

WIL LOU GRAY OPPORTUNITY SCHOOL

BOARD OF TRUSTEES

MINUTES OF MEETING ON DECEMBER 2, 1980

The Board of Trustees convened for a special called meeting on Tuesday, December 2, 1980 at 6:30 p.m. in the Auditorium of the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School. Trustees in attendance were: Dr. Marvin Efron, presiding; Ms. Mary Alice Mack; Ms. Jack Wilson; Ms. Anne Boyce; Dr. Louise Scott; Dr. J. C. Holler, Sr.; The Reverend James B. Mitchell; Mr. Karl Segelken; Mr. Clarence S. Rowland; Dr. M. B. Webb; and Mr. James McClary. Also in attendance were Mr. Salvatore A. Fede, Superintendent; Mr. John King, Director of Fiscal Affairs; Miss Gloria Lloyd, Director of Personnel; Dr. Jonnie Spaulding, Director of Student Development; Mr. Pat Smith, Director of Facilities and Supportive Services and Mrs. Patricia Robbins, Secretary to the Superintendent.

Dr. M. B. Webb led the invocation.

Dr. Efron stated the meeting was called to discuss a Skills Training (Pilot Project) Program proposed for implementation at the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School through the AFL-CIO Appalachian Council under contract from the U. S. Department of Labor.

Mr. Charles Minshew, in discussing the program, stated that the program is designed to provide service up to 100 youthful first offenders from age 16 to age 22.

Dr. Milton Kimpson, Governor's Executive Assistant for Education, stated the Governor endorsed the concept but urged a thorough discussion before decision is reached. He urged all present to consider the betterment of students and the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School in reaching a decision.

Dr. Marvin Efron stated that some persons had asked to speak on the subject before the board and requested that those speaking limit their presentation to no more than three minutes and that all speaking address the subject specifically. The persons listed below were presented an opportunity to speak.

Mr. W. L. Monts, Jr.
Mr. and Mrs. W. A. Poole
Representative Marc H. Westbrook
Ms. Denise Hoce
Ms. Lynda Owen
Ms. Lisa Peeples
Col. William R. Geddings
Also:
Mr. Paul J. Weldon
Ms. Paula Williamson
Mr. Pete Barnwell

Mr. Monts stated he was representing his family and the Churchill Heights community. He had lived near the J. G. Richards facility and had experienced the blue lights, bloodhounds and hardened criminals beforehand and did not want the experience duplicated here. He further stated the influx of these students would transform the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School into a correctional facility.

Representative Westbrook stated the project is an attack on the integrity of the community and the integrity of the school. He stated the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School had received preferential treatment on its budget from the Legislature, but that if the school accepted this project it would jeopardize its funding and it would jeopardize its program.

Ms. Denise Hoge representing herself ~~and the teachers~~ of the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School stated that the school will not be made aware of prior records of project students -- that the present students will leave when project students are enrolled and that youthful offenders needing a second chance can go elsewhere for this chance but not here.

Ms. Lisa Peeples read a prepared statement which is attached as enclosure #1.

Ms. Lynda Owen, teacher at Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School, resident of Springdale, member of Platt Springs Methodist Church stated that the Wil Lou Gray Opportunity School is not the place to host the program. Our students are unique, our school is unique and the two bodies of students would not mix and the new students would have a demoralizing effect upon the present student body.

Ms. Nell Poole, citizen of Springdale (owns property and business activities in neighborhood) stated that the program will damage the image of the school and would damage the worth of Springdale. She stated that she does not care for Federal Grants, and that charity should begin at home.

Col. Geddings, member of Springdale Planning Commission, stated that project would destroy the image of Springdale "as a good place to live." He further stated that CETA Funds would be phased out by new administration.

Ms. Williamson stated that students coming in would be difficult to retain at the school, even more difficult than it is now.

Further open discussion by various persons brought out that the program is a pilot project and that the AFL-CIO had approached the school to house the program and that the project would pay for any new or needed facilities.

Mr. Barnwell stated that many of the fears expressed are not justified for many safeguards would be built into the program.

Mr. Weldon, Deputy Commissioner for Programs of the S. C. Department of Corrections stated the Department of Corrections does not have any interest in taking over the program in the future. He also stated that 41 of the eligible students are presently living in the surrounding area and it would benefit them and the community to have them in the program.

Ms. Anne Boyce, member of the Board, stated programs dealing with youthful offenders are most worthwhile programs.

At this time, Dr. Efron told all persons present that the Board would go into "committee of the whole" session and would return into open hearing to present the Board's decision.

During the "committee of the whole" session the comments from other state agencies were discussed and evaluated. Also, mention was made of the significant number of letters received critical of the project.

Dr. Holler made the motion that the school not enter into the project. This was seconded by Ms. Wilson. Motion carried.

In open hearing, Dr. Efron announced the Board's decision not to enter into the proposed AFL-CIO project. The meeting was adjourned at 9:35 p.m.

James McClary
Secretary, Board of Trustees

Memorandum For Record

The Board of Trustees met as a "committee of the whole" on November 19, 1980 with various staff members and with Mr. Charles Minshew and Mr. Pete Barnwell. The nature of the program and its various disadvantages and advantages were discussed. The attached handout addresses the topics and items discussed.

James McClary
Secretary, Board of Trustees