

Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired

Board Meeting Minutes

August 4, 2023

Call to Order

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President called to order the meeting of Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired Board of Trustees at 10:15 a.m. on Friday August 4, 2023.

Introduction of Board Members and Audience

Board members present were:

Lee Sonnenberg, Julie Prause, Maghan Gautney, Elaine Robertson, Ernest Worthington, Brenda Lee, and Dan Brown. Beth Jones attended the meeting via Zoom.

Audience members present were:

Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Veronica Keating, Executive Assistant; Colin Higginbotham, IR; Alex Arguello, Community Engagement; Ann Du, CFO; Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director; Scott Brackett, IR Director; Kate Borg, Outreach Director; Sara Merritt, STP Principal; Cheryl Williams, HR Director; Jenny Wells, General Counsel; and Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator.

Public Comments/Open Forum

There was no one signed up for public comment.

Consideration of Approval of Minutes of May 25, 2023 Board Meeting

Julie Prause motioned to approve the Minutes of the May 25, 2023 board meeting. Elaine Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion to approve the minutes passed.

Report from the Finance Committee

a. Consideration of approval of Investment Report

The Finance Committee recommended approval of the Investment Report for the ten month period ending on June 30, 2023; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve the Investment Report and the motion passed.

b. Consideration of approval of receipt of gifts and donations of over \$500,

The Finance Committee recommended the approval of receipt of gifts and donations over \$500; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

c. Consideration of approval of request for expenditure of gifts and donations

There were no requests for expenditures of gifts and donations.

d. Review of budget reports

➤ Operating Budget Expenditure Report

Ms. Prause reported the total donations received for the ten month period ending June 30, 2023 was \$43,148.95.

➤ Legacy Revenue Budget Report

Ms. Prause stated the benchmark for the Legacy Revenue budget report for the ten month period ending June 30, 2023 was 83 percent. The percentage of revenues received was 99 percent.

➤ **Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report**

The benchmark for the percent of budget used was 83 percent. The total budget used for all in state treasury for the 10 month period ending on June 30, 2023 was 78 percent.

Report from the Program Committee

a. **Consideration of approval of board policy:**

FFAC (TSBVI) Wellness and Health Services: Medical Treatment

Brenda Lee reported that the Program Committee recommended approval of Policy FFAC (TSBVI) Wellness and Health Services: Medical Treatment; therefore, a second is not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

b. **Consideration of approval of changes to the Student Code of Conduct for the 2023-2024 school year**

The Program Committee recommended the approval of the changes to the Student Code of Conduct to include changes to e-cigarettes and vaping discipline; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

c. **Report from Curriculum Department Director**

➤ **Consideration of membership to the School Health Advisory Council (SHAC)**

Ms. Lee listed the proposed members to serve on the SHAC for the 2023-2024 school year. They were: Parent/Guardian representatives; Mara LaViola, Milka Cox, and Cassandra Hernandez. TSBVI staff member representatives; Ria Ferich; TSBVI School Counselor, and Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director. The Committee recommended the approval of the proposed members; therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

➤ **Consideration of adoption of a resolution to convene the TSBVI School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to recommend curriculum and instructional materials related to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking**

The Program Committee recommended adoption of a resolution to convene the TSBVI School Health Advisory Council (SHAC) to recommend curriculum and instructional materials related to the prevention of child abuse, family violence, dating violence, and sex trafficking, therefore, a second was not required. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

➤ **Consideration of approval of TSBVI local credit courses**

The Program Committee recommended approval of the following local credit courses:

Middle School courses including Career Development – General Employability, Expanded Core Curriculum and Other Electives – Braille, Expanded Core Curriculum Topics, and Academic Support

High School courses including English Language Arts and Reading, College and Career Readiness, Work Exploration, Work Training, Expanded Core Curriculum and Other Electives, Academic Support, and EXIT (Experiences in Transition) courses.

Since the Program Committee recommended approval of the local credit courses, no second was required. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Consideration of Approval of Operating Budget and Personnel Budget for 2023-2024

Ms. Du presented a summary of proposed budget changes for fiscal year 2024 and explained that the final salary numbers related to contract positions would not be made final until September 2023.

Dan Brown moved to approve the Operating Budget and Personnel Budget for 2023-2024. Ernest Worthington seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Consideration of Superintendent's Salary for 2023-2024

Mr. Sonnenberg stated the Board would recess the open session and convene in a closed meeting to discuss the following item listed under agenda item #8 – 'Consideration of Superintendent's Salary for 2023-2024' in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.074 – Personnel Matters.

No voting would take place in the closed meeting. Any action the Board wished to take as a result of discussions in closed meeting would take place after the Board reconvened in the open meeting. It was 10:54 a.m.

At 11:17 a.m., the Board reconvened in open session.

Mr. Sonnenberg stated that Superintendent Coleman has been dedicated and grateful for her position. He stated that he did not submit her paperwork to the Governor's office and the Legislative Budget Board in time last year; therefore, she did not receive a pay increase.

Dan Brown made a motion Increase the salary above \$159,993 up to \$172,398, the amount established in the agency's bill pattern, effective as of 9/1/2023. Brenda Lee seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Brenda Lee made a motion to authorize the Board President to submit a letter to the Governor's office and the Legislative Budget Board to request the Governor's Office and Legislative Budget Board to authorize a salary over \$172,398 up to \$177,824, which is 120% of the salary of the highest paid instructional administrator at the school, per Texas Education Code restrictions. \$177,824. Elaine Robertson seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously and the motion passed.

Consideration of Approval to Transfer Funds between Budgets

Mr. Sonnenberg stated that it was requested, for the year ending August 31, 2024, that the Board authorize the Superintendent to transfer up to 20 percent from any one appropriation item to another appropriation item for the purpose of consolidating any budget savings in departmental operating budgets, including those savings from lapsed salaries, to first cover any budget deficits that may occur in other departmental budgets or program cost accounts and then to utilize any additional savings to cover any emergencies or any unplanned expenditures that may occur during the fiscal year.

It is also requested that the Board authorize the Superintendent to transfer funds between the various projects within the Legacy Fund without limitation.

Elaine Robertson made a motion to approve the transfer of funds up to 20 percent of any one appropriation to another appropriation as well as transfer funds within the Legacy Fund without limitations. Maghan Gautney seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Consideration of Renewal of Internal Auditing Firm Contract for Garza/Gonzalez and Associates

Julie Prause moved to approve the renewal of the internal auditing firm contract for Garza/Gonzalez and Associates. Ernest Worthington seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Dan Brown made a motion to remove the Internal Auditor position posting. Brenda Lee seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously and the motion to remove the job posting passed.

Consideration of Approval of New Contract Staff

Emily Coleman stated there was one additional staff to add to the list of new contract staff provided to the Board Marissa Davila, Behavior Specialist. Elaine Robertson motioned to approve the new contract staff. Ernest Worthington seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Review of District Safety and Security Committee Meeting

Mr. Sonnenberg stated the Board would recess the open session and reconvene in a closed meeting to discuss the following items listed under agenda item #12 – ‘Review of District Safety and Security Committee Meeting and Agenda Item #13 – Consideration of Requirements of House Bill 3’ in conformance with Texas Government Code Section 551.076 – Deliberation Regarding Security Devices or Security Audits.

No voting would take place in the closed meeting. Any action the Board wished to take as a result of discussions in closed meeting would take place after the Board reconvened in the open meeting. It was 11:34 a.m.

At 12:10 p.m. and the Board convened in open session. No action was taken on the agenda item.

Consideration of Requirements of House Bill 3

Mr. Sonnenberg stated there were two actions taking place: addressing the requirement of an armed officer on campus and determining how to financially support the requirement.

Elaine Robertson motioned to obtain one officer for TSBVI’s campus to meet the requirements of House Bill 3. Dan Brown seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Dan moved motioned to authorize TSBVI to create a memorandum of understanding between the Texas Department of Public Safety or local police department to meet requirements for House Bill 3. Ernest Worthington seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Report from the Superintendent

a. Legislative activities

Ms. Coleman stated that the supplemental funding for salary increases was received from the Legislature.

b. Campus activities

Ms. Coleman stated that Summer Programs was a success. It was hot so activities included things like an outdoor bubble activity. She added that there was training taking place for new teachers. Lastly, registration day is August 14, 2023.

c. Superintendent activities

Ms. Coleman stated she was the MC at the Braille Challenge that was held at the end of June. She attended the NFB (National Federation of the Blind) convention. There were several TSBVI staff and students at the convention. Ms. Coleman attended the COSB Board meeting in L.A. She added that she completed summer TxTech classes and visited Washington State School for the Blind.

Discussion of Initiating the Superintendent's Formative Evaluation at the September Board Meeting

Cheryl Williams explained the process the Board would use for the Superintendent's formative evaluation at the September meeting.

Consideration of Approval of TASB Delegate and Alternate

Beth Jones volunteered to be the School's TASB delegate and Elaine Robertson volunteered as the alternate. Brenda motioned to approve Beth Jones as the School's TASB delegate and Elaine Robertson as the alternate. Dan Brown seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Consideration of Approval of Endorsement of Mary Jane Hetrick, Ph.D., as Region 13B Representative on the TASB Board of Directors

Elaine Robertson motioned to endorse Mary Jane Hetrick, Ph.D., as the Region 13B representative on the TASB (Texas Association of School Board of Directors). Brenda Lee seconded. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passed.

Consideration of Future Board Meeting Topics

The Board discussed the start time for the Strategic Planning meeting in September. They agreed on 10:00 a.m.

Announcements

Beth Jones shared that a module her two kids participated in with Described Captioned Media Production (DCMP) was out. Her children competed in the State, Regional and National show. Her daughter placed at regionals and nationals for the first time. Her son was selected as Junior National of the Year.

Ms. Robinson stated that she spoke at an assembly for new teachers at the school that was dedicated to she and her husband. She stated that she met a TSBVI alumni who spoke wonderful things about the School. She added that her son is getting married in February.

Adjournment

Julie Prause motioned to adjourn the Board of Trustees meeting for the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired. Brenda Lee seconded the motion to adjourn. The Board voted unanimously to approve and the motion passes. It was 12:42 p.m.