

RECORDS AND PROCEEDINGS

A special meeting of the Board of Education of the Pulaski County Special School District was held at 925 East Dixon Road on the 1st day of March 2010. The following business was transacted.

Opening 3/01/10

President Tim Clark called the meeting to order at 5:35 p.m.

Present: Mr. Tim Clark, Mr. Danny Gililland, Mrs. Sandra Sawyer, Mrs. Mildred Tatum, Mr. Bill Vasquez, Ms. Gwen Williams, Mr. Charlie Wood and Acting Superintendent Rob McGill

Absent: None

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a public forum to interview Acting Superintendent McGill and to conduct the second round of board interviews for Mr. McGill for the position of superintendent. One other item was on the agenda for action.

New Business 3/01/10

District Make-up Days

Mr. Wood moved, seconded by Mr. Gililland, approval to modify the district calendar to have April 2, 2010 a student contact day, and to move the district "cut day" to June 21, 2010. Mr. McGill stated that this would give the students one more day to prepare for testing. A roll call vote was requested.

Roll Call Vote

Yes: Gililland, Wood

No: Sawyer, Tatum, Vasquez, Williams, Clark

The motion failed.

Public Forum 3/01/10

Loyd Healy

Mr. Healy stated that he had researched the candidates for the superintendent search. Mr. Clark requested that Mr. Healy not release any information pertaining to Dr. Washington since she was not present. Mr. Healy stated that the taxpayers, parents, grandparents, teachers, and those affected do not need persons with some of the credentials of the people we have seen. He said that the more vocal, disruptive school board members of our school board think that person was exactly what PCSSD needs. He stated that tonight was the time for the school board to step forward, unite and select Robert McGill as our superintendent.

Laura Quimby

Ms. Quimby stated that she was a PCSSD involved mom that has a son that has attended school in the district since the beginning. She said he was now an 8th grader and part of the transition team at Oak Grove. Ms. Quimby stated that the reason for being here was to support Mr. McGill. She stated that he knows where the bodies are buried because he has been with the district for 16/17 years; that the only time he has not been at the county is when he has been away serving military duty. She stated that he has been from one end of the spectrum to the other in the district. She said she

thought that as a parent who has been in the system with Mr. McGill in the last year and been around him in the Maumelle area for a number of years, you have lost the one candidate that you had opposing Mr. McGill, and unless you did not do the right job with the two candidates to begin with, you only have one place to go and that should be Mr. McGill. She said that is who you should be giving the job to tonight during your special meeting.

Rizelle Aaron

Mr. Aaron addressed the board and Mr. McGill and thanked Mr. McGill for his service. He said that he and Mr. McGill had served in some of the same units, the 87th Troop Command and the 39th Infantry, but stated that is not why we are here. He stated we are not here to select the superintendent because he is our friend; we are here to select a superintendent because he is qualified and can do the job. He said the bottom line is this and he would refer to the investigation. He said as an African-American minority that his primary concern for the children in the district, my kids, and my grandchildren is to have someone to lead the district that is racially knowledgeable or racially sensitive. He stated that he had read the investigation report and the results from it, and said that although for all intent and purpose are inconclusive, they didn't say that Mr. McGill made a racial remark or he didn't, all it said was that they could not prove that he did. He said that at any rate, if in fact if Mr. McGill did hear one of his subordinates make the statement to that effect, and that the only action taken was a slap on the wrist, it is unacceptable. He stated that if, I believe in my opinion, that a minority subordinate had made such a comment or such a statement, that a more severe action would have been taken, and because of that and only for that reason, I think we should go back and reopen the position, see if the candidates that were here before are still interested in this position, with the exception of Mrs. Washington, and start again. He stated it's not because I don't like you, it's because of the facts.

Mr. McGill inquired asked Mr. Aaron how he had received a copy of the investigation report at this point.

Mr. Aaron stated that the way he could answer that question was that he could not answer that question.

Mr. McGill stated the report was illegally obtained without his consent. He said that he had not given his consent, but that right now, he was going to give the board his consent to allow the media to have and disclose the report with the names of witnesses redacted. Mr. Aaron stated that he was glad he brought that up and asked if he could respond.

Mr. Aaron stated that over the past weekend Mr. Charlie Wood had issued a statement in the absence of Mr. Clark. He said that the statement was issued without the knowledge of the entire board; that the statement was issued without the knowledge, it is my understanding, of Mr. Clark. He stated that with the board not having the adequate time to discuss the

outcome of the investigation, it was inappropriate and maybe even unethical for a statement to be issued by Mr. Charlie Wood. He said he knew it was frustrating that he got the information but if people like him did not get the information, we can't say anything.

Mr. McGill addressed Mr. Aaron and told him that he had gotten it illegally and he wanted everyone to know Mr. Aaron had gotten it illegally from someone sitting right here.

Mr. Wood told Mr. Aaron that you may not agree with me issuing the statement but there is nothing illegal about that. Mr. Aaron said he did not say it was illegal, that it was unethical. Mr. Wood said that Mr. Aaron might say it was unethical, but that whoever gave out the report acted illegally and we need to find who acted illegally and gave him the report.

Ms. Williams addressed the president, stating that due to the fact that an email was released regarding the report, what happened in that instance, Mr. Wood, is that you released the email and that made it public and you made it subject to FOI. Mr. McGill stated that this was incorrect; to check your legal information. Ms. Williams stated that in fact Mr. Wood sent out an email regarding the report and released it. She said this was personnel information, and said she had no knowledge of it; that she had not seen the report. She stated that he released the email regarding the report before this board as a whole could discuss it and it was personnel information. She said that when in fact he did that, he subjected the report to become a FOI which meant the press or anybody could get it. Mr. McGill said that was incorrect. She stated that Mr. Wood was the one that subjected it to become a FOI; that the board had not seen the report or discussed the report as a whole, so no email should have gone out regarding the report until the board had discussed it. Ms. Williams said that she had not seen the report yet.

Mr. Clark requested that Mr. Wood respond. Mr. Wood stated that he had certainly sent the email out and had consulted with our attorney. He said that our attorney said that it needed to be released to the public and also told him that he could not release the report itself. Mr. Wood stated that Jay Bequette, our district attorney, informed him that he could not release the report itself without Rob McGill's permission. He was told the report could be summarized and state the conclusions. Mr. Wood stated that when the public receives the report, I think you will all see that the conclusions that I released are valid, and we have gone through the proper steps. He stated that he was under the impression that the Arkansas-Democrat Gazette, the Arkansas Times and the Sherwood Voice wanted to know about it as soon as the report was released.

Ms. Williams said the board should have discussed it first, we as a board as a whole, not one board member. She said that we had a workshop, Mr. Wood, and we said that all statements will come through the president of the board or the

superintendent – not one board member. She said that we should have discussed this as a whole.

Mr. Wood said that Ms. Williams could slap his hand and he took responsibility, but the fact is it is illegal that someone gave out the report which could only be done by Rob McGill, since it is his personnel file, and he had to give permission to release it. He stated that Mr. McGill is willing to give out the information at this time. Mr. Wood said there is a difference in saying what I shouldn't have done and what the law says we cannot do and what somebody did.

Christopher Wright Mr. Wright said that his questions had already been answered.

Bobby Altom Mr. Altom stated that he was a retired employee of PCSSD and he had two grandchildren in the district. He stated that his son and daughter-in-law also work for the district. He said that he had planned to talk to both candidates; however, it looked as if Mr. McGill was the last man standing. He stated that he wanted to talk about facilities and ask the questions up front then talk about the information he had pulled from the district's website, the Arkansas Department of Education's website, and a newspaper article that will give the background of why I ask the questions in the manner that I do. (1) Where will the money come from to allow any meaningful prioritized sustained effort for facilities to be maintained, renovated and to replace the district's facilities, and (2) Is it your plan to continue the district's current efforts of facilities management that at a glance seem to have diminished the district's resources and have the appearance with a notable exception of the two new schools being built which appears to be haphazard, unfocused and driven by emergency crisis or do you have anything else in mind that will restore or enhance public perception that PCSSD has a plan in place that is comprehensive in nature and void of turf politics and has the financial resources to deliver. He stated these questions came from the Superintendent's letter, which is your letter, the PCSSD Annual Report. He said that one statement said that leadership and accountability go hand in hand. We must be good stewards of the bottom line and maximize our financial resources to support and enrich the environment of every child. He referred to three bullets in the Superintendent's Action Plan 2009-2010 and the Annual Report on the subject of facilities. He said that with all the needs of the district regarding surface renovations, several of the schools being built years ago, that it bothered him to read newspaper reports of the cost of the new schools being built in the district. He referred to another firm that built a school in Memphis at a much lower cost. He talked about the projected student growth, M-to-M projections, and increased operating costs. He said that he thought that possibly some of these costs were covered under the stimulus money, but after looking at the ADE website, PCSSD had zero. He referred back to the statements issued in the Annual Report, but that it was his perception that the district has tapped itself out with resources as far as the Maumelle High School is concerned and the funds are gone to address any more needs of the district. He asked where the money was going to come from

and stated that a well crafted, philosophical pure facility plan had to include more than the four schools getting surface renovations. He said he could not believe this was a comprehensive plan. Mr. McGill addressed these issues.

Lisa George

Ms. George, a teacher from Maumelle Middle School, stated that she had taught in the Pulaski County Special School District at Fuller Middle School in 1981, at Little Rock Public Schools, and at the University of Central Arkansas for twelve years in the College of Education. She said this was her third year at Maumelle Middle School and had met Mr. McGill last year when he came in and took over as acting superintendent. She said what she admired about Mr. McGill the most was not just his credentials, but that he brings his heart to this job. She said that we had to touch the hearts of all students and unless he had special magic powers that none of the rest of us have and since he has been in this position only a short time, that it is hard to answer all the questions that people present to him. She said she supported him and asked the board to consider his loyalty. Ms. George said she did not think the board would find this in any candidate that came from somewhere else; that you do not stay in a place this many years if you did not believe in it and have your heart in it.

Regina Hunt

Ms. Hunt stated that she was a district employee, a parent and a taxpayer. She stated that over the past twelve months there had been a great amount of discord within the district and asked what do you plan to do to heal this district. She said there had been discord on the board and asked Mr. McGill what he plans to do regarding the discord of the board, and among the sections in the buildings. She stated that historically the district has had a very good reputation, but over the last several months that reputation or image has been eroded by what is going on. She asked what we were going to do to heal the district and return to the business of educating our children. She stated that we could not educate our children when the teachers and employees are unhappy and when the board is in disagreement. She asked Mr. McGill if he was chosen as the superintendent and leader, what he would do to bring the district back together.

Melanie Conway

Dr. Conway said that she was one of those mothers that the district needed for her money to be back in the Pulaski County Special School District, about \$12,000. She stated that she thought the accusation toward Mr. McGill was accurately timed. She said that she wanted to move ahead in Arkansas, to get more technical based jobs, but if we don't focus on education and just focus on political issues, we are not going to do that. She said that she had watched decisions that had been made regarding Mr. McGill and having been in higher education, that she had taught in med school, the easiest thing for a career is to lie low and make the least amount of people mad as possible. She stated that Mr. McGill had not done that and he must have known this day was coming. She said that he has made the best decisions for the children and now she was asking the board, although it might not be in the best interest of everyone on board, to stick with their prior

decision. She stated they were down to two candidates, and one dropped out. She said the board needed to do what was right and move forward in this state and hire a man trying to do the right thing even when it was not in his own best interest.

Jamie Naylor

Mrs. Naylor, a district employee for thirty-one years, said that she knew him thirty-nine years ago when he attended UCA and emphasized that he was a gentleman and leader there as a student; and during the past seventeen years in the district he has been a leader. She stated he has children in our district and lives in our district. She said he lived in Maumelle, the fastest growing town in the state and that is why we have a new high school and a new middle school. She said that we have 210 eighth grade students going to Oak Grove High School next year and thanked Mr. McGill for that. She said she had faith in the U. S. Government, that Mr. McGill was a lieutenant colonel in the army, and she felt certain that if he was not a leader, that Pulaski County's scrutiny was nothing like the U.S. Army. She said as a teacher she hoped Rob McGill was the last superintendent that she would have, that he has earned it.

Executive Session

3/01/10

At 6:45 p.m. Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mr. Vasquez, to go into executive session to discuss and interview Mr. McGill for the position of superintendent. The motion carried.

The meeting reconvened at 8:00 p.m. Mr. Gililand moved, seconded by Mrs. Tatum, to reopen the application process of the position of the superintendent of the Pulaski County Special School District, that we contact Mr. McPherson's group and have him send us four more applicants with the request that any previous applicants that would like to apply, please do so. The motion carried. Mr. Wood voted no.

Adjournment

3/01/10

Mrs. Tatum moved, seconded by Ms. Williams, to adjourn the meeting. The meeting adjourned at 8:05 p.m.

Board President

Board Secretary