

TANGIPAHOA PARISH SCHOOL BOARD PROCEEDINGS

March 1, 2005

The Tangipahoa Parish School Board met in regular session on Tuesday, March 1, 2005, at 6:30 p.m., in the School Board Meeting Room, School Board Office, 59656 Puleston Road, Amite, Louisiana, with President Leonard "Tank" Genco, Presiding.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Link, Leonard Genco, Robert Caves and Carl Bardwell, Jimmy A. Richardson, I, Donnie Williams, Robert Potts, Sandra Bailey-Simmons, and Maxine Dixon

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

Superintendent Joseph addressed the audience and stated that the Tangipahoa Parish School System had been sued by the American Civil Liberties Union for opening its meetings with prayer. The case was heard in the United States District Court by Judge Helen G. Berrigan, and a ruling was handed down at 3:30 p.m. on Friday, February 24, 2005. The ruling was:

**UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
EASTERN DISTRICT OF LOUISIANA**

JOHN DOE, Individually and as next
friend of his minor children,
JAMES DOE, AND JACK DOE

CIVIL ACTION

VERSUS

NUMBER: 03-2870

TANGIPAHOA PARISH SCHOOL BOARD
ET AL

SECTION: "C"

JUDGEMENT

In accordance with the Court's Opinion dated February 24, 2005,

IT IS ORDERED, ADJUDGED AND DECREED that there be judgment in favor of Plaintiff declaring that the Defendants' practice of opening each Tangipahoa Parish School Board meeting with a religious invocation violates Plaintiff's rights under the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution as made applicable to the States through the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution. The Court permanently enjoins the Tangipahoa Parish School Board from opening their school board meetings with such an invocation.

New Orleans, Louisiana, this 24th day of February 2005.

HELEN G. BERRIGAN
UNITED STATES DISTRICT JUDGE

Superintendent Joseph recommended to the Board that they appeal Judge Berrigan's decision.

Mrs. Bailey-Simmons indicated that the Board Meeting was dedicated to Black History Month (February).

Durwin Duplesses, student – Crystal Academy, led the Pledge of Allegiance. Keema Muse, student – Ponchatoula Jr. High, and April Sibley, student - SLU, sang the National Anthem.

Ms. Marilyn Baker, Principal – Crystal Academy, explained the origin of Black History Month, and Ricardo Clines, student – Crystal Academy, read an excerpt for Martin Luther King’s speech: “I Have a Dream.”

It was moved by Mr. Caves, seconded by Mr. Williams, to waive the rules to place an item on the agenda regarding opening the Tangipahoa Parish School System Board Meetings with a prayer. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

It was moved by Mr. Caves, seconded by Mr. Williams, to approve the Board Minutes of February 15, 2005, as distributed. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

Assistant Superintendent Thomas Bellavia recognized Sumner High School as 2004 Class AA Cross Country State Runner Up.

Mrs. Bailey-Simmons recognized the recipient of the “Jake Bailey Above and Beyond” Award – Ms. Rose Hill, Volunteer – Ponchatoula Jr. High School.

It was moved by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mr. Link, to approve the 2005-2006 List of Pupil Progression Plan Committee Members. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

Mr. Randy Foulks, Rev. Louis Husser, Rev. Rodney Taylor, and Mr. Mark Campo, spoke in Public Input regarding encouraging the Tangipahoa Parish School to appeal the recent ruling concerning opening school board meetings with prayer.

Mr. Herb Freiler, spoke in Public Input regarding the appeal of the prayer decision.

It was moved by Mr. Link, seconded by Rev. Richardson, to enter Executive Session to discuss the strategy of the Board’s position on the issue of opening School Board Meetings with prayer. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

The Board entered Executive Session.

The Board returned to Open Session.

It was moved by Mr. Caves, seconded by Mr. Richardson, to direct the Board’s legal council to pursue a motion of appeal to the 5th District Court of Appeals and petition the Federal District Court to stay the motion and allow the Tangipahoa Parish School Board to continue to pray. Roll call vote on the motion yielded the following results: 9 Yeas, 0 Nays. Voting yeas were: Mr. Richardson, Mr. Potts, Mr. Genco, Mr. Link, Mr. Williams, Mr. Caves, Ms. Dixon, Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, and Mr. Bardwell. Hearing no objection, the motion was unanimously adopted.

Ms. Patricia Morris spoke in Public Input regarding the teaching of African American and other ethnic studies in the Tangipahoa Parish School System.

Mr. Jason Ard spoke in Public Input regarding the Tangipahoa Parish School System’s Student Grievance Procedure.

It was moved by Mr. Richardson, seconded by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, to approve the Curriculum Committee Report of February 14, 2005. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted. Following is the report as approved.

1. Mr. Scott Johnson, LSU, gave a PowerPoint presentation regarding What an Intervention Plan can do for Tangipahoa Parish. A meeting will be held on March 10, 2005 at Greenfield Baptist Church in Hammond at 6:00 p.m. The purpose of this meeting is to in-service parents regarding the Intervention Program.

2. The Bible Course was discussed, the staff will survey students at all parish high schools to determine the interest in the course and if the needed personnel is available. If the course is approved for utilization in the parish, Judge White urged the staff to bring in trainers for the teachers.
3. Mr. Richardson the math and science programs in the parish. He questioned whether or not the programs are meeting the needs of the students. A survey will be conducted to determine the courses that are offered by the school system. Virtual Television is an option to offer more math and science courses to the students.

It was moved by Mr. Link, seconded by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, to approve the Personnel Committee Report of February 23, 2005 and Addendum #1. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted. Following is the report as approved.

February 23, 2005

1. TEACHER - NEW HIRE

Dvans Howard, Teacher – Roseland Elementary, effective February 17, 2005

2. *LEAVES*RESIGNATIONS*RETIREMENTS

LEAVES:

Melvin Holmes, Sr., Bus Driver (Extended Sick Leave using sick days first due to illness – undetermined), effective January 27, 2005

Lisa Travis, Teacher – Spring Creek (Extended Sick Leave using sick days first due to Maternity – May 30, 2005), effective April 4, 2005

Erin Casey, Teacher – Perrin Early Learning Center (Extended Sick Leave using sick days first due to maternity – May 27, 2005), effective March 7, 2005

Michelle Hampton, Teacher – Independence Elementary (Extended Sick Leave using sick days first due to illness – May 30, 2005), effective February 14, 2005

Brook Burke, Speech Therapist – Amite Elementary (Extended Sick Leave using sick days first due to maternity – May 23, 2005), effective April 11, 2005

Retirements:

Gloria Weatherly, Guidance Counselor, effective June 14, 2005

Robert Williams, Transportation Coordinator, effective July 31, 2004

Resignations:

Dean Benoit, Maintenance, effective February 14, 2005

Cynthia Thompson, Paraprofessional – Hammond Westside Primary, effective December 17, 2004

Michelle Michelli, Lift Bus Attendant, effective February 6, 2005

ADDENDUM #1

1. *LEAVES*RESIGNATIONS*RETIREMENTS

Leaves:

Barbara Walker, WIA (Sick Leave using sick days due to surgery – undetermined), effective February 22, 2005

Resignations:

Darnell Allen, Custodian – Loranger High School, effective February 14, 2005
 Bobby Miller, Maintenance Department, effective February 23, 2005

Retirements:

John Williams, Teacher – Hammond High, effective May 31, 2005
 Shirley Simmons, Teacher – Kentwood High, effective May 31, 2005
 William Cory, Adult Education Teacher, effective July 1, 2005

It was moved by Mr. Link, seconded by Ms. Dixon, to approve the Hammond Board Delegation report of February 10, 2005. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted. Following is the report as approved.

1. Mr. Link was selected Chairman for 2005.
2. Approved Mr. Gasaway's estimated cost of \$526,275.00, plus \$2,500.00 for soil boring, for the Hammond High Practice Gym, to be paid from Funds 671 and 620.

The following items were discussed.

1. Mr. Clark discussed shutting down one cell at a time to upgrade the Hammond High Oxidation Pond. By doing this, the quotes may come in higher than the estimated cost at the 2:00 p.m., March 15, 2005, Bid opening.
2. Mr. LaMarca discussed having a video of the Hammond Westside Primary and Hammond Westside Upper loading and unloading bus area at the next delegation meeting.
3. Mr. Kolwe gave an update on the property adjacent to Wal-Mart. Mr. Caves suggested that constructing a road across property would enhance the value of property.

It was moved by Mr. Potts, seconded by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, to approve the Loranger Board Delegation Report of February 15, 2005. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted. Following is the report as approved.

1. Mr. Potts was selected as Chairman for the year 2005.
2. Approved the purchase of two (2) administrative computers and one (1) W5300 Dell printer for Loranger Elementary School, in the amount of \$3,677.56 from Pay-As-You-Go Funds.
3. Approved the Loranger School Cooling Tower replacement, estimated cost of \$94,162.00, to be paid from Maintenance Fund.
4. The Delegation authorized Mr. Gasaway to obtain bids for Loranger High School Football Stadium Bleachers with seating capacity of 600, 700 and 800.
5. Authorized Mr. Gasaway to obtain bids on re-roofing Loranger Middle School Classroom Building.
6. Authorized Mr. Gasaway to obtain bids on ceiling repairs, electrical upgrade and to re-finish floors for Loranger High School Historic Auditorium.
7. Authorized Mr. Moody to draw-up a lease agreement for the two (2) acres used by Uneedus Community as a Recreational Park.

The following item was discussed.

8. The Loranger Elementary School office renovation was deferred.

It was moved by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, seconded by Mr. Bardwell, to approve the Ponchatoula Board Delegation Report of February 15, 2005. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted. Following is the report as approved.

1. Mrs. Bailey-Simmons was selected Chairman for the year 2005.
2. Approved the estimated cost of \$6,000.00, to be paid from 620 Funds, for construction of an alternate driveway for students at Ponchatoula Junior High School.
3. Reimbursed \$2,083.75, from Pay-As-You-Go Funds, for the purchase of additional security cameras at Ponchatoula Junior High School.
4. Approved the purchase equipment to maintain the ball field at the Athletic Park at Ponchatoula High School, in the amount of \$9,119.44, to be paid from Pay-As-You-Go Funds.
5. Rejected the Tabulation of Quotes for Ponchatoula Junior High School Bus Drop Expansion.

The following items were referred back to Administration.

1. A new Practice Gym for Ponchatoula High School.
2. Vinyard Elementary School Driveway repairs.

It was moved by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, seconded by Mr. Bardwell, to waive the rules to consider items from the Finance Committee Meeting held prior to the Board Meeting. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

It was moved by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, seconded by Mr. Bardwell, to approve Bid #2005-22, the low bidder Contract Furniture Group, in the amount of \$67,286.79 for Movable Partitions for the Title 1 Resource Center and Bid #2005-24, Alack Refrigeration, in the amount of \$74,808.00, for a Walk-In Freezer for Hammond Westside School. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

It was moved by Mr. Caves, seconded by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, to waive the rules to consider an item from the Ponchatoula Board Delegation. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

It was moved by Mr. Caves, seconded by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, to approve Change Order #1 for additional fencing at Ponchatoula High School, in the amount \$5,577.00 from Pay-As-You-Go Funds. Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

It was moved by Mr. Caves, seconded by Mrs. Bailey-Simmons, to adjourn (8:10 p.m.). Hearing no objection, the motion was adopted.

Respectfully submitted,

Leonard "Tank" Genco, President

Louis L. Joseph, Secretary-Treasurer

Recorded By: Jo-Ann L. Frazier (3/01/05)