

GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS *Board of Education*

Special Meeting – August 5, 2022

MINUTES

Vice President Shannon called the meeting to order at 8:31 a.m. She led those present in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll Call by Assistant Superintendent Bill Barnes indicated the presence of **Board Members Present:** Nicole Shannon, Jarrod Smith, Sara Clark Pierson, Denise DuFort and Toni Glasscoe. President Shiflett joined the meeting at 8:41 a.m. **Members Absent:** Ben Cwayna. **Central Office Administrators:** Bill Barnes, Kelly Jones, Mark Deschaine and John Ellsworth. **Others Participants in Attendance:** Greg Stevens, Julie Douglas, Spender Feld, John Piper, Cindy Zerbe, Nancy Coleman, Jason Westra-Hall, Kim Laforet, D'Anne Golub and Kim Manning

PUBLIC COMMENT

Ms. Shannon expressed we are all thinking about Dr. Davenport and his health right now and wishing him well. She commended our community for their outpouring of support and concern for Dr. Davenport.

Mr. Smith provided the rules for providing public comment to the board.

Kim LaForet sends well wishes to Dr. Davenport noting she hasn't agreed with him on many topics but noting he is "a human being and deserves our prayers".

Cindy Zerbe sends well wishes to Dr. Davenport. She further noted she hopes and prays the next superintendent of Grand Ledge Public Schools is Bill Barnes noting his dedication to our district and community.

Nancy Coleman supported Mrs. Zerbe's comments and further noted that Dr. Barnes has worked hard to continue to move things forward. She shared she has known Dr. Barnes his entire life and his a good man and the best choice to ensure we start the year fluidly.

SUPERINTENDENT DR. MARCUS DAVENPORT RESIGNATION

Motion by Ms. Clark Pierson, seconded by Mr. Smith for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to approve waiving the 90-day notification and accept the resignation of Dr. Marcus Davenport as Superintendent of Grand Ledge Public Schools. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Clark Pierson noted Dr. Davenport was a good addition to Grand Ledge Public Schools and she is saddened that his health has taken an unexpected turn.

APPOINTMENT OF ACTING SUPERINTENDENT OF GRAND LEDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Motion by Mrs. DuFort, seconded by Dr. Glasscoe for the Grand Ledge Public Schools Board of Education to appoint Dr. Bill Barnes Acting Superintendent of Grand Ledge Public Schools.

A detailed discussion among the members highlighted the many qualities Dr. Barnes brings to the district including, but not limited to, being a man of integrity, doing what he says he is going to do, caring about students, he is innovative, creative and will always do what is right for students.

The motion carried unanimously.

COMMENTS FROM STAFF AND BOARD

Ms. Shannon noted the board will hold its regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, August 8th and will make a decision how to proceed with regard to the Superintendent Replacement Process. She noted Dr. Barnes will serve as the Acting Superintendent until a decision is made on how to move forward noting she believes Dr. Barnes is an easy decision.

Mr. Smith noted a public school system is legally required to have a superintendent at all times so the board couldn't only act on the resignation and is mandated to appoint an acting superintendent until the board can make something more permanent at the meeting on Monday.

Dr. Barnes expressed his thoughts are with Dr. Davenport and that he enjoyed working with him and hopes their paths will cross in the future. He noted he is honored by the support from the board and the kind words he has heard over the past week commenting there are all kinds of great things, exciting things, coming with the start of a new school year. He shared he was a little kid at Greenwood Elementary School in Kindergarten and now he is sitting here and expressed his appreciation for an opportunity that many don't get. He thanked the Central Office Team, the staff, the students, parents and the community.

Dr. Glasscoe noted she has known Dr. Davenport's family her entire life commenting they are a stellar family and expressing her appreciation for the outpouring of care and concern being shown for Dr. Davenport and his family noting this is what Grand Ledge is all about. Noting her hope is that as we go forward, even if we disagree, we can continue with this approach.

Mrs. DuFort expressed her appreciation for Dr. Glasscoe's comments, expressed her excitement of having Dr. Barnes serving in this capacity and asked everyone to continue to keep Dr. Davenport in their thoughts and prayers.

Ms. Clark Pierson noted she has not spoken with any of her fellow board members over the last couple weeks, but she has had many conversations with community members, union leaders, members of the EDI committee. She noted there is nothing in the law that requires a board of education to do any kind of search and considering that most searches are done in the winter it would be difficult to ask everyone to "hold their breath" for a year. She stated she is hopeful that on Monday her fellow board members will agree with her that we can't wait and she is hopeful the board can settle this matter. In closing she asked that the Naming of Facilities be included on Monday's agenda to begin the discussion.

Mr. Smith acknowledged the board went through an extensive search process just over a year ago and having that search in mind would we even entertain that? He commented we have someone, in the district, that understands the nuances of running this district and he doesn't understand going outside the district to make the district better. In closing he noted he is ready, he is supportive of Dr. Barnes on Monday.

Ms. Shannon echoed Mr. Smith noting she agrees that she is hopeful on Monday, that the board has the next leaders of our district, for the long-term, sitting at this table. She commented Dr. Barnes is known across the district and he makes this an easy decision for her. She expressed her appreciation for the partnership Dr. Barnes had with Dr. Davenport and Dr. Gabriel but noting that life happens and she believes Dr. Barnes would put the district in very good hands.

President Shiflett apologized for being tardy. He thanked Dr. Barnes for his assistance throughout this transition period, encouraged everyone to continue to pray for Dr. Davenport and his quick recovery and noting he hopes Dr. Davenport gets back out into the education community quickly. He shared his goals over the next days and weeks are to ensure continuity for our students, staff and families.

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 8:57 a.m.

Respectfully Submitted:

Attest:

Jarrod Smith, Secretary

Jon Shiflett, President