

AT A CONTINUED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY VIRGINIA, HELD AT ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEM'S CENTRAL OFFICE, LEXINGTON VIRGINIA ON THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 30, 2017 AT 4:30 P.M.

**PRESENT:** CHAIRMAN D. W. HINTY, JR.  
**MEMBERS:** R.S. FORD, JOHN M. HIGGINS, A.W. LEWIS, JR.  
R.R. CAMPBELL  
**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR  
AND CLERK TO BOARD:** SPENCER H. SUTER  
**FISCAL SERVICES  
DIRECTOR:** STEVEN J. BOLSTER  
**SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS:** CHAIRMAN DAVID MCDANIEL, A. J. "Jay" Lewis, II,  
WENDY LOVELL, LAURIE STRONG, KEVIN BROOKS  
**SCHOOL STAFF:** PHILLIP THOMPSON, HAYWOOD HAND; MATT CROSSMAN

**Call to Order:**

Chairman Higgins and Chairman McDaniel opened the meeting at 4:30 PM and welcomed all present.

**Discussion:**

Chairman McDaniel reviewed the RCPS's budget goals and priorities and then called attention to several items which could impact the budget, including: projected lower VRS contribution rate and group life plan; reduction of utilities by \$181,981 for a nine month period and reduction in maintenance expense by \$30,941 for the same period (energy savings offsets); potential 10% health insurance increase; and teacher raises.

He then reviewed a state and regional comparison of teachers' salaries, noting the Rockbridge was falling behind.

Supervisor Higgins asked if a full budget impact of getting the salaries on par was available. Dr. Thompson noted that it was early in the process and full impact had not yet been calculated.

Mr. Brooks added that we will have to see what the State does with SOQ positions.

Mr. McDaniel then explained that the Chromebook initiative would need to be expanded, as one Chromebook would not carry a student through

both middle and high school. He noted that the new plan would require each student receive a device in sixth grade and then a new one in ninth grade, to carry them through all seven years, which will essentially double the original estimate.

Supervisor Ford asked if there would be spares available for times when devices go down, or a student leaves theirs at home. Mr. McDaniel confirmed that spares are part of the plan.

Mr. McDaniel then noted that a priority would be adding a Technology Resource teacher at RCHS.

Mr. (Jay) Lewis noted that though the Local Composite Index was slightly reduced, the School Board had let our legislators know that it is still too high.

Mr. McDaniel then stated that we need to continue to work together to provide the training and programs to produce students who will help grow the local economy. Mr. Brooks noted that we sent the first wave of students through the Byers Institute last year and are sending a new class through this year.

Chairman Hinty then reviewed the Board of Supervisors' budget priorities with the group.

Mr. McDaniel briefly reviewed the School Division's planned capital improvement plan (CIP). He then focused on a proposal to expand the previously approved feasibility study for Central and Natural Bridge Elementary Schools, to all RCPS facilities (Division-wide). He noted that the original appropriation was for \$60,000 (\$30,000 for each school) and that the School Board could potentially get a division-wide study for close to the same total amount. He pointed out that the only way to find out would be to issue a request for proposals. He indicated that a division-wide study would look at demographics and enrollment projections, assess major building systems, and review space and capacity.

Mr. (Jay) Lewis noted that this idea originated as the school division began putting together a comprehensive capital improvement plan. Mr. Brooks added that the goal would be to get better numbers and information on not just the school needs, but community needs. He cited the potential for adding auxiliary gyms to serve the community at large.

Supervisor Lewis asked how Central Elementary's needs could wait. Dr. Thompson replied that Central would not be delayed, noting that improvements are in next year's CIP.

Supervisor Higgins noted that information and data equals justification.

Supervisor Ford noted that we recently built a second gym in Maury River Middle School. Mr. (Jay) Lewis replied that the gym is already maxed out. Mr. Brooks added that it was not an auxiliary gym. He then noted that at Central Elementary, the gym, cafeteria and auditorium are all the same room.

Mr. McDaniel stated that the proposed study would address more than just gyms. Chairman Hinty asked Mr. Suter for his thoughts. Mr. Suter stated that it makes sense to look at the big picture in everything we do. He noted that if the cost for an expanded study came back at around the same cost as for just the two elementary schools, it would be a win; he agreed that there would be no way to know unless it was put out for competitive proposals, and that if the numbers come back higher than the budget, the Board of Supervisors would have to revisit in conjunction with the School Board.

Supervisor Higgins moved to support the School Board in issuing a request for proposals for an expanded feasibility study. Supervisor Lewis provided the second and the motion passed by unanimous vote.

Supervisor Higgins revisited the CIP list and noted that some of the safety issues at Fairfield should be addressed now, rather than waiting for end of year savings. Mr. McDaniel explained that the school division can't dip into the budget this early in the year. Supervisor Higgins asked that this be brought back up for discussion in the next executive committee meeting.

Supervisor Campbell stated that he is looking forward to the upcoming budget season, and to receiving budgetary numbers from the School Board.

Supervisor Ford stated that he is not optimistic about future budgetary contribution levels from the state and federal governments. Supervisor Higgins agreed that he is looking forward to the budget process, but that it would likely be another tight year. Supervisor Lewis stated that he is proud that he pushed so hard on behalf of the

school division, noting that we have made a lot of progress over the past four years. Chairman Hinty noted that he appreciates how everyone has been cordial and thanked the outgoing Board members for their sense of direction. Supervisor Ford added that he thought the recent energy savings project with Trane went extremely well, and he was appreciative to all involved.

Dr. Thompson stated that we was very proud of the school division and thanked both Boards. Mr. McDaniel agreed with Supervisor Ford that the Trane project went very smoothly and thanked the Board of Supervisors for their support. He additional thanked Supervisor Lewis for his overall support of the school division. He then thanked Supervisor Ford, stating that from time to time things were bumpy, but that working together, they always got to the destination.

Mr. Brooks then stated that the past four years had been educational for him, noting that relations had been bumpy but that they have improved significantly. He recognized that both Boards have challenges and pressures, such that the school division gets a smaller and smaller share of both state and local revenues. He then stated that during the recent election, one member of the Board of Supervisors had made two accusations which were false. The first statement was that the school division's budget document was misleading. He stated that the school administration had offered on multiple occasions for the Board member to sit down and go over the budget, and that the offer was never taken up. Second, he expressed displeasure at the accusation that the school division participates in excessive spending at the end of the budget year. He provided figures showing that the final two months of the year have always seen an increase in spending, noting that there are lots of reasons for such spending, including two months of payroll and information technology. He concluded by saying that he wanted to put a "nail in the coffin" on this argument and hoped that the attitude of working together will continue.

Chairman Hinty noted that the next meetings on the regular schedule include an executive committee meeting on December 21, and a joint Board meeting on January 18.

On a motion by Supervisor Higgins, seconded by Supervisor Lewis, the meeting ended with a unanimous vote at 5:25 PM.