

MUSCOGEE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT  
COLUMBUS, GEORGIA

REGULAR BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETING  
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2008, 6:30 P.M.  
BRADLEY LIBRARY CONFERENCE ROOM

MINUTES

The regular meeting of the Board of Education of the Muscogee County School District was held on Tuesday, February, 2008, 6:30 p.m. in the conference room at the old Bradley Library.

The following Board members were present: James Walker, Chairman, Philip T. Schley, Vice Chairman, Cathy Williams, Fife M. Whiteside, Brenda P. Storey, John Wells, Naomi Buckner and Joseph Roberson.

Others present: John A. Phillips, Jr., Superintendent of Education, Greg S. Ellington, Legal Counsel, Eddie Obleton, Robin Pennock, Peggy Connell, Don Cooper, Don Hall, and Billy Kendall.

Upon motion of Dr. Schley, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously voted to excuse Mrs. Green from the regular meeting.

Mr. Walker recognized visitors in the audience. The Board recognized Jacob Wood, a Jordan High student who was appointed to the State Student Advisory Council, Reese Road National PTA grant; Columbus High School as an Advanced Placement Honor School; Chris Spraggins, a teacher at Columbus High for being a finalist for the 2009 Georgia Teacher of the Year and Qundia Ragland for the ABCD award.

Mr. Walker called on those who wanted to address the Board on the public forum; Larry Roane and Joshua McKoon.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Williams, the Board unanimously approved official actions taken at the regular Board of Education meeting held on January 22, 2008 and a called meeting held on January 24, 2008.

Upon motion Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved a resolution (appended to minutes) addressing traffic concerns at the North Site Property.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously voted to add the addendum for action.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved a new magnet program for Spencer High School entitled The Academy of Computer Science and Game Design.

Upon motion of Mr. Roberson, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board approved Channel One Network at Jordan High School. The vote was (6) affirming and (2) opposing, (Wells, Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved a phase-in plan to reinstate the Physical Education Program in the thirty-three elementary schools.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved budgetary parameters for FY09 and the budget calendar for FY09.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously approved Verizon Wireless to serve as the cellular phone service for the Muscogee County School District during the FY09 budget year for an annual cost of \$200,000.00.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved Financial Statements for six months ending December 31, 2007 and the audit of Financial Statement of 1997 SPLOST and 2003 SPLOST capital projects.

Mr. Wells made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Storey to ask the administration to proceed with preparing an initial list of proposed SPLOST projects. Mr. Whiteside commented, “This is a tough vote for me, it really is. In 1997 we developed a project list with sales tax money. I might add without prior board direction to the best of my recollection. We developed a project list for that sales tax. Board members were given an opportunity to review the projects that were submitted to the public and they were also invited to and encouraged to review that project list with their constituents. And we did that. After we had finished with it, it was released to the public for a public hearing at least two. I think one was at Shaw and one was at Carver. And, um, when we took that to the polls in 1997, we had about a 71 or 72 percent yes. Contrast to that in 2003 we developed a project list. I’ve been argued with about this and I’ve already documented it once. I don’t want to have to do it again, but we developed—the school district developed a project list pretty much without telling anybody what was on it. And when the Board voted on it, I might add, that it was a called board meeting. We didn’t know what was on it. That’s clearly in the minutes and in the record as it was reported by the Ledger-Enquirer. Then about two weeks after we voted to call for that sales tax we released the project list and then we began refining it. Then we started into what I remember as the never ending campaign, I ran I believe from August, July or August, all the way to November. And I felt like I was in the losing end of Sherman’s march to the sea. And the way we handled this was that we had this bus tour and we took members of the public and the press out to view the facilities. And in a meeting that occurred about two weeks prior to the election we refined the list and trimmed out some things, put some things back in, moved some things around and we went to ballot in November and it passed by less than 1%. I think it passed by about 280 votes. Now I appreciate the fact that we’re about to begin a process here that, um, will result in a project list which if it’s done properly will involve all of the stakeholders and board members and the public in determining how we will propose that their money should be spent. I think that’s a good effort but there are a couple of things that are bothersome to me about this. The first thing is why are we being asked to vote to direct the administration to do something that I suspect they want to do anyway? We’ve never done that before. The best I can tell what it is an effort or is the act of our expending political capital in order to make a statement to the public that the board is unified in asking for a sales tax. We could make that vote just as easily once the project list has been developed and that’s the way we’ve done it, to the best of my recollection, in the past. Now here are a couple of specific concerns about the process. What I have, um, board members know that I have made it almost a religious principle to satisfy promises made in my public service to and my law practice. I may not always do it exactly when I said I was gonna do it, but I always do pretty much what I say I’m gonna do. And I have told board members, perhaps I’ve told all members I really don’t remember, that if the project list was properly refined and presented to

the public and the public had a real opportunity to participate in the process, that I would vote for a sales tax election whenever it was brought to the board table. But the proof is as they say in the pudding. And what I'm asked to vote on is to vote before I've ever seen the project list or for that matter before I've seen how it's to be developed. And that was the thing that I was concerned about in the 2003 election as how it was developed. So it's difficult for me to, um, vote to start the sales tax process until I know exactly what it is I'm gonna be voting on. Now that's not to say as saying that I'm retreating from the criticism that I've made and that in 2003 we did this wrong that we should have sent it to the public. No retreating from that. I freely admit that, I mean, I freely reiterate that when the time comes to vote for a sales tax to be put on the ballot, if we have gone through process in a way that is respectful of all the stake holders and the board members, then I will absolutely vote to call for the election. I would like to make an amended motion. I'll read that into the record if I can find it. One of the children who is here tonight quoted Winston Churchill, "You make a living out of what you get but you make a life out of what you give." Winston Churchill also said, and I think was quoted from a speech he gave at Yale University, "Never give up. Never give up. Never ever give up." And so here we go. This is an amendment to the motion. I move to direct the administration to develop a project list for a sales tax renewal subject to the following parameters: (1) To involve members of the school board in a meaningful way at multiple decision points prior to the presentation of a preliminary project list to the public. (2) Create a mechanism by which all stake holders, staff, parents and tax payers can be involved in the refinement of that project list prior to the board's vote to take the list to ballot. (3) To include the cost of the new administration building, the construction for which has already been approved by the board, as a separate ballot question and suspend any further efforts towards completion of the building other than demolition that is currently under contract until after the sales tax election, whenever that may be, so as to give the public a meaningful opportunity to give us direction on how they feel we should proceed with their money."

Mrs. Williams seconded Mr. Whiteside's amended motion.

Mr. Wells commented, "Is that a vote on the same thing that we've already voted on, the building that we have moved forward on? Can we bring this up again? I don't mind including everybody. In fact I hope that we do. And I've never voted for anything that did not include the public or won't include the public and especially being honest and forthright to the board. But I don't want to vote tonight on the administration building again."

Mr. Whiteside asked for a ruling from the parliamentarian, if his motion was out of order. Mr. Whiteside stated, "I've tried to state the motion in a way to make it not a motion to reconsider the vote that's already been taken. If I have failed in that regard, I'm ruled out of order and that'll be the end of it." Mr. Ellington stated, "I've tried to listen as carefully as I can. I seem to do better when I read. What I think before I even look at this, I think that the basic point is that to include provisions in a motion to amend that is in essence and in fact a motion to reconsider a vote that's already been taken would be improper." Mr. Whiteside commented, "I asked for the construction to be suspended. I was careful not to ask that we revoke the decision. In fact I referred in that motion, excuse me, I have the floor. I referred in that motion to the fact that I'm not asking to have the building terminated I'm just asking to suspend it until after the sales tax. I don't have anything else to say about this I've said enough. And I'll abide by the rule of the parliamentarian."

Mr. Ellington ruled Mr. Whiteside's amended motion out of order. Mr. Walker asked for a vote on the original motion. The vote on the original motion made by Mr. Wells and seconded by Mrs. Storey for the Administration to proceed in preparing an initial SPLOST list of projects was (6) affirming and (2) abstaining, (Whiteside, Roberson).

Upon motion of Mrs. Williams, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously awarded a contract to ProSys, \$9,131,000.00 to perform LAN upgrade, cabling installation, and wireless implementation.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board awarded a contract to CELT, \$190,000.00 for RFP development and management services associated with the Computer Refresh, Server Consolidation and Novell Migration Projects. The vote was (7) affirming and (1) abstaining, (Whiteside).

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mrs. Storey, the Board unanimously approved the assignment of Neal, Kendust and Murray, Architects, to prepare the plans and specifications for freezer and cooler replacement at Hardaway High, \$279,600.00.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mr. Wells, the Board unanimously approved the following:

- Contract to Turner Plumbing, low bidder for HVAC upgrade, \$966,814.00 at Kendrick, Rothschild, Dawson and Hannan; approve budget and transfer of funds.
- Contract to Turner Plumbing, low bidder for HVAC upgrade, \$385,615.00 at Allen, Double Churches and Wesley Heights, approve budget and transfer funds.
- Contract to Smith-Raymond, low bidder for HVAC upgrade, \$966,727.00 at Richards, Spencer, and Dimon, approve budget and transfer funds.
- Contract to River City Construction, low bidder for re-roofing, \$445,206.00 at Reese Road, approve budget and transfer of funds.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously approved an adjustment for savings of \$123,794.00 to Change Order No. 15 for construction at Eagle Ridge Academy.

Upon motion of Ms. Buckner, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously approved Change Order No. 3 in the amount of \$41,535.00 to be added to the original contract for HVAC upgrading and lighting at Marshall Middle, approve the transfer of funds and a revised budget.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, unanimously approved the closing of selected construction projects and deposit the balance of \$673,914.96 in the NPR funds for other FY03 SPLOST Projects.

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner the Board approved the following consent agenda items including the addendum item that was added:

- Emergency purchase orders (3), \$40,127.71 for video inspection and repair of sewer drain systems at Blanchard Elementary.
- Human Resources Report
- Continuation of Gallup Organization, \$33,813.00
- Workers' Compensation Settlement
- Use of Kinnett Stadium by Special Olympics Georgia
- Use of Kinnett Stadium by Brookstone School
- Reimbursement, \$72,335.00, Cornerstone Literacy Framework
- Budget adjustment, State Woodall
- Budget adjustment, Federal, carryover, Woodall Program
- Budget adjustment, Plant Services, \$689,686.87
- Budget adjustment, Transportation, \$87,066.00
- Purchase order, Follett Library Resources, \$51,055.48, Rigdon Road
- Purchase order, Jenkins Service/Renfroe's Roofing, \$28,400.00
- Purchase order, USPS, \$70,000.00, Printing Graphics and Mail Department
- Purchase order, Turner Plumbing, \$53,926.00, water heaters at Shaw and Kendrick
- Purchase order, Oil Companies, \$85,833.63, system-wide fuel
- Purchase order, Central poly Corporation, \$59,950.00, plastic trash can liners
- Purchase order, Virco/Planscape, \$28,238.18, furnishing for Eagle Ridge Academy
- Purchase order, Communities in Schools Georgia, \$201,666.00, Instruction Department
- Donation, David Rothschild, II, \$2,100.00, Helen Ruffin Reading, middle schools
- Donation, Plant Franklin/Southern Company, \$6,500.00, Johnson Elementary
- Donation, AFLAC, \$5,000.00, Carver High celebration
- Grant, Lowe's Toolbox Education, \$4,065.00, Wesley Heights
- Grant, Georgia Power, \$2,500.00, Carver High
- Grant, GDOE Dropout Prevention, \$201,666.00, Instruction Department
- Financial Assistance, \$2,672.00
- Sales Tax Construction Program Report
- Report on Transfer from FY03 SPLOST Critical Needs
- Report of Change Orders/Changes in Project Contingencies
- Report on System-wide Technology Plan
- Report on Forecasted Revenue Collections
- Report on Transfers from Capital Projects Fund
- Status Report for Projects Under Construction

Upon motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Ms. Buckner, the Board unanimously voted to go into executive session for two student discipline appeals and a legal matter.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously voted to come out of executive session.

Upon motion of Mrs. Storey, seconded by Mr. Roberson, the Board unanimously voted to adjourn the regular February meeting of the Board.

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Greg S. Ellington, Legal Counsel