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Board of Regents, Murray State University

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MINUTES OF THE SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF REGENTS
Murray State University
April 22, 1994

The Board of Regents of Murray State University met on April 22, 1994, in special session in the Board Room, Wells Hall, on the campus of Murray State University. The meeting was called to order at 3:06 p.m. Regent James Butts gave the invocation.

Upon call of the roll, the following members answered present: Mr. James O. Butts, Mrs. Sid Easley, Mrs. Beverly Ford, Dr. Frank Julian, Mr. Philip Lanier, Mr. Wells T. Lovett, Mr. Robert Matthews, Mrs. Virginia Strohecker, and Mr. Brian Van Horn. Absent: Mrs. Arlivia Gamble. The chairman stated a quorum was present to conduct business.

Present for the meeting were Acting President James Booth; Mrs. Sandra Rogers, Secretary of the Board; Mr. John Fitzgibbon, Interim Vice President for University Relations and Administrative Services; Mr. James Overby, General Counsel; faculty; staff; and, members of the news media.

Executive Session

Mr. Easley moved that the Board convene into Executive Session to discuss personnel matters and possibly consideration of the selection of the president. Mr. Matthews seconded and the motion carried.

The Executive Session began at 3:08 p.m.

The Executive Committee of the Faculty Senate, Staff Congress, and the Deans were invited into the meeting during a portion of the Executive Session.

Mr. Matthews moved that the Board adjourn from Executive Session at 6:45 p.m. and the motion carried.

Public Session

Chairman Butts declared the Board in Public Session and the following action was a result of discussions in Executive Session.

Mr. Butts expressed appreciation to the groups and individuals who were invited into the Executive Session for the discussions.

Mr. Easley, chair of the Presidential Search Committee, moved that the Board of Regents select Dr. Samuel Kern Alexander as the next President of Murray State University. Mr. Matthews seconded and discussion followed.

On behalf of the Screening Committee, Mr. Easley expressed appreciation to the Board of Regents, alumni, staff, and the students of Murray State University, for their support during the last four months. The search committee, composed of Beverly Ford, Wells Lovett, Frank Julian, Brian Van Horn, James Butts-ex-officio, and Sid Easley, has completed its task with many hours being devoted to the task. The remaining members of the Board have given support and encouragement and permitted the entire group to work as a team to achieve what they believe to be an excellent result.

Mr. Easley expressed thanks to Virginia Strohecker, Bob Matthews, Arlivia Gamble, Sandra Rogers, John Kuhnle of Kern/Ferry International, and all who provided counsel and encouragement. There were 150 applications and the committee weighed each of them carefully. Twenty people were interviewed and the committee elected to bring five candidates to campus for interviews.
The Committee compared the individuals and their record to the criteria that was set out after consultation early in the process. As the process moved along, certain persons began to emerge as being well qualified for the position and most of those were interviewed. As the process evolved further and campus interviews occurred, the committee arrived at the conviction that one of the candidates stood out because of his strong academic background, his research and his contribution to education in Kentucky and throughout America and that was Dr. Alexander. Dr. Alexander was named by the Kentucky School Board Association as its friend of education this year in February. He followed Bert Combs year before last; Congressman Natcher the year after that; and then Kern Alexander. He is a national education expert on school law and school finance and was quoted by one of the presidential candidates in the last election as being a "national education expert" in his campaign literature. He served as a faculty member for 15 years; he was a special advisor in education for Governor Graham from Florida. He pointed out that the committee understands the concerns of the faculty and has looked at Dr. Alexander's record at Western extremely carefully, recognizing, however, that any president wherever they are, particularly if those presidents make difficult decisions, are going to have friends and they are going to have enemies because they have to make difficult decisions.

Mr. Easley stated that he had talked to the Board chair who served with Dr. Alexander at Western and was told that when Dr. Alexander was elected, the vote was 10-0 and when he left, the vote was 10-0 in his favor. The same reports came from other members of the Board at Western as well. The Board has heard both sides of that issue and we are the ones that had to make that judgement. The Board will urge Dr. Alexander to address the concerns of the faculty and, because of his vast experience and his capabilities, the Board believes that he can do that and he will do that.

Board members were given the opportunity to comment as the names were called for voting. The roll was called and the following voted: Mrs. Ford, yes; Dr. Julian, no; Mr. Lanier, no; Mr. Lovett, yes—he expressed that he was pleased to have been asked to serve on the Search Committee and commended Mr. Easley for a job well done, pointing out that they could not have done it without all the long hours he committed to the search. He stated that the Board has made the right decision to elect Dr. Alexander; however, he expressed that he has the greatest respect for those who hold a contrary view; Mr. Matthews, enthusiastically yes—he stated that after hearing the various concerns of the faculty, deans, and the staff, the Board has come to the conclusion that they believe that it is the time and the place for Murray University to move ahead and with Dr. Alexander's leadership, the university will move ahead at Murray. He pointed out that his vote was not a defensive vote because he believes Dr. Alexander is the best qualified man to run this university; Mrs. Strohecker, yes; Mr. Van Horn, yes—he expressed appreciation for the input from faculty, staff, and the deans, and stated that Dr. Alexander will bring to Murray State University the leadership needed at the present time and pointed out that as university personnel get to know Dr. Alexander, they will see more of the qualities of a proven leader; Mr. Butts, enthusiastically yes—stating that he voted for what he thought was best for this university and that Dr. Alexander is the person that can lead the university and lead it well. The motion carried with seven ayes and two nays.

Mr. Butts expressed his appreciation to the search committee for an excellent job and to Mr. Easley as chair of that committee.

Mr. Easley stated that there would possibly be a press conference on Saturday, April 23, at 8:00 a.m. with Dr. Alexander, if he could be reached. The press will be informed as soon as the decision is made.
Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Dr. Julian moved, seconded by Mrs. Strohecker, that the meeting adjourn. The meeting adjourned at 7:00 p.m.

Chairman

Secretary