

CPSD gives Attaché control of its own coffers, grants easements to The Potter's House

By Taylor McKay Hathorn

The Clinton Public School District's School Board kicked off its monthly meeting by recognizing a "Rising Arrow" from each school who had been selected for their solid academic performance and their good conduct in and out of the classroom. The District also recognized its four National Merit Semifinalists, who are part of the top one percent of students nationally, based on their PSAT and SAT scores.

"That was the best part of the night," Board President Derek Holmes enthused after the students were recognized for their efforts.

The business portion of the Board meeting began with an update from Mark Piper with Bailey Construction. Piper reported that the interior punch list at Lovett Elementary School had been completed, though the exterior punch list had been temporarily halted due to unfavorable weather conditions. Work on the exterior punch list is expected to begin again soon, with the project expected to come in roughly \$14,000 under budget. Piper also reported that the long-outstanding electrical project had been completed at Clinton Junior High School, thus ending the work at the junior high school and enabling the District to finish paying off the project.

Ryan Hansen with WBA Architects also addressed the Board, stating that excavation was "well underway" at the baseball field and tennis courts, while progress was being made on the access road and at the softball field. Hansen also reported that the contractors had discovered an open irrigation line at the baseball field, which they believe has been contributing to the existing moisture-retention problems at the location. The discovery caused a \$15,000 increase to the project, though Hansen remarked that the funds were available in contingency. Despite this discovery and the subsequent repair, Hansen is hopeful that the athletic improvement projects will still be completed in time for the start of the spring sports season.

Financial Director Libby Callegan walked the Board through a number of routine financial matters before presenting a request from Clinton High School principal Brett Robinson to allow revenue from Attaché Show Choir's fall and spring revues to go directly into booster club coffers rather than going through the school first. Callegan stated that the request was not unprecedented, as the band and several athletic teams often managed their own funds in this way, though the removal of the school from the handling of funds absolved the District from requiring an administrator to attend the event.

Board Member Felicia Gavin asked Callegan whether Attaché had a line item in the District budget, and Callegan responded that the group had a program code, as the District provided the show choir with \$23,000 in "start-up funding" each year. Again, Callegan remarked that this was no different from similar start-up funding that the District provides annually to athletics, band, choir and cheer.

"It's fairly equitable," Callegan said of the fund dispersal.

Holmes remarked that he would like for someone to confirm that Attaché is aware of the new policies for District booster clubs and that the District continue to have an administrator on hand at the revues, though they were no longer required.

"We need to make sure they know that if they don't spend [the funds] correctly, it's on them and that booster club," Holmes concluded.

Callegan also introduced the legal representative of The Potter's House, who was requesting a twelve-month easement on behalf of his client, as The Potter's House is slated to undertake a new construction program on its property adjacent to the District's transportation office. The attorney confirmed that the construction was not expected to at all encroach on the District's land, though the City of Clinton was legally requiring the procurement of the easement. The Potter's House offered a good-faith gratuity of \$1,000 and had a representative from its state-licensed contracting firm on hand to accept questions from the Board, who eventually granted the easement with a 5-0 vote.

In his Superintendent's report, Dr. Andy Schoggin discussed the Mississippi Department of Education's recent release of test scores from the 2020-2021 school year, which he acknowledged were "lagging indicators" of the District's progress.

"[Understanding these scores] will allow targeted instruction," Schoggin noted. In order to better pinpoint the specific needs for such instruction, Schoggin and Assistant Superintendent Anthony Goins are instituting a monthly leadership training with WildSparq, who presently facilitates such trainings for companies like Chick-Fil-A. Schoggin will meet regularly with supervising principals and directors, while Goins will meet with assistant and vice principals.

"It'll take us from third to first," Gavin quipped in response to the news.

The next meeting of the Board will be held on Tuesday, November 9.

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