

November 12, 2020  
6:00 p.m.

The Fannin County Board of Education met in regular session with the following members present: Terry Bramlett, Vice-Chair; Bobby Bearden; Mike Cole; and Lewis DeWeese. Chad Galloway, Chair was absent. A quorum was met. The meeting was held at the Fannin County High School (FCHS) Performing Arts Center (PAC) to allow for adequate social distancing due to concerns with COVID-19.

The meeting was called to order by Terry Bramlett, Vice-Chair.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the consent agenda. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Approve the agenda.

Approve the meeting minutes from October 8, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. and October 20, 2020 at 4:00 p.m.

Special recognitions were made for the following:

- Fannin County Middle School Assistant Principal Mark Young shared the product of an ETC Ignite Grant from 2018 – *Untold Stories*. He also recognized the students who worked on the project – Lucas Bain, Colin Bruce, Olivia McAllister, Emma Pittman, Zechariah Prater, Hayden Tucker, Haven Stiles, and McKain Watson. Board members received a copy of the book.
- Director of Applied & Integrated Instruction Lucas Roof shared that Fannin County High School's (FCHS) Boys Cross Country Team has placed 2<sup>nd</sup> in region 7AA. Ninth grader Zachariah Prater finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the Region. The team finished 14<sup>th</sup> in the state at the AA level. The FCHS Girls Cross Country team placed 1<sup>st</sup> in the Region. Ninth grader Carly Holloway finished 3<sup>rd</sup> in the region; the team finished 6<sup>th</sup> in the state at the AA level, and Carlee finished 13<sup>th</sup> in the state at the AA level. Mr. Roof commended Coach Michelle Davis and Coach Suzianne Pass for doing an incredible job working with this team.
- Director of Applied & Integrated Instruction Lucas Roof and West Fannin Elementary School (WFES) Principal Alison Danner shared information on a Georgia Department of Education STEM/STEAM student panel that included WFES student Brody Graham. Brody shared his experience with the Board. Mrs. Danner also recognized the efforts of WFES's STEM Lab Instructor Kim Patterson.

Assistant Superintendent Sarah Rigdon reviewed summaries of recent activities by Fannin County School System School Governance Teams (SGTs).

East Fannin Elementary School (EFES) Principal Matt Price presented school happenings.

Assistant Superintendent Sarah Rigdon presented a Central Office Update on the graduation rate, implementation of Curriculum Online Learning Days (COLD) during SY 2020-2021, assessment for SY 2020-2021, and Online Learning (OLL) for the second semester of SY 2020-2021.

Director of Applied & Integrated Instruction Lucas Roof provided COVID-19 information and an update on student immunization requirements.

Public Comment. There was no public comment.

Assistant Superintendent Darren Danner provided an update on facilities.

Assistant Superintendent Darren Danner provided an update on construction.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve demolition by McHan Grading, LLC for \$31,900.00 for the remaining Toccoa property structures. This will be paid for with SPLOST funds. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve the district's financial report for September 2020. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Director of Finance Susan Wynn stated the SPLOST check received for September 2020 was \$668,092.57.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve school quarterly financial reports. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the adoption of Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) Standard Number 84 – *clarification of the definition of custodial funds* – effective July 1, 2019. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve the purchase of 180 HP 11” G8 EE Chromebooks for Blue Ridge Elementary School (BRES) from Arey Jones for \$45,360.00 to be paid for with SPLOST funds. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve the purchase of 49 desktop computers to be purchased from Bytespeed for WFES for \$33,565.00 to be paid for with SPLOST funds. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Director of Instructional Technology Heather Finley gave a report on the sale of surplus computer equipment. A total of \$44,213.00 was received.

## **POLICY ACTIONS**

**(Vote #1):** Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve to adopt new Board Policy *BCBI: Public Participation in Board Meetings* that was tabled at the meeting on October 8, 2020. All members voted yes; motion carried.

**(Vote #2):** Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the revised policies *GAA: Equal Opportunity Employment; GAEB: Sexual Harassment of Employees; JAA: Equal Opportunity Education; and JCAC: Sexual Harassment of Students*. These policy revisions were all tabled at the meeting on October 8, 2020. All members voted yes; motion carried. **(See attached.)**

Assistant Superintendent Robert Ensley shared the local board training plan for SY 2020-2021.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to go into Executive Session to discuss or deliberate upon the appointment, employment, compensation, hiring, disciplinary action or dismissal, or periodic evaluation or rating of a public officer or employee or to interview applicants for the position of superintendent; (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(2)) **and** to discuss or vote to authorize negotiations to purchase, dispose of, or lease property; authorize ordering an appraisal related to the acquisition or disposal of real estate; enter into a contract to purchase, dispose of, or lease property subject to approval in a subsequent public vote; or enter into an option to purchase, dispose of or lease real estate subject to approval in a subsequent public vote; (O.C.G.A. § 50-14-3(b)(1)). All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Cole, to resume the regular meeting. All members voted yes; motion carried.

No action was taken during Executive Session.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve the minutes of the Executive Session on October 8, 2020. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the resignation of Kyra White effective October 23, 2020. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve the resignation of Carly M. Bernhardt effective November 6, 2020. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the resignation of Sandra Silva effective November 16, 2020. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve the resignation of Kimberly Huffman effective December 31, 2020, pending replacement of certified teacher. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve the resignation of Ernest Long effective January 1, 2021. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve Christina Rea-Gutierrez as a teacher, pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve Alicia Baugh, Brittany Young, and Tammy M. Statham as paraprofessionals, pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve Julie Johnson for the Transportation Department, pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Mike Cole, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve Claudia Bradford, Madeline Chandler, Murphy L. McConnell, Alyson Page, and Donna M. Rivera as substitute teachers, pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Mike Cole, to approve Amy O. Reynolds, Donna M. Rivera, and Debra A. Thomas as Nutrition Department substitutes, pending completion of paperwork and background check. All members voted yes; motion carried.

### **Superintendent's Comments:**

**Superintendent Gwatney** thanked principals and their schools for the work done to honor veterans. He thanked all veterans for their service and especially tonight's guests from the North Georgia Honor Guard, including Commander Bill Stodghill and Mr. Steve Strickland. He also recognized Bobby Bearden, Mike Cole, and Lewis DeWeese for their military service. He congratulated Mr. Bramlett, Mr. DeWeese, and Mr. Galloway for their re-elections and for their continued service to our community and to the school system.

Superintendent Gwatney expressed how proud he is of Kim Patterson and Brody Graham. He thanked the FCMS students who put together the book *Untold Stories* using funds from the ETC Ignite Grant. He thanked Matt Price, Sarah Rigdon, Lucas Roof and Darren Danner for their presentations. He expressed that he is proud of the graduation rate and gave a shout-out to all schools for the part they play in obtaining the graduation rate.

Superintendent Gwatney recalled that the REACH ceremony was held since the last Board meeting and that it was wonderful to see the students at the signing. He appreciated everyone's efforts in the REACH Program, especially Candice Sisson and Vanessa Weaver.

Superintendent Gwatney remarked that inclement weather has already begun with Hurricane Zeta. He thanked the maintenance and custodial personnel for their hard work to get us back online and into our buildings, taking care of the damages as previously described by Darren Danner. He thanked linemen and utility workers for the work they do to restore services. He thanked city and county workers in the road and street departments, Robert Graham of Fannin EMA, and deputies of the Sheriff's office. He commended the Transportation Department personnel for doing a great job keeping our students safe. He gave a shout-out and thanks to Darren Danner and Denver Foster for leading the way in getting us back into the buildings safely on the following Monday.

Superintendent Gwatney shared that it had been Thanksgiving Week in the schools and thanked the Nutrition Teams for their hard work to make this special meal for our students, faculty, and staff. He stated that he and his wife Manda Gwatney, Robert Ensley, and Darren Danner joined Candice Sisson at FCHS for a Thanksgiving lunch. He shared that it was a fantastic meal and commended the School Nutrition Teams for doing a great job. He shared that as Thanksgiving is now upon us, it is a time to reflect on what we are thankful for in life. Superintendent Gwatney expressed that he is thankful for how blessed we are in Fannin County with a wonderful caring community, excellent schools, and wonderful students and staff members. He stated that even in the middle of a pandemic, we continue to move forward; we are having school. We care about each other. We are a family, and he is thankful for that.

### **Board Members' Comments:**

**Mike Cole** stated that he is proud to be healthy and to be here. He is proud of what is going on with the school system and how well everyone is responding. He believes that the graduation percentage is pretty awesome. He is proud of Brody Graham. He is proud of all of the elementary schools and their principals for how they are using the STEM initiative and for the awesome job they do. He asked that we remember

Johnny and Brenda Scarce and pray for Johnny's recovery. He congratulated fellow Board members on their re-election victories and stated that it is an honor to serve with them.

**Bobby Bearden** thanked everyone for being at the meeting. He stated that he thinks Brody Graham will make a good teacher, board member, and/or superintendent one day. He expressed that it is incredible to look at students and realize how much talent and wisdom they have, and it excites him to know that we have children in our system who have this capability. He shared that he was honored to attend the softball banquet, and he is excited about the welding class. He believes there are good paying jobs available for welders. He thanked the students who came to the Board meeting and presented the book *Untold Stories*. He is thankful that the citizens of Fannin County restored our three Board members in the recent election. He believes that things will go very well for the next two years.

**Lewis DeWeese** began by saying he liked what Superintendent Gwatney said about Fannin County being a family. Mr. DeWeese believes that there is something special about this part of the country. Mr. DeWeese shared that he received two letters from students at FCMS complimenting and thanking him for his service in the armed services. Mr. DeWeese reflected on the meaning of the military service oath and bearing arms in protection of the country. He recalled the trip he made about 60 years ago when he joined the Army and began his service to the country. He stated that Fannin County citizens are quick to pledge their allegiance to the flag. Mr. DeWeese read the oath taken by individuals entering military service. Mr. DeWeese contends that when you pledge to the United States flag, you are making the same oath.

**Terry Bramlett** thanked all veterans for their service and for their willingness to put their lives on the line so that we can enjoy the freedoms that we enjoy today. He stated he concurs with previous comments from Board members. He thanked the North Georgia Honor Guard. He congratulated the Ignite Grant Board of Directors from FCMS for their success, and he looks forward to reading the book they produced – *Untold Stories*. He congratulated Kim Patterson and Brody Graham, and he thanked them for representing us so well on the Georgia Department of Education STEM/STEAM panel. He thanked Matt Price for a great job at EFES and for his Support Staff Appreciation Day. He thanked those who re-elected the members of the Board of Education; he stated that the vote of support is truly humbling, and that it is an honor to serve in this capacity and to be a part of this organization. He expressed appreciation for all of the staff – principals, administrators, teachers, everyone involved – for continuing to function in such a high level. With a 95.2% graduation rate, if we continue to improve at this rate, we may have to revisit our vision statement in about four years because we will be at 100%.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, a motion was made by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Mike Cole, to adjourn subject to being called into special session by the Chair when deemed necessary. All members voted yes; motion carried.

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Terry Bramlett, Vice-Chair

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Michael Gwatney, Superintendent