

**TEXAS SCHOOL FOR THE BLIND AND VISUALLY IMPAIRED  
BOARD MEETING MINUTES  
AUGUST 9, 2024**

**Call to Order**

Lee Sonnenberg, Board President called the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired meeting of the Board of Trustees to order at 8:02 a.m.

**Introduction of Board Members and Audience**

Board members present were: Lee Sonnenberg, Julie Prause, Dan Brown, Beth Jones, Elaine Robertson, Ernest Worthington, Hillary Rodriguez, Brenda Lee, and Maghan Gautney.

Audience members present were: Emily Coleman, Superintendent; Cheryl Williams, HR Director; Angela Wolf, Curriculum Director; Miles Fain, Principal; Cyrenna Villegas, Procurement Director; Brian Swegle, Operations Director; Scott Brackett, IR Director; Susan Houghtling, Planning and Evaluation Coordinator; Charles Singleton, Warehouse; Eden Hagelman, Assistant Principal; Matt Schultz, Residential Director; Ann Du, CFO; Colin Higginbotham, Outreach; and Veronica Keating, Executive Assistant.

Present via Zoom: Erica Cairns, Outreach Director.

**Administration of TSBVI Board Member Oaths of Office**

Lee Sonnenberg administered the Oath of Office for the reappointment of board member Julie Prause and newly appointed board member Hillary Rodriguez to the School's Board of Trustees.

The Board welcomed new board member Hillary Rodriguez and shared information about themselves.

**Recognition of Retiring TSBVI Staff Members**

Mr. Sonnenberg recognized retiring staff member Charles Singleton.

**Public Comments/Open Forum**

There was no one signed up for public comments.

**Consideration of Approval of Minutes of May 24, 2024 Board Meeting**

Julie Prause motioned to approve the May 24, 2024 board meeting minutes. Dan Brown seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

**Consideration of Approval of Investment Report**

Ann Du reported that the total earnings for the ten-month period ending June 30, 2024 were \$39,774. Dan Brown motioned to approve the investment report. Ernest Worthington seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

### **Consideration of Approval of Receipt of Gifts and Donations of Over \$500**

Ms. Du reported the donation of \$1,500 from the Lions Club of Lago Vista. Ms. Prause made a motion to approve the receipt of \$1,500 from the Lions Club. Ms. Robertson seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

### **Consideration of Approval of Request for Expenditure of Gifts and Donations**

There were no requests.

### **Review of Budget reports**

#### **□ Operating Budget Expenditure Report**

Ms. Du reported that, as of June 30, 2024, the benchmark set for the total percentage of the budget expended was 83%. The percentages of each budget strategy actually expended as of June 30, 2024 were: classroom instruction - 83%, residential program - 83%, summer and short-term programs - 54%, related and support services - 82%, technical assistance - 74%, teacher preparation - 49%, central administration - 80%, and other support services - 82%. The total expended across all budget strategies was 79%.

#### **□ Legacy Revenue Budget Report**

Ms. Du reported that the revenue for the Legacy Budget for the 10-month period ending on June 30, 2024 was \$918,840 which was 84% of the expected revenue for the entire year.

#### **□ Legacy Operating Expenditure Budget Report**

Ms. Du stated that the benchmark for the Legacy Budget expenditures for the period ending June 30, 2024 was set at 84%. The total percent of the budget used was 90%.

### **Consideration of Superintendent's Salary for 2024-2025**

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 #11 – 'Consideration of Superintendent's Salary for 2024-2025' 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 8:44 a.m.

At 9:00 a.m. the Board convened in open session.

Elaine Robertson made a motion to approve the Superintendent's annual salary at \$177,823.92. Ms. Prause seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

### **Consideration of Approval of Operating Budget and Personnel Budget for 2024-2025**

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the operating budget and personnel budget for 2024-2025 as presented. Mr. Brown seconded and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

### **Consideration of Approval to Transfer Funds between Budget Codes**

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the transfer of funds up to 20% from any one appropriation 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 ending August 31, 2025. Ernest Worthington seconded and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

### **Consideration of Approval of Legislative Appropriations Request for the 2026-2027 Biennium**

#### **a. Approval of Administrator's Statement**

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the administrator's statement as presented. Ms. Prause seconded and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

#### **b. Consideration of Superintendent's salary for the Legislative Appropriations Request (LAR)**

Mr. Sonnenberg stated the Board would recess this open session and convene in a closed meeting to discuss the following item listed under agenda item #14.b. – 'Consideration of Superintendent's Salary for the Legislative Appropriations Request' 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 9:40 a.m.

At 9:44 a.m. the Board convened in open session.

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the Superintendent's salary as stated in the LAR draft which states that the Board, while not requesting funds, will be working with the Legislative Budget Board and leadership offices to amend the language in Education Code §30.023(d) limiting the Board's ability to adequately and competitively compensate the Superintendent of the school. Ms. Prause seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

#### **c. Approval of proposed exceptional items**

Mr. Brown made a motion to approve the exceptional items as presented with an additional two million per year for related services. Brenda Lee seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

#### **d. Consideration of proposed riders and special provisions**

Mr. Brown motioned to approve the proposed riders and special provisions for the LAR as presented. Ms. Robertson seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

## **Report on Types of Teacher Contracts**

Ms. Williams and Mr. Fain explained the different types of teacher contracts.

## **Consideration of Approval of New Contract Staff**

Ms. Robertson motioned to approve the contract staff as presented in the packet. Ms. Lee seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

## **Report from the Superintendent**

### **a. Campus activities**

Ms. Coleman reported that summer school was successful. The all staff welcome back for the regular school year is scheduled for August 12, 2024. Student registration day is on August 18 and the first day of classes is on August 19. Short-term programs will have several classes available through the fall semester.

### **b. Superintendent activities**

Ms. Coleman reported that she is leading the Education Action Sub-Committee that helps improve braille literacy state wide. She added the Texas Governor's Committee on Disability has partnered with the Education Action Sub-Committee to help bring awareness to the importance of braille literacy. She stated she was still serving on the Council of School and Services for the Blind (COSB) board. She attended AER in July 2024. TSBVI had a booth there and it was well attended. She is still serving on the BADIE committee. Eric Grimmett, former CSR director, retired recently. She stated she has taken on the role of CSR director until his position is filled. She added that she completed a summer semester for her doctorate program.

## **Review of August District Safety and Security Committee Meeting**

Ms. Coleman stated details shared in the School's Safety and Security Committee meeting.

## **Discussion of Conducting the Superintendent's Formative Evaluation at the October Board Meeting**

Cheryl Williams gave the Board an overview of the process for conducting the Superintendent's evaluation at the October 7, 2024 board meeting.

## **Consideration of Approval of TASB Delegate and Alternate**

Ms. Jones motioned to approve Lee Sonnenberg as the School's TASB delegate and Hillary Rodriguez as the alternate. Ms. Robertson seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to pass the motion.

## **Appointment of New Board Member to Board Committee**

Mr. Sonnenberg stated that the following board members would serve on the School's Committees:

Audit, Compliance, and Management Review Committee: Ernest Worthington, Chair; Elaine Robertson, Vice Chair; and Hillary Rodriguez, member.

Finance Committee: Julie Prause, Chair; Dan Brown, Vice Chair; and Lee Sonnenberg, Member.

Program Committee: Brenda Lee, Chair; Beth Jones, Vice Chair; and Maghan Gautney, Member.

Personnel Committee: Elaine Robertson, Chair; Julie Prause, Vice Chair; Maghan Gautney, Member; and Lee Sonnenberg, Member.

### **Consideration of Future Board Meeting Topics**

There was no action taken. Brenda Lee stated that she will not attend the October board meeting. Dan Brown's birthday is October 8, 2024.

### **Announcements**

Ms. Robertson shared that she became a grandmother on May 15, 2024.

### **Adjournment**

Julie Prause made a motion to adjourn the August 9, 2024 board meeting. Elaine Robertson seconded the motion and the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the meeting at 10:47 a.m.