

**THE BOARD OF EDUCATION OF
YOUNGSTOWN CITY SCHOOL DISTRICT
YOUNGSTOWN, OHIO**

20 West Wood Street

August 22, 2017

The Youngstown Board of Education met in regular session at the I.L. Ward Building on August 22, 2017. The meeting was called to order at 4:32 p.m. by President Brenda Kimble. The meeting opened with the Pledge of Allegiance followed by a moment of silence.

Roll call was taken with the following board members in attendance:

Members present:

Murphy, Sanderson, Williams, Adair, Hunter, Kimble

Shadd (4:40 pm)

APPROVE AGENDA

It was motioned by Mr. Murphy, seconded by Mr. Williams to approve the agenda for August 22, 2017.

Discussion: Ms. Adair asked the board to move the executive session to follow the approval of the minutes because there was a scheduled skype session. Ms. Sanderson asked when the agenda came out because she had not received one and Mr. Hunter said he had received his on the date of the meeting. Mr. Murphy stated the agendas had been sent out during the week. Ms. Kimble reminded Ms. Adair that executive session could be held at any time during the meeting.

On roll call the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Murphy, Williams, Adair, Kimble

Nays:

Abstain: Sanderson, Hunter

Absent for vote: Shadd

Motion passed.

It was motioned by Ms. Adair and seconded by Ms. Kimble to go into an executive session for an interview to contract with an individual for business reasons. Mr. Hunter then said that this was not one of the allowable reasons for an executive session. Ms. Adair rephrased the motion saying to enter into executive session for the possible appointment or employment of an individual.

On roll call the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Murphy, Sanderson, Williams, Adair, Kimble, Hunter

Nays:

Absent for vote: Shadd

Motion passed.

The board entered into executive session at 4:38pm.

The board exited executive session at 5:05 pm.

The meeting was called back to order at 5:10 pm.

APPROVE MINUTES

It was motioned by Mr. Murphy and seconded by Mr. Williams to approve the minutes from June 2, 2017, June 13, 2017 and June 19, 2017.

On discussion Mr. Hunter asked about the problem that has happened with problems with the recordings of the meetings. Ms. Tyson explained the issue with the recorder and that she and Mr. Hopkinson were looking into the problem.

On roll call the vote was as follows:

Ayes: Murphy, Sanderson, Shadd, Williams, Kimble

Nays: Hunter

Abstain: Adair

Motion passed.

CITIZEN'S PARTICIPATION

Morris Parke from Adopt-A-School – Mr. Parke wanted to know why the Youngstown City School District discontinued Adopt-A-School. He stated that the program was just smashed and that was wrong. He said this year there was no appreciation luncheon for the adopters. He also said the adopters had provided scholarships and many other things for students in the district and to just abolish the program was wrong.

TREASURER'S REPORT

The treasurer spoke to the board members about the Board Docs presentation asking if anyone would be able to register for the free webinar on August 24, 2017 and discussed briefly the relocation of the Treasurer's office out of the Ward building.

Ms. Adair talked about the payments to the two law firms being used by the CEO, stating that a report from the treasurer showed that the payments totaled \$905,699 up to June of 2017. Ms. Adair said these payments were outrageous and recommended by virtue of motion or a resolution if necessary for a committee with the authority to seek legal advice on the CEO's authority to spend more local funds on two law firms for his decisions. Ms. Adair said he is not an employee of the district and it is her opinion that not only his salary but his legal fees must be paid for by the state. Ms. Adair also asked about an expense check that was paid to the CEO and Ms. Tyson told her she was waiting on a reply from the Ohio Department of Education to find out how to get a refund for the CEO when he attends professional development.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Mr. Meranto talked about all the upcoming events that would be happening in the district prior to the opening of school. He talked about the orientation that was currently going on for 70 new teachers and the retreat that was in also in progress at MCEC for principals. He spoke about the professional development and opening day for all teachers being held at East.

Ms. Adair asked if there were teachers hired for math, science and special education. Mr. Meranto said he did not know specifically but he knew that they had been out recruiting teachers since spring. She also wanted to know if any of the 70 new teachers were minorities. Mr. Meranto said he did not know but he could say that human resources is doing all that they can to recruit teachers.

Mr. Shadd asked about the athletic cards for the board members to get into the games and Mr. Meranto said he would make sure they received those cards. Mr. Shadd also asked did the reconfiguration of the schools cause a greater shortage of teachers and Mr. Meranto said he did not think that was the case. Mr. Shadd said he had a problem with the STEM and VPA programs being moved from Chaney and he did not see them being implemented at East and did not see how the programs were going to have the same significance. Mr. Meranto said the intent is that all programs will be available to all students. Mr. Shadd asked about the Ipad that came through the Apple grant questioning whether we had breached the contract and Mr. Meranto stated there was no problem and the issue had been looked into prior to the change. Mr. Meranto said at East and Choffin all students have chrome books and once again he said the intent is that all students get the same opportunities.

BOARD MEMBERS COMMENTS

Ms. Adair said there is still an issue between the communication between the CEO, his staff and the board. She thanked Mr. Meranto for attending the meeting but said she would prefer to hear answers from the CEO. Ms. Adair said she was made aware of a meeting that the CEO recently had with the NAACP officers and a group of community members. She said CEO Mohip met them at their headquarters and was very open with them. He informed them of the appointment of Nick Santucci to the commission, but the board had not been informed. She said 50 to 60 teachers needing improvement will be assigned a mentor and she said he informed them about the number of people that had volunteered for his citizens committee and how many of them he would keep. Ms. Adair said she strongly believes that the citizens group is his latest attempt to keep the board in the dark. She said she knows that he did not tell these folks if they want answers they have to attend his meetings. She said she knows he has not told these groups that he will only accept written questions twice a month and to expect answers in ten days after written requests are submitted. CEO Mohip has not provided answers in ten days or for that matter at all. Ms. Adair said she had been waiting for answers to several questions since the fall. Ms. Adair said that most board members had not been waiting as long as she had but long enough to trigger a law suit to have the CEO provide the documents, why do we have to do that? Ms. Adair stated that under HB70 the board, not the NAACP or the citizens group will be held accountable for the academic failure of this CEO and his staff. Ms. Adair said elections in this county are supposed to mean something but under these circumstances she guesses not.

Mr. Williams had no comment but gave two of his minutes to Ms. Adair.

Mr. Murphy said we share an HR person with the county but with a school district this size he said he thinks the district needs their own HR person so that they can answer questions that the teachers have about their contracts and they will not have to wait until the day she is in the districts office.

Ms. Sanderson said she did see in the minutes of June 13, where Ms. Adair requested specific evaluations and the CEO is well over his 30 days to respond. Ms. Sanderson also said she had just received the request regarding Ennis Britton and it was only 50% of what she really wanted and could not see where the firm had earned the amount of money the district has paid. She commended the Amanda, the Vindicator reporter for the article she wrote on the kickback money scheme some issues that were prompted from Dario Hunters public record request about some of the contract and ties the district was coming into with Mr. Mohip. She stated that there were concerns about contracts being entered into by Mr. Mohip and the money being spent on the law firms. She said the taxpayers have a right to know and if it is not lawful she does not want to be a part of anything that is not lawful.

Mr. Shadd said he was still upset with the situation going on with the senior class and how Mr. Mohip said he is going to refuse to provide transportation to those children. We transport over 5,000 kids outside of our district daily and we need to help our seniors through this last year so that they can graduate and achieve all the things they want to do. They should be able to do that in the environment that they have been accustomed to being in and his stipulation and requirement of 95% attendance, 2.0 GPA and that the parents transport these children is ridiculous. He said we should stick with the children and let them stay in the school that they have been going to for the past years. He said he did not see how moving those students would be good for their success. He said part of HB70 taking place is Choffin being run by MCCTC. Mr. Shadd said he has requested a copy of the strategic plan and any contracts that MCCTC has entered into that will impact Choffin but he said he has not received any response from the yet but there time was not up. He said they needed to have a meeting with the managerial team over Choffin to find out more about that relationship. The contract is for three years and as a board Mr. Shadd they needed to be able to monitor that process to see if it is beneficial to continue in a fourth year or even a second year. Mr. Shadd said Mr. Mohip had made a comment about not having math teachers in certain areas for four years and he requested the evidence to support those statements. He wants information to find out if all the people that he has in place meet all the necessary qualifications and he has requested that data too.

Mr. Hunter thanked his fellow board members for their many concerns and demonstrating that an elected board can put forward concerns that speak to the general public's concerns of our children's future and our city's future. He said I think some people are beginning to forget that – thank you for reminding them. Mr. Hunter said when you work with children you have to be in it for the right reasons, you have to take the right approach and you have to have a real plan for doing so. Ms. Hunter said it is appalling that apparently the CEO is allegedly taking kickbacks from a company that we contract with. He said the CEO has admitted that he has been working for, has received pay from a company that is connected to a company we contract with. He said it is highly unethical and extremely unfortunate and a sign of someone not being in it for the right reasons. Mr. Hunter said Ms. Adair alluded to a lawsuit he had filed in the Supreme Court of Ohio had to do with the fact that Mohip would not give over public records relating to Atlantic Research, the same company the district contracted with which is connected to a company that is paying him and we all know now clearly why he did not want to turn over those records because the request he made was getting a little too close to home. Another person who worked for this

company was the disgraced former superintendent of Chicago Public Schools who was sent to prison. Mr. Hunter said we have enough corruption in Youngstown and we do not need any Chicago style, prison bound kickback scheme. When you ask for public records you should be able to get them. Mr. Hunter said he hopes they get to the root of this kickback scheme and that all parties involved get the full weight of the justice system brought upon them. Mr. Hunter said he is dismayed about all the violence in the district and he is concerned that they are moving away from the clear book bags. Mr. Hunter said it has come to light that some members on the board were involved with making sure certain candidates end up on the ballot for school board by finagling petitions. A complaint/protest has already been filed with the board of elections. It involved one family circulating petitions for a fellow family members or affiliates for their cause. Mr. Hunter said part of the reason he brought this up is because the board has been dysfunctional for years and part of the reason for that is because people are busy spinning their own personal agendas and family agendas. He ended by saying when are we as a community going to say enough , when are we as a community finally going to make the most of our elected members while we still have them.

Ms. Kimble said the appointment of the fifth member of the academic commission was unethical. She said Nick Santucci was hired by the Youngstown Warren Regional Chamber and the Youngstown Foundation and was hired during the time of the creation of HB70. Ms. Kimble said Mr. Santucci is not in favor of Youngstown City Schools. Ms. Kimble said he spoke to her and told her she needed to shut her mouth, shut down the preachers and be a part of bringing the CEO into the district. Ms. Kimble talked about an article that was in the paper regarding the finances of the district and a resolution that was voted on by the board that CEO Mohip commented on eluding that the board did not understand the resolution. Ms. Kimble said they understand that they turned the district over to him in the black and as elected officials they will continue to monitor tax payer's dollars that are spent in this district and hold him accountable. She said this is about our children and ended by saying he was brought her for academics not business.

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Ms. Adair said she was still not receiving robo calls and she wanted to know what was happening with the lawsuit over the student dragging incident and she wanted some clarification about what the board was going to do about Marty Hume.

NEW BUSINESS

Mr. Shadd asked Ms. Adair for time that their committee could meet. Ms. Adair said she was reneging from the committee because she felt HB0 would be better handled by a lawyer. Mr. Shadd then asked if anyone else would like to be on the committee and Ms. Kimble said she would be willing to be a part of the committee.

Ms. Adair spoke about the CEO's association with a company that he is working as a no fee consultant. Ms. Adair said it is rumored that this company has a million dollar contract with the district to provide training for principals to improve their performance. Ms. Adair said the board has to be diligent in asking for information regarding these contracts. Ms. Kimble said that even if you are a consultant you should not enter into a contract with the district because it is unethical.

ADJOURN MEETING

Motion by Ms. Adair and seconded by Mr. Shadd to adjourn the meeting. All members were in favor.

Motion passed; meeting ended at 6:14 p.m.

President

Treasurer