

WAKE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
OPEN MINUTES
March 19, 2001

Board Members Present:

Bill Fletcher, Chair
Beverley Clark
Rosa Gill
Judy Hoffman
J.C. O'Neal
Tom Oxholm
Susan Parry
Kathryn Quigg

Staff Members Present:

Karen Banks
Jo Baker
Danny Barnes
Del Burns
Mike Burriss
Linda Isley
Cindi Jolly
Ray Massey
Toni Patterson
Janice Shearin
Walt Sherlin
Jonibel Willis

Board Attorneys Present:

Ann Majestic

Bill Fletcher called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Everyone recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

INFORMATION

Chairman's Comments

Mr. Fletcher reported that the Wake Education Partnership will present its academic and financial audit of the school system on April 5, 8:00 a.m. at the Cary Chamber of Commerce.

He then introduced Attorney Michael Crowell from Tharrington Smith to give an update report on redistricting. A guide lines handout was distributed (Exhibit A) for Board reference. The public will have an opportunity to comment on redistricting during the Public Hearing portion of the April 2 Board meeting. These guidelines would also be available on the school system website. Following public input, the Board will adopt guideline standards for the redistricting process.

Mr. Fletcher distributed an election process handout for the school system's four appointments to the Wake Technical Community College Board of Trustees. (Exhibit B) The Board will review expectations for these appointments, as well as renewing or replacing a trustee whose term expires June 30. Ms. Clark suggested that these appointments meet annually with the Board to share information about pertinent issues.

Superintendent's Report

Mr. McNeal noted some important upcoming dates: joint luncheon with the County Commissioners on March 21, 12 noon at the Wake County Office Building; Pieces of Gold, March 21, 7:00 p.m. at the Raleigh Auditorium; Battle of the Books, March 22, 8:00 a.m. at Southeast Raleigh, Magnet Retreat in Durham March 22; and the Blue Ribbon visit to Davis Drive on March 23.

APPROVAL OF MEETING AGENDA

Under Facilities, consent item #7 (Right-Of-Way Dedication – Mount Vernon Redirection) was pulled. Facilities action items #1 and #2 action items (Schematic Design:Heritage Elementary (E-2), and Underwood Elementary: Temporary Housing) were moved to consent. A second reason for holding the closed session was also noted.

With these revisions, Kathryn Quigg made a motion to approve the agenda. It was seconded by Susan Parry and the vote was unanimous.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR ITEMS ON THE AGENDA

Julie Nau commented on the Superintendent's budget request, reflecting \$10 million dollars in additional revenue needed or that same amount in services cut. She noted that cuts in employee benefits were not acceptable, and went directly against recruiting efforts.

Peggy Titus also spoke against taking away employee benefits and urged the Board not to do anything while balancing the budget that will have a negative impact on the most important resource the school system has for moving students toward Goal 2003 – the teachers.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Mr. Oxholm reported that a Finance Committee meeting took place on Thursday, March 15 at 4:00 p.m. in the Board Conference Room to continue discussions on the Arthur Andersen implementation challenges. Additional information was received from Ms. Patterson in Human Resource and Brenda Barker in Technology on challenges of filling certain positions in those departments. The positions considered chronically unfillable are tradesmen and technology experts. Consequently, work is contracted out at 150% to 300% of the cost rather than filling the positions internally because the going market value rate cannot be matched for full-time hires. In addition, the legislature also puts restrictions on how the school system spends compensation dollars. Two recommendations were made that will be reflected in the minutes, and be brought to the Board at the April 2 meeting. The first is add to the legislative agenda a request for increased flexibility in compensation of employees. The second is to identify the two job categories mentioned above as "emergency status," and have the flexibility to move out of the restricted pay scale and recognize outside years of experience. The next Finance Committee meeting is March 29 at 4:00 p.m., during which the staff report on the Community Use of Schools will be reviewed in order to make a recommendation to the Board on how the school system charges for usage of its facilities.

Beverley Clark reported that a Facilities Committee meeting was held earlier in the day, and the two action items were moved to consent. The School Construction Support committee, made up of local contractors and sub-contractors, had a meeting at noon today. She noted this type of meeting is always an opportunity for valuable building of community relationships, best practice sharing, input and discussion.

Susan Parry reported that the high school Board Advisory Chairs met on March 15 at 6:30 in the Board Conference Room. The role of advisory councils and whether or not to revise policy was discussed, and chairs are invited to continue this evaluation at the next Policy Committee meeting on March 29 at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Conference Room.

CONSENT ITEMS

Susan Parry made a motion, seconded by Kathryn Quigg to approve all the consent items. The vote was unanimous.

FINANCE

1. Change Order 2: Alliance of Professionals and Consultants, Inc.

On June 26, 2000, the Board approved a contract with Alliance of Professionals and Consultants, Inc. to provide outsourcing services such as technical DBA, applications DBA, programming and development. Estimated funding approved at that time would carry us through March 31, 2001. Additional funding needs were estimated in early February and a change order in the amount of \$250,000 was approved by the Board on February 12, 2001. The current change order will fulfill our production support costs for financial applications through April 30, 2001. Fiscal Implications: An increase in funding in the amount of \$250,000 is requested. Funding is available through the Technology Services Division current expense budget. Recommendation for action – approval of change order was requested.

2. Change Order 4: TeleConsultants, Inc.

In August 2000, we brought before the Board a contract with TeleConsultants, Inc. for consulting services. We estimated the initial amount needed to carry us through January 2001. As anticipated, additional funding was necessary to continue pre-production work in the development of internal technical documents, programs and procedures relative to Oracle in the areas of payroll, financial applications, budget and HR. To this point, budgetary concerns have only allowed us to submit additional change orders to cover the cost of services in blocks of time. The decision to push the “go live” date for payroll to July 1 is now official which allows us to estimate all expenses to be incurred through April 30, 2001. Fiscal Implications: An increase in funding in the amount of \$500,000 is requested. Funding is available through the Technology Services Division current expense budget. Recommendation for action – approval of change order was requested.

PERSONNEL

1. Request for Leave

Shejuann Rodgers requested leave for one year to serve as a member of the state assistance teams that will be working with designated, low-performing schools mandated for assistance by the State Board of Education.

FACILITIES

1. Bids: Project 10G – Networking and Infrastructure Additions and Renovations

Over 90% of all classroom areas in Wake County are outfitted with fiber optic cabling from previous technology projects and/or original building construction. This project will begin to provide fiber optic cabling to limited areas that currently have only minimal copper cabling service. This project will also replace on-floor classroom copper data cabling with wall-mount cabling raceways and improve labeling of existing cabling. Where necessary, existing electrical systems will be upgraded to provide power for new and existing computers and printers. Bids were received on February 14, 2001 for networking and infrastructure additions and renovations at Bugg Elementary, Leadmine Elementary, Leesville Road Elementary and Morrisville Elementary. A&M Electrical Contractors is the apparent low bidder. Bid tabulation is attached. Board approval is requested to award contract in the amount of \$118,181. Fiscal implications – Funds are available through the technology portion of state bond funds. Recommendation for Action – Approval of contract was requested.

2. Bids: Roof Replacement –Administration Building

Bids for the roof replacement at the Administration Building, 3600 Wake Forest Road, were received on February 27, 2001. Staff and Roof Engineering, Inc. recommend award of the contract to Curtis Construction Co., Inc. in the amount of \$159,844. Fiscal Implications - Funds are available from the total project budget of \$215,000. The total project budget consists of \$215,000 from the deferred maintenance component of the Phase IIIB Long-Range Building Program. Recommendation for Action - Board approval was requested.

3. Bids: Site Improvements – Morrisville Elementary

Pre-approval is requested for bids, which are scheduled to be received on March 22, 2001, if the bids are within the CCAP of \$253,000. Staff will provide recommendation for award and bid tabulations at a future board meeting. Fiscal Implications - Funding is available from the total project budget of \$303,500. The total project budget consists of \$228,500 from Phase IIIB Deferred Maintenance and \$75,000 from PLAN 2000 School Building Program project budget. Recommendation for Action - Board approval was requested.

4. Bids: Steam Boiler Replacement – Martin Middle

Bids for steam boiler replacement at Martin Middle School were received on March 1, 2001. Staff and Padia Consulting, Inc. recommend awarding a single-prime contract to Jeff Hargett Mechanical, Inc. in the amount of \$179,865. Multi-prime bids were not taken. Fiscal Implications - Funding is available from the total project budget of \$220,000 from the deferred maintenance component of the Phase IIIB Long-Range Building Program. Recommendation for Action - Board approval was requested.

5. Service Contract: Grass Mowing at 92 Sites

The contract term is April 2, 2001 through October 12, 2001 for 92 school sites. Staff recommends award of contracts to Faithful Lawn Care, in the amount of \$199,920 for 31 schools; Hensley's Lawn, in the amount of \$130,830 for 32 schools; Herb's Lawn Care, in the amount of \$92,400.00 for 15 schools, Parker & Son, in the amount of \$33,180.00 for 6 schools and Pinnacle Inc., in the amount of \$61,390.00 for 8 schools. Fiscal Implications - Funds are available in the 2000-2001 current expense budget for the April – June 2001 expenses. Funds are included in our 2001-2002 budget request for July – October 2001 expenses. Recommendation for Action - Board approval was recommended.

6. Design Consultant Agreement – Cary Elementary

Negotiations have been completed with DTW Architects & Planners, LTD. for the design of the PLAN 2000 additions and renovations at Cary Elementary School. The form of agreement is the standard form approved by the board attorneys. Fiscal Implications - Funding is available from the total project budget of \$11,232,092 as provided in the PLAN 2000 School Building Program. The project budget includes proposed compensation for the design consultant of \$603,000. Recommendation for Action - Board approval was requested.

7. Right-Of-Way Dedication – Mount Vernon Redirection (pulled)

8. Easement Request: Carolina Power & Light Company – Middle Creek Site

Carolina Power & Light Company has requested a utility easement for the purpose of relocating existing utility lines and the installation of new facilities to serve the new schools under construction on the Middle Creek site. The proposed 30-foot-wide easement allows most of the existing utility lines and poles to be removed from the school system’s property. A copy of the approved form of easement and a sketch are enclosed. Fiscal Implications -None. Carolina Power & Light Company will provide all facilities necessary to provide electric power to the schools. Recommendation for Action - Staff recommended board approval of the easement.

9. Schematic Design: Heritage Elementary (E-2)

Staff will present schematic design documents prepared by Pearce, Brinkley, Cease & Lee, P.A. for Heritage Elementary (E-2). Fiscal Implications - Funding is available from the total project budget is \$10,662,555 as provided in the PLAN 2000 School Building Program. Recommendation for Action - Board approval was requested.

10. Underwood Elementary: Temporary Housing

On February 26, 2001, the facilities staff recommended use of the former Cardinal Gibbons site for Underwood Elementary students and faculty during the proposed facility improvements at that school in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003. The board took no action, but authorized staff to continue negotiations with the Catholic Diocese to determine the availability of the site for the coming two years. Inherent in the staff recommendation is the requirement to find an alternative temporary housing site for the Longview facility students and faculty for one year during construction and renovations on that site. The search for a temporary housing location for Longview is underway. Fiscal implications – Funding for the Underwood Elementary project is available from the PLAN 2000 project budget of \$7,400,000, plus the current project balance of \$1,119,297, consisting of \$583,925 in Phase IIIB funds and \$535,372 in 1996 State Bond Program funds. Recommendation for Action – Staff recommended board approval to relocate the Underwood Elementary students and staff to the former Cardinal Gibbons site for up to two years while facility improvements are underway in 2001-2002 and 2002-2003.

INFORMATION ITEMS

PROGRAM

1. Assignment of New Subdivisions to Schools

Staff presented recommendations for the following subdivisions: Falls Glen, Ashley Park Apartments, Brighton, Camden Crossing, Falls Creek Apartments, and The Park at Perry Creek. Transportation costs will increase due to travel distance. Other facilities- related costs would be avoided. This was presented for information only.

In discussion, Mr. O'Neal mentioned that three developments were being constructed in the Garner area, and he would find out more details to pass on to the Student Assignment staff. Dr. Beavers also confirmed Falls Glen in node 288.0 is not assigned to Wakefield Elementary because it is filling up so fast.

FINANCE

1. Presentation of Superintendent's Budget Request, 2001-2002

To present the Superintendent's Budget Request for 2001-2002.

Fiscal Implications: This document established the Superintendent's budget request for fiscal year 2001-2002.

Mr. McNeal made a presentation reaffirming the uphill march to Goal 2003, and the challenges of the budget request, which comes at a crossroads between what additional resources are required to move forward and what the school system will give up if the local funding support is denied. He urged the Board to keep in mind what teachers want and need when reviewing the budget process.

Associate Superintendent Del Burns walked the Board through portions of the Superintendent's budget request for 2001-2002, which began as a process last November and relied heavily on input from teachers, principals, administration and the community. (Exhibit C)

As referenced in the introductory section of the report, the school system requests a total of \$210.2 million for the 2001-2002 school year. According to the Wake County staff, WCPSS will receive \$178.9 million if there is no adjustment to the tax rate. This is an increase of \$3.8 million or 2%. An increase of \$3.8 million is not sufficient to maintain the current level of performance for the school system during a time when student memberships are growing at a rate in excess of 3%; employer matching retirement rate is expected to increase 12%; employer matching hospitalization rate is expected to increase 30%; salary increases are projected to be 4% for certified staff and 2% for non-certified staff; technology costs are rapidly growing; inflation is occurring; magnet funding is shifting from federal to local sources; recruitment and retention of qualified teachers is increasingly more difficult; and the system is aggressively trying to bring students to grade level. The budget request is arranged in four levels: base, service reduction, expansion and deferred needs. Base budget includes priorities within expected revenues at the current tax rate. Service reduction includes currently existing programs and services that will be reduced or eliminated without an increase in revenue. The expansion section includes priorities for expanded or new programs or services requested for 2001-2002. Deferred needs are priorities beyond the budget request to the county, that are deferred to future years.

The WCPSS per pupil expenditure is the lowest of any large urban district in the state, while student achievement is the highest. However, Plan 2000 did not address the impact of growth and Goal 2003 on the operating budget for the changing and rapidly growing school district.

There will be an opportunity for public input during a Public Hearing on the Budget Request during the Board Meeting on April 2. A Board work session will then take on April 5 from 10:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m. in the Board Conference Room. Staff would appreciate that all questions on the budget be emailed to Dr. Burns, and copied to the Superintendent and Tom Oxholm.

CLOSED SESSION

Kathryn Quigg made a motion at 5:40 to move into closed session:

To establish or instruct the Board's staff or negotiating agents concerning the position to be taken by or on behalf of the Board in negotiation of (i) the price and other material terms of a contract or proposed contract for the acquisition of real property by purchase, option, exchange, or lease; or (ii) the amount of compensation and other material terms of an employment contract or proposed employment contract. G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(5), and

To consider confidential student information protected under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act and G.S. 115C-402.

It was seconded by Rosa Gill and the vote was unanimous.

The Board reconvened into open session at 6:30 p.m.

SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENTS

Eleven students were recognized as Spotlight on Students award winners: Benjamin Price, Dillard Drive Elementary; Takirah Renee Williams, East Millbrook Middle; Matthew James Gross, East Wake Middle; Nikki Hewitt, Green Elementary; Sidney Renee Johnson, Green Hope Elementary; Nestor Avila, Lead Mine Elementary; Stephanie Ann Bostic, Millbrook High; Rhea Gupta, Morrisville Elementary; Samuel Eugene Howe, Underwood Elementary; Sarah Frances Broadhurst, Wake Forest Elementary; and Eugene Romanov, Wake Forest Rolesville Middle.

PUBLIC HEARING FOR ITEMS NOT ON THE AGENDA

Judy Newman spoke on the diversity issue at West Lake Elementary. She felt that sharing the challenge should be reflected across all four tracks, and suggested voluntary switching of tracks or reassessing special permission cases now attending West Lake who should be at Oak Grove.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Bill Fletcher adjourned the meeting at 7:10 p.m. and the Board moved back into the Board Conference Room for a continuation of Closed Session. The Closed Session ended at 8:10 p.m. at which time the Board began a work session open to the public in the Board Conference Room. The topic was Board on committee structure and organization.

BOARD OF EDUCATION OPEN MINUTES WORK SESSION - BOARD STRUCTURE & ORGANIZATION March 19, 2001, Board Conference Room, 8:10 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

Board Members Present: Beverley Clark, Bill Fletcher, Judy Hoffman, J.C. O'Neal, Tom Oxholm, Susan Parry, Kathryn Quigg

Staff Present: Superintendent McNeal, Walt Sherlin, Jo Baker, Janice Shearin, Chip Sudderth, Annette Marett, Attorney Ann Majestic

The work session was called to order at 8:10 p.m. by Chairman Bill Fletcher.

To facilitate discussion, Mr. Fletcher distributed two handouts. The first was an agenda prompt to more clearly identify the needs and questions to be resolved concerning committee structure, and the second was a proposed typical schedule of Board committee meetings through June 30, 2001. The focus of discussion was not on a specific schedule, but rather determining why the committees should meet, what level of issues should be addressed, and who should attend.

There was varying feedback on whether day-to-day business issues, higher level system issues, or a combination of both should be addressed in committee meetings. A suggestion was to have separate “councils/advisory groups/task forces” formed to focus on system-wide topics over a designated length of time and report back findings/recommendations to the Board. These advisory groups would have lead time to develop recommendations rather than reacting to a crisis. The topics would follow from a strategic planning session of the Board in July of each year. Board members would have the opportunity to suggest appointments to these advisory councils, and the councils would ideally be representative of all districts and levels of expertise.

While some board members felt the committees and advisory groups could be one in the same, others felt a distinction should be made. All agreed that committees were a source of acquiring knowledge for Board members, and that all Board members were invited to every committee meeting. However, timely minutes, committee reports during Board meetings, and electronic correspondence would alleviate the necessity to attend every meeting if schedule conflicts occur. The practice of bringing Informational items to the full Board would continue.

At the close of the meeting, Mr. Fletcher asked that the Board members email feedback to him of what committees they prefer to serve on, given a minimum of four members per committee. He noted that if preferences were not given, he would assign a chair, vice chair and two committee members per each committee. Mr. O’Neal made a request that while the present structure exists, he would prefer to see Personnel and Policy items prior to receiving the Board binder materials whenever possible.

The Board will continue discussions on committee structure and organization at a later date to be determined. The meeting was adjourned at 9:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Annette Maret, Recording Secretary

Bill McNeal, Secretary

Bill Fletcher, Chairman