

## MINUTES

MURFREESBORO CITY BOARD OF EDUCATION  
SPECIAL CALLED BOARD MEETING--  
INFORMATION SESSION  
Tuesday, October 15, 2013  
4:00 p.m.—City Hall, Room 218

### ATTENDANCE

Board: Chair Mary Wade, Jared Barrett, Andy Brown, Butch Campbell, Nancy Phillips, Nancy Rainier, and Collier Smith, and Council Liaison Ron Washington.

Staff: Director Linda Gilbert, Gary Anderson, Joe Marlin, Ralph Ringstaff, and Lisa Trail.

Others: Staff Attorney Kelley Baker and *Daily News Journal* reporter Amanda Haggard.

### ORDER OF BUSINESS

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

Chair Wade called the meeting to order at approximately 4:05 p.m.

#### II. DISCUSSION OF ZONING

Mr. Anderson provided the Board with documents titled “2014-2015 Rezoning Process and Implementation Plan,” “Rezoning Calendar,” and “Community Input Comment Sheet.” He explained that with the opening of the new Overall Creek Elementary School, the schools on the west side of the school district would receive some relief from their overcrowding. However, schools on the east side of the district have reached capacity, such as John Pittard Elementary, and Hobgood is full even with the addition of the six new classrooms. Therefore, the rezoning plan was designed to provide relief to school capacities, remove pocket zones, and make school zones contiguous, using main arteries as boundaries. After the Board’s initial review of the plan, meetings would be held to gather community input, which would be compiled and provided to the Board. The meetings would be held on October 24 at Scales, October 28 at John Pittard Elementary, and on November 11 at Bradley Academy, with all meetings held from 5:30-6:30 p.m. Input could be gathered by participants filling out the community input comment sheet, by emailing board members, or by using the “Ask MCS” link on the district’s website. The goal would be to bring the plan back to the Board for final approval on November 19, 2013. Principals will receive maps of the proposed zone changes to be posted at their schools.

Once the Board finalizes the new rezoning plan and any other zone considerations such as grandfathering and sibling clauses, a copy of the approved plan would be distributed to each school for display. The new zones would be posted on the district's website and each individual school's website. Maps will also be distributed to the media for their use. A new street index would be developed, and the Transportation Department would begin to develop bus routes to serve the new school zones for distribution to the community. The plan would supersede all previous zoning plans, including the past consideration of a parent saying "I bought this house with the intention of my child attending the school zone at the time of purchase." Mr. Anderson explained the following information:

#### PRIMARY GOALS

- Establish new school zone for Overall Creek.
- Reduce the number students zoned to John Pittard to allow for future growth.
- Make school zones as community based as possible in a contiguous pattern utilizing major roads as dividing lines whenever possible.
- Try to establish a 4-5 year zoning plan.
- This plan will supersede all previous zoning plans and special considerations.

#### METHODOLOGY UTILIZED TO ACCOMPLISH THE PRIMARY GOALS

- Reestablish Reeves-Rogers as a traditional K-6 campus to help the John Pittard capacity issue.
- Move Pre-K classrooms from Bellwood to the K-6 school campuses for ease on transition into the students' zoned K-6 schools.
- Reestablish Bellwood as a K-6 campus by moving Discovery School back to the Bellwood campus where it originated.
- Add an additional Special Education - CDC school location to make four K-6 CDC classroom schools so more children can attend a school closer to their home.
- Move Pre-K Special Education classrooms to schools with existing CDC classrooms.
- Move MNP's 2<sup>nd</sup> grade over to MNE to better align the PTR ratios with the State requirements and give MNP more room for its programs.

#### RECOMMENDED GRANDFATHERING AND SIBLING ATTENDANCE PLAN

- If rezoned to a new school location, allow rising 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade students to remain in their current school. No transportation service would be available for this option but students can complete their elementary schooling at the school if they can provide their own transportation.
- Younger siblings who have a brother or sister taking advantage of the rising 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> grade grandfathering option can attend the school along with the sibling as long as both were in the school when this zoning plan is implemented. No transportation service will be available for this option.

Mrs. Phillips expressed concern that a promise had been made to not move fragile students after the last rezoning. Mr. Anderson explained that by adding an additional CDC class, four schools would house the CDC classes allowing the students to be closer to their zoned school and allow for easier transition from pre-k to sixth grade. The zoning plan was not based on demographics, but on communities and transportation zones. The zones were last tweaked in 2009. If a child started in kindergarten at that time, they would be the rising 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders so would not have to move, providing continuity. Mr. Anderson provided a spreadsheet indicating enrollment estimates for each school, as well as the number of pre-k classrooms that would be placed at schools.

Mr. Marlin, the district's Supervisor of Special Education, explained that the state in the next few years will require school districts to integrate students with disabilities in with typically developing peers. Peer models help those children learn. The ratio would be approximately one to one. Moving preschool students into schools would provide those students an opportunity to become familiar with the school they would continue to attend, and staff would also get to know those students. The non-disabled students would receive the necessary instruction, as the classroom would contain approximately 10 students, with a teacher and two educational assistants to work with the students. Dr. Brown stated that this is the same as the Project Help model, and there is usually a waiting list of non-disabled students who wish to participate. In response to Mrs. Smith's question, Dr. Gilbert stated that at-risk students, either economically or learning disabled, are considered for acceptance into the preschool classes. Mr. Anderson added that the district must accept special needs students at their third birthday. The district would have seven preschool classes with two at Northfield, two at Scales, two at Erma Siegel, and one at Reeves-Rogers. The number 90 is based on the peer model. It is difficult to predict exact numbers for the classes as there is no way to tell how many students with disabilities will be enrolled upon turning three years old. Mr. Campbell shared that his experience with the Peer Model for preschoolers was successful. He suggested that after a week or so, parents could be told that their preschool child would be brought out to them. This whole process will require everyone to have patience.

In response to Mrs. Smith's questions, Dr. Gilbert stated that she has not decided about preschool leadership, but the district will likely still have the Head Start program's partnership. Dr. Gilbert stated that principals will receive the help they need to aide with the integration of preschools into their schools. She will also be talking with Connie Casha, State Department of Education's head over the state's preschool programs. She assured that the safety issues with drop off and pick up of preschool students will be addressed and parking should not be an issue.

Mrs. Phillips stated that she is still concerned that non-disabled students receive the instruction needed as they model for students with disabilities. Mr. Marlin stated that the pupil:teacher ratio is such that non-disabled students will actually receive more individual attention and have pull out instruction. Dr. Gilbert explained that with the changes made as a result of the rezoning, resources would be distributed appropriately and be used more efficiently, and libraries will have resources for preschool students. This will allow the children to know what it is like to be in their school and eliminate a transition.

Mrs. Smith stated that a significant cost would be incurred to make the moves proposed in the zoning plan. Mr. Anderson stated that additional help would be provided to move teachers, furniture, etc. He will look at the cost of previous moves, but would run this through the maintenance budget. The Bellwood facility will be painted with necessary renovations taking place. Teachers will be provided help to move materials. Mrs. Smith stated that investments have been made at Discovery for books for those students.

Mrs. Phillips stated that the district will need a public relations plan to help roll the zoning plan out to the public to inform them why this is in the best interest of the children.

Mrs. Rainier asked about the grandfathering provision. Mr. Anderson explained that rising fourth and fifth grade students would be allowed to remain for their fifth and sixth grade years. Siblings would also be allowed to remain. However, if a fifth/sixth grade student has a younger sibling not yet enrolled at the school, that sibling would not be grandfathered in to avoid creating a legacy. He provided the Board with the proposed rezoning plan enrollment estimates, noting that he built the plan based on no sixth grade students leaving their existing school and half of the fifth grade remaining. He noted that the first year is the most difficult to predict, but the second and then third becomes more consistent. Dr. Brown noted that when teachers moved from Reeves-Rogers to John Pittard, they were given help in moving their materials.

Mr. Anderson reviewed the rezoning on the map, noting boundaries. (Map enclosed with minutes.) Overall Creek will take care of growth on the western part of the county. Cason Lane can take more students. Bradley has taken the pocket zone of students that were attending Mitchell-Neilson so those students will attend their community school. Black Fox will have room for growth due to the Amazon distribution facility in the southern portion of the county. The new Reeves-Rogers zone will help John Pittard's capacity issues. Mitchell-Neilson will pick up Franklin Heights. He pointed out the contiguous zone lines where pocket zones have been eliminated and main arteries became boundaries. He noted that the proposed enrollment numbers are estimates. It is anticipated that some Blackman community students could elect to attend Overall Creek.

Mrs. Phillips asked how the rezoning affected free/reduced percentages for each school. Mr. Anderson stated that he did not base the rezoning on free/reduced percentages. Mrs. Phillips asked to see how the rezoning affected the free/reduced percentages of the schools.

Mr. Anderson explained that this year one behavior class of six students was moved to Hobgood. With this proposal, one behavior class will be placed at MNP and one at MNE, taking the behavior class from Hobgood to provide more capacity there. The proposal moves one CDC class out of Erma Siegel and one from Northfield moving them to Reeves-Rogers. Mr. Marlin explained that the move of the two classes with disabilities would create more capacity with the ability to expand either preschool or CDC. They would still maintain the clusters. He understands that this one-year transition is very difficult; but by placing preschoolers in their zoned schools, the transition from Bellwood to a new school for kindergarten every year is eliminated. Placing preschool students in their zoned school will allow the students continuity with some students (three year olds) remaining in the same school for nine years. Administration, faculty and staff get to know the students. Mrs. Phillips asked that the administration meet with the families of the most fragile students that would be disrupted to help make the transition easier. Mr. Marlin stated that this could be done, social story booklets could be shared, etc. Mrs. Phillips asked to receive feedback on how this is done. She noted that she is very pleased that the proposed plan eliminates pocket zones. Mr. Marlin also noted that Child Find will be handled differently in an effort to identify more three year olds, as it is most beneficial to provide them the help they need at this early age rather than when they enter kindergarten.

Mr. Campbell stated that the Board should be prepared to receive phone calls regarding the zoning plan but should respond that they are looking at the plan but a decision has not been made. Board members should not make a commitment to anyone contacting them. Dr. Brown added that rezoning is difficult as you can't please everyone, and it will be a tough year. The map as presented looks logical, pockets are gone, zones are contiguous with major arteries as boundaries. He thanked everyone who worked on the plan.

In response to Mrs. Smith's question, Dr. Gilbert stated that she would prefer to have more than one preschool class in the schools. Expansion of preschool largely depends on funding, and what she is hearing from the state is that the district will be able to maintain the numbers with no decrease.

Mrs. Phillips asked that the time of the community zoning meetings be later/staggered so that more parents would be able to attend. Mrs. Smith asked that the administration meet with the Discovery School parents as they are greatly impacted with the move to Bellwood.

Mrs. Wade reiterated that if Board members receive calls, they should be referred to Mr. Anderson, Dr. Gilbert, or the designee so they can avoid being misquoted. Mrs. Phillips added that some parents will not respond. In response to Mrs. Smith, Mr. Anderson stated that Erma Siegel will gain some and will lose a CDC class but all other schools are impacted with some students rezoned.

Mr. Anderson reviewed the preliminary socioeconomic impact of the zoning plan.

Mr. Barrett stated that he likes the way the zones are portrayed on the maps, with no zone pockets and contiguous zone lines. Parents will not be as confused about what school their students are zoned to.

Dr. Gilbert stated that she will be looking at how to address the ELL population at Bradley. Mrs. Tapia and Ms. Hill have asked to attend data meetings so they can assist in communicating Hispanic students' progress to their parents. Mrs. Newell has worked hard to promote MNE/P, and she will continue to do this. Mr. Barrett stated that in terms of the economic breakdown, some issues have improved as the district added social workers, adopted the breakfast in the classroom program, etc.

Mrs. Wade asked Board members to email Dr. Gilbert or Mr. Anderson with any questions or recommendations they might have following the meeting.

### III. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Chair Wade adjourned the meeting at approximately 5:50 p.m.

---

Director of Schools

### MISSION STATEMENT

To assure academic and personal success  
for each child.

