

**NORTHAMPTON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SUMMARY OF FORMAL ACTIONS TAKEN AT
Wednesday, July 1, 2020, SPECIAL MEETING
CENTRAL ELEMENTARY SCHOOL**

This document summarizes formal actions taken on substantive matters at the special meeting of the Northampton County Board of Education on July 1, 2020. This document is provided for the convenience of the public and does not constitute the official minutes of the meeting. For details such as the precise substance of main motions, any subsidiary motions, the names of members who made and seconded motions, staff presentations and public comments, and the times the meeting was called to order, recessed, reconvened, and/or adjourned, please consult the official minutes of this meeting, which are maintained as audio or video recordings and available for public inspection in the office of the Superintendent and on the Board of Education website.

Members Present: Rhonda Taylor, Chair; Marjorie Edwards, Josephine Dunn, Barbara Stephenson, Theresa Scott, Tony Burnette, Kelvin Edwards, Sr., ex officio

Members Absent: Lucy Edwards

Others Present: Administration, press, and interested parties

Oath of Office for Board Members.

Chair Rhonda Taylor welcomed the audience and announced that Ms. Laquitta Green-Cooper, Northampton County Clerk of Court, will administer the Oath of Office to the newly elected Board Members. Chair Taylor announced that prior to the Oath of Office, one of our previous Board Members has asked that our attorney to make a statement at this time.

Attorney Rod Malone read the following statement: “I have been instructed by a Board Member with an expiring term to inform the Board and the public that he objects to the legality of this meeting. He stated that he believes this meeting is improper due to the Board’s canceling of the meeting when it met on June 29. He also questioned the Interim Superintendent’s authority to schedule the meeting.”

Attorney Malone further stated that I have explained our position that this meeting was properly called and that the new Board Members can be properly sworn in today, but he did want to note his objection to today’s this meeting so I have done as instructed.

Ms. Laquitta Green-Cooper, Clerk of Court, carried out the Oath of Office to Ms. Josephine T. Dunn, Ms. Barbara A. Stephenson, Ms. Theresa C. Scott, and Mr. Tony A. Burnette as Members of the Northampton County Board of Education for the 2020-2021 school year.

Chair Taylor stated that she wanted to thank Ms. Green-Cooper for coming to swear in our new Board Members. She announced that at this time we will take this opportunity to allow our new Board Members to give a few comments:

Ms. Josephine T. Dunn – “Good afternoon to everyone. I am thankful to all of you who are here to support me today, especially my daughter, my son, my grandchildren, my brother, my sister, and other family members traveling here today. I am also proud that my aunt and my 91 years-old mother are both here today! The mission of the Northampton County Board of Education says, “It is to provide effective, continuous management that will produce excellence in education by

developing policies, supporting the Superintendent, and implementing, monitoring, and reviewing the district's progress towards excellence in education." Furthermore, the General Assembly's legislation clearly says, "it shall be the duty of local Boards of Education to provide students with the opportunity to receive a sound education and to make all policy decisions with that in mind." My actions will be based on these two policies. The decisions I make will not be about me, they won't be about other Board Members or any politics, but about the progress of our students. That is what I am planting today. We ask you to please continue to support us in this endeavor. What are we all about? "Changing the Lives of Our Students"

Ms. Barbara A. Stephenson – "Good afternoon to all. Thanks to everyone who supported me during the election this year, because I really appreciate your support. During the next four years as a Board Member, I am not going to make a lot of promises other than to carry out the policies that govern our student body, because as you know when you make promises they can be not carried out and also they can lead to misunderstandings. What I do plan to do is to make sure that we will move our district forward and as Ms. Dunn stated, this is serious business. This is not about any individual, this is not about politics, but this is about our children and their lives and their future. I commit, as I have done all of my educational career, to provide the best for our scholars in Northampton County. I am very transparent, I'm very open, and if there is a concern, please do not hesitate to reach out and have a conversation. Also, I would like to note that I am one; I have one voice, and one vote. I will not stand in as a representative for all Board Members, because I am not the Chair of that. So, what I am saying is I will know my position, I will know my place, and I will do what is best, not only for the scholars in Northampton County, but the staff for whom we serve. Let's continue to uplift our youth, because this is going to be a very challenging year for all of us, but with the support we see out in front of us I know we can do it; yes we can dot it. Thank you."

Ms. Theresa C. Scott – "It is an honor to be here before you. I am so thankful and grateful that you the people have elected me to sit in your seat. As it was earlier stated, we are here to change the lives of children and I intend to do just that. I am not only here as a concerned citizen, but I am also here as a parent with two children still in Northampton County Schools. Our children aren't less than and they deserve more and that is what I intend to do as I sit before you in the seat and that you allow me to serve our students, teachers, and staff. I look forward to working with the Superintendent and the other amazing elected Board Members to move our county forward. Thank you."

Mr. Tony A. Burnette – "Good afternoon Northampton County! I thank God for each and every one of you who have assembled here today and I thank God for giving me the strength to stand before you knowing that my heart is pure and that my feelings are deep. It is that we made you a promise on the campaign trail and I intend to keep that promise to make sure that we uplift every child in Northampton County; without leaving any child behind, to hold no personal agenda whatsoever, and to make Northampton what it needs to be to uplift our children, to uplift our staff, and our teachers. Let the word go forth today to our people who are on the front line working hard day in and day out and that we understand and we see what you are doing. Now the people of Northampton that marched, they spoke and they spoke in a clear and loud voice that we want change like we have never needed before. So I stand here telling you on this day that we will fight for our children, every one of them and we will make you proud. To everyone who is here leaving this place, know this that this Board stands together. You will never see me fighting with a Board Member. You will always see me put the needs of our children first, always, and I promise you that."

Mr. Burnette asked Dr. Pamela Chamblee to come forward. Mr. Burnette announced to the audience that we asked Dr. Chamblee to come here today and I told the Board Members that I wanted to make a clear apology to you Dr. Chamblee for the wrong that was done to you.

Mr. Burnette further stated that he stands here, crystal clear saying that we apologize to you Dr. Chamblee and we need you to lead our children into the 21st century in the midst of a pandemic and we are still in this pandemic right now. God has brought her to us, this is her time, God set that forth, and God let this be. Thank you Dr. Chamblee and thank you Northampton!

Chair Taylor informed the audience that she is going to ask Ms. Dunn to come back up in case some of her family wants to take a picture, because she was not allowed to take her mask off. I will ask her to step back to the microphone so that she can have her picture taken. Then I will ask all four Board Members to come forward, stand together, take a picture, and then we will convene our meeting.

Ms. Barbara Stephenson also removed her mask and addressed the audience a second time as follows: "One thing that I did promise was to be transparent and in order to do that we have our family and our friends and everyone standing here today. Now what my Board Member just did, I heard him say we. I have a problem with that, because "we" means all of us and I have not had a conversation with him as far as what he was going to do. I don't have a problem with that, but I do want the public to know that not one of us can represent all of us unless it is Ms. Rhonda Taylor who is currently the Chairman of the Northampton County School Board. I just want that to be clear so if it comes out in the public or in the community and if it is not done in decency and in order as a "we" just remember that unless you hear it from the leader or the Chairman of that Board then it is no "we," it is an individual.

Ms. Stephenson further stated that she just wanted to put that out there and like he said, we are not going to be a Board that airs out our dirty laundry, but I thought this was very important. I have nothing personal against anyone, only success and moving this district forward. We are here for these children and everybody needs to understand that we are here for the children, not politics, not political, but for our kids. No hard feelings, I just wanted to be real. Thank you."

Chair Taylor asked that the elected Board Members come forward to take a picture.

Chair Taylor thanked everyone for coming and stated that we will now convene the meeting. She announced that when the Board goes into closed session we want you to know that when we return to open session you will be able to listen or watch the meeting via zoom or Facebook live. Therefore, you don't have to remain outside when we go into closed session, but I don't know how long the closed session will be.

The Board convened the Board Meeting at 4:22 p.m.

Chair Taylor announced that at this time we will establish a quorum. Ms. Marjorie Edwards, Ms. Barbara Stephenson, Ms. Josephine Dunn, Mr. Tony Burnette, Ms. Theresa Scott, and Ms. Rhonda Taylor were present. Ms. Lucy Edwards was not present.

ACTIONS TAKEN:

Approval of the Meeting Agenda. Mr. Burnette made a motion, Seconded by Ms. Stephenson to approve the Board Agenda as presented. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

Closed Session. Ms. M. Edwards made a motion, Seconded by Ms. Dunn to go into closed session at approximately 4:25 p.m. pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(1), (a)(3), and (a)(6) to prevent the disclosure of confidential personnel files under G.S. 115C-321, to consider matters relating to initial employment of an individual employee, and to consult with the Board's attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege.

Ms. M. Edwards amended her motion to add Financial Matters to the agenda as item 6.02. Mr. Burnette seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

Ms. M. Edwards made a motion, Seconded by Ms. Dunn to go into closed session at approximately 4:30 p.m. pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(1), (a)(3), and (a)(6) to prevent the disclosure of confidential personnel files under G.S. 115C-321, to consider matters relating to initial employment of an individual employee, and to consult with the Board's attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

Open Session. The Board reconvened the meeting at 6:13 p.m. Ms. Scott made a motion, Seconded by Ms. M. Edwards to go into open session. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote.

Personnel. Mr. Burnette made a motion to rescind the termination of Dr. Pamela Chamblee effective immediately. Ms. M. Edwards seconded the motion. The motion passed by a 5-1 vote. Ms. Barbara Stephenson voted against. Chair Taylor announced that Ms. Lucy Edwards is not present today for the meeting.

Financial Matters. Mr. Kelvin Edwards, Acting Superintendent, informed the Board that this is the time that we close out the fiscal year and now that it is July 1, 2020 one of the things that the district has been steadily doing is making sure that we maintain good fiscal management. One of the things that we were looking at is the Carryover Funding for the upcoming school year. We have \$102,800.00 in Carryover Funding that we need to request from the Board of County Commissioners in order to move forward so that we can purchase some necessary things. During this COVID-19 time, some of the vendors were not working and were not able to get the work done. One of the biggest expenses that we have had other than the beginning of the school year was that unfortunately we had a COVID-19 case in Northampton County that was an employee. Of course we took the proper measures to go ahead and sanitize each and every school and that bill came up to over \$60,000.00. Now what we are doing is making sure that we are closing out fiscally and making sure that our schools are safe to come back for our staff, faculty, and students.

Mr. Edwards further informed the Board that the company that they chose for the sanitizing was Atlanta Care of Rocky Mount. We did the three-bid process and the other two companies were Serv Pro of Rocky Mount and Care Masters of Greenville and Atlanta Care came in as the low bid. They did a good job working with our maintenance and custodial staff and we want to say "hats off" to our maintenance staff, because what they did was tremendous! They started on a Saturday and they had all of the schools

cleaned within a week and we are so thankful to them that they were able to do this task. Many of those companies charge \$1.00 per sq. ft. so what we did was to choose to have the spray on option, which was affordable for Northampton County Schools. Therefore, those are the type of maintenance things that have been going on with our fiscal management and wellness. Our Instructional Staff has been tirelessly working on grants and our Technology Department has been working on grants with the upcoming Restart money, the Cares Act money and all of those things are due and of course we want to make sure we are ready to effectively open. We thought we would hear the announcement today, but unfortunately Governor Cooper postponed his announcement. That \$102,800.00 is needed to carry on the work that needs to be done.

Ms. Scott stated that you said the cleaning cost for the schools was \$60,000.00, what will you do with the remaining of that funding?

Mr. Edwards responded, yes. He further stated that we would finish those other projects for instance the Technology Department received a grant in the amount of \$87,000.00 and we will be able to furnish the buses with hot spots. What we will do with the rest of that funding we will be sure we are maintaining safety, because every time we come in a building we do not have all of the PPE equipment and all of the things that are needed to take the necessary measures. We don't have to sanitize again, but these are the type of measures that we have to take so that we can assure we are prepared.

Mr. Burnette asked do we have plans for the rest of those funds.

Mr. Edwards responded, yes we do.

Mr. Burnette further stated that I just wanted to make sure of that, because the last thing I would want to do is for us to lose those funds and they go back.

Mr. Edwards further informed Mr. Burnette that he assures him that the team is working tirelessly so that we do not revert any funding back to the State, because we cannot afford to do that in Northampton County.

Mr. Burnette asked are we letting the citizens know about the cleanup. I would like to make sure that we are keeping the citizens abreast with everything we do for transparency and that we put that information out there, because our children are involved and when we do come back we definitely need to make sure that the east and west end is informed so that everybody knows what we are doing. Are we doing that?

Mr. Edwards responded that we are doing that. We put it out there weekly and we have announced it numerous times.

Ms. M. Edwards shared that she wanted to thank Mr. Edwards so far for everything he has done thus far and also our staff who have worked so hard. You know how I am about giving a little token and will that be possible from the COVID-19 money, because they have put themselves in harm's way to be essential and they are working for our children. I am always concerned that we need to look out for those employees. Can we figure out a way that we can do that between you and Dr. Chamblee whom we are bringing back, if she will have us back, and finish the work she is trying to do? Certainly, those

funds need to be allocated to those people who have worked so tirelessly in these buildings that have to be cleaned and wiped down and it won't hurt to help them too.

Mr. Burnette asked can we do that Mr. Edwards.

Mr. Edwards responded to Ms. M. Edwards and Mr. Burnette that we will have to watch how the funding is, for instance with School Nutrition when that funding became available we thought we could give bonuses at first, but then we could not and when it came back they re-worded it and now we can. So anytime that we can show our staff some appreciation we certainly will.

Ms. Dunn asked we have not done that yet?

Mr. Edwards responded that we have not done that yet, but we will be doing that now that we know we can.

Mr. Burnette informed Mr. Edwards that he knows that being in the military and when you were under fire they had what you called "hazardous duty" and that is what you so when you have custodial staff in here cleaning in this COVID-19 era and they deserve "hazardous duty" pay so if we can do that absolutely.

Mr. Edwards stated that he echo's that as well and one of the things we did with the Maintenance Staff was Dr. Chamblee and this Board of Education made sure they were taken care of. Anytime we can see the opportunity to do something with the funding we will. Just as the money came down for Child Nutrition and at first we couldn't and now we can.

Ms. Dunn asked that when we have outside people coming in to clean, our custodial staff still has to be there is that correct?

Mr. Edwards responded, yes absolutely and as I echoed before they were there over the weekend doing this work.

Ms. Stephenson asked are we keeping an accurate record of all of our spending.

Mr. Edwards informed Ms. Stephenson that the administration will make sure that we keep an accurate record of all of the spending and we will make sure that the Board knows.

Chair Taylor informed Mr. Edwards that the Board would like to say thank you from the beginning of this "pandemic" up until now. Northampton County staff has done an excellent job, including the teachers with the virtual learning. We are learning that there are some things out there on the website for students, parents, and staff and one of them is a survey that is very important for them to fill out.

Mr. Edwards stated that he wants the Board to know that our Instructional Department is tirelessly working. Our Principals' Meetings and Directors' Meetings are held virtually and what they are doing is making sure that instruction is maintained in Northampton County Schools, because at the end of the day it is about the teaching and learning process.

Board Information

Chair Taylor informed the Board that the next Regular Board Meeting will be held on July 13, 2020. She stated that more than likely it will be via Zoom with Closed Session at 5:30 p.m. and Open Session at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment. Ms. M. Edwards made a motion, Second by Mr. Burnette to adjourn the Board Meeting. The motion passed by a 6-0 vote. The Board adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Kelvin M. Edwards, Sr., Acting Superintendent