

Board of Education
Board Retreat and Budget Hearing Minutes
March 10, 2021, 9:00 A.M.
Gilmer County, Georgia

Gilmer County Board of Education

Members and Staff present: Dr. Shanna Downs, Michael Bramlett, Doug Pritchett, Ronald Watkins, Michael Parks, Joe Pflueger, Kim Cagle, Trina Penland, Lottie Mitchell, Lindy Patterson, John Call, Bob Sosebee, Jessica Chastain, Matt Johnson, Nicole Pike, Lauree Pierce, Stephanie Burnette, Charles Walker, Carla Foley, James Jones and Emily Plumley

Guest present: Dr. Sandy Addis, Georgia Leadership Associates

- I. The meeting was called to order at **8:30 am** by Chairman Ronald Watkins.
- II. Dr. Downs recommended that the board approve the agenda for the retreat. Motion by Mr. Bramlett and second by Mr. Pritchett. Motion Carried. All voted Yes.
- III. Dr. Downs explained that according to Roberts Rules of Order when a meeting resolves itself into Committee of the Whole, discussion is freer and limitations are removed regarding the number of times a board member can speak in a debate. Dr. Downs recommended that the board resolve itself to a Committee of the Whole to participate in the annually required 3 hours of whole board training. Motion by Mr. Pritchett and second by Mr. Bramlett. Motion Carried. All voted Yes.
- IV. Board participated in whole board training conducted by Dr. Sandy Addis from Georgia Leadership Associates. Dr. Addis trained the Board on Board Roles and Responsibilities as a committee of the whole.
- V. **11:30am:** Working Lunch / Athletic Presentation: Mr. Matthew Johnson, Athletic Director and Gilmer High School Assistant Principal spoke to the Board regarding the success of the athletic program at Gilmer High.
- VI. **12:45pm:** Board Self-Assessment
- VII. **1:15pm:** Georgia Vision Project: Dr. Downs spoke to the Board regarding the Georgia Vision Project in relation to the Strategic Plan. Dr. Downs stated that the district has correlated the Georgia Vision Project's goals into the Strategic Plan.
- VIII. Dr. Downs stated that the Strategic Plan is divided into 5 target areas. Each area is led by a district director with background in each said area. Once the Strategic Plan was adopted every board meeting has revolved around it and the goals therein. Topics were discussed as follows:
 - Professional Learning Communities – District Principals
 - Academic Achievement – Lottie Mitchell, Assistant Superintendent of Academics
 - Parent and Community Engagement – Lindy Patterson, Director of Federal Programs and District Title XI Coordinator
 - High Performing Culture and Workforce – Kim Cagle, Assistant Superintendent of Human Resources

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- Operational Effectiveness – Jessica Chastain, Director of Student Services
- Fiscal Accountability – Trina Penland, Director of Finance

- IX. **4:00pm** Dr. Downs recommend to move from Committee of the Whole to Regular Session to conduct the first of two required annual Public Budget Hearings. Dr. Downs stated the public hearing has been advertised in the local paper, GCCSS website and posted outside the Administrative Technology Office as required by law. Motion by Mr. Bramlett second by Mr. Parks to move into Regular Session. Motion Carried. All voted Yes.

Dr. Downs noted that the advertisement for the budget hearing was in accordance with O.C.G.A. 20-2-167 which provides the opportunity for public comment on the budget for the 2021-2022 school year. Dr. Downs stated the board is planning the 2nd required Public Budget hearing for the Regular Session in May. At which time the board will seek public input and approve the FY22 tentative budget for advertisement in the local media. Dr. Downs explained a special called meeting would be held after advertising the tentative budget for the minimum of 14 days or the board will plan to approve the final budget at the boards Regular Session in June. Dr. Downs stated the budget is primarily developed by working from this year's numbers and investigating possible changes towards next year.

Dr. Downs reminded the Board that last year's Board retreat and public budget hearing took place exactly one week following the state mandated shutdown and it was quite the time of uncertainty. Noting the Board acted very conservative unknowing the final outcome of the pandemic and its impact on our community, state and national financial situation. In our current budget we planned on receiving state austerity cuts of around 10% or \$2.1 million, but as we received our proposed mid-term adjustment recently the state scaled back the amount of austerity and we received additional allotment funds of \$1 million dollars. The district has passed this budget relief to all parties impacted by the previous cuts such as principal budgets, special ed, ESOL, nursing& charter budget.

The current year was budgeted to the Districts our CARES I grant funds to supplement several general fund expenditures such as local tech, personnel, and additional expenses for COVID sanitation and supplies. Earlier this year the federal government issued another round of stimulus including CARES II funds to schools. The district plans on using these additional grant funds to offset the initial expense of custodial startup equipment and supplies as well as funding several local staffing positions for the next two years. Noting a significant decrease in FY 21 and FY 22 local salary expenses in the amended budget and five-year projection.

Recently the district used CARES funds to make purchases that have been deferred in previous years in order to save local funds. The Custodial start-up equipment and expenses are currently being purchased with part of the Cares II grant. Salaries will also be paid out of the grant for the remainder of the current fiscal year and FY 22. After that in FY 23 the general fund will incur an additional annual expense of \$267,000 over the cost of contracted custodial services.

Dr. Downs explained that 85% of GCCSS annual budget is personnel and that there is a projected increase in cost for selected positions. Dr. Downs also noted that TRS increase from 19.06% to 19.81% in FY 22. TRS had increased significantly over recent years from 11.41 in FY13 to 21.14% in FY20, however we saw a slight decrease last year and now an increase this year.

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- Chief Financial Officer, Trina Penland and Dr. Downs presented five-year budget projections focusing mainly on estimated changes in revenues and expenditures for FY22.

XI. **Public Participation:** None

X. **Adjourn:** Motion by Mr. Bramlett and second by Mr. Pritchett to adjourn the Budget Hearing. Motion Carried. All voted Yes. Meeting was adjourned at 4:48 p.m.

Shanna Downs, Ed.D., Superintendent

Mr. Watkins, Chairman

Submitted by: _____
Emily Plumley, Board Clerk