

The mission of the Washington County School District is to empower all students to become well educated, productive citizens by providing appropriate, high quality, and rigorous educational programs in a safe learning environment.

SPECIAL MEETING/EMPLOYEE HEARING

WASHINGTON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

February 13, 2017 – Immediately following the Regular School Board Meeting

Board Room - Administration Building

Chipley, Florida

MINUTES

The Washington County School Board met for a special meeting/employee hearing discussion at the designated time and place. Chairman Vann Brock, Vice Chairman Susan Roberts, Mr. Milton Brown, Mr. Terry Ellis, Dr. Lou Cleveland, Superintendent Joseph Taylor and Attorney Jeff Goodman were present.

I. CALL TO ORDER/ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA:

Chairman Vann Brock called the meeting to order. The Agenda was unanimously approved on a motion by Mr. Terry Ellis and seconded by Ms. Susan Roberts.

II. EMPLOYEE HEARING - Mr. Gene Cox, Bus Driver

Presentation by School Board Attorney Jeff Goodman

Superintendent Joseph Taylor and Director of Administrative Services, Pat Collins gave their testimonies and answered questions from Attorney Jeff Goodman and Mr. Gene Cox.

Mr. Gene Cox gave his testimony, asked and answered questions. Ms. Clara McDonald and Ms. Pearl Jackson were Mr. Cox's character witnesses and gave their statement.

1. Chapter 120 Termination Hearing: In Re Gene Cox

a. Findings of Fact

Violation of School Board policy 6:37(7)(a)(iii) – Incompetency and 6.37(7)(a)(v) – Willful neglect of duty by:

- Gene Cox continuing on his route with students aboard the bus for lengthy period of time after it was determined that smoke and fumes were entering passenger compartment
- Gene Cox failure to properly notify authorized transportation personnel to report an emergency
- Gene Cox failure to follow policy and procedures related to bus evacuations and monitoring of emergency exit from bus by students
- Failure to properly supervise students after they evacuated the school bus during the incident on January 17, 2017 and allowing these students to walk home and/or ride home with unauthorized individuals, thereby failing to insure proper and adequate supervision of the students in his care.

b. Conclusion of Law

- The Washington County School Board has jurisdiction of this matter pursuant to Florida Statutes.
- Gene Cox was found in violation of Washington County School Board Policy 6:37(7)(a)(iii) – Incompetency and 6.37(7)(a)(v) – Willful neglect of duty

2. Superintendent Recommendation/Input:

After reviewing all evidence submitted, Mr. Taylor recommended that Gene Cox, a bus driver at the Vernon bus barn, be terminated from his employment with the Washington County School District based on his actions which he failed to follow school board transportation policies and procedures.

3. Board Action:

It was unanimously approved by the Board on a motion by Mr. Terry Ellis and a second by Ms. Susan Roberts.

III. ADJOURN: With no further business to discuss, the special meeting/hearing was adjourned.

**VANN BROCK, CHAIRMAN
SUSAN ROBERTS, VICE-CHAIRMAN
TERRY ELLIS
MILTON BROWN
DR. LOU CLEVELAND**

JOSEPH TAYLOR, SUPERINTENDENT/SECRETARY