

**SOPER BOARD OF EDUCATION
REGULAR BOARD MEETING
Monday, April 18, 2022
7:00 P.M.**

The meeting was opened with prayer by Bruce Roebuck and was called to order by Angella Dancer. It was determined that a quorum was present.

Members present: Robert Spaulding, Gaylen Branton, Arlis Young, Bruce Roebuck, Angella Dancer. •

Administration present: Scotty Van Worth. Both principals were working ballgames.

It was determined that the agenda for this meeting was posted in due time. A motion was made by Gaylen Branton and seconded by Robert Spaulding to approve the Regular Meeting minutes for the Soper School Board for March 2022. Angella Dancer—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Gaylen Branton—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye.

The Board welcomed visitor, Angie Martin. Ms Martin did not address the Board with any concerns.

Dr Scotty Van Worth reported that the new bus is here and that it is the first bus the district has had with air conditioning. It also has a good deal of storage space and is expected to be a real asset for district activities.

Dr Van Worth also reported that testing was wrapping up for the students and that several trips and activities were planned.

The ESSER monies are being utilized well. As soon as a project is completed and reported, the packages have been approved and paid quickly. As soon as the roof is cleared, Jason Carlile with Dave's Air will be installing the new HVAC systems.

Dr Van Worth was happy to report that the district has over a million dollars in the bank for the third month in a row. Money management has been efficient, even though May will require three payrolls, so the streak will end, but this is normal for operations.

All has been going well with the building fund, and all news on finances is good. About \$36,000 is currently being collected on land taxes and other sources.

PSO performed an audit and offered good information that can be utilized going forward. The administration was still waiting for an official report but the electric bill has been returned to normal. The water bill increased when sewer was added, as expected. The large dish washer broke down in the cafeteria, which caused an expenditure.

At the time of the meeting, four weeks were left in the school year and the year seemed to be wrapping up peacefully.

Bruce Roebuck made the motion to approve the General Fund Purchase Orders 336-366 and checks. Gaylen Branton seconded the motion. Gaylen Branton—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye.

Although Ms Tina Jeffreys was not able to be present, she asked Dr Van Worth to remind the Board that the District is getting ready for Summer School. Dr Van Worth reported that High School Math will be included this year to help with credit recovery. This will be a trial to see if it will be helpful in future years. Choctaw Nation will cover Grades 1 through 3, but the District will also have classes for Grades 4 and 5 to help students recover from missed instruction during Covid-19 outages in the past year.

On that note, Dr Van Worth reiterated that the hope going forward is to not close school doors again for significant lengths of time. He expressed a serious concern for students who have missed real-life instruction time and what the long-term effects will be on the students.

Mr Parker Harless, also unable to be present during the meeting, sent notes for Dr Van Worth to discuss with the Board. The Senior Trip was scheduled for May 6, the Baccalaureate for May 8, Banquet for May 10, and Graduation planned for May 14 at 10 a.m. in the gymnasium.

Mr Harless also wanted to make the Board aware of Brandon Debo, a certified math teacher with an interest and experience in sports. Mr Debo would like to transition from the Hugo school system and join Soper. Mr Harless believes he would be an asset that Soper would be remiss to pass up. Coach Cartwright will

be working with the District for one more year, but Mr Debo would be able to work with the mathematics classes and assist Coach Cartwright with sports until he is needed to take over the sports programs.

Dr Van Worth agrees with Mr Harless's assessment of this opportunity, mainly that waiting a year to offer Mr Debo a position would be a serious risk for losing the ideal candidate for the position that is soon coming open. Mr Debo is willing to take a lesser salary to come into the District, as he wants to bring his two children into Soper Schools and build his family's educational career here. All feedback on Mr Debo has been overwhelmingly positive. The Board is being asked to put this hire on the agenda for discussion while the candidate is available.

Mr Harless also advised that he has found used baseball field lights (as Valliant has changed its lighting system) and has asked the Board's permission to put a low bid of \$500 as an offer to purchase them. The Board was in agreement.

The High School is also working on ordering baseball uniforms. Each year, new uniforms are purchased for a different sports program so that Soper's students get something new throughout their high school sports careers. The kids seem to appreciate this, as often they grow so quickly that many play with uniforms that are too small until it comes their time to get new ones.

In other business, the Board discussed the additional Elementary School teacher and aide, which were briefly discussed in a previous meeting. Ms Jeffreys serves the students in several ways, including as Counsellor and Principal. Her concern for her students makes it difficult for her to open up to hiring a separate Counsellor, according to Dr Van Worth. As such, she is stretched thin and has requested getting an additional aide so that she can continue in the counselling position. The current elementary aide would be chosen to take that position, while a new aide would be hired to serve as general elementary school aide.

Robert Spaulding moved to approve hiring a new Elementary School teacher and aide. Arlis Young seconded the motion. Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye. Positions will be posted.

Arlis Young made the motion to approve the adjunct teachers. Bruce Roebuck seconded the motion. Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis

Young—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye. Positions will be posted.

Gaylen Branton moved to approve the InterQuest contract for the drug dog services. Robert Spaulding seconded the motion. Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye.

Bruce Roebuck moved to approve the applications for temporary appropriations, a necessary vote in order to approve the budget to get approval for use of the building funds. Gaylen Branton seconded the motion. Angella Dancer—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye.

Angella Dancer moved to approve the ADTI contract for drug testing, which is mandatory for bus drivers. Gaylen Branton seconded the motion. Robert Spaulding—Aye, Gaylen Branton—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, and Bruce Roebuck—Aye.

The Board then discussed a change in support staff pay. Dr Van Worth proposes to start cafeteria workers, aides, and other support staff at \$10 per hour with the plan for a raise each year to cap out at \$15 per hour. The rate of increase will need to be determined. Arlis Young stated that finding applicants willing to be hired at \$10 per hour is unlikely; Gaylen Branton agreed.

Dr Van Worth pointed out that 80% of the School's budget is payroll, and so the expenditures are the main focus of the school's needs. He then showed the Board a discovery which can benefit all involved. Since bus drivers only work four hours a day, their insurance is not reimbursed by the State Department of Education. Employees must work six-hours a day in order to receive the reimbursement. Dr Van Worth asked to allow drivers to work an extra two hours per day, which qualifies us for reimbursement and brings more compensation to the district.

The proposal for the raises and the rate caps would be different for those in supervisory positions, such as the head cook, which should be able to cap out at a higher rate. This does mean bringing those already working below the proposed scale up to the new rate.

The two employees in administrative positions would be on a different scale than other support staff because of the imperative nature of their jobs and the difficulty of replacing them with their cumulative experience.

Angella Dancer and Robert Spaulding asked Dr Van Worth to create figures to see what the impact on the budget would be to do a 25-cent or 15-cent increase for those employees impacted. If a 25-cent increase will fit the budget, the Board agrees that doing something beneficial for the support staff needs to happen. It just wants to be sure this is something that can happen and keep within the budget. Insurance and retirement is a draw, but pay needs to be more competitive as well.

Arlis Young moved to table the vote until numbers can be gathered. Robert Spaulding seconded the motion. Robert Spaulding—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye. The Board will return to this item in an upcoming meeting.

Kiamichi Tech, Hugo Campus, asked for approval by the board for the math and science courses and the transportation contract. They pay for the students to be transported, but Board approval is required. Angella Dancer made the motion to approve the contract. Gaylen Branton, seconded the motion. Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye.

The Board then discussed the Total Rehab Services agreement. This covers physical, occupational, sensory, etc. therapies and needs. Offering these services is required by State, so the school uses this service group to cover all Special Education contract needs and requirements. Payment is only billed when services are used. Gaylen Branton moved to approve the agreement; Bruce Roebuck seconded the motion. Robert Spaulding—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye.

One employee, bus driver Roy Reidhead, is retiring, and Dr Van Worth requested approval to pay him a retirement bonus. This bonus is based on payment of sick-leave days not used by the employee during his tenure with the District. The bonus can accumulate up to \$1,600, depending on the unused portion of sick time, which has been established as incentive to come to work except for serious or contagious illness. Robert Spaulding made the motion to pay the retirement

bonus to Mr Reidhead. Arlis Young seconded the motion. Angella Dancer—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Arlis Young—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, and Gaylen Branton—Aye.

Angella Dancer made a motion to approve the Crossroads Psychologist and Counselor Services contract. This covers the Special Ed tester service, which is a requirement. Gaylen Branton seconded the motion. Gaylen Branton—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, and Arlis Young—Aye.

There were no new purchase requests and there was no new business. Arlis Young moved to adjourn the meeting. Robert Spaulding seconded the motion. Gaylen Branton—Aye, Robert Spaulding—Aye, Bruce Roebuck—Aye, Angella Dancer—Aye, and Arlis Young—Aye.

Robert Spaulding
Robert Spaulding
Angella Dancer
Bruce Roebuck