

School Watch

A look at what is happening in Cleveland and Bradley County Schools

by Tonya Brantley
Managing Editor

The Bradley County School Board's first meeting of 2009 was held Thursday evening, January 15th. After Director of Schools, Johnny McDaniel gave his good news report, the first item on the agenda was a report from Johnny Mull of the Land Search Committee.

Now that a site has been chosen on Minnis Road for the construction of a new elementary school for Northern Bradley County, the Land Search Committee has been busy trying to locate one for Southern Bradley County.

Johnny Mull stated that the committee had been looking at tax ID maps trying to identify properties that would be suitable for a school according to topography and access roads. The

committee identified six, what they call 'prime sites' in the Southwest part of the county to build a new elementary school, however of those six sites, two of the owners are not interested in



Johnny Mull - Land Search Committee

selling.

The sites range in size from 20 acres up to 300 acres. According to Mull, there is quite a bit of land available if the owners are willing to sell.

The committee has been searching the areas of Bend About Farms, Johnson Woods, and Bachman. The Site Committee will narrow their search and bring three sites back to the Bradley county School Board for consideration at a later date. Because there may be sites they are not be aware of, School Board member, Terry McGuire made the suggestion to advertise in the newspaper for potential properties.

Johnny McDaniel gave a report on the architect selected to build the new school on Minnis Road and do the renovations at Valley View Elementary. According to the direction of the Board, a contract has been signed with Katz, Binkley, Jones and Morris. McDaniel said that Katz-Binkley is one of the premier architect firms for

schools in Tennessee.

School Board member, Troy Weathers suggested the Board have a work session at Valley View in order for the administration to meet so that they can discuss the needs for Valley View renovations and the new school in order to give the architect firm proper guidance on what is needed. The Board will meet February 5th at 5:30pm at Valley View Elementary.

Weathers wanted to see more examples of the schools that the firm has built. Part of their proposal was based on a school design used to build Mt. Juliet Elementary school. This design was discussed as the prototype for the new school. Mt. Juliet Elementary is roughly 85,000 sq.

ft. They had discussed downsizing it to around 65,000 square feet. Updates from the presentations on other school designs will be given at an upcoming School Board meeting.

Terry McGuire gave an update from the Construc-

tion Management Review Committee. The committee members are Director Johnny McDaniel, board members, McGuire, Dr. Richard Baker, Charlie Rose, and Rick Smith, as well as Bradley County Commissioners Lisa Stan-

berry, Connie Wilson, and assistant Amy Moore. American, Chase, and Tri-Com were the three construction management companies to be considered. An update will be given at a later date. The new school calendar has been chosen for the 2009-10 school year with a change being made for Spring break vacation. Instead of March 8 through 12, Spring break for county students will be March 15 to 19.

The reason for the change is to accommodate the ACT testing date.

This will mark the first time students who are taking the ACT will do so on a school day instead of on a Saturday because the test is now given to all students at the junior level.



(left to right) Troy Weathers, Terry McGuire, Chairman David Kelley

Cleveland City Schools

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The Cleveland City School Board's first meeting of the new year was January 5, 2009. The following are highlights from that meeting.

- Director of Schools, Dr. Rick Denning gave a review of the annual report for Cleveland City schools. A copy of the 24 page, full color report is distributed to several hundred local businesses as well as the Chamber of Commerce.

-The Board passed a resolution to encourage the Tennessee General Assembly to place the interest of students above any other by recognizing the value of appointed superintendents and rejecting any attempt to revert to superintendent elections.

-Board member, Bill Brown made a motion that the Cleveland City School Board endorse and request the public to support the sales tax referendum that the Cleveland City Council

has passed. The motion passed unanimously.

Brown stated that these are difficult economic times, but we do not as a community need to lose sight of the importance of the science wing is to the city school system that's already been pointed out numerous times in reference to attracting business to Cleveland and Bradley County. The system needs to be prepared to educate children by providing them the best education possible and a new resource such as the science wing is critical in doing that.

Board member, Steve Morgan said he didn't know of a better way to make it easier than with a tax increase on sales tax, where people who come into the city, would help add to the costs of education.

Chairwoman, Dawn Robinson stated since the Cleveland City School Board doesn't have a continuing revenue stream for capital improvements, the

sales tax would provide them with one.

The agreement that the city schools have with the city is a two thirds, one third split. One third going to capital projects in the school system.

The City School Board plans to meet with the Cleveland City Council to discuss why the sales tax is necessary and how the money raised will be earmarked for use. An update will be given to the board at a future meeting.

- The new school calendar was chosen for the 2009-10 school year. Spring break for city students will be the same as the county students, March 15 to 19. The ACT testing date falls on March 9.

- The Board held an election for a new Board Chairperson and selected Peggy Pesterfield to hold that position.

The Cleveland City School Board meets on the 2nd Monday of the month at 5:30pm in the school's central office.



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