

October 11, 2012
6:00 p.m.

The Fannin County Board of Education met in regular session with the following members present: Sandra Mercier, Chair; Steve Stanley, Vice-Chair; Bobby Bearden; Terry Bramlett; and Lewis DeWeese. All members present.

By motion from Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Steve Stanley, to approve the following items on the consent agenda. Steve Stanley, Bobby Bearden, Terry Bramlett, and Lewis DeWeese voted yes. Sandra Mercier abstained; motion carried.

Approve the consent agenda.

Approve the meeting minutes from September 13 and October 9, 2012.

Annual School Council Reports were presented to the Board for review.

Approve the following facility use requests:

USA Wrestling – use of Fannin County High School old gymnasium on Mondays and Thursdays, November 6 to December 31, 2012, from 6:00 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.;

Fannin County High Soccer Program – use of Fannin County High School Commons Area on November 10 – 11, 2012, from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m.; and

Community Thanksgiving Open Table Good Samaritans of Fannin County – use of Fannin County High School cafeteria and kitchen on November 21 – 22, 2012.

Approve the following school field trip requests:

Blue Ridge Elementary School First Grade – Cagle’s Dairy in Canton, GA, on October 24, 2012;

Blue Ridge Elementary School Fifth Grade – Turner Field/Capitol/Zoo Atlanta/Cyclorama/WSB TV in Atlanta, GA, on May 8 – 9, 2012;

West Fannin Elementary School First Grade – Mayfield Dairy in Athens, TN, on October 26, 2012;

Fannin County High School Economics Class – Federal Reserve Bank in Atlanta, GA, on December 3, 2012;

Fannin County High School Tenth and Twelfth Grades – Young Harris College in Young Harris, GA, and North Georgia Technical College in

Blairsville, GA, on November 1, 2012;

Fannin County High School YAP students – Attend Future Educators Seminar at North Georgia College and State University in Dahlonega, GA, on September 7, 2012; and

Fannin County High School Tenth and Twelfth Grades – North Georgia College and State University in Dahlonega, GA, on April 10, 2013.

Approve the following fundraiser requests:

Blue Ridge Elementary School Kindergarten – Sale of Krispie Kreme doughnuts – November 1 – December 31, 2012;

East Fannin Elementary School Kindergarten – Sale of Celebrating Home scented candles – November 1 – 29, 2012;

Fannin County Middle School – Sale of Coca Cola soft drinks, Powerade, and Dasani water – October 19 – 26, 2012;

Fannin County Middle School FFA – Sale of beef sticks – October 12 – 31, 2012;

Fannin County Middle School Special Education CBI class – sale of cookies made by students – October 12, 2012 – May 21, 2013;

Fannin County Middle School Fellowship of Christian Athletes – sale of FCA t-shirts – October 22, 2012 – May 24, 2013;

Fannin County Middle School FFA – Students to work as “ghouls” in pumpkin patch at Mercier’s Orchards haunted hayride – October 26, 2012;

Fannin County High School FCCLA – Sale of RIPS 100% juice slush in individual servings – October 15, 2012 – May 20, 2013;

Fannin County High School Soccer – Sale of Christmas pictures – October 15 – December 15, 2012;

Fannin County High School Skills USA – Sale of various food and drink items at the Powder Puff football game – October 16, 2012;

Fannin County High School FFA – students working at Mercier’s spook festival – October 20, 2012; and

Fannin County High School Volleyball – Male volleyball tournament – October 30, 2012.

Public Comment:

Chris Coleman requested the Board consider allowing his son to attend Blue Ridge Elementary School. Mr. Coleman stated his family lived in Gilmer County; however, it was 14.6 miles to Ellijay Elementary School versus 2.9 miles to Blue Ridge Elementary School.

After public comment, motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve the financial report for the month ending August 31, 2012. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Mr. Henson stated the SPLOST check received in September for the month of July was \$342,907.87.

Dr. Michael Gwatney, Director of Technology and Media Services, provided the Board with an overview of what the FCSS Technology Department provides for the district – Technology services, school media programs, and student information system services. Dr. Gwatney commended his staff and also reviewed some of the accomplishments of the technology department along with the behind-the-scenes infrastructure. Mark Henson, Superintendent, stated the technology in Fannin County School System runs seamlessly thanks to the diligence of Dr. Gwatney and his staff.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Terry Bramlett, to purchase doors from Smith-Evans Supply Company for \$28,147 out of SPLOST funds to be installed at Blue Ridge Elementary School. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Karen Walton, Director of Curriculum and School Improvement, reviewed the district's existing vision, mission, and belief statements with the Board to determine whether they were interested in making any revisions. All members were in agreement to keep the current vision, mission, and belief statements the same.

Sandra Mercier, Board Chair, read a lengthy resolution in support of Quality Public Education. Mrs. Mercier stated that by passing the resolution, the Fannin County Board of Education would go on record as opposing the November 6 ballot question – “Shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended to allow state or local approval of public charter schools upon the request of local communities.” A motion was made by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Bobby Bearden, to approve the Resolution in Support of Quality Public Education (see attached). Sandra Mercier, Board Chair, stated the amendment was crafted in a way that is against public education. Bobby Bearden, Board member, stated he appreciated Mrs. Mercier reading the entire resolution for public record. Terry Bramlett, Board member, stated he viewed his position on the Board as an advocate for children. Mr. Bramlett stated the Board strived to be as efficient as possible with a shrinking pool of money sent to the district from the State of Georgia. Mr. Bramlett stated the Board maintained the millage at a steady rate for five years, and keeping students in the classroom for 180 days was a testament to this. Lewis DeWeese, Board member, stated he strongly supported the resolution, and that he was in favor of keeping tax dollars in our local community for the children of Fannin County. Mr. DeWeese added this ballot question

was similar to the Boston Tea Party with money being sent to England. He said if the amendment did not pass, Fannin's tax money could continue to be distributed per the discretion of local taxpayers. Steve Stanley, Board Vice-Chair, stated he was against trickle down government to the local level, which is what he felt this amendment would do if it passes. Sandra Mercier, Board Chair, stated it is each member's First Amendment Right to take a stance on this issue, and as an elected Board member, it is her obligation. Mrs. Mercier added that she is simply exercising her First Amendment Right. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Mark Henson, Superintendent, stated he is very concerned about public education. Mr. Henson stated Georgia public schools are not fully funded per the State of Georgia's funding formula, and to compound this issue school systems are dealing with rising costs with health insurance. Mr. Henson stated if the charter amendment was passed it would create a commission that would bypass local control. Mr. Henson stated he was an advocate of charter schools, and he reminded everyone that he serves on the Board of the Mountain Education Charter High School. Mr. Henson stated there was already a system in place to approve charter schools, and he was against approving a commission that was outside the current process. Mr. Henson stated he fully supports the resolution and the Board for approving it.

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Steve Stanley, to accept the resignation of Beulah I. Williams effective November 30, 2012. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Steve Stanley, to accept the resignation of Sharon Griffith effective December 1, 2012. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Lewis DeWeese, seconded by Terry Bramlett, to terminate Ronnie Rogers. All members voted yes; motion carried. Mr. Henson stated Mr. Rogers was a very commendable employee and was carried on the books for a long time.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Steve Stanley, to approve Mary Poindexter as an interpreter. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Terry Bramlett, seconded by Lewis DeWeese, to approve Rebecca Lee as a substitute interpreter. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Motion by Bobby Bearden, seconded by Steve Stanley, to approve Raymond Doster as a substitute custodian. All members voted yes; motion carried.

Superintendent's Comments:

Mr. Henson stated he wanted to go on record recognizing the tremendous job done by the Fannin County School System Technology Department. Mr. Henson stated it is easy to forget how large the job is, because they make it seem seamless. Mr. Henson stated Fannin County School System had one of the prominent technology departments in North Georgia, with a forward-thinking director and dedicated staff. Mr. Henson stated it was hard to imagine this department once worked out of a surplus bus in the parking lot, then a closet in central office.

Mr. Henson stated he was very proud of the Board's decision to pass a resolution opposing the charter school amendment. Mr. Henson stated it took fortitude for the Board to do this, and it was an honor to serve a Board that was willing to take a stand.

Board Members' Comments:

Bobby Bearden thanked Mark Henson for his positive comments of the Board. Mr. Bearden stated Mr. Henson was an excellent superintendent who was willing to stand up for children. Mr. Bearden thanked the technology department for their hard work. Mr. Bearden also commended the Fannin County High School softball team for winning their first two games of the play offs the previous day and wished them luck in the next round of playoffs.

Terry Bramlett stated it is an honor to be a part of this education system. Mr. Bramlett commended Mr. Henson for his passion for education. Mr. Bramlett expressed his appreciation for the job Dr. Gwatney did as Director of Technology and Media Services. Mr. Bramlett stated Dr. Gwatney was always ahead of the curve in technology.

Lewis DeWeese stated he could not add a thing; however, he wanted to welcome guests.

Steve Stanley stated he was proud of Fannin County Board of Education teachers.

Sandra Mercier stated she appreciated the job the technology department did for Fannin County schools. Mrs. Mercier stated she wished there was a picture of the technology department working out of a surplus bus, then a closet, and now to have the facility they have. Mrs. Mercier stated she was saddened to hear of the death of Joann Davis, a former cosmetology teacher at Fannin County High School. Mrs. Mercier stated she knew Ms. Davis touched the lives of many cosmetologists in our area.

Mrs. Mercier congratulated the 2014 Fannin County Teacher of the Year (TOTY) nominees. Jill Kendall, Blue Ridge Elementary; Lora Robinson, East Fannin Elementary; Angela Parris, West Fannin Elementary; Susie Taylor, Fannin County Middle School; and Donna Ladd, Fannin County High School.

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

Sandra Mercier, Chairperson

Mark Henson, Superintendent