

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, AUGUST 6, 2008

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida, convened in Special Meeting at 4:00 p.m., in the Board Room, at the Dr. Vernon McDaniel Building, 215 West Garden Street, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chair: Mrs. Patricia Hightower Vice Chair: Mr. Pete Gindl, Sr.

Board Members: Mr. Jeff Bergosh  
Mr. Gerald Boone  
Mrs. Claudia Brown-Curry

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Jim Paul

I. CALL TO ORDER/ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Mrs. Hightower called the Special Meeting to order at 4:03 p.m. Mr. Gindl and Mr. Bergosh indicated that they each had an issue to address prior to the "Public Forum" section of the agenda. Motion by Mr. Gindl, seconded by Mrs. Brown-Curry, to adopt the agenda (as amended), carried unanimously.

II. OPERATIONS

1. Real Property Sale and Purchase Contract between Gulf Power Company and the School Board of Escambia County, Florida

Mr. Shawn Dennis, Assistant Superintendent for Operations, gave a brief presentation entitled, *Downtown Elementary & Administrative Consolidation Initiatives*.

- Replacement Downtown Elementary School  
*Purchase of real property in western downtown Pensacola adjacent to Pace Boulevard and north of Garden Street. The purchase includes the 65,000 square-foot former Gulf Power corporate office. The land will be used for the construction of a new downtown elementary school designated to replace through closure and consolidation, Hallmark Elementary, Yniestra Elementary, and a third elementary school to be determined by school year 2011-2012.*
- Administration Closure & Consolidation  
*The former Gulf Power corporate office will be used to close and consolidate the Vernon McDaniel building, adjoining Data Center, End-User building, several other District departments located at the Hall Center, and other district facilities. Long range plans include additional acquisition of adjacent property and continued closure and consolidation of all District administrative facilities.*

The following speakers requested to address the Board regarding their support of the downtown elementary school initiative: Mike Wiggins (representing the Pensacola City Council), Elmer Jenkins, Sandra J. Ward (representing the Pensacola Downtown Improvement Board), and Sheree Cagle-Mauldin (principal of Hallmark Elementary School). Another speaker, Tara M. Johnson, parent of a

Hallmark Elementary School student, stated that she was not yet comfortable with the possible closure of her child's school.

Each Board Member took the opportunity to express their support of the downtown elementary school initiative.

Motion was made by Mr. Boone, seconded by Mr. Bergosh, to approve the real property sale and purchase contract between Gulf Power Company and the School Board of Escambia County, Florida. Motion carried unanimously.

**CORRECTED** 2. Utility Easement and Temporary Construction Easement

Motion by Mr. Bergosh, seconded by Mrs. Brown-Curry, to approve a utility easement and temporary construction easement (as outlined in the backup documentation for this item), carried unanimously.

**ADD: Eligibility for Transportation** (submitted by Mr. Gindl)

[NOTE: *The following discussion refers to a decision made in July (by way of a revision to School District policy) that eliminated unfunded courtesy bus stops for middle and high school students who live within two (2) miles of their school.*]

*Revisions to School District Rule 6Gx17-6.02(2) – Eligibility for Transportation  
(approved for advertising at June 2, 2008 Special Meeting; adopted at July 15, 2008 Regular Meeting)*

*(2) For the purpose of determining eligibility for transportation, a reasonable walking distance for students to school is one (1) mile for elementary, ~~one and one-half (1 1/2)~~ two (2) miles for middle, two (2) miles for high schools; and to a school bus route, is one-half (1/2) mile for elementary and one (1) miles for middle and high schools.*

Motion was made by Mr. Gindl and seconded by Mr. Bergosh, to ask the Superintendent and his staff to re-evaluate the “eligibility for transportation” issue with regard to the elimination of unfunded courtesy bus stops for middle and high school students who live within two (2) miles of their school.

Discussion took place regarding various aspects of this issue, including:

- Understanding the potential hardship for those families affected by the change in walk limit, but also realizing that it is ultimately the responsibility of the parent/guardian to ensure that their child gets to school safely;
- Encouraging parents to contact their State-government officials regarding the need to revise the law regarding hazardous walk conditions such that the law would apply not only to elementary school students, but also middle and high;
- Emphasizing to parents/guardians, the District's funding limitations with regard the transportation of students, in that the District is not funded by the State for the transportation of students who live within two (2) miles of their school;
- Encouraging parents to contact their local-government officials (County and/or City) regarding the need for sidewalks, intersection crossings, bicycle paths, etc. for the safety of those students walking to and from their school;
- Researching the possibility of parents/guardians paying the District for the transportation of their child(ren) [as suggested by several parents/guardians affected by the elimination of unfunded courtesy bus stops].

Motion to ask the Superintendent and his staff to re-evaluate the “eligibility for transportation” issue with regard to the elimination of unfunded courtesy bus stops for middle and high school students who live within two (2) miles of their school was approved unanimously.

**ADD: Reduction in Capital Outlay Portion of Local Board Millage Rate** (submitted by Mr. Bergosh)

Motion was made by Mr. Bergosh and seconded by Mrs. Hightower, to direct the Superintendent to bring to the September 16, 2008 Special Meeting, a reduction to the Capital Outlay portion of the local millage rate, such that the total millage (State & local combined) would not increase over the 2007-2008 level of 7.72 mills. Motion was approved unanimously.

III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mrs. Hightower called for public forum; however, there were no speakers.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Meeting adjourned at 5:30 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Superintendent

\_\_\_\_\_  
Chair