

MINUTES
ANDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
402 Bleckley Street, Anderson, South Carolina 29625
March 19, 2007

Board Members Present: Randy Price, David Draisen, Jeff Kubu, Mike Brock, Reverend Rufus Mitchell, Brenda Bradberry, Mike Gray, and Joey Nimmer, Ex Officio

Board Members Absent: Steve Garrison, John Sherard

Others Present: Mr. Dan McLeod, Mr. Jacky Hunter, Mr. Randolph Dillingham, Mr. Richard Thompson

Call to Order: Mr. Price called the meeting to order. Rev. Mitchell led the invocation. Everyone joined in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

Approval of Agenda: Mr. Kubu made the motion to approve the agenda with the additions of IV. Executive Session after Approval of Agenda and the addition of Item D. Agenda Items under New Business. Mr. Brock seconded the motion and the Board agreed unanimously. It was noted that Mr. Richard Thompson, at the request of the County Board, would be reporting on referendum issues.

Executive Session: Upon motion by Mr. Gray and second by Rev. Mitchell, the Board entered into executive session to be briefed on referendum issues by Mr. Thompson. With no action taken, the Board returned to open session on motion by Ms. Bradberry and second by Rev. Mitchell with unanimous approval by the Board.

Approval of Minutes, February 19, 2007 Meeting: Rev. Mitchell made the motion to approve the minutes with corrections. Mr. Brock seconded the motion. Ms. Bradberry asked if future minutes would be abbreviated instead of listing who asked questions. There were questions and answers to the audit. She noted that she had criticized some Boards in this county for making motions on issues and voting on them without discussion. She wanted people to know that the County Board of Education was discussing the issues, especially the audit. She did not necessarily want it word for word, but she wanted people to know issues were discussed. Mr. Price said that the meeting had been lengthy. Mr. Gray reminded the Board that there was a motion and a second. The Board voted all in favor to approve the minutes with corrections.

Recognition of Media and Patrons/ Public Comment Period: Mr. Price welcomed the visitors to the meeting. Mr. McLeod presented the request for approval of the Anderson School District Five 8% bond resolution for \$7.6 million, which was within their constitutional debt limitation. A summary of information about the involvement of the County Board in the bond process for the school districts in Anderson County had already been given to Mr. Nimmer along with debt service schedules regarding millage. Mr. McLeod listed the projects the bond issue would be used for as the completion of construction and furnishings the West Market Family Education Center, and construction

of additions at T.L. Hanna High School and Midway Elementary School. Ms. Bradberry asked if those were the only three things included in this bond issue. Mr. McLeod stated there was a general provision typically put in bond resolutions for any other purpose authorized by the School Bond Act in the remote event that there would be money left over. The Board would not have to be approached again for approval. These would be limited to improving, renovating, repairing, and capital improvements to school facilities. Mr. Kubu asked for a breakout of each job. Mr. McLeod explained the absence of Mr. David Brooks, who would usually be in attendance for these meetings. Ms. Bradberry asked how many classrooms would be at Hanna and Midway and how much completion is lacking at West Market. Mr. McLeod, not having an exact number, offered to send Mr. Nimmer the information requested by Ms. Bradberry the next week. Ms. Bradberry asked if there was no one else other than the finance person to get the information from. Mr. Nimmer mentioned that Ms. Bagley was in another meeting but had given him her cell phone number and instructions to call if she was needed. Ms. Bradberry asked if they had any bonds coming off this year. Mr. McLeod answered that there were some 2003 bonds that have a current balance of \$3million. A \$1.5million principal payment will be made on April 1, 2007 resulting in a \$1.5million principal balance. There are some 2004 bonds all of which will be paid in April leaving a zero balance. There are some 2005 bonds, \$7.35million of which \$3.75million will be paid leaving a \$3.6million balance. There are bonds Of \$7.3million issued last year, \$.5million will be paid leaving \$6.8 million. Ms. Bradberry wanted to know how much millage that would be. Mr. McLeod said that it was presently 32. Ms. Bradberry asked how much the asking \$7.6 million would add to it? Mr. McLeod said that it would be 32.48and in five years these bonds would go out in 2012. Ms. Bradberry asked if the interest rates were still good. Mr. McLeod said they were not as good as they were two years ago. The rate on these would probably be a little more than 350. Ms. Bradberry said there used to be a pot of fund balance and she wanted to know if it was still in existence or did it all go to pay on bonds. Mr. Hunter explained that there was no fund balance for bonds and that he had reduced the fund balance 20 mills in the last two years. Mr. McLeod stated that it was best not to zero out the sinking fund July 1 of every year because you do not get the tax monies in and bonds are payable semi-annually. Ms. Bradberry made the motion to approve the issuance of the bonds for 8% money for School District Five. Rev. Mitchell seconded the motion. Ms. Bradberry then asked how the passing of the referendum would affect the bond levy. The millage in 2012 was projected to be 33.02 mills, assuming 97% collection and 3% annual growth in tax base. After that the millage drops in 2013 to 25.93 and doesn't go above 27.27 until 2014. Mr. Gray was informed that the bond issue was brought before the Board because the School Bond Act by law requires it. Mr. Gray asked what would happen if the bond issue was not passed. Mr. McLeod replied that they would have to start over because the provisions of the School Bond Act had to be followed. The County Board voted in favor of passing the 8% bond issue.

County Auditor's Report—Jacky Hunter: Mr. Price introduced Mr. Jacky Hunter, Anderson County Auditor, who distributed handouts showing tax levies by school districts. He explained the ratcheting down of vehicle tax values which process will be completed by December, 2007. Mr. Hunter stated that the Property Tax Relief Act limited the taxing ability of the Anderson County Board of Education for commercial property and non owner occupied dwellings. A discussion followed with questions from the Board

concerning Homestead exemption, Fee in Lieu, rollbacks, and the new tax structure. Mr. Price suggested that Mr. Hunter have a meeting with representatives from the Board, County Council and Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Bradberry asked when homeowners would get relief, and Mr. Hunter replied that it would be this year. Mr. Gray asked if we were assuming that the sales tax is not going to generate enough money. Mr. Hunter said that there would be more than enough, and we would come off county taxes next year. Mr. Price thanked Mr. Hunter for speaking to the Board.

Anderson County Alternative School Report: Mr. Dillingham reported that there were between 125 and 130 students enrolled at the Alternative School at present. Mr. Price reported on the tenth year anniversary celebration that he and Mr. Nimmer attended, commending Mr. Dillingham for his leadership and for the dedication of his staff. He was greatly impressed with the behavior of the students and the appearance of the school. Mr. Gray and Mr. Kubu were at the school for a tour the day before and were also impressed by the school's appearance and Mr. Dillingham's leadership.

Administrator's Report: Mr. Nimmer presented brief accounts of:

- (1.) South Carolina School Boards Association Conference
- (2.) Mr. Nimmer called upon Mr. Kubu to report on the issue of consolidation he had discussed with State Representative Brian White. The House Judiciary Committee had met on the matter of consolidation and according to the Committee the Board would be within their realm to authorize consolidation if they believed this would be the best thing to do, but this would possibly be contested. Mr. Kubu suggested the Board members attend the next delegation meeting to stay current on any changes being made. At this point Ms. Bradberry asked what the rush about consolidation was. She said she had not heard one person in her district mention consolidation and wanted to know why it was being pushed. Mr. Price answered that questions concerning consolidation had been brought up by his associates, business people and members of the Board. Mr. Price had appointed a committee at the last meeting to inquire about the feasibility of consolidation. Mr. Draisen reminded everyone that at the last meeting it was voted upon to conduct a study. Rev. Mitchell strongly suggested that the committee attend the delegation meetings. It was noted that Mr. Price had appointed a committee to contact the Strom Thurmond Institute. Mr. Price agreed that the appointment of the committee was not in the minutes and needed to be added. Mr. Gray said he had been appointed to chair the committee. Mr. Kubu and Mr. Garrison had also been asked to serve.
- (3.) Mr. Nimmer stated that Ms. Bagley had been asked to present the District Five building program and all the information on that forthcoming referendum at the April 16th meeting.
- (4.) An updated list of the 2007 committee assignments including the public relations committee was included in the Board packets.

Mr. Price related to the Board the positive comments he had heard about the Board in the last couple of months and attributed this to the great job being done by the new Administrator and the employees of the County Board. Mr. Gray asked for specific clarification on the consolidation committee since it was not included on the updated

Board Committee list given by Mr. Nimmer. Ms. Bradberry said it would be an Ad Hoc committee formed to study one subject and upon completion of the study, this committee would be dissolved.

Financial: Tax Collections YTD vs. Budget: Mr. Nimmer reported that the gap had closed with District Two and everyone else was consistent, either at or above budget. It was noted that the BMW money was received and dispersed. Homestead would come in March and April. Ms. Bradberry said that District One had almost collected all their delinquent taxes. Mr. Gray asked if District Two does anything to collect the taxes. Ms. Bradberry and Mr. Nimmer said they come from the County. Mr. Nimmer said these were taxes from previous years. Mr. Price said they had already gone over assessment totals.

Old Business: Mr. Draisen gave a brief overview of the South Carolina School Boards Association meeting held in Hilton Head, attended by Mr. Nimmer, Rev. Mitchell, Mr. Kubu, Mr. Gray, Mr. Garrison, Mr. Draisen, and Mr. Sherard. Some of the sessions attended by the members were: (1) You Talk, I'll Listen, a class on communication (2) A walk about to observe different schools (3) A free after school program in conjunction with DJJ (4) Grandma's Hands Still at the Helm, listening to older people in families and (5) Dr. David Walsh's presentation of the development of the brain. A discussion followed with the Board members agreeing that the after school program would be interesting to look into.

Mr. Gray gave a report on meeting with the Strom Thurmond Institute. Discussed was consolidation of services, physical consolidation of School Districts based on the optimum number for a School District based on efficiency of numbers with 6000 being the minimum, and reporting on the five School Districts as a County and not individually. They were asked the best way for consolidation to be done, if it were ever done. The Strom Thurmond Institute representatives are experts in their fields concerning financial and educational matters. The Board discussed asking other groups for their input on these same questions. Mr. Price said that the Board had an obligation to answer these questions and that education must not suffer. All children should have the same opportunities. Ms. Bradberry said that the School Finance Act, which is fully funded, guarantees that every child in this State should get the same degree of education. That is the bare minimum. If the Districts want to do more, it has to be done on a local level. Ms. Bradberry explained that she did not agree with Ms. Bagley when District Five wanted to produce the curriculum guides but now they are selling them all over the United States making money that goes back into it for update every year. Those were the local people in District Five that paid the extra money to do that. She said that Horry County was getting money from District Four but now Horry County is getting more tax money than we are. She proposed that the whole Education Finance Act needed to be redone, along with the EIA, local maintenance of effort. Ms. Bradberry suggested our legislative committee needed to be working and talking to the Delegation, telling them EIA is not working right now because Horry County is getting to be one of the richest counties in the state. She stated that she worked with Dick Riley to pass the EFA to assure every child could have equal opportunity to an education, but that was in 1977. Something needs to be changed to update this, and she thought it would have to come through the legislature. Mr. Price said that no one had suggested there be one school district. Ms. Bradberry stated that she

did not want a Greenville County. Mr. Price stated that suggestions received by the Board on consolidation would be discussed by the Board and decisions made after recommendations, but one thing he wanted was a representative for his District. Mr. Gray suggested that there be no condemnation of the study. Ms. Bradberry said she thought the Board was rushing it. Mr. Gray said, "Why not us?" Ms. Bradberry said she didn't think it was the Board's job, and she still hadn't seen it in writing. Mr. Nimmer said that our attorney said it was within our realm. Ms. Bradberry said she felt like this was being too rushed. Mr. Draisen said he believed looking into it would not hurt anything. Mr. Draisen said some business people who had questioned consolidation may be interested in funding the study. Mr. Kubu listed people who had asked him about consolidation after they had seen how much they have been paying for taxes. Mr. Kubu and Mr. Gray reminded the Board that to continue to discuss the issue without all the facts was futile. Ms. Bradberry made it clear that she did not want to spend the taxpayers money needed to conduct a study. Mr. Gray asked if she would be willing to spend the money if it would save millions of dollars, and she said if it could be proved to her that it would save the money. Mr. Kubu said that \$58,000 is a cheap number if you figure one salaried employee in the District office. But I am looking at the budget of the County Board and how many mill we get per year was Ms. Bradberry's reply. Mr. Price suggested that the Board meeting move forward, and he assured Ms. Bradberry that nothing would be done behind her back.

New Business:

- A. and B. Mr. Draisen made the motion to pay the ADM and SFS accounts payable. Mr. Gray seconded the motion and the Board agreed unanimously.
- C. County Board Logo: Mr. Kubu suggested a modern update of the County Board be discussed further at the next meeting.
- D. Ms. Bradberry made the motion that agenda items to be discussed be mailed to the Board members at least a week in advance. All the other Boards she had been on had sent her the items at least two weeks in advance. Mr. Draisen seconded the motion. Ms. Bradberry made it known that she did not understand why District Five did not have a representative at the Board meeting since they have plenty of people in the finance department. She said if they could study all the material to be discussed ahead of time, the meetings would move faster. A discussion followed concerning limiting the number of speakers for each meeting. The Board voted unanimously to have the agenda and all the material that goes along with it, if it is available, a week prior to each Board meeting.

Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully submitted,

David Draisen, Secretary, Anderson County Board of Education
This is a true and correct copy of notes taken at the meeting