

Anderson County Board of Education
907 North Main Street, Suite 202, Anderson, South Carolina 29621
March 21, 2016

Call to Order

Chairman David Draisen called the meeting to order and gave the invocation after which everyone joined in the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag.

Board Members Present:

The following board members were present for the March, 2016 meeting: Mr. David Draisen, Ms. Brenda Bradberry, Dr. Gary Burgess, Mr. Mike Brock, Ms. Dana Grant, Mr. Dale Martin, Rev. Dr. Rufus Mitchell, and Joey Nimmer, Ex Officio.

Mr. Mike Upton and Mr. Nakia Davis were unable to attend.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Brenda Bradberry made a motion to approve the agenda. Dr. Gary Burgess seconded the motion and with a unanimous vote, the agenda was approved.

Approval of Minutes – February 22, 2016 Board Meeting

Mr. Dale Martin made a motion to approve the minutes and was seconded by Rev. Dr. Mitchell. With a unanimous vote, the February minutes were approved.

Anderson County Alternative School Report

Without a formal report directly from the Alternative School, Mr. Dillingham reported there are about 104 students enrolled at this time with six coming in this week. There are many tough kids coming in at this time of year. Approximately 83% of the students have attendance issues which they also had at their home school. Mr. Brock mentioned an article that ran in the Sunday edition of the Anderson Independent-Mail that compared alternative schools in Pickens, Oconee and Anderson counties. Each county runs a very different program and Anderson County is the only one with boot camp. The other counties stopped the practice years ago. It was an interesting, well-balanced article and Mr. Nimmer said he would be sure to mail it to the board members that didn't see it.

Mr. Dillingham stated that he believes boot camp is a tool to deal with very disruptive, disagreeable kids. He feels the kids he is getting are more difficult than before and his staff deals with terrible discipline issues with these wounded, messed-up children. Mr. Dillingham feels they provide hope, structure, and opportunity. Some students make it, some do not.

Ms. Bradberry asked how many teach boot camp. Mr. Dillingham stated there are two retired military personnel that conduct boot camp three days a week for an hour at a time and all students participate.

Ms. Bradberry asked if the county provides funding. Mr. Dillingham said no, the county does not have anything to do with the Alternative School.

Mr. Draisen mentioned that one of the problems with the fund balance is keeping up the building that the Alternative School is housed in rather than staff and salary. Mr. Dillingham agreed stating that capital improvements, computers, repairs, maintenance, etc., are increasingly necessary and there is no way to get funds. We are not included in the penny sales tax, however, the five districts have agreed to share a portion of the proceeds with our school. I believe we have received approximately \$25,000 so far this year which helped with a handicap ramp, a deck on the boot camp building, and we were able to replace a few doors.

Dr. Burgess asked if ending boot camp is fund related or something else. Mr. Dillingham answered some of it may be fund related with two full-time staff members but there also may be a desire to head in a different direction. Mr. Brock added there could be people that think boot camp may be too hard. Mr. Draisen added he hoped no one wanted to close the school since this is the last chance for these kids as they have been expelled from their home school. Without the Alternative School, they will be on the street. Dr. Burgess noted that not only are the majority of students black males, but most of these kids are poor and disadvantaged with over 80% on free lunch programs.

Mr. Nimmer said the bottom line is that the funding model needs a serious evaluation and an update since it hasn't been looked at in twenty years. Mr. Dillingham agreed stating they are still operating on the same millage that was instituted twenty years ago. My staff members have devoted their lives to taking care of these wounded children. Without it there would be 104 more kids on the street every day. With Mr. Nimmer's help, I think we can solidify a plan that will give us a good foundation for the future. Again, it is the funding model that needs an adjustment since it has been over twenty years with no increase. Mr. Dillingham said we need some help and appreciate the support.

Ms. Grant made a motion that the monthly report from the Alternative School be included in the mail-out along with the agenda before the monthly meeting. It was seconded by Ms. Bradberry and unanimously approved.

Administrator's Report

Mr. Nimmer reminded everyone that the Statement of Economic Interest forms must be completed by March 30, 2016 by logging on to ethics.sc.gov and following the instructions. Mr. Nimmer will be happy to assist those without internet access.

The 2DAC (Two Days at the Capitol) through the South Carolina School Board Association will be held on May 11, 2016 for those in Anderson County that would like to visit with our legislative delegation and other legislators that have key pieces of legislation pending before the SC State House. If you would like to go, please let me know no later than Friday, April 29th. If you are planning to attend, we need to complete the registration on Monday, May 2nd. You should have received information in the mail as well.

Financial

Tax Collection: Mr. Nimmer reported that the year-to-date tax collection for each district is still remarkably consistent and slightly ahead of where we were last year which is a good sign. A reminder that District Four's collection percentage is higher because a greater percentage of their local revenue

is derived from property taxes. Mr. Brock commented that it appears to be higher than normal. Mr. Nimmer answered that by this time of year, when all the property tax is in, it is about where we should be. Several Board members noted the Alternative School is doing very well with the collection so far this year. Mr. Nimmer mentioned the County Board and Alternative School will stay a bit behind since the EFA funding and EEA funding aren't received until the end of the year.

Assessment Totals: Mr. Nimmer stated the assessment totals have been virtually flat from last month to this month. Some of the Federal and State Income Tax refunds have been delayed which may be the reason for the decline of automobile purchases. This will probably catch up once the refunds are received.

Old Business

Mr. Draisen asked about the removal of the sign on the former building noting it as the Millard G. Smith building. Mr. Nimmer said, after checking with the new owners again, there was not a plan currently in place to reinstate the lettering on the front of the building. The city is planning to re-sign the building to coordinate with the improvements they have made to the building and surrounding property including walking trails, etc. However, I have asked them to reconsider that at the request of the Board. My contact at the recreation office is running the request through channels now and I will continue to report as I get information from them.

New Business

Ms. Bradberry made a motion to pay the bills as presented. The motion was seconded by Rev. Dr. Mitchell and was followed by a unanimous vote.

The meeting was adjourned by Mr. Draisen.

Respectfully submitted,

Dr. Gary Burgess, Secretary of the Anderson County Board of Education
This is a true and correct copy of notes taken at the meeting.