

The Ouachita Parish School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at six (6:00) o'clock p.m. at their regular meeting place the Ouachita Parish School Board office.

President Hicks called the meeting to order and welcomed visitors and guests to the meeting.

The roll was called and the following members were present: Tommy Comeaux, Scott Robinson, A. R. Sims, Jerry R. Hicks, John Russell, Carey Walker and Greg Manley. There were none absent.

Board member Carey Walker led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Board member Scott Robinson gave the Invocation.

On motion by A. R. Sims, seconded by Tommy Comeaux, the Board approved the Minutes of January 23, 2018 as written. Motion carried unanimously.

On motion by Tommy Comeaux, seconded by A. R. Sims, the Board amended the Agenda to add a request by Purchasing Agent Bobby Jones to include under IX. Business item **No. 6** – *Declare Surplus Equipment* and item **No. 2** – *Sale of Surplus Equipment* under XI. Permission to Bid [Bid No. 36-18]. Motion carried unanimously.

On motion by Greg Manley, seconded by Tommy Comeaux, the Board approved the Agenda as amended. Motion carried unanimously.

Under his Personnel Report, Dr. Coker announced that effective 2/14/2018, Joy Powell, the current librarian at Ouachita Junior High School, will be taking the position of Instructional Technology Coordinator. A position previously held by recently retired Kathy Evans.

Following the presentation and recommendation of the 2018-19 School Calendar by Personnel Director Todd Guice, Carey Walker moved, seconded by Scott Robinson, that the Board adopt the 2018-19 OPSB School Calendar as presented. President Hicks offered a brief moment for public comment and motion carried unanimously.

Board attorney Elmer Noah presented his recommended proposed *“Settlement Agreement and Release of all Sales and Use Tax Audit Claims and Refund Claims for the Tax Periods Beginning January 1, 2000 and Ending December 31, 2017”* ending many years of law suits and tax disputes by Graphic Packaging International, Inc. involving three local entities: Ouachita Parish Police Jury, Monroe City School Board and Ouachita Parish School Board. Following an explanation of Mr. Noah’s proposal and Dr. Coker’s recommendation that the Board approve the mediation for settlement, Greg Manley moved, seconded by John Russell, that the Board approve the GPI settlement agreement as presented and authorize Mr. Noah to contact Mr. Timothy Lewis to appear on behalf of the three bodies, in his capacity as the Administrator for the City of Monroe’s Tax and Revenue Division; The City of Monroe’s Tax and Revenue Division and the City of Monroe and execute the agreement as presented. The following roll call vote was recorded: Tommy Comeaux, yes; Scott Robinson, yes; A. R. Sims, yes, Jerry Hicks, yes; John Russell, yes; Carey Walker, yes; and Greg Manley, yes. Following an offer by President Hicks for public comment, motion carried, with seven (7) “yes” votes and no “no” votes.

Dr. Coker said he was pleased and excited to settle this suit after all these many years and responded favorably to the Graphic Packaging International, Inc. settlement agreement adding that, after paying legal fees for 17 years, "It's a win – win for us!" In the final judgment, the three bodies are to pay GPI \$1.5 million over a 15 year period. The Ouachita Parish School Board is assessed at 50% (\$750,000) to be paid with a monthly tax reduction; Ouachita Parish Police Jury is assessed at 40% and Monroe City School Board at 10% over a 15-year period.

On the recommendation of the Superintendent, Dr. Coker, Personnel Director Todd Guice presented a Resolution for the Board's consideration asking that the State of Louisiana, the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education, Local Educational Authority, Post-Secondary institutions, and all affiliated groups and organizations should increasingly collaborate to ensure a quality teacher workforce for all children. Dr. Coker emphasized the importance of forming a *Task Force* to advise our personnel administrators as to what they are allowed to do in hiring and retaining teachers in the State of Louisiana because there is a tremendous shortage of teachers right now, especially in the area of secondary math and science. Mr. Guice acknowledged that he has also been concerned about the decline in teacher applicants across the state for some time now which is reaching a critical shortage in math and science. A resolution has been created in his association and sent to Governor Edwards asking him to create a task force to address this problem. The Governor, Senate and House have been receptive to this request and pledged to create a task force for this purpose. OPSB is the eleventh school board to draw up a similar resolution with ten other school boards across the state expressing their concern. This resolution will be sent to the Governor and area representatives asking for their support in finding a solution to this problem of attracting more teachers to our state. Whereby, Tommy Comeaux moved, seconded by Scott Robinson, that the Board approve the Resolution as presented regarding the creation of a *Louisiana Task Force* by the Governor and Legislators to offer stronger teacher recruitment options. President Hicks invited public comment and motion unanimously carried.

Title I Supervisor Cynthia Osborne presented the Board with 15 policies for consideration of approval (copies on file). After Act 335 was approved by the 2017 Louisiana Legislature, the term bus *driver* was replaced with bus *operator* in several statutes. In order to be consistent, most policies should reflect this change, not only those affected directly by Act 335. Whereby, Greg Manley moved, seconded by Tommy Comeaux, that the Board accept the changes in these 15 policies using the term referring to bus *driver* and replacing it with bus *operator* according to Act 335. President Hicks offered a brief moment for public comment and motion carried unanimously. Mrs. Osborne asked the Board to review three new policies listed in their folders that are coming up for consideration of approval at the next Board meeting.

On motion by Tommy Comeaux, seconded by Scott Robinson, the Board granted permission to prepare the West Monroe High School football practice field for use that includes installing a new fence and incorporating the existing fence from the old practice field with the new one. The fence is estimated to cost around \$75,000. Coach Arledge submitted one bid of \$75,000 for the fence with an additional cost for its installation. Purchasing Agent Bobby Jones mentioned that this project falls within the limits of the bid law and can be considered a work project and does not have to be bid. When Mr. Jones brings other proposals to the Board for their consideration, a contractor will be selected for

the WMHS football practice field construction project. President Hicks offered a brief moment for public comment and motion unanimously carried.

Purchasing Agent Bobby Jones provided the Board with a list of items that needs to be declared surplus equipment currently stored at the East Garage Warehouse and requested permission to solicit written proposals from vendors interested in purchasing and removing these surplus items from the premises. Mr. Jones commented that these items have been stored for many years in a warehouse that is not conducive for storing the type of contents as described over a long period of time and highly recommended they be removed. Whereby, Tommy Comeaux motioned, seconded by Scott Robinson, that the Board declare all contents stored in the East Garage Warehouse, "surplus equipment" and allow Mr. Jones to accept written proposals (bids) from vendors interested in purchasing and removing the contents stored in the facility. From the list, Mr. Jones pointed out the following surplus items recommended for removal: *AV Carts, Cafeteria Equipment, Weight Equipment, Classroom Furniture (desks, chairs, teacher desks), & Textbooks*. Following a brief moment for public comment offered by President Hicks, motion unanimously carried.

On the recommendation of Special Projects/Safety Coordinator Kenneth Slusher, Scott Robinson moved, seconded by John Russell, that the Board approve the Right-of-Way Agreement authorizing Entergy to install a new utility pole and run a new line across the front corner of the West Ouachita High School property, located within a certain tract of land in the NW/4 of the SW/4 of Section 26 Township 17 North Rang 1 East. President Hicks offered public comment and motion unanimously carried.

Special Projects/Safety Coordinator Kenneth Slusher announced that he had met with the building supervisor and principal of the new East Ouachita Middle School and went over the punch list on a final inspection of the project. He, the building supervisor and the principal are satisfied with the completed punch list items. Since Mr. Slusher and school staff found everything in order after the inspection, he issued the final payment to the contractor, Mann Construction, for the balance of money owed for the completed project less the value of expired punch list items.

Mr. Slusher concluded his report stating that Building/Maintenance Supervisor, Scottie Nugent, has talked with Bannister regarding the removal and installation of the used light poles and lighting fixtures purchased from Osterland Recreation (City of Monroe) and was informed that the lights and poles have been delivered to SMS and will be installed when the weather permits. The poles and light fixtures going to WMHS will be delivered as soon as the weather permits.

Upon the recommendation of Purchasing Agent Bobby Jones, Greg Manley moved, seconded by Tommy Comeaux, that the Board accept the bid from Robertson Produce in the amount of \$70,169.50 for Bid Period 2/17/2018 – 3/30/2018 for Fresh Produce and Eggs (Child Nutrition Services) [*Bid No. FS6F-18*]. Discussion offered for public comment and motion carried unanimously.

Upon the recommendation of Purchasing Agent Bobby Jones, Scott Robinson moved, seconded by Tommy Comeaux, that the Board accept the low responsive bids typed in **BOLD** print for Copy Paper and Other Shades [*Bid No. 33-18*]. Discussion offered for public comment and motion carried unanimously.

Upon the recommendation of Purchasing Agent Bobby Jones, Greg Manley motioned, seconded by Carey Walker, that the Board grant permission to bid the following items: **(1)** Woodchips/Borders [Bid No. 35-18] and **(2)** The Sale/Removal of Surplus Equipment [Bid No. 36-18] as presented. Discussion offered for public comment and motion unanimously carried.

The next Board meeting will be held on Tuesday, February 27, 2018 at 12:00 noon.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Sims moved, seconded by Tommy Comeaux, that the Board meeting adjourn. Motion carried unanimously.

**OUACHITA PARISH SCHOOL BOARD**

Jerry R. Hicks. President

**ATTEST:**

Don Coker, Secretary

/ps