

MINUTES
Orange County 2024 School Bond Education Committee
August 20, 2024

COMMITTEE MEMBERS PRESENT: Al Ciarochi, Dr. Danielle Jones, Sarah Smylie, Jean Hamilton, Phyllis Portie-Ascott, Andrea Tanner, Jason Johnson, Samantha Earnhardt, Rani Dasi, Anissa McLendon

COMMITTEE MEMBERS ABSENT: Vina Modareess, Frederick Davis, Benjamin Alschuler

COUNTY STAFF PRESENT: Travis Myren, Kirk Vaughn, Kristin Prelipp

OCS STAFF PRESENT: Kevin Smith

CHCCS STAFF PRESENT: Andy Jenks

GUESTS: Bonnie Hauser, Scott Scaggs, Jan Johnson, Lynn Carswell, Kari Hamel

1. Call to Order at 6 p.m.

Co-Chairs Commissioners Jean Hamilton and Phyllis Portie-Ascott

2. Introductions of Committee Members

3. Recap of the July 25th, 2024 Bond Education Committee Meeting

Co-Chairs

- a. Co-Chair Comm. Portie-Ascott asked if any changes need to be made to the draft minutes from the July 25, 2024 meeting. There were no changes suggested.
- b. Comm. Portie-Ascott read the Establishment, Charge, and Composition for the 2024 Bond Education Committee.
- c. Comm. Portie-Ascott summarized the legal parameters for the Bond Education Committee. The do's and don'ts include not using public funds to support or oppose the bond. In official meetings, the committee may not advocate for or against the bond. Away from meetings, when not using one's official title, the committee members can support or not support the bond as their personal opinion. Always be sure to ask the county attorney if you have questions.

4. Public Relations Consultant Presentation

Avenir Bold

- a. Jan Johnson, President, and Scott Scaggs, Creative Director, of Avenir Bold gave a presentation that included their capabilities, relevant clients, and similar projects such as the NC Board of Elections Voter ID Initiative. The presentation includes a timeline on the 2024 School Facilities Bond Education Messaging and Media Support.

5. Next Steps

Co-Chairs

Included a discussion about future presentations, outreach materials, and what the selected consultant for messaging and a media plan needs from us.

- a. Next steps will include scheduling an input session for next week. The consultant will need to identify the top five pieces of information that voters need to know to be educated about the bond.
- b. Rani Dasi and Sarah Smylie want to know how Avenir Bold would be able to identify likely voters. Sarah Smylie worries that some voters will leave that section blank. Jan Johnson from Avenir Bold said that there are robust tools in social media that would help to identify people who are likely voters. She referenced a Sierra Club project in which they were able to identify environmental enthusiasts, and people who had supported and donated to environmental causes. They targeted those voters. Scott Scaggs from Avenir Bold said it is important to decode the language that appears on the ballot. Jan Johnson it would be good to have handouts that are easy to read at the polling sites and other locations.
- c. Kevin Smith said that he wants to be sure that we need to make sure that people get out to vote and that message needs to be hardwired into the school bond messaging. Jan Johnson said that we need to educate voters on how important this bond is and how it will impact everyone at some level.
- d. Sarah Smylie wants to know if the direct mailing pieces will include postage. Avenir Bold said that the budget does not include that but rather the creation of a direct mail piece.
- e. Dr. Jones says Orange County Schools does mailings because areas of Orange County do not have internet. She also wants to educate younger voters who are eager to vote but may not be educated about what the bond means.
- f. Comm. Hamilton led a discussion about meeting as soon as possible to discuss the immediate needs. Jan Johnson said we could begin by surveying the group and that a session could be held virtually next week. She suggested that the survey would be completed in advance of the virtual meeting. The committee agrees that virtual will be a better fit.
- g. Al Ciarochi suggests that critical staff can first have a charette with the consultant, especially those who have been through this before. Scott Scaggs suggests that it may be better to begin with a clean slate so that we are not just repeating old messages and are not influenced by an old script.
- h. Dr. Jones said she is worried about the tight deadline and thinks a survey and a virtual meeting next week would work. Comm. Hamilton likes this idea. Rani Dasi suggests that after the survey and the initial meeting, there could also be a subcommittee that could solidify the information in advance of the Sept. 4th meeting. In this way, we could have a draft plan by Sept. 4th. Rani Dasi and Dr. Jones want a mix of staff, community members, and elected officials on any subcommittee.
- i. It is decided that the survey will be sent this week, and Avenir Bold could have the results by Tuesday. The virtual meeting would be on Wednesday, August 28 from 6 pm to 7:30 via Microsoft Teams. Comm. Hamilton said that during the August 28th meeting they need to set aside time to create the agenda for the Sept. 4th committee meeting.

6. Schedule for Future Meetings

Co-Chairs

Proposed Schedule 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. on the following Wednesdays:

- September 4 at the Bonnie B. Davis Environment & Agricultural Center, 1020 US-70 West, Hillsborough
- September 18 at the Solid Waste Administration Office, 1207 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill
- October 2 at the Bonnie B. Davis Environment & Agricultural Center, 1020 US-70 West, Hillsborough
- October 16 at the Solid Waste Administration Office, 1207 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill
- October 30 at the Whitted Human Services Building, Donna Baker Meeting Room, 300 W. Tryon St., Hillsborough

Dates are approved.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, August 28 at 6 p.m. via Teams

Time of adjournment: 7:24 p.m.