

THE SCHOOL BOARD OF  
ESCAMBIA COUNTY, FLORIDA

MINUTES, JULY 2, 2013

The School Board of Escambia County, Florida convened in Special Workshop at 4:00 p.m., in Room 413, at the Vernon McDaniel Building, 75 North Pace Boulevard, Pensacola, Florida, with the following present:

Chair: Mr. Jeff Bergosh Vice Chair: Mrs. Linda Moultrie

Board Members: Mr. Gerald W. Boone  
Mrs. Patricia Hightower  
Mr. Bill Slayton (*absent*)

School Board General Counsel: Mrs. Donna Sessions Waters

Superintendent of Schools: Mr. Malcolm Thomas

Meeting was advertised in the *Pensacola News Journal* on June 29, 2013 – [Legal No. 1602530](#)

[General discussion among Board Members, the Superintendent and staff occurred throughout this meeting.]

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Bergosh called the Special Workshop to order at 4:00 p.m.

II. DISCUSSION RE: 2013 – 2014 BUDGET

Mr. Bergosh stated he had asked for this meeting, and had spoken with the Superintendent with regard to calling a Special Workshop. Mrs. Hightower asked why this had been changed to a “workshop” as the memorandum she received had clearly indicated a “meeting.” Mr. Bergosh stated this had been changed after a discussion with the Superintendent.

The Superintendent addressed the issues referenced in a [communication](#) from Mrs. Waters to School Board Members, dated June 27, 2013. Mr. St. Cyr then distributed copies of reconciled financial statements for the district, encompassing the time period of July 2012 through April 2013. The Superintendent stated these reports would also be placed on the July 16, 2013 Regular School Board Agenda for approval.

Mr. St. Cyr distributed copies of spreadsheets relating to Budget Book V - Food Services, stating these numbers had been reviewed numerous times, and reflected accurate figures. The Superintendent apologized for the manner in which the Special Workshop on June 25, 2013, had been handled, and the discrepancies in the figures on the reports presented at that time. Mr. St. Cyr reiterated this apology, stating the figures presented to them today are correct. He stated everyone in the Finance Department had been working with Skyward representatives to resolve the issues with compiling and producing reports. He also informed them of the resulting change in format for budget information, which should be more “user friendly reports” now issued through Skyward.

The Superintendent and Mr. St. Cyr stated that bank reconciliations for almost all district bank accounts had been completed through the month of May, 2013; with the exception being the general operating account, which had been reconciled through March, 2013. Mr. St. Cyr indicated his staff had worked diligently and will continue to reconcile those few outstanding items remaining.

The Superintendent thanked the Board Members for their patience and understanding during this financial software transition period. Mr. St. Cyr stated that the members of his staff had been focused on making sure all employees were paid correctly, as well as vendors. He stressed that throughout this process accurate records were being kept. Superintendent Thomas again apologized for the reports presented to the Board Members during the June 25, 2013 Special Workshop, and stated the reports being distributed today are accurate. Mr. St. Cyr also apologized, indicating it was his fault the information previously provided was inaccurate, and that responsibility fell squarely on him. He further stated it would not happen again.

Mr. St. Cyr then discussed Budget Book V - Food Services, as several questions were posed by School Board Members regarding expenditures and fund balances. Mr. St. Cyr also explained that due to the large positive balance in the Food Service Operating account, the district was required to provide information to the State delineating the district's plan for decreasing it. These expenditures are measures taken (by expending of funds) in order to be in compliance with the maximum percentage allowed for this balance. He further indicated this "spend down" had been slowed due to the cancellation of a contract with a vendor for kitchen equipment; but since then new contracts were being evaluated. There was a request [by general consensus of the Board] to have Mr. Dennis and Mr. St. Cyr provide a copy of the district's plan for their review.

Discussion began regarding budget figures, with several questions posed on funding for Capital Outlay projects. Superintendent Thomas agreed that he would attempt to have information on the Capital Outlay projects available during the Special Workshop on July 11, 2013. Mr. St. Cyr explained that specific information could not be finalized until we received confirmation from the Department of Revenue, and the planned project list may be ready for distribution in August, or even September. Mrs. Hightower indicated she would like to see this list, with Mr. Bergosh asking to be included in the planning of said list; with other Board Members echoing these sentiments.

Mr. Bergosh introduced Mr. Tod Wilson, current Chairman of the Audit Committee, and stated Mr. Wilson had issued a [memorandum](#) outlining some possible recommendations for the district. Mr. Bergosh further stated this was also due to the communication from General Counsel regarding the district submission of financial reports. Mr. Wilson then provided the reasoning for his involvement, stating that he certainly felt better after being present for the information presented during this workshop. He then discussed the various options within his memorandum, which were suggested measures if the Board considered them necessary. Mr. Wilson reminded Board Members of their statutory responsibility for reviewing the financial reports of the district, and when they were not presented in a timely manner, they should have asked for it. The Superintendent gave assurances that he and his staff would be taking all the steps necessary to restore the Board's confidence and trust in the future. It was [agreed by consensus] that the second recommendation listed was amenable, with the Superintendent asking to delay the formation of an "oversight committee" until after the hectic budget season was over – perhaps October. After further discussion, the Board Members agreed that no formal action was necessary.

Mr. Bergosh, the School Board Members present, the Superintendent and Mr. Wilson all agreed that this workshop had been productive, and had gone a long way to resolve the concerns outlined in both the General Counsel's and the Audit Committee Chair's communications.

### III. PUBLIC FORUM

Mr. Bergosh called for Public Forum. There was no one who wished to speak.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the Special Workshop adjourned at 5:40 p.m.

Attest:

Approved:

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Superintendent

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Chair