

**TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Monday, July 30, 2018
Municipal Complex, Committee Meeting Room, 3rd Floor
100 Ann Edwards Lane, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464**

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Guang Ming Whitley, Chair, and Kevin Cunnane

ABSENT: Tom O'Rourke

STAFF PRESENT: Eric DeMoura, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT: Kate Darby, CCSD Board of Trustees Chair; Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, Superintendent; Jeffrey Borowy, Chief Operating Officer, Reggie McNeil, Executive Director of Capital Programs, Michael Reidenbach, Director, Security & Emergency Management

Ms. Whitley called the meeting to order at 9:31 a.m.

1. Approval of Minutes from the February 5, 2018 meeting

Mr. Cunnane moved for approval; seconded by Ms. Whitley. All present voted in favor.

2. Public Comments

[None]

3. Presentation by Charleston County School District

Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, Superintendent, stated that she would like to make some brief comments about the three strategic priorities that the CCSD Board set for this year. The first strategic priority is to increase the percentage of students who are ready to be successful at the next level. Although she is unable to publicly release the results of the South Carolina testing at this time, they are certain that the students increased in approximately twelve out of fourteen categories. She said they are

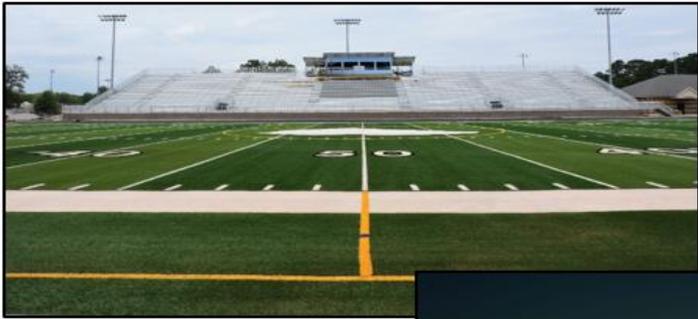
pleased with the progress being made. She said they do have challenges with students from low socio-economic families and the students that are represented in that group are over represented by children of color. She said they have much to do to close gaps between where children are and what true readiness is. She said they are very excited about the progress being made by the principals, teachers, students and parents. She said the second strategic priority is to ensure that CCSD attracts and keeps highly talented people. She said this year teachers received a significant pay raise from Charleston County, more than the state permitted in their budget. She said their goal is that by 2020 CCSD will be the highest paying district in the state so that they will attract talent. She said Charleston County is a high cost of living area and they want their teachers to know how much they value them. She said they also want to support their efforts in all their schools. She said they have added a premium for mathematics teachers, particularly those teaching at their 18 high poverty schools. She said they were pleased to see that this did not keep Mount Pleasant area schools from attracting, recruiting and keeping their own math teachers. She said CCSD has fewer teacher vacancies this year than in any previous years. She said the third strategic priority is to do more with diversity and to study the inequities and address them. She said diversity and inequity studies are ongoing with Clemson University assisting. She said there will be a huge effort to bring back strong recommendations to the Board to implement plans to remedy the gaps that CCSD has in program opportunities, access and success rates. She stated until this year in Mount Pleasant, they have not had an alternative program for students who are unable to maintain success in regular classrooms without disrupting the environment for themselves and others. She said this year at Wando High School, they will be starting an extension of the Turning Points program. She stated that within Districts 1 and 2, there will be direct service for students who need some alternative approaches in order to be successful without disrupting learning opportunities for others.

Jeffrey Borowy, Chief Operating Officer, stated that he would like to point out the calculation of funds spent in Mount Pleasant and across the

County since the building program began. He said 2000 was the first year of the kick-off which included the new Wando High School, leading to the remaining construction and renovation within the entire district. He said as of the end of this program (currently in the 2nd year of Phase 4 of the sales tax program, which will go through 2022), they will have invested \$500 million dollars in Mount Pleasant schools across that period of time which is a huge dollar figure.

Mr. Cunnane asked what the County total was. Mr. Borowy stated that it is estimated at \$2 billion. Mr. Cunnane asked what portion of the student body does Mount Pleasant represent?

Mr. Borowy said 14,000 of 50,000. He stated that this is approximately \$36,000 per student which is just below the county-wide average. He said one of the successful elements of Mount Pleasant is the ability to put more children in Mount Pleasant schools, which drives the per pupil cost down and allows them to build more. The schools are generally larger in Mount Pleasant which has created an environment where they are able to spend less money per student. He stated that looking at Capital, this next picture is one of the projects the Town will see this fall.



REGIONAL STADIUM

- 6000 seat capacity
- Will be ready for first game on 31 Aug
- Naming contract being developed



Charleston > excellence is our standard
County SCHOOL DISTRICT

He said for two years they went through a very interesting public process to decide where the stadium would be built, which is going to be located behind Wando High School. He stated that the home bleachers will have 4,000 seats and, in the center, there are flip-top seats so that the boosters will be able to utilize them to gain revenues for the clubs at Wando. He said the press box is double the size of the old one and has an elevator and a restroom. He said the field will be a top of the line artificial surface and it was decided to use cork infill. He said many of the stadiums use black rubber pellets; however, the school district decided upon cork, which is more expensive. He said that the field will not hold in as much heat as black rubber pellets and adds better cushion as well. He stated that they will also be resurfacing the track. He said the picture in the lower right is the entrance into the complex. It will be able to be personalized through LED lighting. He said they are hoping to be ready for the first home game on the 31st of August.

Mr. Borowy stated that one of the things the Board has allowed staff to do is pursue a "Naming Contract" that will hopefully allow them to gain some revenues, not only to maintain the field, because the maintenance funds are also part of the teacher's funding, so it will be a positive move to gain revenue to name the stadium and allow the resources they will need to maintain the stadium to remain in the classrooms and are hoping to push some of the funds to the two high schools as well. He said they may get some in-kind consideration such as scholarships, but they are hoping that some of the resources will be pushed to the two high schools.

Mr. Cunnane asked about a time-frame to announce the naming contract.

Mr. Borowy stated that they have not advertised the Naming Contract at this time. He stated that Mr. McNeil has a draft and they are hoping to release it this week. He does not anticipate awarding it prior to the first game. He stated that there will be restrictions such as alcohol, tobacco, firearms and others that do not look well on the school district itself. He stated that this is a nationwide trend.

Mr. Cunnane asked if there were plans to rent out the facility.

Mr. Borowy stated that they have the capability; however, they must have Board approval first.

Mr. Cunnane asked if the school district has had discussions with the two churches within sound distance of the stadium to talk about the sound.

Mr. Borowy stated that they had discussions in the past. He does not expect that the facility use will happen quickly. He said the old Wando stadium, which had a very good seating capacity was not leased at all.

Mr. DeMoura stated that Council is looking at the possibility of putting in artificial turf at one of the recreation complexes and asked if the Town could reach out to CCSD on cost and other details.

Mr. Borowy stated that a number of vendors approached CCSD and have a great deal of detail on what is available and competitively bid this project.

LUCY BECKHAM HIGH SCHOOL



- 1,500 student capacity
- Opens in Aug 2020 with 9th-10th grades
- Attendance zone to be determined by Constituent Board



He stated that everyone is aware that this school will be coming online in 2020 and the site elevation view in the top picture faces Mathis Ferry, which is on a 45-degree angle from the old Wando High School. He said the center of the complex is three stories and 240,000 square feet. He said they are anticipating 1,500 students beginning in 2020. He stated that the constituent board is beginning their rezoning process and are hoping to have this completed in a year so that by August of 2019, they will know which students will be attending. He said they have done a traffic study for this site, which was submitted to the Town for consideration as the site plan is developed for this project. He said the picture in the lower right is the Fine Arts entrance in the back, so there will be a separate entrance in the event of after hour events. He said on the opposite side of the Fine Arts Theatre is the gymnasium so both complexes will have access from the backside of the facility.

Mr. Cunnane asked Mr. DeMoura if the transportation study was received.

Mr. DeMoura stated that staff is still working through some of the transportation impacts especially as it gets closer to Highway 17. He said that the district has agreed to support the Town at some level with some of the improvements at the intersection. He said the Town has yet to finalize what those impacts are.

Mr. Cunnane asked if this could be brought to the Transportation Committee.

Mr. DeMoura stated that staff has already received approval from Committee to negotiate with the CCSD on some support. He said once negotiations have been completed, staff will inform Council members what has occurred, as well as the timeline for constructing those improvements.

Mr. Cunnane stated that one of the big issues he has been hearing from constituents is the addition of traffic onto US 17 from the Belle Hall area mostly to accommodate the two beach communities that want to attend the same school. He said the Belle Hall Community is very upset about

this and want their children to be able to bike to school and believes this is a reasonable request. He stated that this is not an unreasonable request.

Ms. Darby stated that she has also heard from many of the Belle Hall residents. She stated that the zoning decisions are made by the Constituent Board. She said the Belle Hall Community is upset about the Moultrie Middle School rezoning. She said based on what she has heard, she believes that Belle Hall children will be able to bike to school. She is not sure if both beach communities will be attending the Lucy Beckham High School, as the decision is made by the Constituent Board; however, once that decision is made, they will have a better idea of the traffic patterns. She said this is still being discussed, which will also have community input.

Mr. Cunnane asked if the junior high zoning is connected to the high school zoning.

Ms. Darby responded in the negative. She stated that it is not feasible.

Ms. Whitley asked if the Constituent Board has the final say or will it require CCSD Board approval.

Ms. Darby stated that the Constituent Board has the final say. She said there is an appeal process which has never been used.

Mr. Borowy stated that the next slide indicates other ongoing projects. He said Moultrie Middle School expansion will add a capacity of an additional 300 more students. He stated that construction bids will be opening soon. He stated that the expansion was one of the initial visions of his predecessor, Bill Lewis, to be able to do the expansion if the need arose. He said this is coming to fruition and the plan completion is August 2019. He said in the last sales tax referendum that was voted on, in addition to the capital construction, there was a placeholder put in for Capital Maintenance. He said the board has allocated approximately \$100 million dollars for capital maintenance over the six-year Phase 4 program, which is a building system replacement (roofs, flooring, bathrooms, windows). He said in addition to this the County Board this past year

approved a \$10 million dollar increase in what is called, “fixed cost of ownership”, so they have infused their program with a significant amount of funding. He stated that there is still a backlog of maintenance and repairs, but they are able to hold this steady with those increases in dollars.

OTHER CAPITAL/FACILITIES

- Moultrie MS Expansion
 - Will add capacity for 300 more students
 - Planned completion: Aug 2019
- Wando HS
 - Construction of entrance vestibule
 - Trailer improvements
- JB Edwards ES
 - HVAC and roof replacement
- Belle Hall ES
 - Restroom renovations

Total Capital Maintenance in Mt Pleasant Schools
(May-Dec 2018)= \$7.8 million

He stated that in the yellow banner, \$7.8 million dollars was allocated for Mount Pleasant schools alone for that six-month period between May and December. He said the highlights are those three schools (Wando High School, James B Edwards Elementary and Belle Hall Elementary). He said of big interest is creating an improved safer environment at Wando High School. He said they are creating a setting at the front entrance which will require you to “buzz-in” in order to enter. He said they are building a vestibule in the existing portico opening area for office space to be glassed in so that the inside door will require a buzzer in order to enter. He said they are doing the same thing at West Ashley High School. In addition to this, the trailers will also undergo repairs which CCSD hopes will carry them through until the new Lucy Beckham High School opens. He said there are large projects at JB Edwards Elementary school of approximately \$3 million dollars. He said this should carry them over well

until the next building program to be considered as a potential replacement for a new school at this site. He said at Belle Hall Elementary, there is a systematic plan to begin upgrades there, the first of which is a complete bathroom renovation this summer. He said there are 25 projects that make up the \$7.8 million design and construction across Mount Pleasant.

He stated that he will now discuss Security and Transportation.

OTHER OPERATIONS

- Transportation
 - State bus breakdowns reduced by 29% (last 4 mo. of school year)
 - “DriveCam” fully implemented
 - Driver count for new school year tracking well
 - Buses at Old Wando moved to Pinckney ES and Wando temporarily
- Security & Emergency Management
 - New camera system installed at Wando HS
 - An SRO in every school.....thanks Mt Pleasant!
 - Search team and emergency planner funded

He stated that there has been significant improvement in Transportation over the last few years and a big reason for this is that there is more analysis being done on break points. He said they have also finally started to see an influx of replacement state busses. He said there were a number of articles indicating how bad the state buses were. He said some were 17 and 20 years old with 300,000 to 400,000 miles on them. He said the state has provided approximately 80 new buses across the district, which is the main reason for the reduction in break-downs between the end of this year and the end of the previous year. He said from a safety perspective, they have also implemented “drive-cam” which is a camera

system on the driver, which identifies any erratic behavior. He said it is used as a training aid for the supervisor and driver to review the driver's reaction to a situation to see how to improve performance. He said this will be the first full year that this program will be in place. He said one of the biggest issues in Mount Pleasant is getting bus drivers. He said most commute into Mount Pleasant to drive buses and their current driver count is good. He said they attempt to maintain 110% of the drivers needed. He advised that they are looking to purchase a property for their bus parking and have the funding available. He said currently the buses are being parked behind Wando High School and between Pinckney and Laurel Hill schools in Park West. He stated that they hope to have a permanent location soon.

Mr. Borowy stated that one of the large Security projects that were completed this year was a complete overhaul of the Wando High School camera system. He said with a school this size, it is important to have coverage throughout. He said this was likely one of the biggest projects. He said that Mr. Reidenbach is provided with a budget of approximately \$5 million dollars a year, which includes replacing camera systems and staffing, which is an upgrade this year. He thanked Police Chief Carl Ritchie and the Town of Mount Pleasant for taking the lead to put SRO's (School Resource Officers) in elementary schools. He said that CCSD has held a number of round table discussions with parents and SRO's are the #1 request. He said in this fiscal year, the CCSD Board has allowed some funding to be transferred to the Town of Mount Pleasant to help pay for this effort. He said they are very thankful to Chief Ritchie for the Committee meetings that have just begun to bring the municipalities together to allow for discussions to improve the ability to protect the schools.

Ms. Whitley asked if Durham is an outsourced company and if they only operate the buses, but do not own them.

Mr. Borowy said that Durham is outsourced. He said CCSD receives state buses for state routes. He said if there is a route from his neighborhood to Wando High School, the state pays for this; however, it will not pay for

a route to Academic Magnet or School of the Arts. Therefore, the CCDS absorbs the entire cost for both the buses and the drivers for schools that are outside what is required by the state. He said that approximately two-thirds of the buses are owned by the state and the remainder are owned by Durham.

Ms. Whitley stated that when looking to purchase land for a bus lot, it will likely create some controversy and encouraged CCSD to seek land that is already zoned for this purpose.

Mr. Cunnane stated that in reference to the "drive-cam", he has had experience with this device and said it was distracting.

Mr. Borowy stated that he is not sure about any distraction with the newer version that they have. He said a great deal of research went into the "drive-cam" and the most negative comment was the feeling that someone was out to get them in order to fire them. He said the primary reason for the "drive-cam" is to improve the bus driver's performance.

Mr. Cunnane asked if any subpoenas have been issued by people requesting footage.

Ms. Whitley asked if any or a percentage of the buses had seatbelts.

Mr. Borowy stated that none of the buses have seatbelts. He said there are several school districts that do have seatbelts. He said one of the common misconceptions is that it makes the bus safer; however, the concern with a rollover or a bus falling on its side, is the challenge of getting all the children out in time, especially if it involves a fire. He said to evacuate a bus that is full of children that are strapped in would be extremely challenging. He said another aspect or challenge is getting the children into their seats and putting on their seatbelts consistently. He said CCSD will watch to see if the state moves in that direction.

Mr. Borowy stated that the last point is that CCSD Board voted to increase Mr. Reidenbach's funding by \$2.5 million dollars this year. He said including the SRO's pay, these funds will also pay for a search team. He said CCSD currently depends upon the faculty to do random contraband inspections or reviews which is used as a deterrent to keep

students from bringing things into the schools that they should not. He said funding a roving search team that will be scheduled around the district will alleviate that burden from the faculty and provide more consistent coverage across the district. He said the Emergency Planner position will allow a dedicated person to focus on each school, which has a facility response plan; however, each school is different due to the setting and environment. He said this position will help the schools better prepare for an emergency and protect themselves during an emergency and respond if something negative occurs.

Ms. Darby stated that when she was elected in 2014, one of the things she has mentioned to the superintendent and Mr. Borowy is that she wished they could replicate across the district, the relationship that CCSD has with the Town of Mount Pleasant. She stated that prior to Mr. DeMoura being in his current role as Town Administrator, he suggested creating a Blue Ribbon Study Committee and both Councilmen Bob Brimmer and Tom O'Rourke sat on the initial Committee. She said they spent almost one year looking at all aspects of Mount Pleasant Schools. She said they made recommendations and the two main recommendations were more autonomy for the high performing schools and the second was recommendations for the facilities plan. She said unlike any other portion of the County, Mount Pleasant residents and the Town were able to provide input into the size and growth patterns of the school, as well as ideas for temporary space. She thanked the Town for their leadership and the vision they have had when working with the schools and CCSD Board and Administration. She said there is no other municipality that contemplates the big picture like the Town does and it has made a tremendous difference in what CCSD is able to do from a capital standpoint and what is being done in the classrooms. She stated that the Town has some of the best schools in the country and believes it is the collaboration between the Town of Mount Pleasant and CCSD that makes this happen.

Ms. Whitley asked Mr. Borowy if he knew the dollar amount in the budget apportioned to help support the SRO's.

Mr. Borowy stated that it is \$36,000 per elementary SRO, which is just over a total of \$400,000.

Mr. Cunnane asked if this is an annual commitment.

Mr. Borowy responded in the affirmative.

Mr. Cunnane asked when the Town would receive the funding.

Mr. Borowy stated that the funding is available now. He said their budget year begins July 1st. He said the process should already be set up.

Mr. DeMoura stated that on the capital side, aside from the academic achievements, it has really been extraordinary. His assessment in early 2000, was that CCSD was faced with having to catch up on capital needs of the full district, county-wide, and it has been a massive capital campaign. He said over the course of almost two decades, the capital achievements of CCSD have been extraordinary and the Town of Mount Pleasant has been the beneficiary of several of them.

Mr. Cunnane directed his question to Superintendent, Dr. Gerrita Postlewait, and said as part of her presentation he thought he heard that mathematic teachers would be paid more in other schools than Mount Pleasant.

Dr. Postlewait said that CCSD has identified eighteen high poverty schools and CCSD is paying a premium to retain mathematics teachers in those high poverty schools.

Mr. Cunnane asked the amount of the premium.

Dr. Postlewait stated that the premium will bring the starting salary for mathematics teachers to \$45,000 versus the starting salary for other teachers at \$36,400.

Mr. Cunnane stated that he is appalled that CCSD is paying a lesser rate in the Town of Mount Pleasant and believes the public would also be appalled. He understands there are parameters that must be met in other areas but does not believe it is right.

Dr. Postlewait said she understands Mr. Cunnane's point of view; however, there is a national teacher crisis and in some other schools in this district, there were students that went an entire semester without a mathematics teacher. She said CCSD had to do something and this is a place to start, but not where they want to finish. She added that ultimately, they would like to see every teacher start at a much higher salary. She said this is a starting place, but certainly not the finish line.

Ms. Whitley stated that she disagrees with Mr. Cunnane and believes this is a good thing for the underperforming schools and their students who do not have a mathematics teacher. She said Mount Pleasant is considered a great place for teachers, so they actively seek to teach in Mount Pleasant schools, because there is so much support in the Town. She stated that she commends what is being done for the underprivileged schools.

Ms. Darby stated that in the budget approved this spring, they approved bringing all of the teachers' starting salary to \$40,000 over the course of two years. She said the average in the state of South Carolina is \$32,000 and as Dr. Postlewait mentioned, it is CCSD's goal to be the highest paying district. She said CCSD was desperate for math teachers and in the 50+ year history of CCSD, the high poverty schools have been underachieving. She said no one has been able to impact this.

Mr. Cunnane asked if this was an issue unique to Charleston County.

Ms. Darby stated that she believes it is an issue throughout the country; however, they are going to solve this in Charleston County. She said she has lived here for 30 years and different boards and superintendents have tried different things; however, they believe they are doing what needs to be done to get the best teachers into these 18 high poverty schools that have been identified and to get mathematics teachers, they need to be paid more. She said even the Mount Pleasant schools from 30 years ago have seen a phenomenal increase in achievement levels. She stated that some of their best teachers do not want to teach at the high poverty schools, because students are not prepared for school. She said it is not an issue of enough teachers. She said at North Charleston High

School last year, they did not have anyone to teach Algebra, which is not acceptable.

Ms. Whitley thanked the members of CCSD and said she is hopeful that this update can be accomplished on a quarterly basis.

4. Council recognition of academic excellence

Mr. Cunnane stated that this came as a result of a public complaint. He stated that a citizen attended a meeting and witnessed two sports teams being recognized and emailed Council to ask why academic excellence is not being honored. He stated that he originally thought to ask staff for ways to honor academic excellence; however, also thought about the SRO's (School Resource Officers), that are now in all the schools, who are familiar with the students. He said this could also be more than academics. He suggested an award that is not athletic based necessarily, but a way for the Town to recognize our youth.

Ms. Whitley stated that possibly having the valedictorians of the high schools come in and formally recognize them. She said the Committee could also direct staff to look at something such as the Kiwanis "Terrific Kids" awards, and have the SRO's identify children. She said at Mount Pleasant Academy an SRO took a student to lunch outside. She said having the SRO's identify some students may be a way to do this.

Mr. Cunnane stated that Chief Ritchie mentioned that they are already doing this, so he is hoping to elevate it to the Council level.

Police Chief Carl Ritchie stated that the police department currently has several programs in the elementary, middle and high schools where the SRO's (School Resource Officers), recognize a shining star. The program is intended to recognize those students who have excelled in the classroom and presented themselves as a good student. They are recognized with certificates signed by the Police Chief and the Mayor and is a pretty big deal. He said this could certainly be brought to a public forum.

Ms. Darby stated that CCSD also recognizes whether they are teams or groups that have academic success and can certainly let the Town know.

She said it is similar to the STEM award that Laing Middle School won. She said this would be focused on academics.

Ms. Whitley asked if a motion is needed or if they can simply encourage staff to seek out these opportunities to recognize once a quarter.

Mr. DeMoura stated that a motion is not necessary. He asked if this Committee would like for these recognitions to be acknowledged at this committee or at the Town Council level.

Mr. Cunnane stated that at this time of the year, it could be done at the Committee level; however, these recognitions would need to be held in the evenings at Council meetings. He said that he has also been thinking about suggesting a change in how Council recognizes individuals and groups, as Council seems to run out of time at the end of a meeting. He said perhaps the Town could do a quarterly awards program.

Mr. DeMoura stated that staff has direction and will at the Council level, look to recognize individuals such as valedictorians or Shining Stars and other academic achievements that come up during the year. He said the STEM award recognitions that were earned by Laing Middle School was a good example. He said staff will begin to incorporate this more.

5. Adjourn

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 10:17 a.m.

Respectfully submitted

Barbara Ashe

July 30, 2018