

Perquimans County Board of Education
Special Session – July 2, 2018

The Perquimans County Board of Education met in special session on Monday, July 2, 2018, at 5:00 p.m. in the administrative offices of Perquimans County Schools in Hertford, North Carolina. Board members Russell Lassiter, Matt Peeler, Amy Spough, Dr. Anne White, Leary Winslow and Arlene Yates were present.

Call to Order / Pledge of Allegiance

Board Chair Amy Spough called the meeting to order. Russell Lassiter led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

Oath of Office for Newly-Elected and Re-Elected Board of Education Members

The Oath of Office was administered to Matt Peeler, Amy Spough, and Dr. Anne White by Todd Tilley, Clerk of Superior Court for Perquimans County.

Signing of Code of Ethics Statement

In accordance with Board Policy 2120, at the organizational meeting of the board, all board members read and signed a code of ethics statement.

Election of Officers

Chairperson Spough relinquished the gavel to Superintendent Cheeseman to conduct the nomination and election of the Board Chair.

Mr. Cheeseman opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair. Russell Lassiter nominated Leary Winslow. Arlene Yates nominated Dr. Anne White. There were no further nominations. Those in favor of Leary Winslow were Mr. Winslow, Mr. Peeler, and Mr. Lassiter. Those in favor of Dr. Anne White were Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Spough, and Dr. White. Since no one candidate received a majority vote, the Superintendent began the process again.

Mr. Cheeseman opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair. Arlene Yates nominated Dr. Anne White. Russell Lassiter nominated Leary Winslow. There were no further nominations. Those in favor of Dr. Anne White were Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Spough, and Dr. White. Those in favor of Leary Winslow were Mr. Winslow, Mr. Peeler, and Mr. Lassiter. Since no one candidate received a majority vote, the Board decided to have a conversation.

Russell Lassiter asked if there could be co-chairs and no vice-chair. Mr. Peeler said only if there are two organizations could there be co-chairs. Mr. Peeler asked the two board members nominated for Chair if they wanted the job and why.

Leary Winslow said yes, he wanted the job. He said he has been on the board for two years and learned a lot from Mrs. Spough. He stated he has supported the Superintendent and he has a vested interest in the district with two children in the school system. He stated he is the most seen board member in the community. He has a passion for the athletic complex and wants to see it completed in a timely manner and within budget. He said that Dr. White and Mrs. Spough are very knowledgeable and he could lean on them. He said he has considered everyone on the Board for the position, including Dr. White. He said it is important to maintain support of the Superintendent. He also said it is important to stay on the same page and disagree, but to keep moving forward.

Dr. Anne White said she wanted the job of Board Chair. She said she is retired and has time to participate in training and prepare for board meetings. She said she supports our superintendent who is second to none. She said Perquimans County Schools is the best school system around. She stated she has had many leadership positions as Principal of Perquimans Middle School, Board Vice-Chair for two years, CTE Director, and has worked with kids at all grade levels. Dr. White stated she has a degree in English Education, a Master's degree in Guidance and Counseling, and a Doctor's degree in Curriculum and Instruction. She said she has the disposition and community support for this position. She said the previous vote indicated support across the board, not from one race or one community. She stated all things need to be considered. She said she comes prepared to board meetings and always reads the information in the board packet. She said she asks lots of questions. She believes it is important to investigate matters from the community thoroughly and to serve everybody. She stated the district has the best superintendent in the world and she will try to keep him in Perquimans County as long as the district can keep him.

Mr. Peeler asked for clarification on Dr. White's comment on the vote. Dr. White stated it was not an issue for her. She stated she was not only talking about the community, but across the United States as far as votes from Republicans, Democrats, African-Americans, Caucasians, etc. It was not shown in the votes she received.

Arlene Yates stated that Dr. White has been to several churches in the community and has served the community well. She was the principal at Perquimans Middle School and is familiar with budgeting. She has a Doctor's degree and has had an inside view of the school system. She can provide a pipeline for new teachers from ECSU. She cares about the students, the school system and the teachers.

Mr. Cheeseman again opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair. Arlene Yates nominated Dr. Anne White. Russell Lassiter nominated Leary Winslow. Mr. Peeler asked if a person could self-nominate. After pausing the meeting, Director Cynthia Perry reported that the policy does not say that you can or cannot. Assistant Superintendent James Bunch referred the Board to Policy 2200 which simply says that the Board must elect a Chair and a Vice Chair. There were no further nominations. Those in favor of Dr. Anne White were Mrs. Yates, Mrs. Spaugh, and Dr. White. Those in favor of Leary Winslow were Mr. Winslow, Mr. Peeler, and Mr. Lassiter. No one candidate received a majority vote.

Mr. Cheeseman opened the floor for nominations for Board Chair.

Leary Winslow stated he had two concerns. He stated there was a vote with overwhelming evidence in one direction. It appeared that a vote by Dr. White was made against the evidence for personal reasons. For that reason, he questioned whether he could support Dr. White for that position. The evidence/data was clearly one way. There was a vote two and a half years ago that contradicts Dr. White's support of the superintendent, as it was not unanimous when he was hired. Mr. Winslow asked for clarification on those before he could support Dr. White in the Chair role as they were major concerns for him.

Dr. Anne White stated that is was true that she did not vote for the Superintendent as her first choice because of some misinformation that they were given in the meeting when they were voting. The information they were given was that he had a certain position in a former location that was not indeed the position that he had at that time. That was in the selection committee that she did not vote. When he came on board that night, he was voted for unanimously. He knew that she did not vote because there are no secrets in the community, unfortunately. They

had a brief moment to talk about it right then. He said something then that he would prove himself or something to that effect. Dr. White stated that he had her support. Dr. White stated she may have voted against a recommendation, but believed that is the type of board he needs.

Dr. White stated the other was a personnel issue. She voted no due to circumstances; there were many more issues other than just in that vote. The evidence that was presented that evening was not the complete evidence. Dr. White stated that each board member must vote his/her own conviction and not vote just because everyone else voted yes. Dr. White stated she thought she had supported the Superintendent and the other members of this Board.

Amy Spaugh added that anyone on the Board could do a fine job, but she believed in Dr. White's experience and her ability to see multiple issues, along with her broad understanding of the issues.

Arlene Yates said to Leary Winslow that not all the time had he agreed with the Superintendent. There were times when things were said that should not have been said. She said everyone has their own opinion and everyone has their own way of voting based on the evidences presented. Everyone has their own opinion and that is what makes this board a good board.

Mr. Winslow stated that contradicted what he just said. He said Dr. White said that the information that was presented to her looked one way, but that did not tell the whole story. Board members are not allowed to investigate; they are allowed to vote on the information presented to them. Mr. Winslow stated he is not a yes person. He is going to ask questions and if he doesn't agree with you, he is going to tell you. He said he was not going to plead his case as he has plenty to do to occupy that time. He stated he has a passion for certain things and will have a true reaction. He is not a yes man. He stated he voted no twice on this board and they were both two meetings ago. One of them was in reference to FFA alumni members begging for a greenhouse which is not on the CTE plan of action. The other was on the Personnel Summary Report which included several teacher contracts and several employee changes. There was only one item he wanted to vote no on. The items were not separated so he had to vote no on the entire thing. So about not supporting the superintendent, the voting record speaks for itself.

Mr. Winslow stated he was not going to sit and go around in circles. He told Dr. White that every issue was not a race issue and that bothered him. He said she brought it up with the voting. The whole story she was talking about was a race issue, but not every issue was a race issue. He said he did not want to go twelve months hearing about race every single meeting because the Board is here for the kids, the students in our school district—all students, not white students, not African-American students, all students, not athletes or the band, all students. He said if you did not vote with that on your conscience, then you are not serving this board or this district correctly.

Dr. White stated she would like to respond. First, when she talked about the personnel issue, she was not talking about knowing additional information beyond that. She said she knows that she was accused of telling this employee some information which was 100% not accurate. She said the main thing about this board is that it needs to trust each other. She said she had served on this board for four years. She said no one could ever accuse her of racism on this board. She served as a principal of Perquimans Middle School for five years. Nobody had ever accused her of racism as a principal of Perquimans Middle School. She wanted to clarify that issue right away. She said what she meant by the employee that presented her case, she felt that the employee did not do a good job presenting her case. So she voted on that basis.

Every issue has never been a race issue for her. She grew up in Alabama in the deep South, but she has grown beyond that. She stated that she is an ethical individual and she knows how to treat people as people, not as black, white, yellow or green. She said that she was sorry that he had gotten that impression of her. Mr. Winslow stated she had always treated him great and had been great to him. She said that is not who she is and you can ask anyone in this community that knows her and they will tell you that is not who she is. Mr. Winslow stated he can only go by what she does, not by what she says. There was a field trip being planned for overseas and the first question that she asked the teachers doing the field trip was how many African-American students were going. As a board member, how many African-American students had the opportunity to go was all of them. Every student in our school had the opportunity. Dr. White stated that is why she asked the question. Mr. Winslow stated he did not want to see that issue brought up unless there is just cause for it. Then he will fight right along beside her. Dr. White stated that Mr. Winslow had proven that he will do that. Not from the beginning, but he has proven that he is for all students. Dr. White stated that she will probably ask questions as board chair, with most questions being on the answering end. She stated that it is the Board's responsibility to support equity for all students. She stated those questions should be asked.

Mr. Winslow stated that he had spoken directly to Dr. White and to the Board as to his feelings and his reservations. He stated that it appeared that no one was going to change their vote or recommendation so he withdrew from being nominated as Chair. He stated he did not want this to be a blood-bath going around in circles all night as there was another meeting scheduled in the room at 6:00 p.m.

Mr. Cheeseman asked if there was further commentary. Mr. Peeler stated that Dr. White mentioned that this board is a non-partisan board. In her discussion today, she brought up that some will vote Republican, some will vote Democrat. That kind of communication also makes it difficult to run within this board, a non-partisan board.

Dr. White stated she hopes they do not have to spend the year clarifying everything. She stated she was not talking about the voting on this board. If you look at the voting record across the United States, which she was referring to, as to how people vote. You will see that that is an issue. She was not talking about this board; this board is non-partisan.

Mr. Cheeseman asked if there was further commentary. There was none. He asked for nominations for Board Chair. Arlene Yates nominated Dr. Anne White. Matt Peeler nominated Amy Spagh. There were no further nominations. All six board members voted in favor of Dr. Anne White as Board Chair.

As the first order of business as Board Chair, Dr. White opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chair. Arlene Yates nominated Amy Spagh. Russell Lassiter nominated Leary Winslow. Leary Winslow asked what involvement the Vice Chair had last year and the year before and if the Vice-Chair was notified as often as the Chair. Mr. Cheeseman noted that in previous years, there were committees and the vice chair sat on the personnel committee. Mr. Winslow stated there had not been committees for twelve months. Mr. Cheeseman stated that contact was directly with the Board Chair. When asked, Mrs. Spagh stated she would take the job if she won. Mr. Winslow stated he did not want the job. He stated that Dr. White would probably agree that as Vice Chair she had no more involvement than the other five board members that were not Chair in the past two years. Mr. Winslow said it was a title and he was not building a resume. Mr. Cheeseman noted that the Vice Chair is also the person who runs the board

meeting in the absence of the Board Chair. There were no further nominations. All six board members voted in favor of Mrs. Spaugh as Vice Chair.

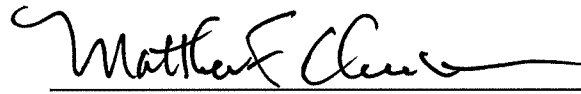
Announcements

Regular Board of Education Meeting, Monday, July 23, 2018 at 6:00 p.m., Board of Education Building

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Anne White", written above a horizontal line.

Dr. Anne White, Chair

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Matthew F. Cheeseman", written above a horizontal line.

Mr. Matthew F. Cheeseman, Superintendent