

TOWN OF MOUNT PLEASANT, SOUTH CAROLINA
EDUCATION COMMITTEE
Monday, February 5, 2018
Municipal Complex, Committee Meeting Room, 3rd Floor
100 Ann Edwards Lane, Mount Pleasant, SC 29464

MINUTES

MEMBERS PRESENT: Guang Ming Whitley, Chair; Tom O'Rourke

STAFF PRESENT: Eric DeMoura, Town Administrator

ALSO PRESENT: Anna Dassing, Principal, Lucy G. Beckham High School

Ms. Whitley called the meeting to order at 10:03 a.m.

1. Approval of minutes from the January 2, 2018 meeting

Mr. O'Rourke moved for approval; seconded by Ms. Whitley. All present voted in favor.

2. Public Comments

Kathy Landing, 2114 Sewee Indian Court, said that she has a proposal for one of the biggest issues that affects Highway 41, Park West Boulevard and Dunes West Boulevard. She said on a non-school day, there is no issue exiting or entering Dunes West; however, during peak times for school drop off or pick up, it is almost impossible to exit Dunes West, turning left onto Park West Boulevard. She would like to propose two ideas, which involve both the bus company and the school system. She said that it could begin here in Mount Pleasant as an exploratory idea. She proposed having two different special days set aside; the first one being "Have your children ride the bus to school" Day. She said that children do not always feel comfortable riding the bus and there are concerns with bullying. She said the idea would be to ask parents, who drive their children to school and create so many traffic issues, to serve as volunteer monitors once a month on the bus to help with safety. The second idea would be "Ride your

bicycle to school” Day. She said the way the Town of Mount Pleasant would be involved is to ensure there are crossing guards at every crossing area. She said this is an idea that comes from the issues at Dunes West, but could be very helpful for the entire community.

Marie-Louise Moreto, 1133 Liberty Court, said that she is the President of the Mount Pleasant Community Center. She said that they are thankful and delighted that the Town is interested in the arts and trying to make arrangements with the Lucy Beckham High School’s Performing Arts Center. She said that she would like to reiterate that what is most important is that the use of this facility be open to local artists, there be a set criteria for its use, that the use is equitable and fair, and that it is affordable to local artists groups. She said there was discussion regarding 50% of ticket sales be charged. She said that there must either be a usage fee that is affordable, or a percentage of the ticket sales. She said if both are imposed, none of the local artists groups would be in a position to utilize the space, because it is out of their financial reach. She asked about the use of other facilities for artists, because they do not have a place. She said artists need a place to perform, rehearse and exhibit.

3. Discussion of Charleston County School District constituent school boards

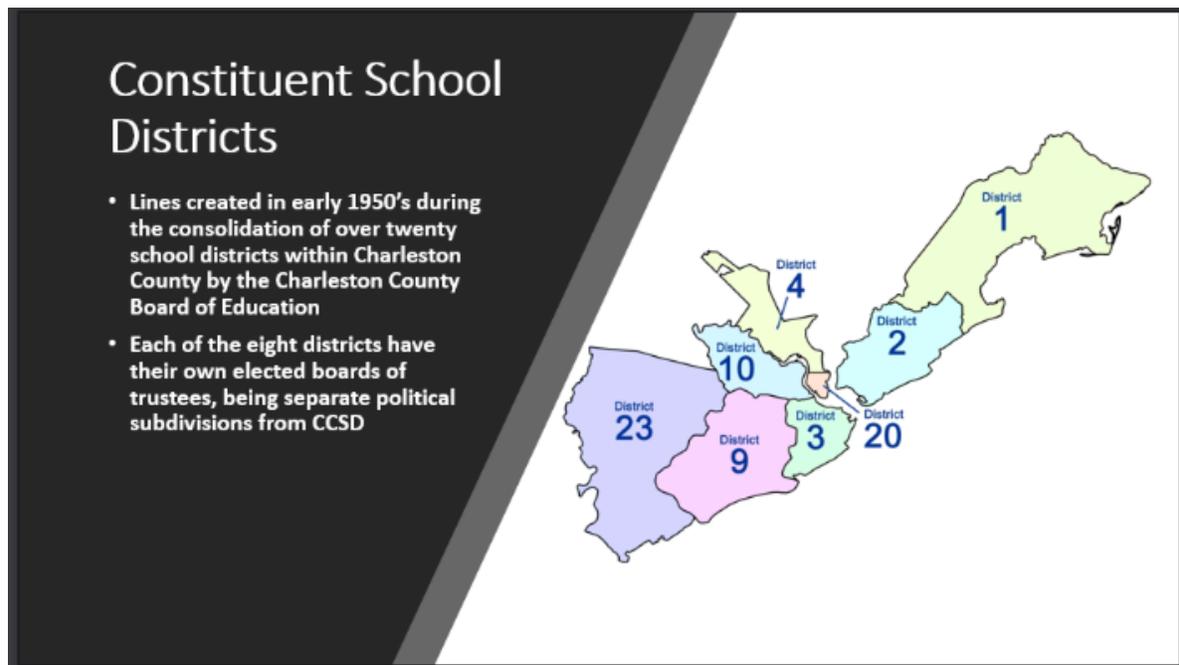
Ms. Whitley stated that she has invited Mr. Joe Bowers and Sarah Johnson with the Constituent School Boards, Districts 1 and 2, which cover Mount Pleasant.

Joe Bowers, said that he serves on the District 1 board. He said that all school districts in the state of South Carolina are governed by local legislation.

Act of Consolidation (340 of 1967)

- Local legislation passed by the South Carolina General Assembly
- Created CCSD and abolished the County Board of Education, devolving its authority upon the newly created Charleston County Board of Trustees
- Retained the 8 school districts as “Constituent Districts” devolving upon their trustees limited authority, appealable to the Charleston County Board of Trustees
- Amended over fifteen times, last in 2017

He stated that the eight constituent districts were created in the 1950’s.



He stated that the last amendment in 2017 moved the line between District 4 and 20 slightly north to mirror the current city limits between Charleston and North Charleston.

Original Governance Role

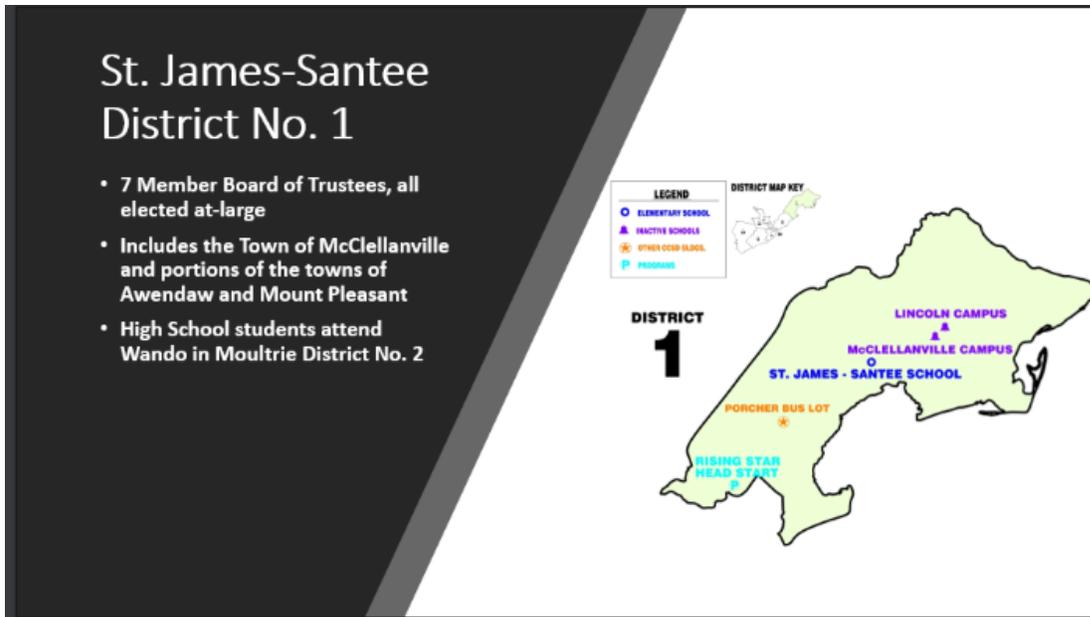
- Pupil Assignment
- Discipline
- Bus Transportation & Safety
- Employment of School & District Staff
- Make Recommendations to County Board of Trustees

He said their original governance role, when the act of consolidation passed, covered primary jurisdiction over the items listed above. He said after consolidation, they continued having their own superintendents, employing their own bus drivers and are required to make annual recommendations to the County Board of Trustees. He said currently, the only item that has been reduced is their authority over staff. He said all their governance roles are appealable to the County Board of Trustees, who has final say over all of their jurisdictions.

Current Governance Role

- Pupil Assignment
- Discipline
- Bus Transportation & Safety
- Make Recommendations to County Board of Trustees

He stated that his board is St. James-Santee and are the largest, land-wise covering 1/3 of the County; however, the smallest in population with 300 students, which does not include students that attend Wando High School in district 2.



He said the portions of Mount Pleasant that are in District 1 are located at the end of Causey Pond Road.

District No.1 Planning for the Future

- D1 Board Members serving on stakeholder committee for the construction of joint D1 and D2 Middle and High Schools in Awendaw
- Working with Sewee to Santee Community Development Corp. to re-purpose Lincoln Middle-High School Campus
- Continuing collaboration with D2 Board to develop the process for drawing attendance zones for the new schools in Awendaw

He stated that they are currently going through a transitional phase

with two board members that are also serving on a stakeholder committee between the East Cooper Municipalities and the district 1 and 2 boards over the construction of joint schools that will be built in Awendaw.

Sarah Johnson, Chair of the District 2 Constituent Board. She reviewed the following:

**Moultrie
District No. 2**

- 5 Member Board of Trustees, all elected at-large with residency requirements
- Includes the City of Isle of Palms, Town of Sullivan's Island, the majority of the Town of Mount Pleasant and a portion of the Town of Awendaw

DISTRICT 2

She introduced Board Vice Chair, Roger O'Sullivan (at large seat), and Marty Belk, Isle of Palms, and Lucy Beckham High principal, Anna Dassing, which will open in 2020. She said that the Town of Mount Pleasant seat is filled by Chris Nickels, and added that there is a vacancy in the Sullivan's Island seat, and this term ends in 2020. She said that this seat requires you to be a resident of Sullivan's Island. She said that this is an elected seat.

Ms. Johnson said there is only one high school in Mount Pleasant, which is several hundred over capacity. She said they are pleased that Lucy Beckham High School will be open in 2020. She said enrollment indicates who lives in the area and attends Mount Pleasant Schools and how many attend from outside of the area. She said all of the schools in Mount Pleasant are rated excellent.

District No. 2 Statistics (2016-17)

- **9 Elementary Schools**
- **3 Middle Schools**
- **1 High School (also serves District 1)**
 - 1 Center for Advanced Studies (CAS)

- **Total Enrollment: 13,758**
- **Live In & Attend In: 12,561**
- **Live Out & Attend In: 1,197**

All schools are rated Excellent.

She said one of the three main duties is drawing attendance lines for schools.

District No. 2 Attendance Zoning

- **Carolina Park Elementary**
 - New attendance lines announced in 2016
 - School opened August 2017

- **James B. Edwards Elementary, Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary, & Mount Pleasant Academy**
 - Final stage of rezoning completed

- **Upcoming Projects:**
 - Moultrie Middle Expansion, opening 2019
 - Lucy G. Beckham High, opening 2020
 - Awendaw D1 & D2 joint middle and high schools, opening TBD

She said the newest school is Carolina Park Elementary, and announced those lines one year prior to the opening.

She stated that on February 21, 2018 at 5:30 pm at Laing Middle School, they will request input on rezoning for Moultrie Middle School. She said that they would like to receive the Town's input on rezoning. She said they are also preparing to zone for Lucy Beckham High School, which will begin next year.

District No. 2 Transfer Requests

The D2 Board continues to receive a high volume of student transfer requests from within and outside of D2.

- **2016-2017 school year - 341**
 - Intra District - 147
 - Inter District - 194

- **2017-2018 school year – 332 +**
 - Intra District - 149
 - Inter District - 183

Ms. Johnson stated that this is accomplished when a student would like to attend a school that is different from their neighborhood school, which is typically granted for hardship or very special circumstances. She said this is very indicative of how popular the schools are in Mount Pleasant. She said intra district are those that may want to attend Mount Pleasant Academy, or Moultrie wants to attend Laing or vice versa. She said the inter district is when students from all other parts of Charleston County wish to attend Mount Pleasant schools.

District No. 2 Discipline Hearings

The D2 board heard a total of 57 discipline hearings from 5 different schools during the 2016-17 school year.

- Expulsions - 1
- Return to School - 48
- Alternative School Placement - 8

She said the Discipline Hearings is where they spend significant time. She said the numbers shown are from last year. She said that they hear expulsion hearings from the Middle and Elementary school levels. She said what they hear are the level 3 serious offences. She said they do attempt to keep students in school. She said the alternative school placement is when they are not able to return to (for example) Wando High School right away and the student needs to be in another setting, they have Daniel Jenkins Academy in North Charleston which is a discipline school for high school students. She said once they meet a certain level, they are returned to Wando High School. She said for Middle School students, the alternative school is Liberty Hill Academy, which is the same idea and when the student has met a certain level, they are returned to their school. She said there is a newer program called, Turning Point Academy, which is for students who do not have multiple offences and need 30 to 45 days to get on track, then come back to their school. She said these are numbers from last year and this year they have heard less expulsion hearings. She said that Charleston County School Board approved a progressive discipline plan and their board now only sees the most serious offences, while Charleston County School District handles the lower offences. She

said those are three main areas they work on; however, they are also involved in the hiring of principals.

District No. 2 Principal Hirings

D2 board members served on principal hiring committees for the following schools during the 2016-17 school year:

- Carolina Park Elementary
- Lucy G. Beckham High
- James B. Edwards Elementary
- Mount Pleasant Academy
- Mamie P. Whitesides Elementary
- Laurel Hill Primary

She said last year, there were a number of principals appointed and they always send a board member over to the hiring committee. She said they do not make the decisions, but participate in the process.

Stakeholder Committees

D2 board members served on the stakeholder committees for the following future schools, along with other elected officials and community members:

- Lucy G. Beckham High
- Awendaw D1 & D2 Joint Middle and High Schools

She said regarding stakeholder committees for the Awendaw,

District 1 and 2 joint middle and high school, the plan is to build this school in Awendaw, but they could be sending as many as 1,000 students from District 2 to those schools. She said it is very complex and they do not have the land at this time. She said once the land is acquired, the stakeholder meetings will continue. She said there will be two stakeholders from Town Council and said that they look forward to working with the Town. She said for years there has been a stakeholder committee for Lucy Beckham High School and Ms. Belk and Mr. O'Sullivan sit on this committee. She said for the Awendaw schools, she and Mr. Nickels sit on the stakeholder committee.

Mr. O'Rourke said regarding the intra student transfers of students from out of district coming into the school. He said there are impacts to the Town and the schools. He asked if the schools reach a level where they will not accept another student.

Ms. Johnson said they consider the requests in April and last year all the schools in Mount Pleasant were closed; at capacity. She said the numbers she showed were what was received, but not necessarily approved. She said the ones that are approved go on a waiting list. She said if there is a hardship or special circumstances, they make exceptions; however, their decisions are appealable to the County Board. She said they are working on strengthening the policy so that it is fair.

Mr. O'Rourke asked if there are any from District 1 or 2 that leave to attend elsewhere.

Ms. Johnson said those students that do, attend Academic Magnet, School of the Arts or a similar-type school, but not to another neighborhood school.

Mr. DeMoura said over the past several years, periodically staff hears from Mount Pleasant residents who have an interest in making sure that their children stay in the confines of the Town. He said it came up when the new Sullivan's Island Elementary opened

and whether Mount Pleasant children were going to be bussed over to the new school. He said similarly when the new schools that are planned for are opened in the northern area, such as Awendaw, is it the plan of the constituent board that some residents of the Town may be attending those schools.

Ms. Johnson stated that this is the County Board's vision. She said that District 1 does not have enough students to support a middle or high school and District 2 is over capacity. She said that Laing Middle School opened at capacity and Wando High School is over capacity and when Lucy Beckham opens in 2020, Wando High School will be where it is now in 2024. She said that it is a joint school and the idea is District 2 students will attend the Awendaw School.

Ms. Whitley thanked Mr. Bowers and Ms. Johnson for presenting on the Constituent School Boards, which is a unique situation for Charleston County School District to have. She reminded the public to attend the upcoming meeting at Laing Middle School on February 21, 2018 at 5:30 pm, where they will discuss rezoning Moultrie Middle School.

4. Adjourn

There being no further business, meeting adjourned at 10:25 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,
Barbara Ashe
February 5, 2018