
STATE OF INDIANA

DISTRESSED UNIT APPEAL BOARD



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Distressed Unit Appeal Board Meeting Memorandum

October 22, 2020

Call to Order: A meeting of the Distressed Unit Appeals Board (“DUAB” or “Board”) was held October 22, 2020, at 10:00 a.m. EDT via WebEx. Members of the Board attending the meeting include Justin McAdam, Chairman, Wes Bennett, Paul Joyce, Rebecca Kubacki, Senator Liz Brown, Representative Vernon Smith, and Representative Jeff Thompson. Courtney Schaafsma, Executive Director, was also in attendance.

Chairman McAdam called the meeting to order and recognized compliance with the Open Door Law.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item three – Approval of Minutes. Mr. Bennett moved the minutes be approved. Mr. Joyce seconded the motion. The motion passed (4-0).

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item four – Public Comment. Chairman McAdam reminded the Board of the public comment protocol.

Dr. Michaela Spangenberg addressed issues residents have taken up with the referendum, including a lack of financial transparency and consistency. She stated specific spending concerns.

Tracy Coleman brought concerns of students not having books for their classes. She stated that there is a concentration on finances and not academics. She raised concerns about Title I funds not being spent appropriately and the underuse of CARES funds.

Jessica Samuels stated that she appreciates the job that DUAB and MGT is doing. She stated that people need to understand that things like the referendum are required to move forward. She added that if the referendum is not passed now they are in a world of trouble as are the students.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item five – Budget Advisement Approval by Executive Director. Ms. Schaafsma presented and gave background on the budget advertisement.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item six – Gary Community School Corporation Manager Update. Dr. Paige McNulty presented the general update. She stated that the school resources officers have undergone de-escalation training and that each building now has an advisory committee. She added that GCSC has been reapproved for the summer feeding program and that they have continued to work with the Gary health department. She updated the Board on technology distribution for students, specifically that deployed for preschoolers. She noted that enrollment has gone up for the first time in 12 years. Chairman McAdam commended Dr. McNulty on their enrollment success. Dr. McNulty updated the Board on the Employee Health Insurance Trust and provided details on the services provided to employees and their families. Rep. Smith asked if the lines of authority have been drawn in regard to student discipline and Dr. McNulty answered that they have had a lot of conversations with school resource officers on the need to follow the lead of the administrators. Rep.

Smith asked if art and PE are still being offered during e-learning and Dr. McNulty answered that they are. Rep. Smith asked how this is being done and Dr. McNulty gave specific examples of how classes are taking place. Rep. Smith referenced complaints from parents in relation to students' attention spans and asked how many breaks students are given. Ms. Kimberly Bradley answered that they have incorporated many breaks in to the schedules when they were created, especially for the little ones. Rep. Smith asked why all students do not have textbooks and Dr. McNulty answered that all the textbooks are in as well as online and that she will follow up with the student being referenced. Rep. Smith asked about conflicting enrollment numbers and Dr. McNulty offered clarification. Rep. Smith asked for clarification on the summer feeding program numbers and Dr. McNulty responded that they are able to feed any child that shows up whether or not they are enrolled. Chairman McAdam asked if that is any child in Gary regardless of where they are enrolled and Dr. McNulty confirmed that it is. Rep. Smith asked about suspensions and expulsions over time and Dr. McNulty responded that she could get back to him at a later time.

Mr. Eric Parish provided an update on the school improvement fund update. He stated that the plans for the boiler and the roof are being put together and added that the site preparation for the new playground has begun. Rep. Smith referenced ADA elevator updates and asked which schools have elevators and Mr. Parish noted that he did not know but they could get him that information. Rep. Smith asked about a chair lift and what it is for. Dr. McNulty answered that it is for a student or staff that might need it. Rep. Smith asked about updates to water fountains and Dr. McNulty answered that they have to be lowered. Rep. Smith asked what the architectural services payments are for and Mr. Parish answered that DUAB approved a contract with Martin Riley and clarified that they are hired for project management and design work on major projects. Rep. Smith asked specific financial questions and Mr. Parish offered clarification. Mr. Bennett asked what the process for handling change orders will be and Mr. Parish explained the two-step process.

Mr. Joyce moved the claims docket be approved. Ms. Kubacki seconded the motion. The motion passed (4-0).

Ms. Bradley provided an update on The Path Forward. She updated the Board on the dashboard and presented the template that was put together after conducting a survey to discover preferences. She added that the curriculum team has partnered with Starbase in Gary and the Gary Historical Society to come up with a project-based learning activity for K-12. She informed the Board that the first formative assessment window has been closed and the data will be ready in December. Rep. Smith asked how widespread the survey was and Ms. Bradley answered that there were about 400 respondents. Rep. Smith asked if MGT is in their third or fourth year. Mr. Parish explained that they are on their fourth year but did not have time for an enrollment campaign the first year. Rep. Smith stated that the chart shows inaccurate information.

Chairman McAdam introduced agenda item seven – Consideration of the GCSC 2021 Budget. Ms. Nicole Wolverton introduced herself and presented the budget. Chairman McAdam asked clarifying questions about property taxes and their collection and Ms. Wolverton provided answers. Chairman McAdam asked if there was anyone in attendance at the hearing and Ms. Wolverton answered that nobody was in attendance and there were no question on the livestream. Mr. Parish added that there were viewers on the livestream. Rep. Smith asked if the budget was based on the collection rate or on what should be generated. Ms. Wolverton answered that they include as much revenue in their estimates as possible. Rep. Smith asked if the revenue will be lower based on their collection rate and Ms. Wolverton confirmed that it will fluctuate with the collection rate. Rep. Smith asked clarifying questions and Ms. Wolverton answered. Rep. Smith asked what will happen if the referendum does not pass and Ms. Wolverton answered that the line item will not exist and will not have an effect on any other portion. Ms. Wolverton added that as part of the DLGF process they are required to include the referendum in the budget and stressed the importance of the referendum funds. Chairman McAdam asked what drives cuts and Ms. Wolverton answered forecasting. Rep. Smith asked for clarification on the deficit and Ms. Wolverton stated that it will be around \$6 million for the year. Rep. Smith asked why there would still be a deficit if the referendum passed and Ms. Wolverton explained that they must still be shown separately. Rep. Smith asked when they would get to a balanced budget and Ms. Wolverton answered that it will take time but the referendum is still the fastest

way. Rep. Smith asked for clarification on whether or not the budget would be balanced budget and Chairman McAdam explained how to view the budget and the separate funds to balance the budget. Mr. Joyce requested Ms. Wolverton explain how the referendum process works and when they will see the first dollar. Mr. Wolverton explained that they will not receive those funds until June 2021.

Mr. Joyce made a motion to authorize GCSC to adopt the budget as presented. Mr. Bennett seconded the motion. The motion passed (3-0).

Mr. Parish clarified the differences between ADM and enrollment.

Chairman McAdam asked if there was any other new business and seeing none adjourned the meeting.