

## MINUTES

### MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL CALLED MEETING

August 3, 2009

6:00 p.m.—Central Administration Building

#### ATTENDANCE

Board: Chair Mary Wade, Susan Andrews, Ray Butrum, Butch Campbell, Nancy Duggin, David Hopper, Nancy Phillips, and Council Liaison Ron Washington.

Staff: Gary Anderson, Danielle Kaminsky, Cheryl Harris, Michelle Hummel, and Jo Lasater (for Lee Wilkerson).

Others: City Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, *Daily News Journal* reporter Chasity Gunn, a principal, and others.

#### ORDER OF BUSINESS

##### I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Mary Wade called the meeting to order at approximately 6:00 p.m.

##### II. APPROVAL OF AGENDA

On motion by Nancy Phillips and second by Mrs. Duggin, the agenda was approved as presented.

##### III. APPROVAL OF MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETINGS OF JUNE 19, 2009 AND JULY 15, 2009

On motion by Dr. Andrews and second by Mr. Hopper, the minutes of June 19, 2009 and July 15, 2009 were approved as presented.

##### IV. REVIEW OF POSSIBLE SEARCH FIRMS—Information Provided by Kelley Baker

Mrs. Baker pointed out that a table providing a quick summary of the information contained in the notebook has been placed on the Board's desk. She reviewed that an email was sent to sixteen firms, and she received responses from eight firms. Two other firms responded that they could not respond at this time. TSBA had previously provided the Board a standard packet of information. The firms she contacted were extended that same opportunity. McPherson & Jacobsen sent a packet of information that has also been placed on the Board's desk.

Dr. Andrews stated that it previously had been suggested by a board member that the search firm have a full-time staff with a track record that can be used as a criteria to

eliminate some of the firms. One company has not conducted a school superintendent search.

Dr. Butrum commented on the range of expenses spanning from \$5,000 to \$20,000+ (\$28,000) and that he did not understand the diversity in costs, so price should be considered. TSBA appears to be the cheapest. As members of TSBA, he would hope that the Board would use the state association that appears to have experience and that Plan I looks very reasonable. Mr. Campbell stated that all offer basically the same thing, but TSBA's Plan II includes the communication and involvement of the Board and the people in the community. Plan II at a cost of \$8,500 gives the Board everything other companies have offered at a higher cost. Mrs. Duggin stated that she has narrowed her study to two companies, one being TSBA, but that her question to TSBA would be could they speed up the timeline to less than six months. Mrs. Wade noted that Dr. White of TSBA had previously stated that it would be up to the Board to set the timeline. Dr. Andrews stated that her concern with using TSBA is that she wants the Board to find a firm that will be aggressive about looking for a good director, possibly one currently employed in another school system and perhaps not even looking for a new position. She was concerned that a conflict might exist in recruiting within the state as other school systems in the state are also members of TSBA. She would also want the firm to recruit candidates outside of Tennessee. As the most important job of the Board, to hire the director of schools, she stated that choosing a firm based on saving money might not be the best idea. In response to Mrs. Wade, Mrs. Baker stated that she did indicate to the firms that the Board was interested in a regional search and did ask if they had done national searches and searches in Tennessee and to specifically indicate the parameters of the searches they have experience in. Some companies did not clearly state they have not done searches in Tennessee and some do not include references from Tennessee. They all did indicate they would tailor the search to however the Board wished as far as state, regional, national, etc. This was indicated in their references to advertising, publications, etc. Mrs. Duggin stated that TSBA does do searches in the southern regional states, and their search does go on their web site. She agreed that they do not necessarily wish to go with the least expensive but should tap into every resource possible. She spoke with Metro board members and they were extremely pleased with Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates and are satisfied with the director they chose.

Mr. Hopper stated that in response to the request made by the Board at the last meeting, he contacted an HR specialist employed by one of the major manufacturing companies in our area that frequently use search firms to locate executive position candidates, and he summarized that information and has provided it to the Board. One of the key things he got is that all firms are not created equal, and you will get what you pay for. He, too, had a concern regarding how Tennessee systems that are also members of TSBA would affect TSBA's recruiting strategy. In response to his

question, Mrs. Baker stated that TSBA indicated there would be a search committee but did not identify who would be on the committee. He noted that he did not get the impression they would do more than just advertise the position. Dr. Andrews pointed out that if TSBA recruits outside of Tennessee, Plan III, the cost is \$20,000. Mrs. Phillips noted that experience is significant, and she is interested in McPherson & Jacobson. The firm's charges are mid-range, \$11,500, and they have a short timeframe of a minimum of two to three months. She, too, voiced a concern with the vested interests TSBA has with Tennessee school systems.

Dr. Butrum stated that he did not think TSBA would try to go in and recruit someone in a position from a school system but would advertise so interested persons could apply. Dr. Andrews clarified that this is a negative to her in that they would not actively recruit applicants already employed in Tennessee school systems. Dr. Butrum replied that this may not be what the Board wants the firm to do but to have the candidates look at the qualifications and the candidates make the decision. Mrs. Phillips stated that finding the best candidates is the objective. Dr. Andrews stated that some candidates might not actually have been in the job market but would realize the opportunity. Mr. Campbell pointed out that TSBA states that they will go out of the state to recruit at least in the southern region. He asked Mrs. Baker if in addition to advertising the position, does the firm actually go out to other places and pull an individual to recruit them? Mrs. Baker replied yes, as indicated in some of the proposals, they clearly stated that they will actively go out and recruit individuals that already have positions such as Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates, Ray & Associates, and McPherson & Jacobson. This question was posed to the firms in question number twelve and by looking at their responses to that question, you can tell how vigorous they are in recruiting and whether they have associates across the nation, etc., so they know who the up-and-coming leaders are in education and can recruit them for their clients. Some companies indicate they work for the school board and are not headhunters where they receive payment from candidates to find them employment. Mrs. Phillips asked for clarification of TSBA's plan II and III; Mrs. Baker referred to page 6 of their proposal indicating that they will involve the National School Board Association but TSBA could be asked to clarify the depth of that involvement, they will distribute brochures to all school board associations (across the nation), and advertise in national publications and with national organizations. As this is what expands it as a national search, the Board may wish to ask them to explain this. Mr. Hopper said Dr. White did not answer this question at the last meeting, but it appears they would advertise but not actively recruit across the nation. Mr. Washington stated that on page 6 of TSBA's booklet, they offer a guarantee; did other firms also offer a guarantee? Mrs. Baker responded that TSBA offered a two-year guarantee, and guarantees offered by other firms ranged from six months to two years. The Board may want to focus on that. One firm specifically said they would not recruit your director (for another position) for five years. That could be negotiated in a contract when you hire a firm. Mrs. Phillips liked that Jacobson & McPherson listed contacts, but Mr. Campbell stated that they do not list

contacts in Tennessee. Mrs. Wade stated that she was concerned at the expense involved in the search and the travel expenses for consultants. Inexpensive is not always bad if you can determine how the association has worked with us in the past. TSBA's proposal narrowed the services down with the expenses involved.

Mr. Campbell moved that the Board employ TSBA to do the search under Plan II. Dr. Butrum seconded the motion. Mrs. Duggin asked if the Board wanted to box themselves in to a Plan II if they need to do the other and had anyone spoken to the other districts where TSBA has been used. Mr. Campbell said he had spoken to Rutherford County, Mrs. Phillips had heard mixed reviews, and Dr. Butrum said he had spoken to Cannon County school board members and they seemed to have been happy. Mr. Campbell amended his motion that they begin with Plan II but add something if the Board desires. Mrs. Duggin stated that there is disagreement about what the Board wants the firm to do, actively recruit or information to be simply put out there. Should that be discussed before a vote is taken? Mrs. Baker clarified that the criteria used was that the Board wanted a firm that could do at least a southeastern regional search, potentially a national search, a firm that could go out and recruit people who already had a job, not someone who needed a job, consider the price, and preferred someone closer to Tennessee considering the travel expenses.

Mr. Campbell pointed out that TSBA's Plan I indicates they will recruit candidates that meet the Board's criteria. Plan II says provide all services indicated in Plan I, so they will meet the criteria set forth by the Board. Dr. Andrews said she interpreted this to mean they will advertise, not necessarily recruit. Dr. Butrum stated that it appears they will recruit for the Board if it is written as criteria. Dr. Andrews stated that different board members have a different idea of what recruiting means in terms of recruiting, actively recruiting or aggressively recruiting. She likes Attea & Associates who she has heard is a strong firm and would lean toward the larger firms who are set up to do this; they wouldn't have to have conducted searches in Tennessee.

Mrs. Wade asked if the Board knows what they want and are they ready to take a vote on this tonight. Dr. Andrews stated that a decision does need to be made so they can move forward. They have good information. Mrs. Baker stated that in addition to the information provided, the firms' web sites have been noted so that board members could go to their sites to research the firms. She shared that other systems that have conducted searches stressed that to set the director up for success, you should really invest in the community meetings to bring in information from different stakeholders so they feel they have a role in the selection. On the downside, expenses, in addition to the firm's fee, are the Board's responsibility as are some of the advertising costs so expenses can far exceed the fee charged by the firm. One way to cut expenses is to use technology, such as webcasts/satellite. Mr. Campbell said the next meeting (August 11) is to meet with the chosen firm, and if at that meeting they did not feel the firm met the criteria, they are not obligated. Mrs. Baker stated that unless the

Board takes a vote to authorize her to enter them into a contract with the firm, they are not obligated to that firm until they actually enter into a contract with them. Mr. Campbell clarified that his motion is not to enter into a contract with them; his motion is to recommend TSBA and start with their Plan II and if they decide they don't want TSBA, they can go someplace else. Mrs. Duggin stated that the other firms did not give the Board a clear answer as to what the other expenses might be. Mrs. Baker stated that actually one firm gave detailed expenses. Three firms gave more information: Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates; Ray & Associates; and, McPherson & Jacobson. Mrs. Duggin asked if one of these other firms were asked to come in to give the Board more information, is there a fee for this. Mrs. Baker stated that one of these three had indicated they would come without a fee. Mrs. Ridley asked Mr. Campbell for clarification, in that you start with TSBA, to bring a representative in, look at what they offer, starting with Plan II, and see if they are the company you wish to hire. Mr. Campbell responded that this is not to hire them but is to meet and consult with them. Dr. Butrum seconded the motion.

On roll call: Duggin—yes; Hopper—no; Phillips—no; Andrews—no; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

Mrs. Phillips asked if she could move to have another firm come in the same night for comparison. Dr. Butrum stressed that to move forward the Board should bring TSBA in and move forward and this does not mean they have made a decision to contract with them. Mrs. Phillips stated that it does sound like they have made a decision so preferred to bring someone else in at the same time. Mrs. Wade stated that it would be difficult to meet with another company that same night; the Board could decide who their second choice would be if TSBA did not work out. Dr. Butrum asked if they could wait to involve other firms until they know if TSBA is their choice. Mrs. Baker pointed out that in the information provided to the firms, she did indicate that the Board might possibly choose to do formal interviews of their final selected firms. It would not be unusual for you to call in more than one firm. Mr. Campbell stated that he did not disagree with Mrs. Phillips to look at more firms by scheduling one after the other.

Dr. Andrews moved that the Board invite two firms in addition to TSBA to interview. Mrs. Phillips seconded the motion. On roll call: Hopper—yes; Phillips—yes; Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

Dr. Butrum asked if the Board would have to pay the expenses for the firms to come in for the interview. Mrs. Baker replied they would not, and she will confirm that with the firms and will email the Board if any firm states they will not come without charging a fee.

Mrs. Duggin moved that the Board invite the following two firms to come in for an interview if they do not charge a fee: Hazard, Young, Attea & Associates and McPherson & Jacobson. Dr. Butrum seconded the motion.

On roll call: Phillips—yes; Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Duggin—yes; Hopper—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

Mr. Anderson explained that Williamson County had narrowed it down to three firms, determined the questions to ask so that every firm responded to the same questions, and in the time remaining were allowed to ask follow-up questions. Dr. Butrum suggested that by looking at each firm's web site for information, an hour should be sufficient. Mrs. Wade suggested ninety minutes. Mr. Campbell moved that each firm be allotted ninety minutes, and that the Chair be the only one to ask questions that the Board has submitted in advance. Dr. Andrews stated that after reviewing the answers to these questions by the firm, she might have a question she did not foresee prior to the interview. Mr. Campbell amended his motion to include that in the time left over individual board members could ask for clarification of any of the questions. Mr. Anderson added that the firms generally wish to make a presentation to the Board before the question and answer session. Dr. Butrum asked if they could request they not make a presentation. Mrs. Baker stated that if you do want a presentation, you could set the cap on how much of the ninety minutes they can use for the presentation. Mr. Hopper stated that he would like a thorough presentation as he would judge the firm at least partially by that presentation. After further discussion, Mr. Campbell clarified his motion to be that each firm be allotted ninety minutes, allowing thirty minutes for the firm to make a presentation, after which the Board Chair would ask questions from a list comprised of questions submitted prior to the interviews by individual board members, and that during the time left, board members can ask questions for clarification. Mrs. Duggin seconded the motion. Mr. Campbell also clarified that questions shared by Mr. Anderson would be a "guide" to go by, and Board members could submit at least two questions so that Mrs. Wade could use all information to develop a list. Board members should also submit the questions to Mrs. Baker so that a final list can be developed with any duplications being removed. The firms will not receive the questions prior to the interview.

On roll call: Duggin—yes; Hopper—yes; Phillips—yes; Andrews—yes; Butrum—yes; Campbell—yes; Wade—yes. The motion carried.

Mrs. Duggin asked that Mrs. Baker request that the representative the firm sends be the main contact or consultant for the search. Mrs. Baker stated that she needs the Board members to submit their questions to her by Friday.

V. DISCUSSION OF DIRECTOR OF SCHOOL SEARCH TIME LINE

Dr. Butrum asked that this item be tabled until after a firm is chosen. Mrs. Wade stated that she perceived that this is a consensus of the Board so tabled the item until a later meeting.

VI. DISCUSSION OF CRITERIA TO BE USED IN SELECTION OF NEW DIRECTOR OF SCHOOLS

Dr. Andrews stated that the firm that is chosen will be involved in developing the criteria so this could be delayed. Mrs. Wade stated that the Board had indicated they wanted to suggest criteria that can also be shared with the firm. Mr. Anderson noted that it is one of the roles of the consultant to help the Board decide what the criteria are, and if they are to go out to the community, the consultant will also bring back this input. You can do it now or wait for the consultant. Mr. Hopper moved that the Board defer until a consultant is involved; Dr. Andrews seconded the motion.

Mr. Campbell asked that a few suggestions be made at this meeting so they can get an idea of what they are looking for. He suggested the Director should have a minimum of five years teaching in a K-5 curriculum classroom, some experience in administration in a K-6 school system, and should move/be a resident of Rutherford County. Mrs. Wade noted that these items are only suggestions at this point and that a concrete list would be developed with the help of the consultant. Dr. Andrews pointed out that the new director could live in an area such as Milton and still be close. Dr. Butrum suggested an advanced degree in supervision and administration, a preferred but not required doctorate in education, and someone who has experience with children in an elementary school whether it is as a supervisor, teacher, or administrator. Mr. Campbell suggested a background in preschool. Dr. Andrews noted that these should be things they would like for a candidate to have but not to limit it so that a great candidate who might not meet one criterion would therefore not be considered. Preschool experience would limit the pool of candidates so she would prefer not to box themselves in. Mrs. Wade stated that this is a wish list.

Dr. Butrum stated that he has heard from lots of people in the community including teachers and as elected officials by those people should be cognizant of what they want. One thing they want is someone who is a good communicator and can pull the community back together in the school system. That means we would have to look at someone who knows the school system and Tennessee and pick up some of the good things in the system and move forward in maintaining them as a special school district. Dr. Andrews stated that she did like that one of the firms stated they would ask the Board what groups they would want the consultant to meet with, such as central office administrators, building administrators, teachers, classified staff, students, community and business leaders. Mrs. Phillips agreed with many of the

suggestions but also agreed that they should not box themselves in if a candidate lacks one criterion. She emphasized that she wants someone with the heart of an educator who is completely dedicated to children and to the system, has a strong financial background, and someone who can be a strong leader in the community. The Board needs to be cautious and deliberate in their choice.

Mr. Hopper as first and Dr. Andrews as second withdrew their motion from the floor.

Dr. Andrews asked that Mrs. Baker request the firms to provide a ballpark figure of what they anticipate the expenses would be. Mr. Hopper reminded everyone that with the state of the economy, these fees would be negotiable.

#### VII. ADJOURNMENT

Mrs. Wade adjourned the special called board meeting at approximately 7: 30 p.m.

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Marilyn Mathis, Director of Schools

#### *MISSION STATEMENT*

*To assure academic and personal success  
for each child.*