

Monroe City School Board of Education
2006 Tower Drive
Monroe, Louisiana 71201

MINUTES

The Monroe City School Board met in regular session, Tuesday, December 10, 2024 at Monroe City School District Central Office, 2006 Tower Drive, Monroe, Louisiana 71201. The meeting was called to order at 6:00 p.m. by Board Vice President Brandon Johnson. Prayer was offered by Pastor John O'Leary, Assistant Pastor of First Methodist Church of Monroe, La and the Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board Member Bill Willson.

Agenda Item 1C – Roll Call

Present: Mr. Michael Sampognaro, Mr. Bill Willson, Mr. Daryll Berry, Mrs. Betty Ward Cooper, Mr. Brandon Johnson, and Mrs. Brenda Shelling

Absent: Ms. Jennifer Haneline

Action Item 1D – Adoption of the Agenda

On a motion by Mr. Willson and seconded by Mrs. Shelling the Board approved the agenda as printed. The motion carried unanimously.

Agenda Item 2 A&B – Consent Agenda

It was moved by Mr. Berry and seconded by Mrs. Cooper to approve November 12, 2024, board meeting minutes and Resolution for the proposed sale of surplus school property (former junior high school campus) located at 3716 Nutland Road in Monroe, Louisiana.

Agenda Item 3A - Receipt/Approval of Board Ad Hoc Committee recommendations regarding procedures for Certified Staff vote and Parental vote on Type 3 Charter Application for Neville High School.

Board Member Willson gave an overview of the previous held ad hoc committee meeting. The committee went over the stipulations as to the requirement the board requested to have a revote of not only the certified teachers but of the certified staff. Mrs. Cooper stated the vote is for faculty, staff, parents and guardians. Mr. Stewart Shelby previously stated there was a certified vote of teachers according to state law and Mr. Willson believes the results from this were 74% of teachers voting in favor of the charter. The school board requested there be another vote and to incorporate certified staff along with certified teachers. This will take place on December 17 -18 2024. There will be a lock box located at the Central Office and Neville High School for Parents and guardians to vote. The votes will be counted at the Central Office on the evening of December 18, 2024. Superintendent Moore added

that a representative from the Neville Charter Association be present along with a representative from the School Board and Principal Mickey McCarty. Mrs. Cooper added the ad hoc committee report is posted and can be reviewed on boardDocs.

Public Comment: Mr. Gary Roberts was a teacher and coach in the system for 20 years. Mr. Roberts voiced his concerns about opening the Charter School and for the Board to keep an open mind and to know this is not about race and politics but what is best for their kids and other children. He would like to have an open discussion and do things the right way. Mr. Roberts stated they must be more involved with their kids and know what's going on. He stated, "If I can help you, If I can be a person to speak to do anything, I will be here for it" and appreciated the Board's time.

Public Comment: Mrs. Dana Jefferson lived in Monroe all her life and Neville High School is very important to her and her family. She stated to the board that she is curious about the approval of the board wanting a redo of the voting. Mrs. Jefferson inquired about the staff being a part of the vote or just teachers. Mr. Johnson responded that the request to speak is not for questions but to address the board.

Board Member Brenda Shelling inquired about the comment Mr. Roberts made about students being engaged in social media and other types of activities. She stated this is more of a parent's fault and not necessarily the school's fault. Mr. Roberts stated this is why he supports the Charter. He believes the Charter School will force the parents to become more involved. Mr. Willson shared his stance with the public.

On a motion by Mrs. Cooper and seconded by Mr. Berry the board approved receipt/Approval of Board Ad Hoc Committee recommendations regarding procedures for Certified Staff vote and Parental vote on Type 3 Charter Application for Neville High School. 5 in favor and 1 opposed.

Mr. Willson stated he is voting against this motion because he does not believe there should be a revote from the teachers.

The motion passed.

Agenda Item 4A-Report of Superintendent

Superintendent Moore reported on academic updates and school performance

- 23-24 Barkdull Faulk improved their performance score by 4.88% to be proficient rating
- Berg Jones improved by 4.95% to be proficient rating
- Carver improved by 5.88% to have a high proficient rating
- Clara Hall improved by 6.06% excellent rating
- Cypress Point 5.85% high proficient rating
- J.S. Clark 5.88% high proficient rating
- Lexington 6.36 excellent rating
- Madison James Foster 5.17 Proficient
- Minnie Ruffin 5.14 Proficient
- Roy Neal Shelling 5.81 High Proficient

2024 scores were released and the Monroe School District performance score increased from 72.7 to 73.

Top growth schools:

- Roy Neal Shelling improving their SBS by 8 points
- Barkdull Faulk improved their SBS by 5.7 points

Top gain schools that rated high and made 90 and above

- J.S. Clark Magnet School
- Sallie Humble Elementary
- Lexington Elementary
- Neville High School

Schools that increased by letter grades:

- Carroll High School from C to B
- Martin Luther King Jr Junior High School from D to C
- Minnie Ruffin Elementary School from F to D
- Madison James Foster Elementary school from F to D and removed from academic unacceptable status 3.

Mr. Moore reported that he is open-minded and believes there are good points on both sides. He stated parental involvement should happen whether you are a Charter School or not and pray that parents get involved in their kids' education. The district has been trying to get more parents involved and with partnership with Monroe Housing Authority doing everything to make this happen.

Six schools have completed their middle-of-the-year dibbles screenings. Three schools have increased proficiency sustainability:

- Berg Jones Elementary at 20%
- Madison James Foster Elementary School at 12%
- Carver Elementary School at 4%

A lot of things have been put in place this past year and we are currently seeing improvements focusing on literacy and numeracy. The last couple of days they have been meeting with the Arkansas Department of Education through The Writing Revolution. There are approximately 20 Arkansas Educators visiting Monroe City Schools because of the outstanding work that has been done with The Writing Revolution. The Educators visited Sallie Humble and Clara Hall.

Mr. Moore gave a recap of the finance Committee Meeting

- Paid out a one-time stipend to all employees; certified - 2,000 and Classified - \$1,000
- Sales tax revenue received October 2024
- August 2024 increased by \$67,000 by 2.36%
- 1968 Sales tax revenue increase of \$27,000 which is 1.0% more than the prior year
- 1994 sales tax revenue approximately increase of \$52,000 2.64% more than prior year

- 2001 sales tax revenue approximately \$104,000 increase of 2.64%
- The deadline for ESSER Funding is Monday, December 16th
- The Sallie Humble project is 86% completed. The completion date is February 2025.
- The business department is in full fledge of one-on-one training with principals.
- The Professional Development Day is on December 13th and we will do additional training with principals
- The legislative auditors are continuing to request documentation related to the investigation at Neville High School student activity account funds.

Superintendent Moore wanted to share to the public things that were being said as if the legislative auditors were ordered by him. He wanted to make clear that he has nothing to do with the legislative auditors and what they are doing. He stated it was the school board that voted to extend looking into those funds. This is to ensure public transparency and to make certain doing the right things moving forward and handling public funds. Superintendent Moore stated he supports the kids regardless of Charter or not and on every side of the track regardless of their address. Mr. Moore commented on Neville High School stating that they have been a great part of the Monroe City School system and wishes they were given the opportunity to put some of those things in place that are being asked seeking and desiring. Mr. Moore stated whatever the will of the Board is, he supports it. Mr. Moore and Todd Guice, two opposing superintendents working together and praying to continue working together to better Monroe as a whole.

Agenda Item 4B–Report of Board Members

Mr. Willson reported about 12 to 14 years ago he had the opportunity to work on bond refinances for the school board when he was in investment banking. Mr. Willson realized about three in a half years ago all the government spending that was taking place that we were going to start seeing inflation creep up. He rushed to get with the investment banking group and look at the proposal to refinance our bonds. The bond refinancing was done which was called the Cinderella Structure. The district saved approximately \$1.2million in interest savings for stakeholder citizens of Monroe City School System. Mr. Willson thanked Superintendent Moore for scrambling to Baton Rouge to get this signed as quickly as he did. The second bond was just closed and will save the district an additional \$400,000 in interest cost savings. This is \$1.6 million in total interest cost.

Mr. Sampognaro congratulated all the football teams that made the playoffs. This was a good season for them all.

Mrs. Cooper encouraged the Board to look at the Vectors Solutions Online Trainings. These are very good training courses that need to be addressed in a more effective way. The Trainings educate the administration, teachers and staff members. She believes the public can take the training as well. Mrs. Cooper stressed the importance of bullying and affecting a lot of people their lifetime. The trainings are not only about bullying but cybersecurity, sexual harassment, and suicide. She stated these issues are serious and need to be addressed in a more effective way. Mrs. Cooper recommends looking at the Vector Solutions required online training.

Mr. Berry – No comments

Mrs. Shelling reported she, Board Member Mrs. Cooper, and some of the Central Office Administrative staff, had an opportunity to visit Madison James Foster. They spoke in unison about helping the students. So much has been done this year until it's hard to realize that the students are growing by leaps and bounds. Mrs. Shelling stated the students are gearing up for a pizza party this year (only students that bring their scores up) sponsored by Board Member Shelling and Chris Lewis. She is very pleased with how the students and schools have grown this year. Mrs. Shelling is moving forward with this objective.

Brandon Johnson reported that Mrs. Haneline was out due to her daughter's school concert and as Vice President he wants to keep everything moving forward. He thanked the Central Office Staff, Dr. Bush, Dr. Herron, and Mrs. Howard for coming in to address the Board and Community when needed. Mr. Johnson wanted to congratulate his son that plays football at Wossman High School for making first team all-district this year with maintaining a 3.8 GPA. He is a proud Parent. Mr. Johnson thanked the Neville High School community for coming in and speaking, hoping whether they agree or disagree as Mr. Roberts stated to come to one common ground and wants to continue to work together to make betterment of our kids withing Monroe City Schools.

Mrs. Cooper stated it is so refreshing to see our Administration showing up in the communities often and interacting with parents and teachers. Mrs. Shelling added she appreciates the Administrators for being present at the meetings.

Agenda Item 5 – Future Meetings

Board Meeting – February 11, 2025 and March 18, 2025 at 6:00pm.

Action Item 6 – Recess/Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Willson and seconded by Ms. Cooper, the meeting adjourned at 6:36pm.

/Jennifer Haneline/
Jennifer Haneline
Board President

/Sam Moore, III/
Sam Moore, III
Superintendent

Note: These minutes summarize the final decisions made by the Board at the referenced meeting. This meeting was also audio recorded, and that recording is available for review by contacting the Board clerk at tonya.robinson@mcschools.net.