

**MINUTES OF THE PUBLIC SESSION  
OF THE SOUTH BEND EMPOWERMENT ZONE  
BOARD OF DIRECTORS  
12/19/24**

**MINUTES**

- Meeting Time Start: 6:10pm
- Meeting Called to Order: Sam Centellas, Board President
- Meeting video is available on [Youtube](#)
- Meeting presentation is available on the [Zone website](#)

**LOCATION**

- Coquillard Elementary School

**QUORUM**

- Attendees:
  - Sam Centellas, Board President
  - Rosa Hiestand, Board Secretary (virtual)
  - Ryan Matthys, Board Treasurer (virtual)
  - Duane Wilson
  - Jeff Rea
  - Stephanie Ball (joined at 6:34pm)
- Absent:
  - Kareemah Fowler
  - Sonya Watkins
  - Leslie Wesley
- Quorum Established (Y/N): Yes

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**SUMMARY**

The Board voted to extend the Chief's contract through the 2025-26 school year. The Board also congratulated Teachers of the Year and welcomed Coquillard students in the Gentlemen and Scholars program.

**AGENDA ITEMS**

**I. ADOPTION OF AGENDA**

- Motion to approve agenda: Ryan Matthys
- Seconded: Duane Wilson

- Discussion: None
- Approved Unanimously

## II. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- Motion to approve minutes of November 21, 2023: Ryan Matthys
- Seconded: Duane Wilson
- Discussion: None
- Approved: Unanimously

## III. BOARD PRESIDENT REPORT

Board President Sam Centellas recognized the teachers of the year:

- Patience Trowbridge: Kindergarten at Coquillard Elementary.
- Courtney Mitchell: 4th grade DLI at Harrison Elementary.
- Steven Smith: Social Studies at Navarre Middle School.
- Douglas Clark: 4th grade at Warren Elementary.
- Tiffany Mason: 5th grade at Wilson Elementary.

The Board President also mentioned the news coverage for the Zone, including both a story about an extracurricular program at Coquillard, as well as Dr. Lewis's appearance as a panelist on WSBT's special "Operation Education" Town Hall. Lastly, he thanked teachers and staff for a successful first semester.

## IV. PUBLIC COMMENT

None.

## V. COQUILLARD STUDENTS AND GENTLEMEN AND SCHOLARS

William Douglas, founder of Gentlemen and Scholars and a Coquillard graduate, introduced Coquillard students currently in the program: Kendrick Graham, Douglas Donley, and Robert Stuckey.

Led by Gentlemen and Scholars Director Cory Brazier, the students presented key values and lessons of the program. Each student also shared how the program has helped them and what they would like to be when they grow up. Mr. Brazier also praised the students and how each has developed during the program.

Dr. Lewis shared that the Gentlemen and Scholars program will soon roll out to all Zone Schools where it has not already been implemented.

Board Questions:

- *What was the hardest thing about becoming a true Gentleman and Scholar?*

- Douglas Donley: Learning the ways of a gentleman and scholar
- *What are the ways of a gentleman and a scholar?*
  - Kendrick Graham: Holding the doors open for ladies, helping your mother, washing dishes, getting chores done.
- *How often do you get together and what kind of things do you do?*
  - Douglas Donley: We get together every Wednesday and talk about not bullying and other topics.
- *When things get tough and hard, what do you do?*
  - Kendrick Graham: I choose to either listen to some music, take a deep breath, or walk away and be by myself.

## VI. FINANCE

Ronda Ross shared an update on transfers from SBCSC to the Zone's accounts. She also reported that the Zone is on track in terms of budget to actuals for both the 501(c)3 and the Zone's funds held by SBCSC. The Zone has spent approximately 50% of its budget at the midpoint of the school year.

The report also included an update on the audit process. The auditor and accountant are making some adjustments, and expect to bring the report to the next board meeting.

Board Comments:

- The Treasurer, Ryan Matthys: *I want to point out that there will be an adjustment on the statement of assets of approximately \$83,000, as a portion of what is reported today has been used and will be expensed pending discussions with the auditor and accountant.*

Report Approval:

- Motion to approve the financial report: Jeff Rea
- Seconded: Duane Wilson

Ryan Matthys re-emphasized that the current assets will be significantly reduced after discussions with the auditor and accountant. Based on this future change, the motion was amended to be pending adjustment to the asset figures. The new motion was unanimously accepted.

There was no public comment.

## VII. PERSONNEL REPORT

In November the Zone hired three staff and there were seven departures.

## VIII. SOUTH BEND EMPOWERMENT ZONE CHIEF EXTENSION

Board member Jeff Rea expressed the satisfaction of the entire board about Dr. Lewis's, and his team's management, and their desire to extend his contract. The Governance and Executive Committees and Dr. Lewis have agreed on the contract presented to the full board, which extends the Chief's contract through the 2025-26 school year.

- Motion to approve: Jeff Rea
- Seconded: Stefanie Ball
- Public comments: None
- Approved: Unanimously

### BOARD COMMUNICATIONS

The Zone will hold a virtual staff town hall on Thursday, December 21 at 2:15pm. The next board meeting will be on Tuesday January 16th at 6pm at the SBCSC administration building.

## IX. ADJOURNMENT

Meeting adjourned at 6:47pm