

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, JANUARY 18, 2018 AT 4:30 P.M.

PRESENT: CHAIRMAN D. W. HINTY, JR.
MEMBERS: R.R. CAMPBELL, JOHN M. HIGGINS, A.W. LEWIS, JR.
DANIEL E. LYONS

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
AND CLERK TO BOARD:** SPENCER H. SUTER
**FISCAL SERVICES
DIRECTOR:** STEVEN J. BOLSTER

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS: CHAIRMAN DAVID MCDANIEL, COREY BERKSTRESSER,
HEATHER HOSTETTER, WENDY LOVELL

SCHOOL STAFF: PHILLIP THOMPSON, HAYWOOD HAND; MATT CROSSMAN,
JASON KIRBY, RANDY WALTERS

Call to Order:

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

Discussion:

Chairman McDaniel provided a high level overview of the RCPS proposed budget, noting key points including:

- Estimated budget reductions
 - o \$102,000 - VRS
 - o \$5,000 - Group Life
 - o \$181,981 - Energy savings based on performance contracting
 - o \$30,941 - Maintenance savings based on performance contracting
- Estimated budget increases
 - o \$180,000 - Health care (10% increase)
 - o Others as noted in further discussion (below)

Dr. Lyons asked how the health care claims experience had been in the prior year. Dr. Thompson noted that they had been slightly up. Mr. Campbell asked if we were still considering the potential to join together in an insurance plan. Mr. Suter and Dr. Thompson explained that the two groups use the same benefits consultant (OneDigital) and that this option was being explored in the ongoing Request for Proposals process.

Chairman McDaniel then provided the group with a comparison of teacher salaries on other school districts. He then reviewed a series of pay raise options with budget impacts ranging from \$503,851 to \$1,030,007. Chairman Hinty asked if the options included all personnel or just teachers. Chairman McDaniel noted that all employees were included but that the number one priority would be to move teachers to the middle of the comparison chart. Dr. Lyons asked if the VRS had been considered and if consideration had been given to doing the pay adjustment over a series of year, rather than all at once. Mr. Berkstresser noted that the goal is to get the teachers to the middle of the scale soon because we risk falling further behind. Ms. Hostetter noted that all employees would get a 2% raise, with teachers getting additional percentage to move them to the middle. Chairman McDaniel added that it would take 3% to get teachers to the middle. Mr. Higgins asked if group life impacts had been considered. Mr. Daniels noted that the group life costs would add an additional \$130,000.

Chairman McDaniel reiterated that pay raises were the first priority and introduced Chromebooks as the second priority. He introduced staff member Jason Kirby to discuss the initiative. Mr. Kirby provided a PowerPoint presentation on digital conversion, describing a transition from hard copy books to Chromebook. He noted that the division had determined that a single Chromebook would not last a student from the beginning of middle school to graduation as a senior. Rather, the proposal is to provide one Chromebook in middle school and then a new one at the beginning of ninth grade. During subsequent discussions, Mr. Kirby noted that the reduction in hard copy books will likely not translate to cost savings due to the similar costs of the digital copies. However, the editions will be much easier to keep up to date. He noted that Google Docs would be provided as the work processor and that internet security is included. He added that multiple options were being explored for children without good internet access at home.

Chairman McDaniel then summarized the initial local funding request which totaled \$917,059 above the FY2018 budget. After further discussion on salaries, Dr. Thompson clarified that raises were included for all division employees, with additional for teachers, to get them to the middle of the scale.

Dr. Lyons asked what average daily membership (student population) number was being used. Dr. Thompson noted that this year's number is based on 2540 and last year's number was 2535.

Dr. Lyons then asked if the division realized an increase in funding from the November caboose budget adjustment. Chairman McDaniel noted that he was hopeful.

Chairman McDaniel then noted that the overall budget includes to draft capital improvement plan. He asked Mr. Suter to explain the reasoning behind including this in the overall budget. Mr. Suter explained that staff and the executive committee had discussed this at length and agreed that it is important to have full visibility on all costs. He then explained the premise of the school division's capital reserve fund. He explained that it is funded by end-of-year savings and that the Boards had previously agreed to a basement of \$225,000, reserved for emergency capital needs. He added that there is currently about \$34,000 in the fund, above the \$225,000 basement.

Chairman McDaniel summarized the total initial budget as being \$1,413,918 above the current-year base, adding that any additional fund infusion from the Commonwealth would be subtracted from that number.

Mr. Lewis noted that he was disappointed that Board of Supervisors had not been provided with priorities from prior years. Chairman McDaniel explained that the School Board had chosen the highest priorities rather than bombard the Board of Supervisors, but noted that the school board could certainly add other priorities in. Dr. Lyons expressed appreciation for the prioritization, noting that there are always many areas of need which could be looked at.

Chairman McDaniel then asked for the Board of Supervisors' support in forming a Rural and Small Schools Coalition. After brief discussion, Supervisor Lewis moved to adopt a resolution of support. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Higgins and was approved by unanimous vote of the Board.

Resolution to Support the Creation of a Small and Rural Schools Coalition

WHEREAS, over 80 school divisions across the Commonwealth could be defined as Rural and/or Small; and

WHEREAS, Small Rural Localities and Stakeholders have determined that working collaboratively will enhance their collective voice in legislative and other matters; and

WHEREAS, Local Stakeholders include School Boards, Boards of Supervisors, City Councils, Town Councils, Industrial Development Authorities, Chambers of Commerce, etc.; and

WHEREAS, Small Rural Stakeholders believe that PK-12 public education is critical to the vitality of their region and to the Commonwealth as a whole; and

WHEREAS, Rural School Divisions have seen a decline in K-12 enrollment of over 5,000 students since 2009 which

represents a 6% decline; and

WHEREAS, 18% of students in the Rural School Divisions live below the Federal Poverty Level; and

WHEREAS, 50% of students In Rural School Divisions are eligible for Free or Reduced Priced Lunch; and

WHEREAS, the State share for school operations has decreased by 4.7% in Rural School Divisions since 2009 while the Local share for operations has Increased by 4.3%; and

WHEREAS, these Rural Localities have the ability to raise only \$19,469,500 by Increasing property taxes by one penny (.01); and

WHEREAS, local poverty and tax revenues prevent Rural Localities from funding schools at the same level as affluent Localities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors does hereby support the creation of a Small and Rural School Division Coalition In order to better advocate for our students, teachers, staff, and stakeholders.

ADOPTED this 18th day of January 2018.

Chairman Hinty asked if Board members had any other comments. There were none.

The group then discussed the time and place of future joint meetings. Considerations discussed included geographical access and time of the meetings, to allow for public participation. It was ultimately agreed to continue to meet at the school administration offices but to change the time to 5:00 PM.

On a motion by Mr. Higgins, seconded by Mr. Lewis, the meeting ended with a unanimous vote at approximately 5:30 PM.