

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, NOVEMBER 12, 2020

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Special Workshop at 1:00 p.m., in Room 160, at the J.E. Hall Educational Services Center, 30 East Texar Drive, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chair: Mrs. Patricia Hightower (District IV)
Vice Chair: Mr. William E. Slayton (District V)
Board Members: Mr. Kevin L. Adams (District I)
Mr. Paul Fetsko (District II)
Dr. Laura Dortch Edler (District III)

Superintendent of Schools (Incoming): Dr. Timothy A. Smith

Advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on October 19, 2020 – Legal No. 4411653
General discussion occurred throughout this session amongst School Board Members, the Superintendent, and staff.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Hightower called the Special Workshop to order at 3:00 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION ON GENERAL COUNSEL:

1. Job Description

For ease of reference, a copy of the current job description for General Counsel was projected on screen throughout this session. Mrs. Hightower tasked the School Board's assistant with entering any suggested changes as the School Board went through the review process. The Human Resources Department would use those entries to prepare a revised job description. The revised job description would be reviewed at the December 10, 2020 Special Workshop to ensure no additional revisions were necessary prior to submission for School Board approval at the December 15, 2020 Regular Meeting.

Position Description: *To perform this job successfully, an individual must be able to perform the essential job functions consistently and to the satisfaction of the employer. Reasonable accommodations may be made for qualified disabled individuals. This job description is not an exhaustive list, as employees may be required to perform duties not specifically designated within this document, at the employer's discretion. The Escambia County School District reserves the right to modify or interpret this job description as needed.*

Reports to: *Appropriate Supervisor or Designee*

Pay Grade: *Administrative – 1*

Job Summary: *The purpose of this position is to render sound legal advice and counsel to the School Board, to serve as an effective advocate for the School Board in administrative court proceedings, to ensure that the School Board and the Superintendent are informed of changes in laws and regulations, and needed legislation and their impact on the School District, to facilitate the acquisition of real property or other School District property, to ensure that all School District contracts are legally sufficient and enforceable, to effectively manage the delivery of legal services to the School Board by coordinating and overseeing litigation by serving and managing contract counsel, and by organizing and directing assistant attorneys, clerical, and technical staff assigned to the attorney's office, and to reduce claims against the District and to ensure compliance with laws and regulations through training to the School Board, the District and their employees and through communication with local, state, and federal officials, as appropriate.*

Essential Job Functions

- *Attends all regular or special School Board meetings and such workshops as are deemed appropriate by the Chairman for the School Board, rendering legal advice and counsel.*
- *Represents the administration in administrative hearings, including appeals of administrative action as authorized by the School Board or the recommendation and supervision of outside counsel for such representation.*
- *Reviews periodically the policies and procedures manual of the School Board to determine if it is in compliance with state and federal law and regulations.*
- *Advises the School Board and the Superintendent as to those policies which should be changed and recommends appropriate content of the change.*
- *Informs the School Board and the Superintendent regarding any pertinent changes in state and federal law.*
- *Advises the School Board of any needed or suggested legislation and how proposed legislation would affect the District.*
- *Oversees the sale or acquisition of all real property or other School District property, including arranging for title insurance when necessary and arranges for representation of the School Board in condemnation proceedings or other real property litigation.*
- *Prepares or approves as to form all contracts entered into on behalf of the School Board.*
- *Coordinates any litigation to which the School Board is a party including appeals, by assigning cases to outside counsel as approved by the School Board or by retaining the cases personally.*
- *Delivers information concerning any litigation in a timely fashion to the appropriate trial attorney and monitor the progress and costs of any litigation to which the School Board is a party.*
- *Renders such other legal services as the School Board may from time-to-time require including serving as lead counsel in selected cases involving the School Board.*
- *Sends written reports to the School Board on a quarterly basis or more frequently if directed by the School Board as to the progress of litigation.*
- *Assists in the interpretation of programs, philosophy, and policies of the District to staff, students, and the community.*
- *Interacts with parents, outside agencies, business, and community to enhance understanding of District initiatives and priorities and to elicit support and assistance.*
- *Serves as liaison with the Florida Department of Education for assigned areas of responsibility.*
- *Responds to inquiries or concerns in a timely manner.*
- *Disseminates information and current research to appropriate personnel.*
- *Keeps well informed about current trends and best practices in areas of responsibility.*
- *Facilitates the development, implementation, and evaluation of staff development activities provided in assigned areas.*
- *Promotes and supports professional growth for self and others.*
- *Develops annual goals and objectives consistent with and in support of District goals and properties.*
- *Maintains a network of peer contacts through professional organizations.*
- *Attends training sessions, conferences, and workshops to keep abreast of current practices, programs, and legal issues.*
- *Supervises assigned personnel, conducts annual performance appraisals, and makes recommendations for appropriate employment action.*
- *Prepares or oversees the preparation of all required reports and maintains appropriate records.*
- *Serves on District, state, or community councils or committees as assigned or appropriate.*
- *Represents, consistently, the District in a positive and professional manner.*
- *Performs other incidental tasks consistent with the goals and objectives of this position.*
- *Conducts seminars and/or individual training of the School Board, members of the School Board, employees of the School Board or District, as to legal issues faced by the School Board and District.*

Minimum Requirements

- *Doctoral Degree, graduation from an accredited law school, and a member in good standing of the Florida Bar.*

- *Over ten (10) years of experience as an attorney.*
- *Qualifications may vary from the above requirements to such a degree as the Board determines is necessary and appropriate to ensure properly qualified personnel in each specialized assignment.*

Knowledge, Skills, and Abilities

- *Requires the ability to display demonstrated skill in governmental and administrative law.*
- *Requires the ability to display experience in, and knowledge of, laws applicable to Kindergarten through Twelve (K-12) School Districts.*
- *Requires the ability to display effective trial experience.*
- *Requires the ability to display successful experience in a supervisory capacity.*
- *Requires the ability to display experience in Parliamentary Procedures and knowledge of Roberts Rules of Order as revised.*
- *Requires the ability to organize and prioritize activities.*
- *Requires the ability to communicate effectively, both orally and in writing.*
- *Requires the ability to determine strategy as well as long range goals for the organization.*
- *Requires the ability to develop policies, long range plans, and allocate funds.*
- *Requires the ability to perform work that involves high level issues, processes, or organizational needs.*
- *Requires the ability to make recommendations that impact the budget and manage the budget within assigned department.*
- *Requires the ability to use small office equipment and computers.*

Physical Demands - Light Work: *Exerting up to 20 pounds of force occasionally and/or up to 10 pounds of force as frequently as needed to move objects. The work also requires the following physical abilities in order to perform the essential job functions: hearing, mental acuity, repetitive motion, speaking, talking, and visual acuity.*

Working Conditions - *Employees in this position spend most time working in a physically threatening environment that requires life and death decisions to be made for themselves and others.*

2. Interview Committee

The School Board discussed the formation of an interview committee to review applications for the position of General Counsel. The committee would then suggest perhaps three (3) individuals to be interviewed by the School Board. The following individuals were suggested as possible appointees to this committee: David Bryant, Director-Internal Auditing; Sharon Goshorn, Paralegal; a representative from Human Resource Services; a principal from each level (elementary, middle, high); an assistant superintendent; a representative from Exceptional Student Education (perhaps the Director); and the Deputy Superintendent. The Chair would work with the Superintendent to determine final composition of the interview committee. Dr. Edler requested that diversity and inclusion be considered with regard to the composition of the committee.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

~~No registration forms submitted~~

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop concluded at 3:02 p.m.