

MARION COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT CONFERENCE ROOM
719 North Main Street – Marion, South Carolina 29571
May 16, 2023

Board Members Present: Vice Chairperson-Nadine Foxworth, Rev. Cynthia V. Brown, Mr. Donnie Hill, Mr. Kevin Dozier, Ms. Ogleretta White and Mrs. Susan Pridgen.

Call to Order & Notification of Board Workshop: The Board meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Vice Chairperson Foxworth. In accordance with the S.C. Code of Laws, 1976, Section 30-4-80 (d) as amended, the local media was notified of the time, date and place of the meeting. Ms. Dianne Hopper stated that Ms. Deciera Gause notified the media of the meeting and a copy of the agenda was also provided.

Invocation: The invocation was given by the Elder Octavia Johnson. The Board thanked Elder Johnson for the invocation.

Welcome to Staff and Visitors Present: Vice Chairperson Foxworth welcomed everyone to the May 16, 2023 Meeting.

Establishment of Quorum: Vice Chairperson Foxworth verified that a quorum was present.

Approval of Agenda: Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for approval of the agenda. Rev. Brown moved, seconded by Ms. White to approve the May 16, 2023 agenda; and the Board voted unanimously to approve the May 16, 2023 agenda. (Rev. Brown, Mr. Hill, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mrs. Pridgen, Mr. Dozier and Ms. White).

Approval of Minutes: Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting for April 18, 2023 and the Special Called Budget Workshop on April 27, 2023. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Mr. Hill to approve the minutes and the vote passed. (Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Rev. Brown, Ms. White, Mrs. Pridgen, Mr. Hill and Mr. Dozier).

Marion County School District Special Presentations: Dr. Bunch recognized the May MCSD Superhero Award Recipient. Dr. Bunch recognized select students and staff for their outstanding accomplishments. The Board commended the students for their outstanding accomplishments. Dr. Bethea expressed gratitude and appreciation to the students and staff.

Finance: Mrs. Angel Cooper presented the April 2023 financials. This report was presented as information.

Policy DKC: Expense Authorization/Reimbursement – 2nd Reading – Asking for approval. Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a motion to approve Policy DKC: Expense Authorization/Reimbursement. Mr. Dozier moved, seconded by Mrs. Pridgen to approve Policy DKC and the vote passed. (Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Rev. Brown, Ms. White, Mrs. Pridgen, Mr. Hill and Mr. Dozier).

Approval 2023-2024 Fiscal Year Preliminary Budget: 1st Reading – Mrs. Cooper highlighted the changes that were made since the Special Called Budget Workshop. Dr. Bethea further explained the changes were made after the Board asked to look into non-certified staff holding classrooms. Non-certified staff was budgeted from local funds for content areas.

Auditor/Professional Services Contract – Five qualified bids were reviewed by the team. Thompson Price was the successful bidder with a cost of \$31,500.00. Mrs. Cooper is asking for approval for the audit prep. Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a motion to accept the lowest bid for the Auditor/Professional Services from Thompson Price. Ms. White moved, seconded by Mr. Hill. Motion carried. (Vice Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Dozier, Ms. White, Mrs. Pridgen, Rev. Brown and Mr. Hill).

Operation/Facilities: Mr. Jordan asked for executive session on a legal matter. Mr. Jordan stated that Aramark was selected as the Food Service Management Company and is asking for approval. Dr. Bethea explained how our employees will work with and through the new food service system. Mrs. Pridgen asked about the types of food being prepared by Aramark. Mr. Jordan explained that the meals are made from scratch and they will also have a registered dietitian on staff. Ms. White moved, seconded by Mrs. Pridgen. Vote (6 Yes - Vice Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Dozier, Ms. White, Mrs. Pridgen and Mr. Hill). 1 No – (Rev. Brown).

Landscaping RFP – The Board asked to discuss in executive session.

Facilities Update – Large projects are being done throughout the district and several other smaller projects are being done as well. Mr. Dozier asked about the decision making for the summer projects. Dr. Bethea explained that the principal turn in a prioritized list of things that are needed and wanted at their school. The forms are discussed during budget meetings beginning in January or February. Ms. White asked if the District can look into building a track field at MuHS and replacing stationary band equipment at each school.

Human Resources: Mrs. Paula Grant requested an executive session for the personnel action consideration. Policy GBEBA: Staff Dress Code was placed in the packet for information purpose.

Academics and Accountability: Mr. Bellamy gave an update on the Academy of Excellence (Saturday Academy). The attendance for 8 Saturdays average around 114 students. The initiative served over 250 students. Mr. Bellamy also shared iReady Data. Dr. Bethea explain that the growth is to be commended but the rate of growth needs work. She thanked Mr. Bellamy and Mrs. Wilbanks for agreeing to facilitate Saturday School.

Student Service: Mrs. Rush presented a partnership with New Visions Wellness Center, Inc. that will provide mental health counseling services to the students at SAPEC. The services will be no cost to the District for the first 6 months. They are actively seeking grants to continue serving throughout the school year. Mrs. Rush presented some updates and revisions to the Code of Conduct. She outlined the changes. The Board comments and concerns were addressed during this time.

Superintendent's Report / Update: Dr. Bethea gave a brief update on the happenings in the schools in MSCD. She gave additional updates from each department. Dr. Bethea briefed the Board on upcoming events. The Board comments and concerns were addressed during this time.

Review and Action:

Dr. Bethea presented out of state/overnight travel for approval:

- PMS Distinguished Gentlemen EOY Leadership Retreat to Atlanta, GA

Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a motion to approve the request. Rev. Brown moved, seconded by Ms. White. Motion carried. (Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Hill, Mr. Dozier, Rev. Brown, Mrs. Pridgen and Ms. White).

Dr. Bethea presented Student Transfers and Releases to the Board for approval. Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a motion to approve the request. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Ms. White.

Motion carried. (Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Hill, Mr. Dozier, Rev. Brown, Mrs. Pridgen and Ms. White).

Dr. Bethea asked for executive session for the following contractual matters: Marion County SROs and FDTC funding.

No Public Participation

Agenda Items for Next Month / Calendar Reminders: Board members were given the opportunity to express any concerns or comments that they may have. Rev. Brown expressed concerns about staff dress code and following policy.

Attorney Boykin gave a recommended update to the Board pertaining to board members meeting with the superintendent as it pertains preparing the agenda. The verbiage was passed but the language will go under Policy BEDB: Board Agenda. He also explained that Policy BD:AR BD-R Organization of the Board will need to be discussed at the next meeting. The Board members expressed concerns about who can attend the meeting with the superintendent as it pertains to the agenda. Vice Chairperson Foxworth reminded Attorney Boykin that the policy stated the chair or vice chair and not both. Attorney Boykin explained that no more than 3 (three) members can be a part of the meeting, the chair or vice chair, another board member, the board secretary and the superintendent. The meeting will be every second Tuesday of the month. Board members will decide who will meet each month.

Violation of Board Policy by a Board Member - Rev. Brown gave an example of deception by a board member and asked Attorney Boykin to explain the consequences. If a board member's conduct is outside of the policy then it should be reviewed by the entire board. He explain that 59.19.60 provides for the ultimate sanction that the board has the authority to deliver. The ultimate sanction is removal for a cause from the board after notice and an opportunity for a hearing. This is an option if that happens on routine basis. It can also be brought forth by a Bill of Particulars and the policy that was violated by a board member. These a drastic measures. It can also be handled during open session to be reflected in the minutes. He explained in detail the process of dealing with violating board policies.

Executive Session: Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a motion to go into executive session for Personnel / Legal Briefings / Contractual Matters / Superintendent Evaluation. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Ms. White to approve this request; and the Board voted unanimously to approve. (Rev. Brown, Mr. Hill, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mrs. Pridgen, Mr. Dozier and Ms. White).

Open Session: Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a motion to come out of executive session. Ms. White moved, seconded by Mr. Dozier to come out of executive session back into open session; and the Board voted unanimously to approve. (Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Rev. Brown, Mr. Hill, Mr. Dozier, Ms. White and Mrs. Pridgen).

Vice Chairperson Foxworth stated that no action was taken in executive session.

Landscaping Bids: Mr. Hill moved to accept the bids that were outlined in the handout presented by Mr. Jordan based on the Landscaping RFP for 2023-2024 school year, seconded by Mrs. Pridgen and the Board voted (2 Yes - Mr. Hill and Mrs. Pridgen; 3 No – Rev. Brown, Mr. Dozier, Ms. White). The motion did not pass.

Personnel: Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for motion to accept the Superintendent's recommendations for personnel action and personnel action addendum. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Ms. White and the Board voted unanimously to approve. (Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Rev. Brown, Mr. Hill, Mr. Dozier, Ms. White and Mrs. Pridgen).

Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a volunteer to sit in on the meeting with Dr. Bethea. Rev. Brown will sit in on the meeting on June 6, 2023 at 3:00.

Adjournment: Vice Chairperson Foxworth asked for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Ms. White to approve this request; and the vote was unanimous (Rev. Brown, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Dozier, Ms. White, Mrs. Pridgen and Mr. Hill). The meeting adjourned at 9:10 pm.