

**GREENE COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION**  
**James W. Parham Central Office Complex**  
**August 9, 2018 – Called Meeting – Minutes**

The Greene County Board of Education met in Called session Thursday, August 9, 2018, at 5:30p.m., at the James W. Parham Central Office Complex.

Chairman Rick Tipton called the meeting to order and noted that all Board members were present as well as County Attorney, Roger Woolsey. The pledge was led by Tom Cobble and Nathan Brown led the Invocation.

III. New Business

- A. Approve the construction of a new consolidated 2,200 seat high school only at a cost of \$79 million as recommended and approved by the Education Committee of the Greene County Legislative Body at its meeting on July 26, 2018. At that meeting the Education Committee voted to sponsor a resolution for the County Commission's consideration to fund only the high school portion of Recommendation I that was approved by the Board of Education on December 14, 2017. (III-A)

Chairman Rick Tipton stated that the Board had voted 6 – 1 at a prior meeting on how to move forward with Greene County Schools and that recommendation was presented to the Education Committee of The Greene County Legislative Body and the Budget and Finance Committee. The Education Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee recommended a resolution to lower the amount to \$79 and closing schools has been removed from the recommendation at this time. The new resolution recommends \$79 million and the \$11 million to renovate the high schools to middle schools has been removed.

Approve the resolution of \$79 million dollars by the Education Committee and the Budget and Finance Committee.

On motion Made by Tom Cobble                      Seconded by Brian Wilhoit

**Vote: 6 – 1**

Greene County Board of Education member Kathy Austin read a prepared statement at the called meeting Thursday, voicing her disapproval for the Board's decision to approve a \$79 million school consolidation resolution and gave a recap of the previous meetings regarding consolidation. Ms.

Austin read through an email exchange between Mr. McLain and TSBA attorneys to address the question on whether a Called Meeting of the Board was required to take this recommendation to the Education Committee. *(For more details see The Greeneville Sun, August, 10, 2018; Page 1 and page 9A)*

Chairman Tipton stated that there was no resolution sent by the Board and that the approved \$90 million dollar recommendation is what went to the Education Committee and nothing was said about a resolution.

David McLain stated that all of the emails were not shared from Mr. Bennett and noted that he was merely looking for counsel as to whether we needed to have another Board meeting and no doubt if the attorneys had said we needed to have another meeting, we would have had a meeting. He said what was sent to the Education Committee is exactly what the Board voted on and approved in December. He added that in the emails not shared by Mr. Bennett, he did tell them about the April meeting and the discussion of waiting, so that the public could gain more education about the plan. Mr. Bennett responded that the bottom line was, the motion that was passed, is all that mattered, and it was not formally amended by the Board and has no bearing on what was passed.

Chairman Tipton asked County Attorney, Roger Woolsey if they had violated any rules or laws and to clarify if we even needed to have this meeting. Mr. Woolsey said that he saw the same emails and in his opinion Mr. Bennett clearly stated that there was no action taken in April. He also noted that a Commissioner had contacted him to prepare an alternate resolution and he had prepared that document for the Commissioner and clarified that it did not come from anyone on the Board or the Director of Schools. He stated that he and Mr. Bennett agreed that any decision by the Board requires a vote if they expect it to have the force of the Board. No formal amendment was made and what was discussed has no effect on what was voted.

Mr. McLain noted that he sent the entire discussion from the April meeting to Mr. Bennett and his response was "bottom line, the motion that passed was all that mattered". Mr. McLain added that the amount was never changed and that was what was taken to the Education Committee.

Kathy Austin recommended to always require a vote and not to trust an agreement.

Clark Justis stated that we have a Policy that states that if an item passes by majority vote of the Board and you are on the opposing side, you are to accept the will of the Board and give support to the resulting decision. Ms. Austin stated that she still has a right to her opinion and what her constituents want. Nathan Brown agreed with Mr. Justis and added that it is okay to agree to disagree or have disagreement but under the policy for the duties of an individual Board member you are to "accept the will of the majority vote in all cases and give support to the resulting action" and indicated to Ms. Austin that at no time, or in any case, either here or out in the public, and that she had undermined it and been against it from day one and that was the disappointing part. Ms. Austin stated that she would continue to be against it.

**Question: Tom Cobble; Seconded by Michelle Holt**

**Vote: 6 -1**

- I. Announcements
- II. Next Regular Meeting
  - Date: Thursday, August 23, 2018
  - Time: 5:30 p.m.
  - Place: James W. Parham Central Office Complex
- III. Adjournment: On Motion by Tom Cobble; Seconded by Michelle Holt and with no further business the meeting adjourned at 6:01 p.m.