

**MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF EDUCATION  
FORT STOCKTON INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

July 12, 2018  
6:20 pm

President Billy Espino called the meeting to order at 6:20 pm.

Board member Freddie Martinez established a quorum with the following members present: Billy Espino, Tom Zell, Sandra Marquez and Freddie Martinez. Nacho Dominguez, Flo Garcia and Andy Rivera were absent.

**ACTION**

Motion made by Tom, seconded by Sandra, and carried unanimously to employ Abraham Barker as legal counsel for the purpose of assisting and advising the Board of Trustees on proposed nonrenewal of Danny Dixon.

**CLOSED SESSION**

In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act (Subchapters D and E of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code), the board entered into a closed meeting to consult with legal counsel at 6:22 pm.

**OPEN SESSION**

The board reconvened in open session at 6:29 pm.

**HEARING ON PROPOSED NONRENEWAL OF PROFESSIONAL TERM CONTRACT EMPLOYEE DANNY DIXON**

Mr. Abraham Barker conducted the hearing on behalf of the Board. Mr. Barker indicated that the employee, Danny Dixon, requested an open hearing. Legal counsel indicated they were qualified to act as counsel. None of the board members objected to participating in the hearing. Counsel for the District invoked the rule to request all witness leave the room until called. Mr. Barker presented the rules of the hearing. Each party was given 60 minutes to present evidence, and Mr. Barker would act as timekeeper. The court reporter, a notary, swore in the potential witnesses. Witnesses were excused. Mr. Barker continued reading the reasons for proposed nonrenewal.

Administration began the proposed nonrenewal hearing at 6:39 pm. Counsel for the administration, Heather Rutland, gave each board member in attendance documentation supporting the administration's reasons for recommending nonrenewal. Superintendent Ralph Traynham was called as the first witness by Fort Stockton ISD legal counsel Heather Rutland. Counsel for the employee, Jay Brim, began questioning Mr. Traynham at 7:00 pm. Mr. Traynham was excused from testimony at 7:14 pm.

Ms. Rutland called administration witness Gil-Ray Madrid at 7:14 pm. Mr. Brim began questioning Mr. Madrid at 7:27 pm. Mr. Madrid was excused from testimony at 7:45 pm.

Mr. Brim called Alex John Gonzalez as a witness for Danny Dixon. Alex spoke on behalf of Danny and asked the board to consider the positive impact Danny has had for his past students and the community and make an honorable settlement. Ms. Rutland questioned Mr. Gonzalez and asked him to clarify some of the comments he made. Mr. Brim again questioned Mr. Gonzalez.

Mr. Brim called Luis Villarreal as a witness for Danny. Mr. Villarreal spoke in support of Danny and asked the board to consider the history Danny has had with students and that he is not a threat. Ms. Rutland had no questions.

Mr. Brim called Darren Hodges as a witness for Danny. Darren spoke in support of Danny and voiced his frustration at the lack of due process for Danny and that he should be allowed to teach until and unless he is found guilty. Ms. Rutland questioned Darren about his opinion of Danny's effectiveness.

Mr. Brim called Cody Aaron as a witness for Danny. Cody, a former student of Danny's, spoke in support of him and his use of the Bible and prayer in helping him through personal issues and considers him a mentor. Ms. Rutland had no questions.

Mr. Brim called Danny Dixon. Danny stated that he had not heard anything from law enforcement since his arrest and indicated that not one negative word has been said to him and everyone he has come in contact with, including students, offers him support and encouragement. Ms. Rutland questioned Danny about, among other things, some of the comments he made about online teaching and a civic organization he belongs to.

Mr. Brim and Ms. Rutland rested their cases at 8:19 pm.

The board recessed at 8:20 and reconvened at 8:27 pm.

Ms. Rutland began her closing arguments at 8:27 pm and asked that the board focus on the current issue, not on how he has been perceived in the past and to remember the seriousness of the charges that have been brought against him and reminded the board that they are responsible for the safety and security of all students, not just some or a few.

Mr. Brim began his closing arguments at 8:34 pm and objected to the statement that Ms. Rutland made about earlier calls that started coming in today wondering why Mr. Dixon has not been fired because it was not a part of evidence and asked that the board consider that he has not been convicted and to utilize him unless or until he is.

Ms. Rutland closed by saying that the nice things people are saying about Mr. Dixon do not outweigh the fact that the board is responsible for keeping the students safe.

Mr. Barker read a statement of guidance to the board to consider the evidence presented and consider only the reasons stated for nonrenewal.

#### **CLOSED SESSION**

In accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Act (Subchapters D and E of Chapter 551 of the Texas Government Code), the board entered into a closed meeting to deliberate the proposed nonrenewal of professional term contract employee Danny Dixon at 8:40 pm.

#### **OPEN SESSION**

The board reconvened in open session at 8:53 PM.

#### **ACTION**

Motion made by Tom, seconded by Freddie and carried unanimously to nonrenew the contract of Danny Dixon.

Mr. Barker stated that Mr. Dixon has the right to appeal to the Texas Education Agency.

Meeting adjourned at 8:54 pm.

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Presiding Officer

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Attest