

The Ouachita Parish School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, January 23, 2018 at twelve (12:00) o'clock noon at its 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, A. R. Sims, Jerry R. Hicks, John Russell, Carey Walker and Greg Manley. Scott Robinson was the only member absent.

Board member Tommy Comeaux led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Board member Greg Manley gave the Invocation.

On motion by A. R. Sims, seconded by Greg Maley, the Board approved the Minutes of January 9, 2018 as written. Motion carried unanimously.

On motion by Greg Manley, seconded by Carey Walker, the Board approved the Agenda as presented. Motion carried unanimously.

Superintendent Coker announced that he needs to fill the position of Coordinator of Instructional Technology due to the retirement of Kathy Evans and asked the Board's permission to open the position for application through the interview process. He explained that the new job description has similar duties but has been updated with more descriptive directions (i.e.), add several more duties allowing the coordinator to provide more Professional Development, In-services, Classroom Activities, etc. and that the written updated job description was available any time for the Board's review. Whereby, Carey Walker moved, seconded by John Russell, that the Board grant permission to the Superintendent to open the 12 mo. position of Coordinator of Instructional Technology for application through the interview process. Motion carried unanimously. Scott Robinson was absent.

Title I Supervisor Cynthia Osborne provided the Board copies of policies for approval that were submitted for review and consideration at a prior meeting and Tommy Comeaux moved, seconded by Carey Walker, to approve the following four policies as presented, which have been reviewed and approved by district personnel, our policy service provider (*Forethought Consultants, Inc.*), and Board attorney, Elmer Noah: **Policy DFL: Sale of Buildings and Land**; **Policy ECA: Authorized Use of Equipment**; **Policy GBC: Recruitment**; and, **Policy GBRIB: Sick Leave**. Following a brief moment for public comment offered by President Hicks, motion carried unanimously. Scott Robinson was absent.

Personnel Director Todd Guice reported that the Pupil Progression Committee met on Friday, January 12, 2018 for the final adoption of the 2017-2018 Pupil Progression Plan. Mr. Guice announced that the implementation of the Pupil Progression Plan was pushed back by the state department, which is unusual because approval usually comes much earlier in the year. The Board was provided a copy of the changes recommended by the committee to the Pupil Progression Plan that included a list of six minor Carnegie Unit modifications mostly at the middle school level, with some at the high school level; summer remediation "period" defined as, (*"the period after the completion of spring testing and running until October 1st"*); and included previously approved Bridge Academy or (Virtual School). Whereby,

John Russell moved, seconded by Tommy Comeaux, that the Board approve the 2017-2018 Ouachita Parish Pupil Progression as presented by Personnel Director Todd Guice. Motion carried unanimously.

Business Director Juanita Duke presented her monthly interim Financial Report for the period ended November 30, 2017. The Board was provided copies of the report which includes all funds of the school board and the total budgeted revenues and expenditures for the fiscal year compared to actual performance. She reported **General Fund** revenue is about 2% less than last year at this time mainly due to the reduction in MFP funding, and about 30% of the expenditure budget is expended, with expenditures being 103% of prior fiscal year-to-date expenditures. The fund balance is about 97.5% of the balance in the General Fund compared to last year. The four sales tax funds continued to show an overall decline in sales tax revenues as previously reported. Currently, revenue collections in the four sales tax funds are about 92%-94% compared to last fiscal year-to-date. **District M&O** expenditures are \$2.8 million, in line with prior year expenditures. The **Internal Service Funds** and **Debt Service Funds** showed normal activities. **Capital Project Funds** continues to experience a slowdown in capital spending. However, Ms. Duke noted a correction in the balance of the **East Ouachita 2015 Bond Construction** for late adjustment made in November to reverse contract retainages payable accrued at the prior fiscal year's end of \$897,880. Normally this is a seamless entry, with the accrual posted in the last period of the old fiscal year and reversed in the first period of the new fiscal year. The effect is that expenditures in the fund were overstated until the reversal was made in November. East Ouachita Construction is now reported with a fund balance of \$1,605,619 with outstanding contract obligations still remaining of approximately \$493,322 at the end of the period. The West Ouachita 2015 Bond Construction is reported with a fund balance of \$4.3 million. Mrs. Duke offered to answer the Board's questions and Carey Walker moved, seconded by John Russell, that the Board approve the 2017-18 Financial Report for the period ended November 30, 2017 as presented by Business Director Juanita Duke. President Hicks offered a brief moment for public comment and motion carried unanimously.

For the past year or so, Superintendent Coker has been trying to look ahead and develop a vision as to where he wants to take the Ouachita Parish School System in meeting future challenges facing our school system each and every day. In doing so, much thought is taken to minimize the disruption of our students, the schools and families that have chosen to live in areas of specific school zones. However, we may have to look at rezoning some of our schools in the future, but will do everything to prevent this from happening.

In his quest to find a solution in which to make his departments operate more efficiently, he looked at relocating the Central Office operations, Media Center, IT Dept. and Instructional Annex and house them under one roof. When looking at the decline in enrollment of 547 students within a five-year period, he realized that something needed to be done to save the system money wherever possible. Instead of having to close existing schools, he thinks it makes more sense to move the operations of the OPSB Central Office, Media Center, IT Dept. and Instructional Annex into one building. At this time he presented his renovation proposal and reasons for his plan to the Board. He went over several explanations for the move. It would be more convenient to have all his administrative staff under one roof offering the opportunity to consolidate some duplicate positions, while assuring the Board that no one will lose their job. His plans are to eliminate those positions through attrition. Consolidating the 90 - 100 employees into one building will not only save money, but reduce utility and

maintenance expenses. The former WMJHS has approximately 97,000 square feet and is currently used for about 70 OPAC alternative students and 17 staff members, which adds up to unnecessary expenses and a lot of unused space that has to be maintained with added expenses of heating and cooling unused areas. At one time, student enrollment was at its peak with 1,100 students and 100 staff members, so it is clear that we are not getting what is needed in maximum efficiency at OPAC. To bring the Board up to date with student enrollment changes, Dr. Coker provided the latest declining student enrollment figures from 2013 to present time while emphasizing the need to reduce square footage in buildings in the District without impacting schools or students. He suggested creating more efficiency within the District by consolidating four buildings into one facility, thereby eliminating maintenance, utilities and costs associated with daily use of three of these facilities (School Board, Media Center and Information Technology building). By housing Central Office, Media Center, IT and Instructional Annex under one roof, there should be better communication, more availability to meet instructional needs and some consolidation of positions that are duplicated at the four sites, thereby utilizing OPAC to its fullest capacity.

Dr. Coker reminded the Board that the West Ouachita Task Force established in 1996-97 recommended the capital improvements plan that was approved by the Board on August 5, 1997 and promoted to the citizens prior to the election authorizing the 1% west side sales and use tax on November 15, 1997. Included in the plan was the recommendation to move the Central Office to the former Richardson Alternative High School; however funding was not allocated for the relocation at that time. Dr. Coker stated that funding for relocating the current four departments to the Ouachita Parish Alternative Center (OPAC) will come from the sale proceeds of the three facilities in the City of Monroe, remaining West Side Bonds, and West Side Sales Tax revenue. After providing a letter from School Board bond attorney, Grant Schlueter with Foley & Judell, Dr. Coker reported the use of these funding sources is permissible for the proposed renovation plan to move the aforementioned departments to OPAC. Dr. Coker informed the Board that the cost of the project to relocate the four departments into one building is a preliminary estimate of between \$5 million to \$6 million, including the cost to renovate OPAC.

For a while now, Dr. Coker's plans to consolidate the four buildings and turn OPAC into the new Ouachita Parish Central Office complex has been considered by administration for some time and has been discussed in the community. In order to save more money, Dr. Coker pointed out there are no plans to purchase new furniture and equipment for the move. Employees' existing furnishings and equipment will follow them to the new facility. The renovation process is expected to take a little over a year to complete with occupancy to take place hopefully in May or June, 2019.

Following the presentation of the proposed OPAC renovation plan for moving the Central Office, Media Center, Informational Technology, and Instructional Annex departments to the OPAC facility, Tommy Comeaux moved, seconded by Jerry Hicks, that the Board approve the plan as presented by Superintendent Coker. President Hicks offered a brief moment for public comment and the motion unanimously carried. Board member Scott Robinson was absent.

On motion by Tommy Comeaux, seconded by Greg Manley, the Board appointed Tim Brandon with TBA Studios as the architect for the renovation project at the Ouachita Parish Alternative Center

(OPAC) property in preparation for accommodating the employees of the Central Office, Media Center, Informational Technology, and Instructional Annex in moving them into the newly renovated OPAC building. President Hicks offered a brief moment for public comment and the motion unanimously carried. Board member Scott Robinson was absent.

The Board heard a renovation report from Special Projects/Safety Coordinator Kenneth Slusher regarding the East Ouachita Middle School final punch list items. Mr. Slusher explained that some of the items need to be done by the contractor; however, about 90% of them are warranty items that have expired. Architect for the project, Rice Gregory, Mr. Guice, Scottie Nugent and Mr. Slusher are meeting there in the morning to walk through the school separating the actual punch list from warranty items. Once the findings are satisfied, Mr. Slusher and his team will authorize payment to Mann's Construction less the value of the punch list items pending Dr. Coker's approval. At this time, Greg Manley asked Mr. Gregory if he thought there would be a problem with Mann's Construction finishing the identified warranty items listed on the punch list if paid in full. Mr. Gregory answered that he did not think so since substantial completion was granted on May 4, 2017 and at that time the list was very lengthy. However, the contractor has shown diligent effort and cooperation to progress where they are right now. The last major item addressed by Mr. Gregory was the repair/replacement of the tile floors that were completed during the Christmas holidays. After examining the floors himself, Mr. Gregory thinks they are in good shape. Mann's Construction representatives, project superintendent and manager, will be onsite during the visual inspection tomorrow.

During Mr. Slusher's report, questions were asked about the progress of the Linderman Street Property demolition project (*formerly Tim Tippit School site*) and Mr. Slusher responded that asbestos abatement of the buildings had to be performed before the demolition could begin. Once this is done, the demolition can begin, which will take approximately three weeks to complete. Also, Purchasing Agent Bobby Jones reported that the West Monroe softball field poles and lighting fixtures were delivered January 18, 2018 and the contractor (Albritton's) will be installing them possibly this week if weather permits. Additionally, Mr. Jones stated that the removal of the used lighting poles purchased earlier from Osterland Recreation Center that are destined for Sterlington Middle and West Monroe High will be delayed waiting on drier weather conditions. Contractor, Bannister, contacted Mr. Jones reporting that the onset of rainy weather has made it impossible to move heavy equipment onto the sites at Osterland, and the two schools for removal and reinstallation of the poles. At the time of the Board meeting, Mr. Jones had not heard from Bannister's on a tentative date for installation of these pole lights. Bannister announced that they will begin replacing lights that can be reached from the paved areas at West Ouachita High on January 29, 2018. The outfield area is too wet for the weight of the lift equipment.

There was no evaluation of bids offered.

On the recommendation of Purchasing Agent Bobby Jones, Tommy Comeaux moved, seconded by A. R. Sims, that the Board grant permission to bid Cheerleader Uniforms for West Ridge Middle School (*Bid No. 34-18*) with a budget of \$40,000 and paid with West Ridge School Funds. Motion carried unanimously.

At 12:58 p.m., Tommy Comeaux moved, seconded by John Russell, that the Board go into executive session and that the meeting be closed to the public pursuant to Louisiana Revised Statute 42:6.1(A)(2)(aa) for the limited purpose of discussing the status of pending litigation in the matter styled, "Nancy Lee Jones, individually and on behalf of her minor child, Ayron Hunter Lee v. Ouachita Parish School Board" No. 14-0184, on the docket of the Fourth Judicial District Court in and for Ouachita Parish, Louisiana and matters related thereto." The following roll-call vote was recorded: Tommy Comeaux, yes; Scott Robinson, absent; A. R. Sims, no; Jerry Hicks, yes; John Russell, yes; Carey Walker, yes; and Greg Manley, yes. Motion carried, with five (5) "yes" votes, one (1) "no" vote and one (1) absence (Mr. Scott Robinson was absent).

At 1:10 p.m., the executive session closed, at which time, Carey Walker moved, seconded by Mr. Sims, that the meeting be re-opened to the public. The following roll-call vote was recorded: Tommy Comeaux, yes; Scott Robinson, absent; A. R. Sims, yes; Jerry Hicks, yes; John Russell, yes; Carey Walker, yes; and Greg Manley, yes. Motion carried with six (6) "yes" votes, no (0) "no" votes and one absence (Mr. Scott Robinson was absent).

Dr. Coker announced the date and time of his "Focus on Education Luncheon 2018" where he will address the public regarding his views on the state of education in the Ouachita Parish School System and his plans for the future of education in Ouachita Parish schools. The event is hosted by the West Monroe West Ouachita Chamber of Commerce on Tuesday, February 6 at noon at the West Monroe Convention Center and everyone was extended an invitation to join him during this exciting event.

Superintendent Coker took this time to recognize our Board attorney, Elmer Noah, for a special award he recently received from the 4th Judicial District Bar Association for his 40 years of dedicated service as a professional attorney in our community. Mr. Noah has represented the Ouachita Parish School Board as our legal counsel for over 30 years and we are very proud to have him on our team.

President Hicks announced the next meeting will be on Tuesday, February 13, 2018 at 6:00 p.m.

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

OUACHITA PARISH SCHOOL BOARD

Jerry R. Hicks, President

ATTEST:

Don Coker, Secretary

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