

OFFICIAL MINUTES FROM THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING OF THE
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF
ARKANSAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The Board of Trustees for the Arkansas School for the Deaf and the Arkansas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired met for their monthly meeting on February 19, 2019.

Present: Susan Pack, Chairperson; Dr. John McAllister, Vice-Chairperson; Everett Elam (Via Phone), Board Member; , Board Member; James Caton, ASBVI Superintendent; Dr. Janet Dickinson, ASD Superintendent; Eddie Schmeckenbecher and Will Gorum, Interpreters; Members of the Deaf Community; Members of the Blind Community, Hillcrest Residents

Ms. Pack called the meeting to order at 4:00 pm. The next meeting is scheduled for March 12th at Arkansas School for the Blind. The meeting was changed due to Spring Break being the third week of March. Mr. Elam said he would be moving on the 11th but will do his best to attend.

Ms. Pack said Everett is on the phone so there are three board members present. She said she is going to get some definitions before the next meeting about the people who have gone off the board as to whether they can continue until there is an appointment made to serve and vote. She is going to talk to the Attorney General's Office to be sure the board is staying legal in everything they do.

Ms. Pack said she is starting with something that is not on the agenda. She handed out material from the Law Seminar she attended last week at the School Board Association Conference. She said it was one of the best meetings she has attended and there were two topics she thought the members needed the information she received at the meeting. She said one is regarding cell phones search and seizure and sexual predators. The other one is The Ban of the Fan dealing with disruptive adults in school. She said she did not think it is a big problem at ASD or ASB but they are having problems in the public schools. They are having a hard time getting officials because of disruptive fans.

19-J-004 Motion to Approve Minutes

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the minutes from the January board meeting. Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve the January minutes and Mr. Elam seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.


Action Items
None

Discussion Items
None

There being no further business of Joint nature, the meeting moved to the agenda for the Arkansas School for the Blind.



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. Sam Atcherson, Secretary

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19-B-002 Motion to Approve Consent Items

Ms. Pack asked for a motion to approve the consent items to include the minutes, financial statement and personnel items. Dr. McAllister made a motion to approve the consent items and Mr. Elam seconded the motion. The motion passed 3-0.

Ms. Pack asked Mr. Caton if there was anything he wanted to say about the personnel items. Mr. Caton said that ASB hated to lose Ms. Whitfield, she was a very good residential advisor.

Action Items
None

Discussion Items
Entergy Update

Mr. Caton said he put together a timeline of different emails, etc. that he was able go through. He said it gave him a better understanding of what had transpired. He said basically what it has led up to when you get to the end is he thinks Entergy might still be confused as to rather ASD is interested in moving forward with the transfer of their electrical lines. He said they know ASB wants to transfer their lines. He said if you go back to some of the early communications in 2016 when ASD was not involved at that time, Entergy wanted assurances that the ASD did not have any ownership interest in the ASB facilities. He said that came up several times over the course of the years that Entergy wanted those assurances. He thinks they are at the point that if Janet still wants to move forward with the transfer of ASD lines, she needs to let Entergy know that and it will clear up that confusion. In addition to that, Entergy will need something saying that ASD doesn't have any ownership interest in ASB facilities. He said he thinks ASB will have to do the same thing for ASD.

Mr. Caton said many of the delays appeared to be at one point Entergy was going to approach this by doing a filing with the Public Service Commission. Then it was believed that it was possible to do the filing without going before the Commission and so they worked on that for a period of time. Then it went to being more issues with internal accounting issues at Entergy. There were a number of filings before the Commission, those that were pending and up till now where some confusion crept in about whether ASD really wanted to move forward with their lines. He said he thinks part of that came from one of his staff members who should not have been speaking for ASD and he had to clarify that and when he reached out to Janet she said ASD was still interested in moving forward.

Dr. Dickinson said in her opinion, she thinks the last time this was discussed she believes their deposit was huge to start with and then they would have to pay like \$50,000 a year. She said that is a lot of money and so far we have not had to pay a lot in repairs. She asked Ty to respond more in depth about it.

Ty said the meeting ASD had were a lot like what Mr. Caton said. He said there was a lot of miscommunication on wording. At one time the contracts were being worded that ASD would be responsible for the known or unknown of items found hazardous during this transition which didn't seem to be appropriate wording. He said the finances were a big part of it. He said ASD met with Mr. Bruester 2-3 years ago and tried to get drawings from him but he seemed to be resistant to giving ASD a clear set of drawings on the work. He definitely remembers Mr. Bruester saying ASD could get that after the contracts had been signed which didn't sound appropriate either. ASD had questions to the timeline on exactly where the split would be and how that would affect the school. Would it shut the school down or was it an hour thing, there was a lot of questions they couldn't get answers to by Mr. Bruester at that time. There seemed to be resistance on give them a comfort level that everything would be okay during the transition. He said he knew that Dr. Dickinson had done everything she could to assist the Blind School and they were not doing anything to hold the process up. Ms. Pack said if it was okay with both superintendents – she said she knew this all started 20 years ago and Stan did it for money saving reasons. She said she would like to call Stan and ask him why it was such a better deal at that time. She said she would find out something and let them know to help fill in the gap as to why they decided to go that route. Ty said one thing is both schools are getting older and they have run into a few hiccups to repairing a few lines in the last 3-4 years but it was minimal cost (\$5,000 or \$10,000). He said ASD probably hadn't spent \$50,000 in 50 years, yet the down payment and \$60,000 a year didn't really seem to be a financially feasible. Ms. Pack said she did not remember a down payment. Ty said the infrastructure was estimated around \$400,000. Dr. Dickinson said whether ASD says yes or no there is more work that needs to happen. She said even if ASD decides no she needs a better understanding of how it will impact ASD.

Mr. Elam said the further forward the schools move into newer technology, etc. and the older the infrastructure gets he sees this as dragging our broken leg behind. Ms. Pack said she wasn't sure they were talking about updating. Ty said Entergy is not going to upgrade anything so what is the school getting for the money. Basically ASD was told that they would go to the top of the list if the power was to go out, but he finds it ironic they wouldn't give ASD any guarantee that it would be any faster and the contractor they use to help is actually the contractor he has do their repairs at minimal cost. He said that was the key thing. Mr. Caton said in the last documents he found Entergy released like a Bill of Sale and an affidavit that indicated an estimate for installation that would need to be done was around \$139,000 and then ASB would be responsible up front for around \$15,000 and then there would be a monthly charge to recoup the installation charge over a period of time. He said that was in 2016 and he doesn't know how it would update now. He thinks regardless he thinks it would be a good idea for him and Janet to get with Sarah at the AG's office since Sarah was involved in all of this. Ms. Pack said if they would do that and she will call Stan and find out what she can. Mr. Caton said ASB is still very interested in pursuing the ownership of the lines with Entergy unless something significantly changes. Ms. Coleman said she would suggest that they talk to the facilities people at UALR as they just put in new electrical plant with Entergy and they may be able to give the schools some tips. She said they ended up saving so much money they were able to pay for it. She said all the UA schools are doing it.

Superintendent Report

Mr. Caton said he spoke with Chris at Wells Fargo and asked him about the investment accounts since the markets have been so volatile. Chris said ASB is in good shape and whatever losses there have been are being recovered and he didn't have any recommendations at this time for any changes.

Mr. Caton said ASB's annual Black History Assembly is tomorrow. Mayor Scott will be the speaker. The program will begin at 9:30 in Woolly Auditorium. Everyone is welcome to attend and lunch will be served afterwards.

The annual Braille Challenge was February 7th. It was the eighth year for the braille challenge – this is the Regional challenge that ASB hosts. Seven students from around the state and 30 of ASB students participated.

The EAST program is doing well with their projects. They have been working on playground plans and looking at needs for the three playgrounds and what it would cost to do some renovations. They have presented their plans to him and to the ASBVI Foundation. He said it had been interesting to watch them approach that as a project and come up with solutions.

Mr. Caton said the GT program is still going strong. In January, the elementary GT students worked on an electronic O&M device that was designed to detect obstacles and produce a sound ranging from low to high pitch based on the distance they were away from an obstacle. This grew from a student driven innovation plan which started with a 4th grade GT student brainstorming in September to an actual application which could benefit the blind and visually impaired population.

Mr. Caton said he is very pleased with the Pre-AP 8th grade math class. Three of five students scored a grade equivalent of 11th grade or greater on a recent STAR math assessment.

The Sweetheart Dance for secondary was held on February 13th. The staff served them dinner and danced afterwards.

The sixth graders won the 100th Day of School contest. The students discussed their memories from the school year and then wrote 100 memories on colored strips of paper. They then looped them together to create a connected atmosphere and discussed how each person had a main role in the classroom and how they are all needed. They created a three-dimensional tree trunk to attach their memories. They are continuing to add memories to the tree until the last day of school.

The wrestlers and cheerleaders attended the competition in Illinois. The wrestlers won second place and the cheerleaders also won second place. This weekend they will be participating in the State Wrestling competition at Jack Stephens at UALR.

Mr. Caton said he continues to follow the legislation sessions. The appropriation bill is now an ACT-we received notice today. He said they are waiting to get approval on a re-appropriation on some of the grant funds that was received from the historical grant as well as a re-appropriation of some of the general improvement funds that came from the Governor.

ASB celebrated School Counselor week February 4-8 as proclaimed by the Governor. The students made special thank you cards for the school counselor and refreshments were served in honor of Ms. Linder.

ASB continues to experience issues from the recent storms and lightning strikes from about a month ago. There have been several HVAC repairs and ongoing wireless issues with the internet. The one thing we haven't been able to repair is the bell system. He thinks it is shot and probably looking at replacing the system. It has been there for about 40 years.

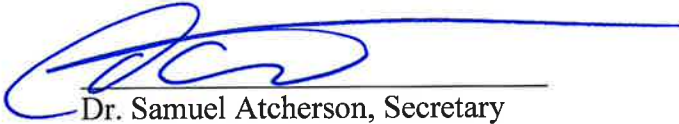
Mr. Caton said ASB is installing a new handicap/automatic door entrance for the west gymnasium doors. He said they are also looking at doing renovations in the boys/girls bathrooms and locker rooms in the gymnasium.

Mr. Caton stated he thought the school was doing pretty good at staying ahead of all the flu and sickness but this week has hit the school hard. As of today, there were 25 students out and several staff members. Four students have tested positive for the flu as well as a couple of the staff.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Blind, the agenda moved to the Arkansas School for the Deaf.



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary

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Ms. Pack asked Dr. Dickinson if she had any comments on the personnel items. Dr. Dickinson said they were really excited to have Seth their new Dietary Services Director. He and his wife are due to have twin daughters in a few weeks. She said that Robert Walker, Extra Help Artist, had passed away. ASD has plans to make a mural that Robert designed and was going to make for the school. Michael Krenn has left ASD and gone to the Department of Labor.

Action Items

None

Discussion Items

None

Superintendent Report

Dr. Dickinson said there were tons of things she could talk about today but because of the weather she was going to try to keep it short. She said ASD earned their accreditation. She said the final comments about the school were very inspiring. Many people in this room were involved and she thanked them. Two things they had to do schoolwide to prepare for the accreditation process was 1) they tried their very best to get bios for all ASD staff to put on their doors so when people walk around the campus they can get to know the staff.

Ms. Pack said it was a wonderful idea and when she walked into Michelle's office she read her bio and learned all about Michelle. She said she learned many things about Michelle that she did not know before. 2) ASD decided as a school they would pick a word of the year and focus on that word. Last year the word was engaged. This year the word is inspire and ASD has used kits donated by the ASD Foundation to give each staff member a charm to imprint the word "Inspire" along with their own personal word for the year to keep with them as a reminder.

Dr. Dickinson said they went to the Governor's Inauguration. She said ASD had the Mayor and the Fire Chief at the school and the students (ASD & ASB) were given multi-sensory fire alarms.

Dr. Dickinson said she has been watching the legislation to see what is going on and what is happening. She said there is a Deaf Mental Health Bill that will be up next week. There are several other bills she is keeping an eye on as well.

Dr. Dickinson asked Ty to comment on the elevators. Ty said it was moving forward and they had a pre-bid meeting that day. They had a dozen contractors show up. He said the opening of bids will be on the 26th then they will know who is awarded the project.

Dr. Dickinson said ASD is also celebrating Black History Month. Ray said the program is going to be Friday. They have a gentleman coming in from a dance company in California that will be giving a performance. Ms. Pack asked if he was a deaf dancer and Ray said yes. Dr. Dickinson said they have a nice partnership with LRBDA.

Dr. Dickinson said their ADCC program is starting to take off. More students are being added to the program – there are 11 students now. She said they had a new binder she wanted the board to see. She said it is life tips for every student working and they are developing their own binders with all the information they will need like resumes, health information and information they will need in the future to take care of themselves. She passed a binder around for the members to look at.

Dr. Dickinson asked Brian if he would talk about the fiber optic line project. Brian said they completed the connections for the fiber optic project which essentially took out all of the 15-year old data that was connecting the buildings. Now they have a fresh new network where each building works independently. If a storm happens now it will not take out the entire campus. He said this allows them to grow with their technology. Dr. Dickinson said she appreciated Brian's leadership in that process.

Dr. Dickinson said there was a lot more but she thought she would stop.

Dr. Dickinson said they had a party planned to celebrate Harry and Faith's terms on the board. She said she was sorry they were going to miss their own party. Dr. Dickinson had Stacie show the awards. Stacie said they were partnering with the ASB to thank Harry and Faith for their service to the schools. She said it has the sign "I Love You" on the top and braille on the bottom that says "Thank You".

Dr. Dickinson said Faith and Harry's terms had expired and the schools wanted to thank them for their service.

Dr. Dickinson told everyone to feel welcome to join the party.

There being no further business for the Arkansas School for the Deaf, the meeting adjourned



Susan Pack, Chair



Dr. Samuel Atcherson, Secretary