

**Shreveport Charter Schools, Inc.**  
Linwood Public Charter School  
401 W. 70<sup>th</sup> Street ~ Shreveport, Louisiana 71106

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**Board of Trustees Meeting**

**May 2024 MEETING MINUTES**

This meeting was held at 331 E. 71<sup>st</sup> Street and Zoom Meeting (ID: 267 635 4207) on May 20, 2024, at 4:00 p.m.

**Board Members Present:** *In-Person:* Gard Wayt, Travis Morehart, Dr. Bernard Kimble, Dr. Kerry Laster, Leathon MaGee, Sheryl Nix  
*Virtually:* Mildred Tolliver, Lori Graham, Cynthia Franklin

**Leadership Team/Faculty/Contractors Present:** Dr. Staughton Jennings, Starla Ross, Shirley Pierson, Letisha Williams, Richard Hilliard, Jennifer Hamilton-Myles, Wanda Austin-Lewis, Tara Sealy, Shoyla Bryant, Aaryenne Strickland, Camille Cruse, Marilyn Johnson-Preston, Cassandra Anderson, Kevin Cox (*4<sup>th</sup> Sector Solutions*), Ella Dotson (*Instructional Coach*), Lori Beaty (*Teacher*)

**Call to Order:** Mr. Wayt called the meeting to order at 4:08 p.m.

**Quorum Check:** A quorum was present.

**Approval of Agenda:**

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the agenda as presented.
- Mr. MaGee seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the agenda was approved.

**Conflict of Interest Advisements:** There were none.

**Visitor Comments:**

- Mrs. Anderson recognized May's Most Valuable Partners. Partners were presented with an LPCS Spirit Shirt, Plaque, and Certificate of Appreciation for their continuous support to LPCS and their students' education.
  - May's Most Valuable Partners: Destiny Coleman, Elizabeth Nation, Ashley Cooper, Jessica McGhee, Kimberly Mazier, British Taylor, Tomika Williams, Pamela Burns, Julia Brown

**Approval of Minutes from Previous Meeting:**

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the April 2024 minutes as distributed.
- Mr. MaGee seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the April 2024 minutes were approved.

**Financial Report:**

Kevin Cox (*4<sup>th</sup> Sector Solutions*) presented the April 2024 Financial Report.

Question, Answer, Comment:

Q: Mr. Morehart: In the line item "Forecast," there is \$119,000 under contingency. Do you have an expense designated for those funds?

A: Mr. Cox: No. We usually set aside 2% of our overall income for contingency for unforeseen expenses. We haven't had to use it this school year. It will be converted to net assets if it is unused.

Q: Mr. Morehart: When do ESER funds run out?

A: Mr. Cox: September 30, 2024.

Q: Mr. Morehart: Do you have the funds obligated?

A: Mr. Cox: Yes, they have given us a bit of cushion with the new rule. If it's obligated by September 30<sup>th</sup>, we can cut checks afterwards. They only allow this until December 15, 2024. It still gives us a little bit more time to ensure all things are taken care of.

Q: Mr. Morehart: We will spend all of those funds, correct?

A: Mr. Cox: Yes, we should. Our goal is to get it all spent by the end of the fiscal year. There are some that may carry over to the next fiscal year.

Q: Mr. MaGee: Is Food Service reimbursable or is it paid through a grant?

A: Dr. Jennings: Yes, it is reimbursable.

C: Mr. Cox: Right, it is federally reimbursed. The revenue and expenditures for the food program should balance each other out.

Q: Mr. Morehart: Under the Accrued Expenses line item, is that all payroll related?

A: Mr. Cox: Most of it is uncompensated leave that's building up. We will have some big accruals at year end.

Q: Mr. Morehart: We were only at \$89,000 at the end of June last year with accrued expenses and today we are already at \$671,000.

A: Mr. Cox: Yes, a big part of that is some retainage/hold back for the building.

C: Mr. Wayt: Can you elaborate more on that? What do you mean when you say retainage?

A: Mr. Cox: When we pay contractors, we hold back on a portion of the expense until it is completed. The expense is kept on the books as a liability until it is time to pay it.

Q: Mrs. Tolliver: In speaking of the cashflow, do we know how much more money we have to spend out on the new building project?

A: Mrs. Lewis: Yes, we are forecasting another \$500,000.

C: Mr. Cox: The contractor provides us with a percentage to completion report. The last time we reviewed it, it was \$400,000 to completion.

C: Dr. Jennings: That doesn't include everything.

C: Mr. Cox: Right, that is just construction-wise. In addition to construction, there is FF & E (*Furniture, Fixtures, & Equipment*), any final walkways or landscaping, and others that may not be included in the construction. There will be additional expenses. That is why we must be very careful with the cash until this project is complete and we know how much is owed.

Q: Mrs. Tolliver: Are we still within budget?

A: Mr. Cox: For the operating budget for the school, we are. For the construction project budget, I assume we are. Right now, I don't have any additional information regarding additional change orders.

C: Mrs. Tolliver: The reason I am asking is because considering the price we paid when we bought this building and what the estimated cost of the total project is going to be, it seems like it's a lot more. It seems as if we went into this not having a clear picture of the cost.

C: Mr. Cox: Yes, there are a few change orders, but I don't remember the amount of them.

C: Mr. Morehart: The biggest problem we're going to have is the kitchen and we've had to redo the sewer lines. Those 2 things have significantly increased expenses.

C: Mr. Cox: The kitchen project is a change order.

C: Mr. Morehart: It is going to be a brand-new project. We will have to see what it comes in at.

- Q: Mrs. Tolliver: Will we be able to get a revised estimated report of what everything is going to cost?
- A: Mrs. Lewis: Yes, we can send that to you from Build Blocker.
- C: Mr. Cox: We don't know the kitchen cost just yet. We will bid it out and see.

**Approval of April 2024 Financial Report:**

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the April Financial Report as presented.
- Dr. Kimble seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the April Financial Report was adopted.

**Differentiated Compensation Fund** (discussed during the Finance committee meeting)

Mr. Morehart asked Dr. Jennings to explain the funds received. Mr. Morehart will give the decision from the Finance Committee meeting.

Question, Answer, Comment:

- C: Dr. Jennings: The state gave an additional \$30,000 to high-risk schools for teacher retention. We have to give it to our teachers. We would like to use it as our end of the year stipend since we are unable to give what we normally give due to the building project. We would like to give instructional staff \$400, support staff \$300, and bus drivers \$200.
- C: Mr. Morehart: The total cost is approximately \$54,000, of which the state is giving us \$30,000.
- C: Dr. Jennings: The \$30,000 will come from the general funds.
- C: Mr. Morehart: This was discussed in the Finance Committee meeting, and it was approved.

**Approval of disbursement of the Differentiated Compensation Fund:**

- Mr. MaGee moved to approve the disbursement of the Differentiated Compensation Fund as presented.
- Dr. Kimble seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the disbursement of the Differentiated Compensation Fund was approved.

**Executive Director's Report:**

- Dr. Jennings gave the Executive Director's report.

Question, Answer, Comment:

- C: Dr. Jennings: The state has proposed a new accountability scale to take effect the year of 2026 but they have given simulated scores based on where we are now. They will explain this further next week during the Teacher/Leader Summit. (*refer to the PowerPoint*)
- C: Dr. Jennings: In review of our growth, we are outperforming the state in ELA and in Math. We have work in EL Mastery, Math Mastery, Science Mastery, and Social Studies Mastery.  
At the last meeting, I mentioned appeal the score because I knew it wasn't correct. Last week we received our results from the appeals process and our score is actually 54.6, which is 6.7 points of growth. We grew more than we did the year before. We are about 10 points away from a C.
- Q: Mr. Morehart: The appeal gave us an additional 4 points?
- A: Dr. Jennings: Yes.
- C: Mrs. Tolliver: That is great.
- Q: Mr. Wayt: Who did the appeals?
- A: Dr. Jennings: Myself and Ms. Sealy.
- Q: Mr. Wayt: Who sent back the word from the state?
- A: Dr. Jennings: Jennifer Baird sent the letter. Thomas Landberg signed off on it.
- C: Dr. Jennings: When we score well this year, we should be at a C. I'm saying this loosely.

- Q: Mr. Morehart: With the schools that are closing down, will any of those students choose to come to Linwood?
- A: Dr. Jennings: We have started the recruitment efforts in those areas. Mrs. Williams, will you talk a little about the recruiting efforts we've put in place?
- A: Mrs. Williams: Yes, for the past 4 weeks, we have been targeting those specific areas. We have spoken with parents about Linwood and the programs we have to offer. We received some good results. After the initial announcement of the closures/mergers, the next day we had parents come into the building to register their students.

### Consent Agenda Reports Received

Consent agenda reports were sent electronically for the board's review prior to today's meeting. The floor was open for questions. (*Reports included: Academics, Operations, Marketing/Recruitment, Human Resources*)

#### Question, Answer, Comment:

- Q: Mr. MaGee: I am concerned with the leak in your office Dr. Jennings. There are long-term health challenges that may arise. Accumulated mold could cause some serious health concerns to the people in the building. If we haven't had the building inspected for mold, I think we should get that done to prevent a major concern in the future.
- A: Dr. Jennings: We have had it inspected and they said there was no mold in the building.
- Q: Ms. Nix: Does Caddo still take on the cost?
- A: Dr. Jennings: Caddo has been out to fix it.
- C: Mr. MaGee: As a precautionary measure, I think we should get someone independent to check it out, both the mold and the corroded pipes.
- Q: Mrs. Pierson: May I comment?
- A: Mr. MaGee: Yes.
- C: Mrs. Pierson: That hallway has always been leaking since 2016 when I started. In some cases, the leaks are worse than others. On that entire hallway they have insulated the pipes, but the pipes really need to be changed out. Whomever Caddo selects to come; they are patching it up instead of fixing the problem. They charge us for everything they do, and it's not even fixed. So, we have disputed asking them to not keep charging us when they aren't fixing the problem.
- Q: Dr. Kimble: So, they charge us to fix their building?
- A: Dr. Jennings: Correct.
- A: Mr. Morehart: Yes, that is a part of our lease agreement. We do minor repairs; they do the major repairs.
- C: Dr. Jennings: They don't do the major ones as they should. We still have to pay for those as well.
- Q: Mr. MaGee: Do you have to use them or other contractors?
- A: Dr. Jennings: We try to use them to have documentation that they sent contractors out. Every time we call them about a capital project, they tell us that we have missed the date or don't have the funding for it.
- C: Mrs. Pierson: They don't inform us of the deadline. It is a big issue, and they are quite costly.
- C: Dr. Jennings: We've replaced all the air conditioning units in the main building. We've replaced the lighting, that cost was over \$300,000. We have done all capital projects, i.e. floors, fiber lines, chillers, etc.
- C: Mrs. Pierson: We have to be very careful because we have found that they have been double charging us.
- Q: Mr. Wayt: Do you have some correspondence where they have declined to pay for something that is included in our contract? I would like to see it. I will take it up with the new superintendent.

- A: Mrs. Lewis: Yes, we do.
- Q: Mrs. Pierson: Just so I am clear, the actual contract agreement is that whatever we need done at the building, we have to pay for it?
- A: Mr. Wayt: Minor repairs/maintenance are our responsibility and major repairs are their responsibility. It specifically states that capital improvements are their responsibility. It is their legal responsibility.
- C: Mr. Morehart: I don't think we've thanked the staff for their efforts.
- C: Mr. Wayt: I was going back to that. Go to page 7 of the power point. This should say + 6.9 instead of 6.7. That is so much better than the 3 points. And yes Mr. Morehart, we need to thank everyone because all contribute to this.
- C: Mr. Hilliard: Great job for pursuing the appeal.

Mr. Wayt recognized the Aquaponics Teacher, Ms. Beaty, for comments.

- C: Ms. Beaty: We've had a lot of great strides this year. Last year, we had about 150 heads of lettuce. This year, we increased to 235. We are bringing in some other herbs, vegetables, and fruit. Anything the students inquired about, we're trying to bring those programs in next year, i.e. strawberries, lemon grass, cilantro, tomatoes, and peppers. Our students have so many questions.
- Q: Mr. Wayt: How many harvests have you had?
- A: Ms. Beaty: We have had 1 large harvest and every month we have a miniature harvest. The miniature harvest is like the leaves and the stems. The big harvest comes from the root. They can test one lettuce versus another and all those observational things such as the crispness of it, the difference in colors, etc. They also get to taste it if they choose. Our catfish start as fingerlings. 30 of them were donated to us by Fish Wagon from Arkansas. All were about 6-8" long and weighed about 40 g when we got them in October. The 1<sup>st</sup> time we weighed them in November, they already doubled in size. We have to feed them 2.5% of their biomass. So, the kids had to figure out their biomass. Now, they have quadrupled in size. Some are at least 16-17" long. The bigger ones are going to experience life in the pond.

#### **Approval of Consent Agenda Items:**

- Mr. Morehart moved to approve the Consent Agenda reports as presented.
- Mr. MaGee seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor and the motion was adopted.

#### **Board Chairman's Report:** *(provided by Mr. Wayt)*

##### **Renovations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Campus**

Mr. Wayt called on Mr. Morehart for an update on the renovations of the 2<sup>nd</sup> campus as presented by Mr. Marchive during the Finance Committee meeting.

Per Mr. Morehart, Mr. Marchive has suggested that due to the size of it, the kitchen project is set aside from the current scope of work. Legally, we need to rebid the project. The motion is to advertise for bids for a full working kitchen to include grease traps with our design team.

##### **Approval of aforementioned motion with respect to the bids for the kitchen:**

- Mr. Morehart motioned to advertise for bids for a full working kitchen to include grease traps.
- Mr. MaGee seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor of the motion.

**By-Laws Review**

Mr. Wayt and Lori Graham will meet to review the by-laws and the revisions. All will be notified of that meeting. All are invited to attend.

**Finance Committee Report/Approval of Contracts** *(provided by Mr. Morehart)*

A decision was made on when contracts need to be brought to the board for approval. The policy will be written and brought to the next meeting for approval.

- The auditing contract will be approved by the board in advance.
- Changes to our legal contract will be approved by the board in advance.
- Any contracts over \$50,000 will be brought to the board for approval in advance.
- All other contracts School Leadership can proceed without having board approval in advance.
- When we are reviewing line items within the budget and the expense is forecasting to be over \$50,000, we will acknowledge it in our meeting to ensure we are monitoring it.

**Emergency Expenditures** *(provided by Mr. Morehart)*

Emergency expenditures will be approved by the executive committee, but we will be sure to follow state bid laws and rules. There may be a need to call an emergency board meeting

**Unfinished Business:****Board Retreat**

Mr. Wayt would like to have the Board Retreat in late July. We are told we will have access to the raw numbers from the LEAP Assessment that should be available around July 4<sup>th</sup>.

**Upgrading Surveillance System** *(Dr. Jennings asked Mr. Hilliard to speak to this)*

All of the bids are in. The 1<sup>st</sup> 3 bids are the same: This is for the main campus only. They are going to replace all of the cameras and increase our storage. That will require rewiring. The 4<sup>th</sup> bid is proposing to not rewire and use our current wiring through a new system and increase our storage. As our cameras fail, they will be replaced as needed. The system is old, and Mr. Hilliard recommends that we upgrade our system.

Question, Answer, and Comment:

Q: Mr. Wayt: What do you think accounts for the difference between these quotes?

A: Mr. Hilliard: The 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quote are familiar with us.

Q: Mr. Wayt: Do they come out and look at our current system?

A: Mr. Hilliard: Yes, but not in depth. They sent someone out that came and looked at the cameras by walking the hallways. He didn't look at it in depth. For example, you have to look at the wiring within the walls and things of that nature. Quoter #1 and #4 know us and their quotes are more accurate. Quoter #2 and #3 have the more high-end cameras.

Q: Mr. Morehart: Are you comfortable that #1 can do it?

A: Mr. Hilliard: Very comfortable. That's who we're using now. They've done all the work here at the annex building.

Q: Mr. Wayt: The combination of #1 and #4 would be a good substitute for #2 and #3.

A: Mr. Hilliard: We should select one of these, not a combination. The only thing about #4 is they don't have anyone that can fix anything. They can just sell the camera and replace the camera. However, if there is an issue with the equipment, we have to hire someone that can fix it.

Q: Mr. Wayt: What does #1 offer that #4 doesn't?

A: Mr. Hilliard: They do the entire project.

Q: Dr. Kimble: Does #1 have brand new cameras?

A: Mr. Hilliard: The 1<sup>st</sup> three quotes are for 105 new cameras.  
 Q: Dr. Kimble: So, you don't have to work in any of the old cameras?  
 C: Mr. Morehart: Like any compatibility problems?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: No, we won't have to deal with that. They also offer an optional maintenance plan as well.  
 Q: Dr. Kimble: So, quote #1 is just as good as #3?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: Yes, 1 is just as good as 3.  
 C: Ms. Nix: But we don't need it because 3 does things that we don't need.  
 C: Mr. Morehart: #1 will do what we need done, #2 and #3 have more sophisticated equipment that we do not need.  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: Yes and #1 is familiar with our building and our needs.  
 Q: Mr. Wayt: So, this will cover both campuses?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: No, this quote is just for the main campus.  
 Q: Mr. Wayt: So, what are we thinking about the new campus?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: We have to quote it. I would like the vendor selected for the main campus to send us quotes for this campus. The 1<sup>st</sup> hurdle was our immediate need to get the campus fixed at the main campus as soon as possible.  
 Q: Mr. Wayt: So, from what you understand and your experience, you think that #1 would be the best solution?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: Yes, I do. And we are currently paying Interface \$518/month to maintenance our cameras. We will save some money on maintenance if we get them updated.  
 Q: Mr. Morehart: And we are not storing much data, right?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: Right.  
 C: Mr. Morehart: That's not acceptable.  
 Q: Mr. Wayt: How long will this project take?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: A little over a week.  
 Q: Mr. Wayt: How long could we store data?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: 6 months.  
 Q: Dr. Jennings: Will these have audio?  
 A: Mr. Hilliard: It's an additional cost.  
 Q: Mr. Morehart: Dr. Jennings, what's your timeline for getting this done?  
 A: Dr. Jennings: I want to say yesterday, but I know we have budget concerns right now. Our building is supposed to be turnkey on June 15<sup>th</sup>. I would like to vote on it at June's board meeting and they can start on the project in July.  
 C: Mr. Morehart: We can add it to the agenda for the June BOT meeting.  
 Q: Ms. Nix: We talked about the schools closing and getting students. Are we looking to get some of those displaced teachers?  
 A: Dr. Jennings: We're already getting some. We also have to keep in mind the new charter that's opening. Some of our teachers may try to go over there because of the high salaries that they are offering. But we are competitive.  
 Q: Ms. Nix: I know you look at teachers and their growth. Have you thought about a differentiated bonus for teachers who show incredible growth?  
 A: Dr. Jennings: The bonus structure now is similar to the Tap model. It is based on SLT's.

**New Business:** None

**Executive Session:**

- Personnel Matter
- National Charter School Conference

**Approval of move into Executive Session:**

- Mr. Morehart moved to enter into Executive Session to discuss personnel concerns.
- Mr. MaGee seconded the motion.

- All voted in favor.

Meeting moved to Executive Session at 5:24 p.m.

**Approval of move return to Regular Session:**

- Dr. Kimble motion to return to regular session.
- Mr. Morehart seconded the motion.
- All voted in favor.

Meeting returned to Regular Session at 5:44 p.m.

**Adjourn:** Mr. Morehart moved, Dr. Kimble seconded, to adjourn the meeting at 5:48 p.m. All voted in favor.