

Henderson County Board of Public Education
Special Called Business Meeting
Minutes
September 17, 2018

The Henderson County Board of Public Education met in a special called business meeting on September 17, 2018 in the Boardroom of the Administrative Offices located at 414 Fourth Avenue West, Hendersonville, N.C.

Board Members Present: Amy Lynn Holt, Chairperson; Rick Wood, Vice Chairperson; Michael Absher, Mary Louise Corn, Blair Craven and Lisa Edwards joined the meeting via Facetime.

Administrative Staff Present: Bo Caldwell, Ed.S., Superintendent; Jan King, Ed.D., Assistant Superintendent, Curriculum & Instruction; Rick Fender, Chief Technology Officer; and Scott Rhodes, Chief Human Resources Officer

Administrative Staff Absent: John Bryant, Ed.D., Associate Superintendent, Administrative Services and Bernie Sochia, Chief Finance Officer.

Attorney Present: None

CALL-TO-ORDER – PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairperson Amy Lynn Holt called the meeting to order at 12:00 p.m. Mrs. Holt led those in attendance in the pledge of allegiance to the American Flag.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Mr. Blair Craven moved that the agenda be approved as presented, seconded by Mrs. Mary Louise Corn. *(Unanimously approved.)*

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Chris Walters stated his disapproval with the ad hoc committee's decision to recommend ClarkNexsen as the architect to work on the Hendersonville High construction project. He said that he wanted more specifics regarding the statement made by Chad Roberson, of ClarkNexsen, at the September 14, 2018 meeting where he mentioned 'a lack of communication' as the main issue between county commissioners, school board members and ClarkNexsen. He also questioned what ClarkNexsen had learned recently that would make them the best candidate for this project going forward.

Mr. Ken Fitch stated his disapproval with the ad hoc committee's decision to recommend ClarkNexsen as the architect to work on the Hendersonville High construction project. He stated that he feels the school board is rushing its decision and that a full school board should have been involved in the architect decision. He thinks the firm of ClarkNexsen no longer enjoys the public trust. Mr. Fitch added that other firms brought much better presentations to the ad hoc committee on September 14. He pleaded that the board select a candidate that would bring a high level of respect and trust back to the project.

Mr. Davis Rhode stated his disapproval with the ad hoc committee's decision to recommend ClarkNexsen as the architect to work on the Hendersonville High construction project. He also commended Mr. Fitch on his passion and dedication in attending multiple meetings and presenting the truth in his public comments. Mr. Rhode stated he feels community voices are falling on deaf ears regarding the Hendersonville High project. He also stated that Henderson County is not a poor county and that the 20 million dollars once earmarked for a new shooting range could be used for this project.

NEW BUSINESS

Approval – Ad Hoc Committee Architect Recommendation – (Mrs. Amy Lynn Holt, Chairperson)

Mrs. Holt opened the discussion with the following statements:

- The Ad Hoc Committee was appointed to interview architects for HHS and make a recommendation to the Board of Education
- Committee met in public session and interviewed architectural firms on Friday, September 14th.
- The Committee voted and ranked ClarkNexsen first and PFA second.
- At this time, the Board of Education needs to vote on the committee's recommendation. We have 6 board members; therefore, a tie vote is a possibility. In the event that the committee's recommendation does not receive at least 4 votes or ties, I will accept a motion to approve the second choice of the committee. If that motion does not receive at least 4 votes or ties, I will accept a motion for the Board of Education to receive additional presentations directly from ClarkNexsen and PFA at a future meeting.
- After each motion and second, I will ask for any discussion, HOWEVER – please remember that, by law, the Board of Education cannot and should not discuss the possible “fee for service” of either firm. The fee for service of the selected firm will be determined in a subsequent discussion with the firm and the Board of Education and County.
- The fact that ClarkNexsen was previously the architect and the fact that the firm has already done work may be reused and are relevant topics for any discussion today.

After the opening comments, Mrs. Holt stated that the Chair would accept a motion to accept the recommendation of the committee and select ClarkNexsen as the project architect for Hendersonville High School and authorize the Superintendent and Chair to enter into negotiations with ClarkNexsen and the County of Henderson for an appropriate contract. A motion was made by Mrs. Mary Louise Corn to to accept the recommendation of the committee and select ClarkNexsen as the project architect for Hendersonville High School and authorize the Superintendent and Chair to enter into negotiations with ClarkNexsen and the County of Henderson for an appropriate contract. Mr. Rick Wood seconded the motion. Mrs. Holt opened the floor for board discussion.

Board member Blair Craven began by stating that he felt all board members should disclose how they voted on September 14 after the architects' presentations. He stated that his first place vote went to PFA, his second place vote went to McMillan Pazdan

Smith; his third place vote went to ClarkNexsen and fourth place to Novus. He reiterated that he felt all board members should disclose their votes as well. Chair, Amy Lynn Holt stated that her choices were as follows: first, PFA; second, McMillan Pazden Smith; third, ClarkNexsen and fourth, Novus. Vice Chair, Rick Wood stated that Mr. Craven presented the idea of having an ad hoc committee for this selection process and the full board approved his recommendation. Four board members, Mrs. Holt, Mr. Wood, Mr. Absher and Mr. Craven, volunteered to serve on the ad hoc committee along with Superintendent Caldwell, Associate Superintendent Dr. John Bryant and Director Kent Parent. Mr. Wood stated that he heard no opposition to the formation of the ad hoc committee when the decision was made. With their extensive knowledge on previous building projects, Mr. Wood welcomed the votes of Mr. Caldwell, Dr. Bryant and Mr. Parent. He continued by saying that the ad hoc committee voted 5-2 to select ClarkNexsen as the recommended architect to proceed with for the Hendersonville High project. Mrs. Holt reminded those in attendance that the written ballot vote process was used so that board members would not be influenced by prior discussion of the presentations. Mr. Wood stated that he wasn't sure why Mr. Craven was calling for an open accounting of votes from the prior meeting at this time. He continued by encouraging all board members to vote in favor of the motion before them to accept the ad hoc committee recommendation of ClarkNexsen.

Mrs. Mary Louise Corn stated that the board went thorough the ad hoc committee process and that the full board should vote to approve the committee's recommendation. She continued by saying as far as consistency and openness, she feels the ad hoc committee did their due process. She also questioned why the board had gone through the ad hoc process if board members were not willing to accept the recommendation. She called for a unanimous vote to approve the ad hoc committee recommendation.

Mr. Craven replied that his request for the disclosure of committee votes was due to Mr. Wood's insistence on transparency. He continued by stating the suggestion of a unanimous vote by board members was ridiculous. He again stated that committee members should release whom they voted for because the public had the right to know. He added that ClarkNexsen did not give the best presentation at the September 14th meeting, and that is what his decision was based upon.

Mrs. Lisa Edwards joined the conversation via computer since she was currently out of town. She stated that since the board members seemed to be at an impasse, that the full board should see both firm's presentations and then make a decision.

Mr. Michael Absher added that he also believed that the ad hoc committee recommendation should be approved. He felt the four companies' presentations showed varying approaches and he reminded the board that this was just a starting point, to open negotiations with ClarkNexsen. He mentioned the time constraints put upon the school board by county commissioners and that ClarkNexsen had the background information to proceed quickly while choosing another firm would cost more money and time.

Mr. Craven reiterated his lack of trust with ClarkNexsen and said he could not get past feeling deceived by the firm. Mr. Craven called for a vote on the motion before the board.

Board members Michael Absher, Mary Louise Corn and Rick Wood voted for the motion to work with Clark Nexsen, while Blair Craven, Lisa Edwards and Amy Lynn Holt voted against. The vote ended in a 3-3 tie.

Mr. Craven then made a motion to accept the recommendation of the committee regarding its second choice of PFA as the project architect for HHS and authorize the Superintendent and Chair to enter into negotiations with PFA and the County of Henderson for an appropriate contract. No second was made to the motion.

The final motion, to request that ClarkNexsen and PFA make their presentations to the full Board of Education for the final selection of a project architect for HHS, was presented by Mrs. Corn. Mr. Wood seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

The board is scheduled to meet on Thursday, September 27, at 9:00 a.m. to hear proposals from ClarkNexsen and PFA.

Mr. Craven made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Mrs. Corn. The meeting adjourned at 12:50 p.m.

Minutes approved: October 9, 2018