

MARION COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD MEETING MINUTES
MARION SCHOOL DISTRICT CONFERENCE ROOM
719 North Main Street – Marion, South Carolina 29571
August 16, 2022

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

Call to Order & Notification of Board Workshop: The Board meeting was called to order at 5:34 p.m. by Chairperson Atkinson. 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. Mrs. Hopper (filled in for Ms. Deciera Gause) stated that the media was notified of the meeting and a copy of the agenda was also provided.

Invocation: The invocation was given by the Reverend Curtis Campbell, Pastor of Mt. Ariat Baptist Church, Mullins, South Carolina. The Board thanked Reverend Campbell for his presence.

Welcome to Staff and Visitors Present: Chairperson Atkinson welcomed the staff, students, parents and visitors to the August 16, 2022 meeting. She acknowledged Mrs. Pridgen and extended condolences on behalf of the Board on the passing of her mother.

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

Approval of Agenda: Chairperson Atkinson asked for approval of the agenda. Rev. Brown moved, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Foxworth to approve the August 16, 2022 agenda; and the vote passed. (Chairperson Atkinson, Mr. Dozier, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mrs. White, Rev. Brown and Mrs. Pridgen).

Approval of Minutes: Chairperson Atkinson asked for a motion to approve the minutes of the Regular Meeting of June 14, 2022 and the Special Called Meeting of June 28, 2022. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Mr. Dozier to approve the minutes with the necessary corrections; and the vote passed. (Chairperson Atkinson, Mr. Dozier, Mrs. Pridgen, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Rev. Brown, Mrs. Pridgen and Mrs. White).

Marion County School District 2022-2023 School Administrators: Dr. Bethea introduced the new administrative staff and their locations.

Marion County School District 2022 Summer Graduates Celebration: Dr. Bunch presented the Summer High School Graduates. They were recognized for their determination and outstanding accomplishments to succeed.

Reports from Administration / Review and Action Items: Finance Report for July 2022: Mrs. Angel Cooper presented the financials for the month of July. Chairperson Atkinson asked for a report on ESSA Funds. Dr. Bethea informed the Board that funds had been set aside for bonuses again this year. Vice-Chairperson Foxworth expressed her concern about supply checks for non-certified staff. After the briefing from the Superintendent, the Board made a request by the next Board meeting for the number of certified and non-certified employees. The finance report was presented as information.

Facilities/Operations Report: Mr. Leon Sturkey gave an overview of the operation's report.

Model Fire Program: Mr. Sturkey presented the Model Fire Program for 1st Reading approval of the Policy for acceptance. Chairperson Atkinson asked for a motion to approve this request. Mrs. White moved, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Foxworth to approve this request as recommended by the Superintendent; and it was approved. (Chairperson Atkinson, Rev. Brown, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Dozier, Mrs. Pridgen, Mr. Hill and Mrs. White).

Transportation: Mr. Sturkey briefly discussed the mobile unit from Henry Theodore Lester Elementary School in Florence that can use down in Area Seven as the bus transportation office. Last year it was discussed about the new system called Traversa which will allow us along with parents to locate busses and eliminate a lot of questions and calls.

Summer Projects: Mr. Sturkey stated that the bus loop at Easterling has been completed and the gym floors have been installed at Johnakin Middle School. The paving of student parking lot at Marion High School should be started by next week. Final approval will determine when to proceed with getting the water refill stations installed at all schools.

Trane - HVAC: Mr. Sturkey stated that they have the final approval. The installation at Marion High School will begin in November and should be completed by January 2023. Some metal detector quotes had been received. Some demonstrations are forthcoming. Vice-Chairperson Foxworth thanked him for his report.

Milk Bid: Mr. Sturkey requested an executive session for contractual matters to discuss the Milk Bid. Dr. Bethea thanked Mr. Sturkey and the team for the way they handled the lockdown and assured the Board that the information was presented in three different forms to the parents and community. She stated that if they did not receive the notification, the School District must not have the correct information. Please ask them to give the school the correct information. The Board thanked Mr. Sturkey for his report.

Human Resources Report / Updates – Mrs. Paula Grant gave a brief update and stated that a Salary Study has been received and is being reviewed. She requested an executive session for personnel actions.

Academic Update / Report - Summer Programs Review: Ms. Shalah Sweeney gave a brief update on the various Summer Programs that were offered during the summer. She discussed the purpose of the programs, the school hosting the programs and the dates the programs were offered. Board concerns and comments were addressed during Ms. Sweeney's presentation.

2022-23 Academic Initiatives: Mr. Eugene Bellamy gave a brief update on the academic initiatives for the upcoming school year. Mr. Bellamy stated that they will be moving forward with the staggered entry for all kindergarten students allowing our teachers to do assessment testing to see how far along out students are ready for school. He shared information about how feedback would be provided immediately to all schools through the digital program (Class Mosaics). Writing resource program has also been purchased.

Accountability Update – Cognia Report: Ms. Melonie Gordon gave a brief update on the accreditation report from COGNIA (formally known as AdvancED). Chairperson Atkinson stated that since they had just received the report, they review it and come back next month for an update on their questions and concerns. Dr. Bethea emphasized her concerns about the Cognia Report coming into a pandemic. She thanked parents, students, staff, the community, external officials and our Faith Based supporters for their support.

Superintendent's Report / Update: Dr. Bethea gave a brief update on the recent happenings in MSCD since the opening of school. She talked about the great school opening and the Convocation with Dr. Ford, President of Florence Darlington Technical College as the speaker for the occasion.

Proviso 1.113: Dr. Bethea asked Attorney Goodwin to brief the Board concerning this proviso. Attorney Goodwin stated that referred to vacant or unused property that has not been in use in the past four years. You are required to publish this on your website.

Proviso 1.22: Dr. Bethea stated that the board meeting must be posted within 24 hours of the scheduled meeting and minutes must be posted within ten days after they have been approved.

Dr. Bethea stated that Section B has been updated, but the overall Policy manual has not been reviewed since 2012. Dr. Bethea will contact the SCSBA for a quote for Board Policy Review. Policy J needs to be reviewed first since there is so many concerns with behavior and conduct. She finalized her report by updating the Board on the Departmental updates and addressing concerns from Board members i.e., uniforms.

Review and Action: Dr. Bethea presented the student transfers and releases to the Board for approval. Chairperson Atkinson asked for a motion to approve this request. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Rev. Brown to approve this request as recommended by the Superintendent; and it was approved. (Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. White, Rev. Brown, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Dozier and Mr. Hill.

Student Field Trips: Dr. Bethea presented both field trips to the Board for approval.

The MuHS Varsity Football team is requesting permission to travel to Red Springs, North Carolina on September 16, 2022 for approval. Chairperson Atkinson asked for a motion to approve this request. Board members began a discussion about the variation between the miles of the football team and cheerleaders. Dr. Bethea stated that she would check on this variation. No motion was made.

The MuHS Varsity Cheerleaders are requesting permission to travel to Red Springs, North Carolina on September 16, 2022 for approval. Chairperson Atkinson asked for a motion to approve this request for the Mullins High School Varsity Cheerleaders. Mr. Hill moved, seconded by Vice Chairperson Foxworth; and it was approved six for (Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. White, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mrs. Pridgen, Mr. Dozier and Mr. Hill) and one abstention (Rev. Brown).

The Board had a brief discussion about donations to organizations.

Public Participation: There was no public participation.

Board Committees / Calendar Reminders: Board members were given the opportunity to express any concerns or comments that they may have. Chairperson Atkinson stated that she would like to have a Retreat. Chairperson Atkinson stated that it was a unanimous decision to move forward with organizing a Retreat.

Mrs. White gave a brief discussion concerning posting Special Called Meetings. After a brief discussion from others, Chairperson Atkinson stated that a motion was needed. Mrs. White moved, seconded by Mrs. Pridgen to broadcast Special Called Meetings and place them on the website; and it was unanimously approved. (Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. White, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mrs. Pridgen, Mr. Dozier, Mr. Hill and Rev. Brown).

Superintendent's Evaluation: Chairperson Atkinson stated that after speaking with the Attorney, this will be discussed in executive session.

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

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

Chairperson Atkinson stated that no action was taken in executive session.

Milk Bid: Mr. Dozier moved, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Pridgen to accept the Pinecrest Food's milk bid for this school year as recommended by the Superintendent and the Board voted unanimously to approve. (Mrs. White, Mrs. Pridgen, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Rev. Brown, Mr. Hill, Mr. Dozier and Chairperson Atkinson).

Personnel: Mr. Hill made the motion that the Board deny Employee A.1.a's request for release at this time and reconsider the request contingent upon the submission of information in accordance with District Policy and procedures, seconded by Mrs. White; and the Board approved this request unanimously. (Mr. Dozier, Mrs. White, Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. Pridgen, Rev. Brown, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth and Mr. Hill).

Personnel: Mr. Hill made the motion that employee A.2.a, A.3.b, A.7.b and A.11.a as represented on personnel actions for August 16, 2022 Board meeting be reported to the South Carolina State Department of Education for breach of contract and that the South Carolina Department of Education take any appropriate action for failure to comply with contractual obligations, seconded by Mrs. White; and the Board approved 6 for (Mr. Dozier, Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. Pridgen, Rev. Brown, Mr. Hill and Vice-Chairperson Foxworth).

Personnel: Mr. Hill made the motion that employee A.2.a, as presented on the Addendum to Personnel Actions for the August 16, 2022 Board meeting be fully released from their contractual obligations with the Marion County School District for the 2022-2023 school year, seconded by Mrs. White; and the Board approved the vote unanimously (Mr. Dozier, Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. Pridgen, Rev. Brown, Mr. Hill and Vice-Chairperson Foxworth).

Personnel: Mr. Hill made the motion that employee A.1.a as represented on the Addendum to Personnel Actions for August 16, 2022 Board meeting not be released from their contractual obligations with Marion County School District for the 2022-2023 school year, seconded by Mrs. White; and the Board approved 6 for (Mr. Dozier, Mrs. White, Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. Pridgen, Rev. Brown, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth and Mr. Hill).

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

Reconvened to Open Session: Chairperson Atkinson asked to amend the adjournment motion and come back into open session to vote on the Mullins Football Team travel request. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Mrs. White to approve this request; and the vote was unanimous (Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. White, Rev. Brown, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Dozier, Mrs. Pridgen and Mr. Hill).

Adjournment: Chairperson Atkinson asked for a motion to adjourn. Mrs. Pridgen moved, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Foxworth to approve this request; and the vote was unanimous (Rev. Brown, Vice-Chairperson Foxworth, Mr. Dozier, Chairperson Atkinson, Mrs. White, Mrs. Pridgen and Mr. Hill). The Meeting adjourned @ 8.47 pm.