

THE CITY OF STARKVILLE
OFFICE OF MAYOR
CITY HALL, LAMPKIN STREET
STARKVILLE, MISSISSIPPI 39759

Parker Y. Wiseman
MAYOR

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March 18, 2010

Ms. Markeeta Outlaw, City Clerk
101 East Lampkin Street
Starkville, MS 39759

Re: Motion Veto

VIA HAND DELIVERY

Dear Ms. Outlaw:

Be advised that pursuant to **MS Code section 21-3-15, (9)** this is formal notice that I veto the Motion presented by Alderman Sandra Sistrunk, seconded by Alderman Jeremiah Dumas, which was passed at the March 16, 2010, Recess/Regular Meeting of the Starkville Board of Aldermen the motion being:

AN ORDER APPROVING THE APPOINTMENT OF SUSAN TOMLINSON TO THE STARKVILLE SCHOOL BOARD FOR THE TERM BEGINNING MARCH 6, 2010.

The motion made by Alderman Sandra Sistrunk duly seconded by Alderman Jeremiah Dumas, was put to vote with the results as follows:

Alderman Ben Carver	voted:	YEA
Alderman Sandra Sistrunk	voted:	YEA
Alderman Eric Parker	voted:	YEA
Alderman Richard Corey	voted:	YEA
Alderman Jeremiah Dumas	voted:	YEA
Alderman Roy A'. Perkins	voted:	NAY
Alderman Henry Vaughn	voted:	NAY

After receiving a majority of the affirmative vote, the Mayor declared the motion passed, approved and adopted on March 16, 2010.

It is with a heavy heart that I have decided to veto the appointment of Susan Tomlinson to the Starkville School Board. This decision was not easy, and I have not come to it lightly. Knowing her personally, knowing her credentials, and knowing her outstanding record of service to the schools, I have no doubt that Mrs. Tomlinson could serve the school district capably and well. However, having reviewed a deep field of uniquely qualified applicants and the current needs of the School Board, I do not feel that Mrs. Tomlinson is the best fit for the vacant position.

The School Board is a policy making body. Above all else, it is important for a policy making body in a free society to be representative of the community for which it makes policy. The Starkville School Board makes policy for the students of the Starkville Public Schools. One of

the crown jewels of the Starkville Public School System is its diverse student population. The current racial composition of the Starkville Public Schools is as follows: 2% Asian, 64% Black, 1% Hispanic, 1% Native American, and 32% White. Yet, the School Board, if Mrs. Tomlinson is appointed, will become nearly racially monolithic (80% White).

The Starkville Board of Aldermen has the power to appoint four of the five members to the Starkville School Board. As such, the Board of Aldermen bears the responsibility to ensure not only that appointees are qualified to serve but also that the School Board is representative of the diverse community it serves. Diversity of representation should be considered as an important but not controlling factor in the process of appointing a School Board member. The Board of Aldermen did an excellent job discerning the qualifications of the applicants through the interview process, and there were a number of candidates that proved well qualified. Ultimately, I disagree with the level of attention that the Board of Aldermen gave to the importance of diversity of representation in evaluating the candidates for the position.

Therefore, I must respectfully veto the decision of the Board. Furthermore, given that the original process was complicated by confusion as to whether residents of the "added territory" of the Starkville School District were eligible for the position, my recommendation is for the Board of Aldermen to open a fresh application process to fill the vacancy.

Should you require assistance or further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,



Parker Y. Wiseman

Mayor

City of Starkville, MS