

CULPEPER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Minutes
April 28, 2014

A meeting of the School Board of Culpeper County was held April 28, 2014 at Culpeper County High School (library) at 14240 Achievement Drive at 6 p.m. Present were Robert Beard (East Fairfax District); Robert A. Houck (West Fairfax District); Elizabeth Hutchins (Stevensburg District); Anne C. Luckinbill (Salem District); Michelle North (Jefferson District); Elizabeth "Betsy" Smith (Cedar Mountain District); Superintendent Dr. Bobbi F. Johnson; Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Rob Hauman; Executive Director of Student Services Dr. Russell Houck; Executive Director of Special Education Angela Neely; Executive Director of Finance/Clerk Jeff Shomo; Executive Director of Human Resources Dr. Stacey Timmons; Director of Facilities, Planning and Construction Hunter Spencer; Budget Analyst Lauren Thomas and Deputy Clerk Pearl Jamison.

At 5:45 p.m., School Board members toured the Culpeper County High School campus.

At 6:03 p.m., Mr. Houck called the meeting to order.

On motion of Ms. Hutchins seconded by Ms. Luckinbill, the Board went into closed session at 6:03 p.m. regarding:

- [a] Discussion of Personnel Recommendations as permitted by the Code of Virginia 2.2-3711 (A) (1)
- [b] Discussion of Student Matters of Named Student A (Religious Exemption) as permitted by the Code of Virginia 2.2-3711 (A) (2)

Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

On motion of Ms. Hutchins seconded by Michelle North, the Board ended the closed session at 6:15 p.m. and certified that to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered.

YEAS: 6

Robert Beard
Robert Houck
Elizabeth Hutchins
Anne Luckinbill
Michelle North
Betsy Smith

Those present observed a moment of silence. Mr. Houck asked everyone to keep Sue Jenkins and her family in their prayers.

Ms. Luckinbill led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Houck asked if there were any changes to the agenda. There were no changes.

On motion of Ms. Hutchins seconded by Mr. Beard, the School Board approved the agenda. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

The board considered the following action items:

(a) Approval of Farmington Roof Replacement Bid

Mr. Spencer said last month staff advertised for two partial roof replacements for Sycamore Park and Farmington Elementary School. He said we budgeted \$624,534 for both projects and the bids received totaled \$568,210. The Sycamore Park roof bid was already awarded because it was budgeted in the current fiscal year; however, the Farmington roof is budgeted for next fiscal year. He said in order to get the roofs done before school starts in the fall we need to have the contractor start as early in June as we can.

On motion of Ms. Luckinbill seconded by Ms. North, the School Board approved the Farmington Roof Replacement Bid as referenced on Page 1 of the Board packet. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

(b) Disposition of Named Student A (Religious Exemption)

On motion of Ms. Luckinbill seconded by Ms. Hutchins, the School Board approved the Release of Named Student A (Religious Exemption). Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

(c) Personnel Recommendations

On motion of Ms. Hutchins seconded by Mr. Beard, the School Board approved the Personnel Recommendations. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

(d) Authorize the Chair to Petition the Court for a Writ of Election and Establish time line for Filling School Board Vacancy

On motion of Ms. Hutchins seconded by Mr. Beard, the School Board authorized the chair to petition the court for a Writ of Election. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

Members discussed the time line to fill the Catalpa School Board Seat. The following dates/times were agreed upon:

- Applications due - May 14th at 2 p.m. at the School Board Office
- Conduct Public Hearing - May 19 at 6 p.m. at the School Board Office
- Candidate Interviews - May 26th at 6 p.m. at the School Board Office
- Appoint a Candidate to the Catalpa School Board Seat - June 3rd at 6 p.m. at the School Board Office

Members requested to have a closed session at the next work session to discuss the questions that will be posed to the School Board candidates.

Work Session

FY2015/2016 Proposed School Calendar

Dr. Johnson shared with the Board that staff filmed a segment on “Accent on Education” relative to the proposed school calendar. She said the segment was posted on website along with a request for feedback relative to the calendar. She noted a summary of the feedback received was emailed to Board members. She stated that out of the 18 Region IV districts 4 of them have or will have an early start calendar and of the 14 remaining 4 are considering it. Dr. Johnson said she also did a sample survey of several school divisions in Virginia (see attached); it is not a complete survey of all Virginia divisions. She noted that divisions along the eastern shore/coast line do not have early start and probably won’t discuss it until the pre-Labor day situation is changed by the General Assembly. She said from this area down Rt. 29 to southwest Virginia there is a pattern of school divisions moving to an early start. She said the Shenandoah Valley divisions are not moving to an early start. She said she did not look to see if divisions are on a

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4x4, A/B or single period day. She said school divisions on an A/B or single period day don't SOL test until the end of the year.

Dr. Johnson said we would lose approximately \$30 per child per day if we go to an early start and parents protest and don't send their children to school.

Dr. Johnson said based on the early start feedback it appears that approximately 15-20 individuals did not understand the calendar.

Mr. Beard said he was surprised the poll was pretty evenly divided. He said a lot of the "No's" seemed confused. He noted that a lot of the negative comments seemed to have the same talking points, order, and verbiage to suggest canvassing was going on.

Dr. Johnson said all the reasons against were the same; i.e., vacation, sports, etc.

Ms. Smith said she was not concerned with those for or against but more concerned with the pros and cons for the majority of the students.

Ms. Smith asked if there are other ways to accomplish the goal other than an earlier calendar start. She questioned how difficult it would be to transition to an AB schedule? Dr. Johnson said it would be costly and explained the costs that would be associated.

Ms. North said we are doing this for the high school. She stated that the school division is an educational entity and suggested the Board take this opportunity to adjust the schedule forward for one year and see what benefits are derived. She said if we don't get the SOL bump anticipated we could rethink it the following year. She said we are giving families a year in advance to set plans and we should give this the support it needs for one year and see how it ends up. She said sports camps are important but so is education. Ms. North said she is willing to support it for one year and then re-evaluate.

Ms. Hutchins said the school division used to start after Labor Day and it has gradually moved forward. She asked what has driven it to continue moving forward. Dr. Johnson said, in her opinion, the additional weight on AP and SOL scores has driven the need to have additional instruction; before the assessments you have no control over. Ms. Hutchins stated that in the past the division didn't have 4x4 and we weren't going in August.

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Ms. Smith reiterated that she would still like to see other ways to accomplish the goal. Dr. Johnson said you can have a shorter first semester; however, students taking Algebra I first semester will have lesser instruction.

Mr. Beard said the philosophy of the Board is to provide optimal maximum instruction time.

Ms. Smith said, in her opinion, a longer day is not a good solution.

Ms. North said the division could shorten the winter break; however, that would impact family holiday time.

Ms. Luckinbill stated that the calendar reflects two makeup days prior to winter break.

Mr. Beard said the Board has tried to avoid the half-day and half-week prior to winter break.

Mr. Houck said part of the driver for this is the fact that we now have a significant portion of the teacher evaluation based on student test scores. He said we need to make it more positive for them to get it done. He said we can try this for a year or two and go back if it doesn't work. He said the further south you go school starts earlier. He said it is worth it to give it a try.

Ms. Luckinbill said she is reluctant to try this for just one year.

Dr. Johnson said her vision in the coming years is to approve two school year calendars at a time.

Ms. Hutchins said she would like the Board to thank everyone who sent comments, phone calls or emails relative to the calendar.

Ms. Smith thanked staff for all the hard work that went into researching the early start calendar. She asked Mr. Hauman to share the pros and cons of the proposed calendar. Mr. Hauman stated that winter break has a significant impact on instruction. He said he supports the proposed calendar both professionally and as a parent.

Ms. Smith suggested a robocall be sent out to parents inviting them to visit the website to watch the Accent on Education "Early Start Calendar" segment. Ms. North concurred.

Mr. Beard said the superintendent would not have brought this forward without thoroughly discussing it with the staff.

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Ms. Luckinbill said a lot of individuals understand the early start calendar but are just firmly against it.

Mr. Houck thanked everyone for their input on the calendar.

Budget

Dr. Johnson said there has been no action from the General Assembly relative to the budget and staff continues to work off of the Senate budget. She said part of the discussion at the joint meeting will be how we plan to deal with employee contracts.

Dr. Johnson said at the last meeting the discussion of increasing tuition for preschool was discussed. Dr. Johnson said she and Randi Richards-Lutz spoke with CT&E staff at VDOE about the issue and were promised something in writing.

Mr. Beard said his sense from the Board was regardless if we can charge more or not the consensus of the Board was to leave it alone. He said unless a majority of the Board wants to pursue this there is no need to spend additional time on the subject. He said he is not inclined to increase rates.

Dr. Johnson said Kent Dickey, Asst. Superintendent for Finance, put in writing it was a local decision.

Ms. Luckinbill asked where the discussion is coming from. She said she felt at the last meeting it was discussed and the Board wanted to move on. She said she has no interest in raising preschool rates.

Ms. North said she brought this up because the school system was voting on whether to invest in supplies and so the class at Culpeper High School could accept registration from families in an appropriate time period. She stated she is new on the board and has heard over and over again the school system doesn't have funds to do things we want to do. She said one of the objections to raising rates is that it is not a real preschool; so call it daycare. She said the school division is a government entity, competing with private enterprise and have an unfair advantage to daycare providers in our community. We are providing a program that our taxpayers are subsidizing so families can have an unbelievable opportunity for their children to take advantage of. She said she has no doubt it is a fine program and can go up against any of the preschools in the community. She said those children are very fortunate because of the ratio, and whether it is a

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licensed teacher or educator, there are caring young people one on one. She said it gives those children a leg up into the school system which will be helpful. She said when the Board discussed this last she tried to enlist if this program was setup for a need other than to educate our high school students. She said this is an opportunity to set a fee and you can include all the operational fees and it is very appropriate and she said the Board needs to consider doing it. She asked why the School Board would run a program that could pay for it and over when we are trying to get another math teacher. She said it needs to be considered. We charge fees for sports, building rental, etc. She said we don't have to match a local preschooler dollar for dollar but could be a bit closer in fees.

Ms. Smith asked why there is opposition. Ms. Luckinbill said it is not equivalent to a preschool because it is run by a high school teacher who is not necessarily a pre-school teacher. She said it is not a licensed daycare and it is a community service. She said the rate entices the community to put their children in the program.

Mr. Beard said he has always resisted fees in the schools because it is against his personal philosophical view that it is supposed to be a public service facility. He said he doesn't like charging fees and he doesn't like the idea of the School Board getting involved in creating revenue. He said public education is the responsibility of the division. He said it is against his philosophy and not a competitive service and we are using their children to train our students. He stated it is not the same it is very different.

Dr. Johnson said part of the conversation with Randi Richards-Lutz and Rob Hauman was that the previous direction from VDOE was to not charge higher rates. She said CT&E staff at VDOE feel this is a learning opportunity; however, based on the conversation with Kent Dickey it is left up to the local division. Dr. Johnson said we would have to increase rates to \$1500 per year to in order to cover the teacher. She said she would prefer to not increase the rates. She said personally she would prefer not to charge more but that is a decision the Board needs to make.

Ms. Hutchins said other divisions have a larger CT&E program than Culpeper. They have automotive, cosmetology, culinary arts and the public is not charged at a business rate for these services. She said the purpose of the program is not to make money but to educate students. She said from her perspective it is about what we are doing for our current students not the future students. She said we are using the children as resource material for our students to learn.

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Ms. North said there is a whole continuum of what the fee could be. She said she is asking the Board to give it some thought as to where it could be. She said in this incredibly tight financial situation the Board is in we need to give consideration to increasing it somewhat and still make it affordable, attractive, and a benefit to our schools. She said the current fee is unrealistic.

Ms. Luckinbill said the fee covers the materials. Ms. North asked Dr. Johnson to explain what the materials are. Dr. Johnson said arts and crafts and workbooks.

Ms. Smith said she had a friend who had a child in the program and she said it was an excellent program.

Mr. Houck said he is not in favor of increasing the rates. He said we aren't competing with private enterprise and should not be. He said the parents are giving us an opportunity to work with their preschoolers. He said if you increase the rate you will lose the opportunity.

Dr. Johnson said at the last budget public hearing there was a slide that presented us with a delta of \$1.3M between the request and funding. She said that is not correct. The actual delta is \$1.9M. She said on the county slide they included \$570,000 that will be moved to CIP. She reiterated that we are really trying to make up \$1.9M.

Dr. Johnson distributed a handout detailing revisions to the proposed budget.

Dr. Johnson said the original budgeted reflected an increase of 30.5 positions. She said she met with staff and that request has been decreased to 25.5 positions (See attached.) Dr. Johnson and Mr. Hauman briefly described the suggested cuts. She said the costs for new positions total \$1.4M

Dr. Johnson stated the uncontrollable costs (health insurance, VRS, diesel, utilities) remain at \$1.3M.

Dr. Johnson said the school budget requested asked that the Board of Supervisors fund a more aggressive, well below, full implementation of the Evergreen Study to get us to minimum market value. She said we asked for a little over half to get us to where Evergreen said we needed to be to be at minimum across the board. She said we do not anticipate getting the money to do that. She said in the original budget request she factored in a 3% salary increase and \$600,000 to start the Evergreen phase in. Dr. Johnson said Lauren Thomas, Budget Analyst, has run numerous scenarios based on funding we might receive and is up to "Option I".

Dr. Johnson said if we implement the study, with as much money as we receive, using the Evergreen indexing, unclogging, and getting everyone on appropriate level about ½ of teachers would get a 1 percent salary increase. She said she is concerned that the message would be we implemented Evergreen and ½ of those employees would only receive 1 percent. She said if we do that we need to very clear. Dr. Johnson said, in her opinion, we can't do Evergreen or the indexing to give the impression that we have implemented it and we really haven't. She said we would be committing to \$1M each year to move staff up the steps. Dr. Johnson said if we give employees a 1% salary increase we would need to say to those employees we have confidence that once we are unclogged everyone will receive a step and we can't do that.

Dr. Johnson said this proposal represents a 3% salary increase with unclogging the scale. She noted that the steps are not a clear 1.6% indexing between steps; some steps only represent \$22 difference.

Ms. Thomas briefly reviewed what the teacher scale would look like with a flat 3% salary increase and unclogging the scale.

Dr. Johnson said this proposal does not make us more competitive with the starting salary but it does raise the starting salary by 3%. She said the hope is to fully implement the Evergreen Study; when funds are available.

Ms. Thomas said to implement the Evergreen Study next year we would have to increase the beginning teacher salary to \$39,835 to stay positive and it would cost \$1.3M and that is only teachers.

Mr. Beard asked how much the difference is between the Senate and Governor's budget. Dr. Johnson said approximately \$300,000.

Ms. North said as individuals move up their percentage is a larger number. She asked if staff at the top of the scale could receive 2.5% rather than 3% to make us more competitive at the beginning of the scale. Dr. Johnson said it could be considered. Mr. North said it is a balance; are we in worse shape by not having more competitive beginning salaries vs. ending salaries. Ms. North said it will not gain goodwill but attract new teachers. Dr. Johnson said one might conclude that someone who has been here 30 years will not consider leaving and the more beginning salary might be beneficial but others may argue it is not benefiting those who have been with you.

Ms. Smith said it is very important to offer a starting salary that attracts new teachers and it is extremely valuable that we maintain those veteran teachers. She said they will go elsewhere and they do. She said she would not support that difference.

Ms. Hutchins said there will not be enough of a benefit to make the beginning salary more valuable when we are not at market value. She said it would be too minimal to make a difference.

Ms. Smith said the veteran teachers are mentors for the new teachers and the new teachers bring in fresh and new ideas. She expressed concern that the disparity in pay increase may hurt the relationship.

Mr. Beard said the Board started the budget season with the commitment to giving 3% across the board; if we could. He said there is nothing else to cut but positions and salaries.

Ms. Hutchins said she recalled that the Transcript Management Software was critical. Dr. Johnson said we hope to purchase the Transcript Management Software with year end funds.

Dr. Johnson said the biggest items on the division needs list that were cut were technology, elementary summer school, and restoring the school allocations to half of what was cut.

Dr. Johnson said we receive approximately \$325,000 from the state for technology and it is not just computers but iPads, phones, etc.

Ms. Smith asked where the most recent computer replacement took place at. Mr. Hauman noted that 422 computers were received last week with some going to elementary, middle, and high. He stated that we have 600+ Gateway computers and the Gateway Corporation no longer exists.

Dr. Johnson said we may have \$325,000 in the state budget but you really don't know you will receive it until the end of the year.

Ms. North said professional development needs to be at the top of the funding list. She said well trained teachers make all the difference to the outcome.

Dr. Johnson said she appreciated the comments. She said we hope to move the professional development software licensing purchases to year end funds.

Dr. Johnson said we need a clearer funding stream for division level professional development. She said curriculum development is also paid for from professional development.

Ms. Luckinbill asked for clarification on the additional stipends in the budget. Dr. Johnson said the \$15,000 represents stipends for indoor track and weight room. She said student athletic fees for indoor track will help absorb some of the costs associated with the program.

Dr. Johnson said in speaking with Mr. Bossio, Lauren Thomas, and Jeff Shomo we will offer contracts with the stipulation “pending approval of the proposed budget” and if the funding comes through as anticipated, we will not have to redo contracts.

Mr. Beard thanked the superintendent and staff for all the hard work that went into developing and revising the budget. It must be an agonizing process. Ms. Smith echoed his comments. Dr. Johnson said it has been a lot of hard work.

Mr. Houck reminded members that the Board of Supervisors/School Board Joint meeting will be tomorrow night at 6 p.m. at the School Board Office.

Dr. Johnson reminded members the health insurance rates went down which resulted in a savings of \$245,000 on the employer side. She said the conversation tomorrow night with the Board of Supervisors will be what to do with that – wellness program or bank. Ms. Hutchins asked if the division could hold on to it for when rates go back up. Dr. Johnson said the county can set it aside but it will not stay in our budget; unless they allow it.

Dr. Johnson said the employee will realize a savings of 6% for their insurance. Mr. Shomo said on a premium of \$500 the employee would see approximately \$30.

On motion of Ms. Smith seconded by Mr. Beard, the School Board voted to adjourn at 8:16 p.m. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote.

JEFFREY R. SHOMO, CLERK

ROBERT A. HOUCK, CHAIR