

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY DISTRICT

BOARD OF EDUCATION SPECIAL BOARD MEETING

January 5, 2017 – 5:30P.M.
Fisher Building, 3011 W. Grand Blvd.
12th Floor Conference Room
Detroit, MI 48202

MINUTES

Call to Order

The Special Board Meeting of the Board of Education of the Detroit Public Schools Community District was called to order by Member LaMar Lemmons at 5:38pm.

Roll Call

Board Secretary Karen Morgan called the roll:

Present: Deborah Hunter-Harvill, LaMar Lemmons, Sonya Mays, Angelique Peterson-Maybury, *Misha Stallworth, and Iris Taylor

Excused: Georgia Lemmons

*arrived after roll call

There being a quorum present, the meeting was declared in session.

Member L. Lemmons suggested the structure of the meeting should be conducted under the Robert Rules of Order.

Consensus of the body supported

Member L. Lemmons nominated Member Taylor as Meeting chair.

Consensus of the body supported

Study Session

A. Bylaws

Member Mays stated they are awaiting feedback from the Office of the General Counsel. The Bylaws should be ready by the January 11, 2017 Organizational Meeting.

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B. Administrative Positions

Interim General Superintendent Alycia Meriweather reported there are a total of 25 vacancies in Central Office. Five (5) vacancies are deemed critical due to compliance issues. Four (4) of the five (5) vacancies are in Special Education for which there may be personnel issues whereby the Board needs to be informed. A closed session may need to be called to hear the specific issues that cannot be discussed.

C. Mission, Vision and Values: Downstream

Meeting Chair Taylor provided an overview of the Mission, Vision, and Values: Downstream. The Vision is why we exist. The Mission is what we want to obtain. The Values are how we want to do our work and make decisions. Downstream is to push the discussion with comment from staff and community to see did it resonate with people and were there concerns.

Member Mays stated it still tracks with the intention of the Board during the exercise. The body supported the statement.

Member Stallworth read the Vision, Mission, and Values.

Superintendent Meriweather is expected to present a plan for how the Board will migrate downward by the full Board meeting scheduled on January 11, 2017.

D. Transition Team

Meeting Chair Taylor provided an explanation of the Boards Task Force Teams for the benefit of the audience.

- **Initial Meetings**

Member Stallworth and Peterson-Mayberry are experiencing challenges with contact information for team recommendations. Chair Taylor noted she has requested assistance from Skillman to research email addresses off the list with a report expected tomorrow.

Member L. Lemmons will provide contact information for persons he recommended for the teams.

Meeting Chair Taylor stated team leaders should seek alternatives if no information is received within 24 hours or go with the number of team members confirmed.

Superintendent Meriweather will assign a specific person from the District to each team to provide data or whatever request the team may have.

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- **Process to Review Data**

Chair Taylor stated at the end of 45 days, consideration should be given to review and process data for setting priorities moving forward and for having discussion and study sessions, and multiple Committee of the Whole meetings. The Board Secretary will look at calendar of availability for Board Members.

Superintendent Meriweather provided an overall of the process of the former transition team in pulling information together which included large group meetings, break-out team sessions (small groups), mission stated, clear check points and an outline of expectations from each team. Superintendent Meriweather will provide the template used.

- **Academics**

The Academics discussion was led by Member Hunter-Harvill. Member Hunter-Harvill stated the Academic Plan of Superintendent Meriweather is being used a guideline. Members Hunter-Harvill and G. Lemmons role is to look at the plan from a policy perspective coming up with recommendations so everyone can be engaged in the process. Recommendations made to the Superintendent can continue to be refined ending up with some policy specifics that will go into a policy manual. There will be a meeting on January 19, 2017 to distribute information to the Board and Superintendent so the team can know if they can proceed with focus sessions. A meeting will be scheduled by Board Secretary for January 19, 2017 for 5:30-7:30p.m.

E. Interview of Search Team

Members Deborah Hunter-Harvill, LaMar Lemmons and Iris Taylor will be the Ad Hoc Superintendent Search Committee. A review of organizations who applied for the Request for Proposal (RFP) was completed with three (3) firms selected. The Board Secretary will be scheduling the interviews before January 19th with the Board reporting back on the same meeting. The Board will discuss looking for outside resources to cover the cost for the bylaw process and regulatory policies and the contract for the search. Once resources are targeted a letter should be drafted with a cost for each.

F. Project Coordinator

The Project Coordinator will be an individual to help coordinate team meetings. One person expressed interest to the Skillman Foundation in the temporary position. The individual's resume was distributed to members by Chair Taylor. Clarity was requested from Skillman in relation to cost and if Skillman or New Detroit is contracting the individual. Melissa from Skillman will provide the information.

Chair discussed email communications and responses cautioning the Board not to respond or ask questions regarding information because it serves as a quorum subject to the Open Meetings Act. Members were instructed to receive information and make contact on a one-on-one basis or send to the Board Secretary.

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It is noted General Counsel, Phyllis Hurks-Hill nod in agreement with Chair.

G. External Orientation Opportunities

1. Wayne RESA

Member Stallworth will take the lead in organizing quarterly retreats focusing on business and function team building. Retreats will be all day and open to the public.

General Counsel Hurks-Hill stated there is an agreement with the Michigan Department of Education and Detroit Public Schools Community District (DPSCD) where the Board would have the training by Michigan Association of School Board (MASB) or some other organization and training sessions between the Board and administration.

Member Stallworth will look into the conversion of credit hours for members' professional development.

2. Skillman Foundation

Skillman agreed to pay the cost for transportation, housing, and registration for the Board to attend the National School Boards Annual Convention in Denver, Colorado on March 25th – 27th. On March 24th, arrangements have been made with the Colorado School District that has been recognized as one of Best Practices Districts in the country to have an exchange with the Board. The coordinator of the event is Ashley, Project Coordinator from Skillman. Board Secretary will work with Ashley in securing the travel arrangements for the Board.

3. School Law and Finance Seminar - Plante Moran

Plante Moran is offering a free seminar on School Law and Finance at Schoolcraft College in Livonia to Board Members on January 21, 2017 from 7:30am - 3:00pm.

H. Legislation/Introduction Relationship Process

Chair Taylor discussed the importance of a relationship with decision makers in Lansing and with individuals who influence decision makers in Lansing. Noting that each member have a different level of experience and network for information and obtaining information. The Board should begin to build a process of how the Board have a presence in Lansing and around federal interaction that could have an impact on the ability to deliver education in the city of Detroit. A matter that should be at the top of the list of things the Board should be armed with relatively quickly. Chair then opened for any comments or suggestions in moving in that direction.

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Member L. Lemmons suggests first establishing a legislative agenda and wish list rather it be finances or policy, etc. that could be device with a clear set agenda that the Board would advocate. Being cognizant of what legislation is being coming force having potential to affect the District.

Member Mays stated Member L. Lemmons would be vital in the process.

Member Stallworth supported Member Mays stating she would also assist Member L. Lemmons.

Member L. Lemmons agreed and stated Member Mays would be a tremendous asset.

Member Mays stated the first deliverable of the team should be a framework for an action plan. Target date for framework is February 14, 2017 Board meeting.

I. Other

Superintendent shared the following events impacting the District:

1. There will be a story in the Detroit Free Press regarding the Durfee School closing. A decision was made along with General Counsel today to make a statement about the District's decision on the Judge's signoff on December 30, 2016 regarding Durfee. The Governor's office made a statement Durfee is closing as part of SRO's action. The District was proactive having a statement about the consolidation and the piece with Life Remodeled that was signed off by the Judge. The Durfee principal have met with the families of Durfee and a community meeting. The District was not expected to talk or do anything publicly. Event have occurred within the last 12 hours. Superintendent was not sure if the story with the Free Press would air.
2. Office of Inspector General (OIG) of the United States Department of Education would be onsite Monday through Friday following up on items dating back as far as 2008. The Superintendent will be forwarding a document to the Board identifying what items OIG will be checking. The Superintendent would also provide the Board with informational updates about the status of those meetings.

Superintendent mentioned Kristen Howard, Executive Director of Compliance (present in audience) is the point person on that task. Howard will handle the Title IX/ADA, Office of Civil Rights, and the compliance issues. Howard would provide an update next week that the Superintendent will forward to the Board.

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Superintendent noted if there are any requirements for follow-up, or call for further information to reach out to Board Secretary or with Kristen would be appropriate. The Office of OIG US Department of Education will come in on Monday at 1:00pm for a 30-minute conversation and then the audit will be the entire week.

Member Mays questioned if the site visit was planned or unusual? Superintendent responded it was known about two and a half weeks. DPSCD was one of four (4) cities in the entire country for this audit.

Second question is their enough information about the intent or framework of the audit? Superintendent's response was she was not sure but she thinks she is sure there is an angle from the Governor's office and what she does know is there is going to be something about the top to bottom list and something about the School Reform Office (SRO). Superintendent doesn't know if it is a part of a larger story because the District is still waiting for the SRO's follow-up list expected sometime in January.

Superintendent stated that this reporter did a closing interview with the Judge before he left. The reporter asked a question about SRO. Rhodes stated he was working with the Governor's office and hoped he would have something worked out. The reporter took the story, called the Governor's office and she believes that is where it started going but are still waiting on the SRO report.

Chair Taylor stated the reporter received an anonymous letter written between Judge and John Walsh.

Member Hunter-Harvill stated the letter referred was sent out to the Board.

Member L. Lemmons stated that at the time the Board received the letter they were private citizens so it was not a leak.

Member L. Lemmons stated Rhodes also gave his word to the Board on several things that did not come to fruition. Example given was the sale of the radio and television station.

Member Mays questioned if there was reason the Board should proactively have a statement ready in response to what may.

It was agreed all comments will be designated back to the Superintendent since statement will already be issued on the District's behalf.

General Counsel agreed.

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Member L. Lemmons stated the Old Co attorney will be suing the State of Michigan based on PA 192-197. Specific components being: 1. Uncertified teachers, and 2. separate grading system only applicable to DPS as being discriminatory. The Old Co have asked if the Board would be a party to the suit. If the Board chooses not to the Old Co will sue the Board if they do not adopt a position against non-certified teachers being posed exclusively on the District. The Old Co still considers themselves in affect due to the deficit.

General Counsel stated the Old Co only exists to pay off the debt. The new Board taking office will be responsible for the obligations of the old district.

Chair Taylor suggested a legal opinion from counsel reduced in writing for a separate discussion and a scope from Old Co to what it is they are suing about and what among that is specific to the existing Board reduced in writing. Member L. Lemmons will have the Old Co attorney to reduce in writing. The Old Co attorney is Thomas Blakely.

Member L. Lemmons stated the District replaced a group of African American, district-educated males who owned an insurance company with an Alabama firm non-reflective of the city of Detroit's population. The District cut off the insurance company's ability to process automatic deduction. The company would like to be placed on the agenda for the January 11, 2017 meeting for consideration to return to the agent of record prior to emergency management.

Member L. Lemmons will get specific information from Dwight Glover, Company Representative so the Board can understand the full scope and what the decision means before placing on the agenda and taking a vote.

Chair stated once the information is received a presentation can be scheduled.

Member L. Lemmons stated the presentation can be placed on the agenda with a vote taken the following day.

Member Peterson-Mayberry expressed the need for additional information before taking a vote.

Member Mays stated that the Board should have a focused effort to review the totality of the previous Emergency Manager's actions as a body of work to determine attention needed.

Member L. Lemmons and Chair Taylor agreed.

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Chair Taylor will take on the responsibility of sorting through what those decision categories are and go from that point.

Member Hunter-Harvill announced a contest for African American males ages 11 to 14 sponsored by the Matrix Center where they can write letters about their hero. Letters are due by January 20, 2017. Information was given to Board Secretary for scanning to members and Superintendent.

Chair Taylor moved for adjournment.

Consensus of the body agreed.

Meeting adjourned at 7:15p.m.



Certified:
Karen Morgan, B.S.B.M
Secretary of the Board