

MINUTES

MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING--
POLICY WORK SESSION
Tuesday, February 8, 2011
6:30 p.m.—Central Administration Building

ATTENDANCE

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

Staff: Director Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Cheryl Harris, Priscilla Van Tries, and Ralph Ringstaff.

Others: City Staff Attorney Kelley Baker, MEA President Natalie Hopkins, and Principal Kim Fowler.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

I. CALL TO ORDER BY BOARD CHAIR

Chair Mary Wade called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 p.m. followed by the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence.

II. DISCUSSION OF HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr. Ringstaff referred to documents provided the Board regarding the changes to insurance coverage for MCS employees that became effective January 1, 2011. He noted that the system moved from a two tier plan (family or individual) to a four-tier plan: Employee Only (531 participants), Employee + Children (44 participants), Employee + Spouse (44 participants), Employee + Spouse + Children 91 participants; and, 139 employees declined coverage.

The Board pays 100% of the “employee only” coverage and pays \$478 towards all other employee’s coverage. Employees are offered \$1,500 a year not to participate in the insurance plan. The hardest hit were those in the category of Employee + Spouse + Children with a range of \$666 to \$700 per month. The City pays 80% of whatever their employee’s premium is, but all employees pay for their coverage. The Rutherford County School System pays 77% of their employee’s coverage and all employees pay for their coverage. The premiums are negotiable with MEA, but the plan is not. Mr. Anderson stated that if individual coverage participants were required to pay \$100 per month, the savings would help to offset some of the costs for the provision of insurance

to MCS employees; however, this would affect a large number of employees. Dr. Gilbert explained that the City has acquired the services of a company in Kentucky to help in their search for an insurance plan that best meets the needs of their employees at an affordable rate. She may also be in touch with that company for assistance. Board members asked that the administration review different plans/options in an effort to assure the most cost effective quality plan. Mr. Rainier complimented the administration and MEA on how well they have worked together.

III. BOARD POLICY REVIEW

Revised Index by Descriptor Number--Information

Passed on First Reading

1. BO 43—Travel Expense Policy—No revisions
2. BO 44—Reimburse of Expenses Policy for MCS Board—No revisions

For Discussion

3. BO 1—Board Member Authority—No revisions
4. BO 2—Rules of Order—No revisions
5. BO 3—Board Organization—No revisions
6. BO 4—Board/Director Relationship—No revisions
7. BO 5—School Board Meetings—No revisions. Mrs. Baker explained that regular meetings are only those specified by statute, ordinance or resolution. If the “special policy work sessions” were to be referred to as a regular meeting, she would be required to go before City Council to request a change in the city’s code by ordinance. This was not requested by the Board.
8. BO 6—Notification of Board Meetings—Revised/Bring to Board for Approval. Mrs. Baker explained that advertising in the *POST* meets the Board’s legal obligations. Board meetings are also advertised on the system’s website.
9. BO 7—Agenda Preparation and Dissemination—Revised/Bring to Board for Approval. Mrs. Baker clarified that the Director develops the agenda with the input and approval of the Board Chair.
10. BO 8—Public Participation in Board Meetings—No revisions
11. BO 9—Minutes—Revised/Bring to Board for Approval
12. BO 10—Board Policy Development—No revisions
13. BO 11—Policy Accessibility—Revised/Bring to Board for Approval. Mrs. Duggin asked that an email “blast” be sent to all employees when a policy is revised with the revised policy attached.

14. BO 12—New Board Member Orientation—No revisions
15. BO 13—Board/Staff Communications—Bring to March Policy Session/Mrs. Phillips asked for clarity for lines 6 and 7.
16. BO 14—Negotiations—No revisions
17. BO 15—Responsibility, Authority, and Rights of Negotiating Team—Revised/Bring to Board for Approval (changes due to change in T.C.A. Section 8-44-201(b): *The Negotiating Team may conduct planning strategy sessions with the Board which are not open to the public.*)
18. BO 16—Reimbursement of Expenses for Board Members (will become obsolete with adoption of BO 44 if passed on second reading)
19. BO 17—Director—No revisions
20. BO 18—Director’s Compensation and Benefits—No revisions. Revisions would be considered during budget meetings.
21. BO 19—Director’s Development Opportunities—No revisions
22. BO 20—Director’s Evaluation—No revisions
23. BO 21—Director’s Administrative Staff—No revisions
24. BO 22—Development of Administrative Rules—Revised/Bring to Board for Approval
25. BO 23—Administration in Absence of Policy—No revisions
26. BO 24—Emergency Preparedness Plan—No revisions, but may be reviewed and be brought back to the Board in the future.

Mr. Campbell emphasized that the policy review sessions have been profitable, and he thanked Mrs. Baker for her work with the Board.

IV. REVIEW OF DRAFT FEBRUARY 22, 2011 BOARD MEETING AGENDA

Mrs. Phillips asked that at the next board meeting, Mr. Anderson report to the public that the system received a clean audit.

Dr. Gilbert stated that she might bring the current calendar to the Board to ask their approval to move parent/teacher conferences to a later date.

Retirement Incentive Plan

Mr. Anderson explained that this item has been placed on the February 22 board agenda to determine if the Board would wish to offer a retirement incentive to eligible employees. Approximately 85 employees have 25 years of service, at least 5 years with MCS, and would be eligible to participate in the plan; however, Mr. Anderson suggested that a cap of 25 be allowed to participate. He noted that this is recommended so that the

Board's cash flow would not be negatively impacted if a large number chose to accept the incentive. Mr. Rainier and Mr. Campbell did not agree with putting a cap on it, and Mrs. Duggin was concerned with how those 25 could be fairly selected.

Mr. Anderson stated that he had looked at the difference in average pay for a veteran teacher to one hired with the maximum ten years' experience to determine what the cost to the system would be and the length of time for the payback. Each ten people would cost approximately \$180,000 so for 25 the cost would be \$450,000. He would divide this into two payments that would help with the system's cash flow and, in terms of taxes, be beneficial to the employee, too. The cost would come from the system's fund balance. The issue would be that if all 85 employees participated, the cost would be \$1.5 million. Dr. Butrum suggested using JOBS funds for the retirement incentive plan that would eliminate using the fund balance. Personnel could be reassigned in available positions. Dr. Gilbert stated that she prefers to use the fund balance to provide tutoring and other instructional services. Mrs. Phillips emphasized that she is concerned about losing experienced, veteran teachers who are good mentors and replacing them with employees who have not had experience. Mr. Campbell stated that new teachers do bring an element of enthusiasm and energy to the positions and can actually bring new ideas to share with veteran teachers. He suggested that those teachers who are eligible be surveyed to determine how many are interested before the Board approves the plan. Mr. Rainier asked that the survey be done prior to the Board's budget sessions. Mr. Anderson stated that the turnover for the system this year was 20 teachers, but on the average can be about 40 teachers. Dr. Butrum stated that the savings could be approximately \$10,000 per person.

Mr. Campbell and Mr. Rainier asked that the administration look into the possibility of offering an incentive to classified employees. Mr. Anderson pointed out that he would, but it would be a wash with no financial benefit to the system. Mr. Rainier also asked that the Board be provided the costs for potential raises, 1% to 5%.

Purchase of Buses

Mr. Anderson explained that the current procedure to purchase buses means that we receive a new bus six months after the request is made so the bus not available to serve students until February of the fiscal year. He asked that the Board allow buses to be purchased from the fund balance so buses can be ordered now and will be ready to serve students at the beginning of the school year. The current vendor would allow purchases to piggyback off of the current bid price of \$97,978. Mr. Anderson noted that purchasing two buses would be sufficient but three would put the system ahead of the game. As it is, for the duration of this school year, the system will lease buses at \$1,000 a month to replace the ones that we must retire.

Mrs. Phillips and Mr. Rainier were in agreement. Dr. Butrum and Mr. Campbell asked about the possibility of purchasing two 90+ passenger buses and a smaller bus. Mr. Anderson stated that the difference in cost for the larger versus the smaller buses is nominal, and a driver has to be hired regardless. The only difference would be in gas expenses which again is nominal. He will look into this. In response to Mr. Rainier's questions, Mr. Anderson stated that the system purchases gas from the City, and we are okay this year. However, predictions are that gas prices will increase to \$3.00 to \$4.00 a gallon next year.

V. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mrs. Wade adjourned the board meeting at approximately 8:10 p.m.

Director of Schools

MISSION STATEMENT

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