

MINUTES

Monroe City School Board
2101 Roselawn Avenue
Monroe, Louisiana 71201

The Monroe City School Board met in special session, Tuesday, May 10, 2011 at Monroe City School District Central Office, 2101 Roselawn Avenue; Monroe, Louisiana 71201. The meeting was called to order at 12:05 p.m. by President Traweek. Prayer was offered by Reverend A. J. Mansfield, First Baptist Church. The Pledge of Allegiance was led by President Traweek.

Agenda Item 4: Roll Call

Board Members Present: Mrs. Victoria “Vickie” Dayton, Mrs. Victoria “Vickie” Krutzer, Mr. James Mickey Traweek, Mr. Clarence Sharp, Bishop Rodney McFarland, Sr., Mr. Verbon Muhammad.

Board Member Absent: Mr. Glynn Ludley

Administrative Staff: Dr. Kathleen Harris, Attorney L. Douglas Lawrence, Mrs. Derenda Flowers, Mrs. Davona Howard, Mr. Josh Leporati

Action Item 5 – Adoption of the Agenda

On a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Mrs. Dayton, the Board approved the agenda as printed. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Action Item 6 – Authorization to obtain information from Prismatic, Inc.

It was moved by Mr. Muhammad and seconded by Mrs. Krutzer, to direct the Superintendent to obtain the top ten concerns to date from Prismatic within 72 hours, to assist the Board in the budgetary process.

Dr. Harris read the following statement into the record:

I wish to begin by encouraging all involved to adhere to board policy and rules that delineate the roles and authority of the superintendent and the roles and authority of the school board members. This is particularly important since this appears to be the first instance in which the board has called a special meeting to direct the superintendent to provide information to the board that the superintendent deems to be incomplete and that may result in causing more adverse impact to the district than positive effect if provided.

First, the justification given by the board president and two members of the board, Mrs. Krutzer and Mrs. Dayton, that the diagnostic study information is needed immediately by the board for FY12 budget considerations is flawed. The cost of the study itself was funded in FY11 budget and has no impact on the FY12 budget. If the data are provided, the board will be using incomplete and inaccurate information as a basis for budgetary decisions.

The finished report will have suggestions on ways the district can optimize our HR, MIS, Business Office, and Instructional Technology department functions and some suggestions may require the board to provide funding to implement. If the board at that time wishes to implement suggestions from the finished study, the FY12 budget can be amended and adjusted to provide the funding.

To ask the diagnostic study consultant to provide data at this time to use in budgetary planning is to rush the agreed upon timeline which will result in the board receiving very preliminary and incomplete information that is subject to change after full analysis of all the data. The consultants have stated that the data are subject to change after full analysis is completed. The consultants are still in contact with district staff asking for additional data and clarifying already received information - two weeks ago the diagnostic study consultants asked for data that had not yet been provided by a staff member after several requests. Last week the consultant asked for clarification on data previously received from the business office.

I do not support the providing of preliminary diagnostic study data to the board at this time. The consultants have not had enough time to analyze the data. I ask that the board wait until the draft report is ready in late June or early July.

I will, of course, if directed provide the board with what the board requests.

Public Comments:

Rev. Ike Byrd stated that he is concerned that the Board is not working together for one cause. He questioned the reasoning for asking the superintendent to obtain incomplete information. Many items presented by the superintendent have been voted down; it appears that the majority of the time the vote is split 4/3.

Rev. King Dawson noted that he has always been a supporter of the school district. He stated that the Board has the reputation of usurping the authority of the superintendent, and that is disturbing. It would be in the best interest of the community if the Board would work with the superintendent. If there is an agreed upon timeline, the Board should wait and not act on incomplete data. He asked Board members not to use the excuse that constituents want them to vote a certain way. In reality, only a small number of persons within the district have made contact with Board members; therefore, the majority of the district is not being represented.

Rev. John Avant stated that he is also concerned about the school district. He stated that he represents 70 churches that have come together for the purpose of breaking barriers. If 70 churches can work together then, he feels certain that the school board can do the same. He firmly believes that there can be unity where there is division.

Rev. James Johnson noted that the overwhelming number of ministers in attendance has assembled to show support for the superintendent as well as the Board. He stated that the group is concerned that the Board is not giving the superintendent a chance to do what needs to be done. He asked the Board to allow the superintendent an opportunity to move the district forward.

Board Comments:

Mr. Sharp stated that the Board will be doomed if they move forward with requesting incomplete information. He asked the Board to allow Prismatic a chance to compete the process before any information is presented.

Mrs. Dayton noted that the Board has the heart to work together and has done a much better job recently. The Board's mission is to reach out to students that have fallen through the cracks and provide the best education possible. This district is facing a possible \$5 million deficit for next year; that means that cuts will have to be made or creative ways will have to be developed so that cuts will not have to be made in the classroom. The Board has asked for this study, and the superintendent agreed that it needed to be done. She stated that she does not want Prismatic to give the Board information that they are not ready to share; however, they did indicate that they could provide 10 key things that are of concern. She further stated that her goal as a Board member is to make the type of budget decisions that keep reductions from the classroom. The information may help the Board think their way through the budget process.

Dr. Harris stated that when Mrs. Krutzer contacted Prismatic, they did tell her that they could provide preliminary data that could be subject to change. The information is so preliminary that it would be unwise to make any budgetary decisions based on that information.

Mrs. Dayton indicated that she was a part of that conversation with Prismatic. She also stated that cutting administrative staff positions versus cutting classroom positions is the only thing she is interested in. She reiterates that she only wants to know the areas of concern.

Mrs. Krutzer noted that the budget is a live document. The information that is requested will help the board prepare; it will not be used to make final decisions. When Board members met individually with Prismatic, they indicated that they would be in communication with the Board throughout the process. Board members are trying to analyze every area. She stated that she is not aware of any hidden agenda by any Board member. The budget will go into effect June 30th even if it has not been adopted. Had the previous Board acted on this last year, the district would not be in the position it is in now. The overall goal is to make the school district efficient and effective.

Mr. Muhammad stated that the entire board is concerned about students. Board members must be mindful that they are not micromanaging the superintendent. Originally, the data was not going to be available until after the budget was adopted. The MCS district may be faced with a deficit, but that is something that the nation is also faced with. He further stated that he is learning the budget process, but he would like to see the finished product before any decisions are made. Obtaining preliminary information will lead to additional questions and the process will be stagnated.

Bishop McFarland stated that it is unnecessary to overrule the superintendent on this matter. Once the preliminary report is received, it will be publicized and scrutinized by the community. He further stated that he has served on the Board for nine years, and this is

the first time that the Board is attempting to overrule the superintendent. There have been numerous email requests from Mrs. Krutzer to the superintendent; many of those requests are unnecessary. He stated that the Board should stop denying the fact that race is not a barrier.

Mr. Traweek stated that the Board has done a lot of right and wrong things over the years, but it has been frugal with money. It is beneficial to give the Board a head start by asking for this information. The role of Board members is policy and budget setting. The budget will take effect in two weeks, and anything that will assist in the process is welcomed. He noted that he consulted with the Board attorney to insure that no policies or laws were broken, and the attorney noted that there were none.

In favor: Mrs. Dayton, Mrs. Krutzer, Mr. Traweek

Opposed: Mr. Sharp, Bishop McFarland, Mr. Muhammad

The motion failed.

Addition to the agenda

Dr. Harris noted that the district needs lease space in order to clear Georgia Tucker before the closing date. To meet the deadline items stored at the location must be relocated. She asked that this item be added to the agenda.

Mrs. Flowers noted that space has been located on Breard Street for \$2 per square foot at a cost of \$624 a month with a month-to-month lease. She also noted that this location is the most economical.

It was moved by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mr. Muhammad, to add to the agenda authorization to lease space for items stored at Georgia Tucker.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Authorization to Lease Storage Space

Mrs. Dayton asked if the buyer will allow the items to remain at the location until other arrangements can be made.

Mrs. Flowers noted that the district has 20 sites; therefore, the district always needs storage space.

It was moved by Bishop McFarland and seconded by Mrs. Sharp, to authorize the administration to enter into an agreement with North American Land, Inc. for the lease of space at a rate of \$2 per square for storage at a cost of \$624 per month.

Mrs. Krutzer inquired about North American Land, Inc.

Mrs. Flowers noted that the facility is owned by Mr. Eddie Hakim.

Bishop McFarland noted that the district has been trying to sell the Georgia Tucker site for many years and that he doesn't want anything to hinder the sale of the property.

Mr. Muhammad asked if there are any other choices.

Dr. Harris indicated that the staff has exhausted all the choices.

The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Action Item 15 – Recess/Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, the meeting adjourned at 12:45 p.m. upon a motion by Mrs. Krutzer and seconded by Bishop McFarland. The motion carried on a unanimous vote.

Mr. Mickey Traweek
Board President

Dr. Kathleen Harris
Superintendent