

MINUTES OF THE BUSINESS SESSION OF THE MARSHALL BOARD OF EDUCATION HELD ON MONDAY, JANUARY 27, 2020 AT 7:14 PM, IN LIBRARY OF THE MARSHALL OPPORTUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

PRESENT: DESMET, NICHOLSON, MIDDLETON, WILLIAMS, DAWSON, GAMBLE, LINDSEY, DAVIS, JONES

ABSENT: NONE

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by President DeSmet. A moment of silence was observed.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The pledge of allegiance was led by Secretary Middleton.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Moved by Middleton, supported by Lindsey, that the agenda be approved as presented with item #3. Members of the Audience May Address the Board on Agenda Items Only to be moved so it follows item #7. Discussion Items. A roll-call vote unanimously carried the motion.

ACADEMIC HIGHLIGHT

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR ESSAY CONTEST WINNERS' PRESENTATION: Harrington Elementary Principal Robert Giles introduced this year's winners of the of the Martin Luther King Jr. Essay Contest. The student winners read aloud their essays about Dr. King's life, his legacy and what his dream meant to them for their future.

**APPROVAL OF THE CONSENT AGENDA
MINUTES, EXPENDITURES, AND PERSONNEL**

Items included on the consent agenda were minutes of the December 16, 2019 Combined Work/Business Session and Closed Sessions, the January 13, 2020 Combined Organizational Meeting/Work Session and Closed Sessions; December disbursements in the amount of \$3,355,821.36; and employments of Lucinda Benoit as assistant cook at Harrington Elementary, Vivian Davis as proctor for the Easter Calhoun Early College, Mark Paskett as noon-hour supervisor at Gordon Elementary, Nancy Piggins as assistant cook at Gordon Elementary and Gail Rodgers as math instructional systems coach.

Moved by Middleton, supported by Dawson, that the Board of Education approve the Consent Agenda – Minutes, Expenditures, and Personnel as presented. A roll-call vote carried the motion unanimously.

REPORT OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

SPECIAL RECOGNITION: Superintendent Davis presented background information about each hire included in the consent agenda.

Superintendent Davis indicated that January was *School Board Recognition Month*. He shared Calhoun Intermediate School District's proclamation and thanked members of the

Board of Education for their dedication to public education. Board members were presented with a gift from the district.

LEADERSHIP TEAM REPORTS: Superintendent Davis indicated that Leadership Team members were in attendance and available to respond to questions from board members regarding reports on their buildings/departments.

DISCUSSION ITEMS

FACILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT UPDATE AND DEBT EQUALIZATION MILLAGE: Superintendent Davis indicated he was combining discussion items Facility Needs Assessment Update and Debt Equalization Millage.

Superintendent Davis stated the Facility Needs Assessment Committee (FNAC) has looked at all facilities across the district. The committee concluded that a capitol bond would be necessary. He explained that first needs are assessed and then wants and wishes from administrators and teachers are being assembled. The committee is now meeting at every school building. He indicated that debt equalization has been mentioned in media and social media. He made it clear there is no proposal or bond initiative before the Board. For the purpose of transparency there is ongoing conversation around it all and the realities that need to be faced. There has been no Board action. The FNAC Core Committee Work Group has identified there is not equity in elementary schools; specifically, the "teaching learning environments are not the same". There is unanimous agreement from the committee that a capital bond is going to be in the very near future. The committee is discussing needs not wants. They are looking at the document from Kingscott with comparison of replacement for needs for each building. He shared that the district is faced with determining what it can do to address building needs. In the past 20 years; the former Marshall Public Schools (MPS) district had three major bonds and on average MPS typically goes for a bond every 10 years. The last bond the former Albion Public Schools (APS) had was a 1996 bond and that bond was for the Washington Gardner Building. The 7.05 millage debt in the MPS district was for the new auditorium at Marshall High School.

He presented a PowerPoint that included: MPS District Assets and Liabilities, Financial Advantages to Annexation, Existing Debt, Historical Capital Improvement Bonds for Both District Prior to Annexation, and Projected Millage Data.

Superintendent Davis estimated there is \$40M is estimated needs. He indicated the community will hear a lot of changes that could occur in several open forums. The outcome of the forums will be brought back to the Board at which time the Board will consider taking action. There will be a lot of questions.

Board members shared their views as follows.

Trustee Dawson looks at the debts being kept separate when it went to annexation; he feels trust would be broken if the Board were to go for debt equalization; and he believes there has to be a way to bring voters in that will draw some of the Marshall voters to support buildings in Marshall that would benefit the entire school district.

Trustee Lindsey believes a promise was made throughout annexation discussions that indicated both districts would pay for their own debt; that he is opposed to debt equalization; new buildings are not always the end all as it is what is going on in the buildings, the culture and climate, and that is what matters; and that part of how to move forward is determining what the community can bear.

Vice President Nicholson does not think Marshall voters will support a bond that will increase taxes with the majority of the bond dollars going to buildings in Albion. She believes it has to be what people would be willing to pay for and that more information needs to be shared with everyone.

Secretary Middleton indicated she is pleased to have such a community presence and commitment at the board meeting and hopes they will continue attending meetings. She added there has been nothing proposed to the Board at this time and that all that is being done is fact finding.

Trustee Gamble thanked everyone for coming. She asked that everyone keep in mind equity; that the Board needs to be equitable when things are proposed; and to remember and be weighted in one space that one space has a heavier vote than another.

**MEMBERS OF THE AUDIENCE MAY
ADDRESS THE BOARD ON AGENDA ITEMS ONLY**

Garrett Brown spoke about the median household incomes for both communities and the distinction between equality and equity. He believes there is a need to take into account racial differences in the communities as this is a core political issue. He agrees with Trustees Gamble and Dawson. He read disingenuous comments, he believes renaming the district would ease this. Equality and equity are concerns of his. He asked the Board to be sensitive to the needs of the community; that debt equalization not fair; and that he would support a bond.

Sonya Brown wants to make sure she clearly understands; are they looking at two separate tax increases debt equalization and a bond. She appreciates Vice President Nicholson's comments and making it plain that the Marshall voters would not support a bond without equalization. She believes the focus should be on equity more than equality and that the Albion community should not pay for a debt that it didn't create.

Superintendent Davis stated he is hearing from the Board there is not support for debt equalization.

Donald Cornell indicated the thing that gets him is that Marshall voted for the bond and it is not fair that Albion would have to pay it. He wants to know how many Albion students are being serviced by Marshall; he questioned what is wrong with building a new school; and that he doesn't like the negativity demonstrated that Albion did not keep the buildings up to date. He added that between 2010 and 2017 \$45M in tax revenue was lost in the Albion Community; and that 125 houses in the town of Albion have been demolished.

Superintendent Davis shared that debt equalization had to be looked at; and it will not be pursued but that it needed to be discussed. He provided numbers for the 2016 full annexation that included the number of Albion students.

APPROVAL OF ACTION ITEM – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION
ADOPT TEXTBOOK FOR ADVANCED PLACEMENT (AP) UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS: Adopt a textbook for the AP Government and Politics Course at Marshal High School as presented.

Moved by Dawson, supported by Lindsey, that the Board of Education approve Action Item – Curriculum and Assessment as recommended. A roll-call vote carried the motion unanimously.

APPROVAL OF ACTION ITEM – OTHER
NOMINATE CANDIDATE FOR THE CALHOUN AREA SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS ASSOCIATION (CASBMA) 2019 DISTINGUISHED AWARD: Approved the nomination former Kellogg Community College President Mark O’Connell for the Professional Distinguished Service Award.

Moved by Lindsey, supported by Middleton, that the Board of Education approve Action Item – Other as recommended. A roll-call vote carried the motion unanimously.

BOARD PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION PLAN / OBJECTIVES: Superintendent Davis asked Board members to review the Strategic Communication Plan / Objective included in their board packet; and to be prepared to discuss it at the next meeting.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

President DeSmet welcomed public comments. There were none.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS

Secretary Middleton gave kudos to the Albion Shamrock Center for its four-star rating achievement, to 7th graders for their charity pieces as this it is really great to hear the students research and support of their selected charities and to the young student speakers that read aloud their Martin Luther King Jr. Essays.

Trustee Lindsey wanted to make is clear that he did not hear Vice President Nicholson say that Marshall would not support a bond vote; he does not believe this is true. He believes the bond needs to be crafted in a way that it can be sold in both communities. He thanked Superintendent Davis for being a panelist on Mental Health Services that was presented at the Baptist Church this past Saturday as it is great that local leaders are discussing mental health connections and what is going on in schools to help students.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Middleton, supported by Lindsey, that the Board move into executive session under Section 8 (h) of the Open Meetings Act to consider material exempt from discussion or disclosure by state or federal statute at 9:14 p.m. A roll-call vote unanimously carried the motion.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Board returned to open session at 9:24 p.m.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Moved by Dawson, supported by Lindsey, that the Board move into executive session under Section 8 (b) of the Open Meetings Act in regard to disciplining of a student at 9:26 p.m. A roll-call vote unanimously carried the motion.

Trustee Dawson left the executive session at 10:05 p.m.

RETURN TO OPEN SESSION

The Board returned to open session at 10:19 p.m.

DISCIPLINE OF STUDENT 12

Superintendent Davis, the hearing officer, took notes during the Board's deliberations and read aloud a proposed resolution for the Board's consideration related to the discipline of Student 12.

Moved by Lindsey, supported by Gamble, that the Board adopt the proposed resolution as read. A roll-call vote carried the motion. Trustee Dawson was no longer present. Treasurer Williams abstained.

STUDENT DISCIPLINE HEARING - DISCIPLINE OF STUDENT 13

Superintendent Davis explained the purpose of the hearing was to provide the Board with background leading to the request for disciplinary action for student 13.

Marshall Opportunity High Director Ben Wallace shared information regarding incident and circumstances involving student 10.

Student 13, the student's parents and siblings shared thoughts and commented about the situation.

Questions and responses followed.

Board members discussed the student's actions and appropriate discipline.

Superintendent Davis, the hearing officer, took notes during the Board's deliberations and read aloud a proposed resolution for the Board's consideration related to the discipline of Student 13.

Moved by Lindsey, supported by Williams, that the Board adopt the proposed resolution as read. A roll-call vote carried the motion. Trustee Dawson was no longer present.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 11:24 p.m.

LISA MIDDLETON, SECRETARY

KIMBERLY VANWORMER, RECORDING SECRETARY