #'s 95719, 95720, 95721, 95722, 95723, 95784, 95787, 95788, 95789, 95790.

Motion passed without objection.
(Copy in SMB 47, page 276)

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent,

Dr. Walker moved, and Mr. Pribramsky seconded the board approve

Approval of Contract with Fowler White & Boggs as revised

Motion passed without objection.
(Copy in SMB 47, page 277)

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent,
Mr. Pribramsky moved, and Dr. Walker seconded the board approve

Approval of Resolution # 721 Concerning the Grant from DCF for Gerald Adams School.

Motion passed without objection.
(Copy in SMB 47, page 278)

Upon the recommendation of the Superintendent,
Mr. Pribramsky moved, and Dr. Mathewson seconded the board approve

Approval of Invoice for April for John R. Collins in the amount of \$9,015.00 for investigative legal services.

Motion passed without objection.
(Copy in SMB 47, page 279)

The Letter of Understanding Concerning the Charter at Sigsbee School was stricken from the agenda to be brought back at the next meeting after collaboration with the Sigsbee Charter committee.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Chair adjourned the meeting.

Andy Griffiths
Andy Griffiths, Chair

Randy Acevedo
Randy Acevedo, Superintendent