

CULPEPER COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Minutes
March 5, 2014

A meeting of the School Board of Culpeper County was held March 5, 2014 at the School Board Office (Colin Owens Conference Room) at 450 Radio Lane at 6 p.m. Present were: Robert Beard (East Fairfax District); Elizabeth Hutchins (Stevensburg District); Russell E. Jenkins (Catalpa District); Anne C. Luckinbill (Salem District); Michelle North (Jefferson District); Elizabeth "Betsy" Smith (Cedar Mountain District); Superintendent Dr. Bobbi Johnson, Executive Director of Curriculum, Instruction and Technology Rob Hauman, Executive Director of Student Services Dr. Russell Houck, Executive Director of Finance/Clerk Jeff Shomo, Executive Director of Special Education Angela Neely, Executive Director of Human Resources Dr. Stacey Timmons, and Deputy Clerk Pearl Jamison. Robert A. Houck (West Fairfax District) was absent.

At 6 p.m., Ms. Hutchins called the meeting to order and noted that Mr. Houck was out of town.

Those present observed a moment of silence. Ms. Hutchins led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Adoption of Agenda

Ms. Hutchins asked if there were any changes to the agenda.

Ms. Hutchins noted that Dr. Johnson requested to amend the agenda to give an update on the snow days.

On motion of Ms. Luckinbill seconded by Mr. Beard, the School Board approved the agenda as amended. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote. (Mr. Houck was absent.)

Inclement Weather/Make-up Plan

Dr. Johnson said we have missed 14 days of school due to inclement weather and it has become necessary to lengthen the school day at the elementary level in order to meet the state requirement of 180 days or 990 hours instruction. In all likelihood, families will not even notice the change because the adjustment was made internally i.e., modifying recess or lunch shifts. The secondary schools will not be impacted because their instructional time exceeds the minimum required. She said if we miss 2.5 more days we may need to make some half days, full days at the elementary level. She assured those present that Spring Break and graduation dates

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will not be adjusted. She noted that the school calendar reflected five make-up days that will need to be used. Staff will distribute a press release later in the week to the media.

Mr. Beard asked what the impact will be on SOL tests. Dr. Johnson said we have missed a lot of time but the SOL test date will not change. She said staff will look at the amount of curriculum that is left and develop a plan to get it taught.

Work Session

Budget

Ms. Hutchins introduced Elizabeth Arledge, Director of the National Capital Region for Evergreen Solutions.

Ms. Arledge shared a PowerPoint describing the project scope of the salary study, overview of internal analysis, overview of market analysis, pay plan development, plan overview, and cost. (See handout.)

Mr. Beard asked if Social Security and Medicare benefits are included in the salary proposal. Ms. Arledge said no, just the salary. He said it appears it would take \$1.5M the first year to implement the plan and \$1M thereafter. He said it is interesting to note that the higher level employees are the most underpaid compared to market.

Dr. Johnson said the budget proposal does not include administrators and it will take 5 years to get to the market minimum.

Mr. Jenkins noted that he has a personal interest in the budget discussion because his spouse is employed in the school system. He noted that he is able to participate in the transaction fairly, objectively, and in the best interest of the public. He filed a copy of his disclosure statement with Deputy Clerk Pearl Jamison on January 29, 2014. He further noted he will disclose his interest at each meeting where there is discussion pertaining to the budget.

Ms. Luckinbill asked if the \$1.8M includes compensation for administrators. Ms. Thomas said no.

Mr. Beard asked when the county did their study. Dr. Johnson said it was done in 2012 and they implemented phase 1 in July 2013. She said according to Mr. Bossio to get the county to market it cost them \$1.1M. She said they are trying to implement phase 2 and 3 with the upcoming budget.

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Mr. Beard asked how much was included in the proposed budget for salaries. Dr. Johnson said \$1.6M for a 3% across the board increase and another \$600,000 to phase in part 1 of the salary study.

Ms. Hutchins said the salaries have been compressed for a long time. She said it is frightening to think that we are as far below as we are in so many categories.

Ms. Arledge recommended that pay plans be revisited every 7-8 years unless there is a significant shift in the market.

Mr. Beard asked how long it will take to finalize the plan. Ms. Arledge responded a few weeks.

Mr. Beard said what we have proposed is enough money to fund it for the first year. Dr. Johnson noted that employees were given a 2% pay increase last year; however, they did not advance a step.

Ms. Smith asked if the 2% increase was for all employees. Dr. Johnson responded yes.

Members thanked Ms. Arledge for the presentation.

Dr. Johnson said the one disappointing thing about the implementation plan is the five year transition.

Dr. Johnson said the indexing makes sense. She said the information is very good.

Mr. Beard said he would like Mr. Bossio to receive a copy of the PowerPoint and spreadsheet.

Dr. Johnson stated that she shared general numbers with Mr. Bossio. She noted that Ms. Thomas developed a proposal to implement the recommendations quicker.

Ms. Thomas said the "Option B" proposal brings the starting teacher salary to \$39,250 and includes indexing the categorical supplements to \$39,250. (See handout.)

Dr. Johnson said the second proposal implements the salary recommendations quicker; however, there is not enough in the proposed budget to cover the cost plus fringes.

Dr. Johnson said staff could put together a budget proposal with each of the salary recommendations.

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Mr. Beard said the Board has three options relative to salaries: full implementation, partial implementation, or give a 3% raise across the board. He said he would like to see all three options presented.

Ms. Hutchins noted that at the last meeting members discussed removing certain items from the budget and that needs to be finalized to give Dr. Johnson direction for the meeting Monday night.

Members noted that the proposed salary recommendations do not factor in the new positions in the budget.

Mr. Beard stated he was not inclined to remove things from the budget until we know the actual funds that will be received. Mr. Jenkins concurred.

Ms. North said the core things the board needs to focus on are salaries, maintaining the facilities to prolong their useful life and providing adequate instructional materials to support our student's education. She said other things are admirable but we can't always have everything we want. She said the Board needs to focus on core programs – math, science, English. She suggested the Board look at cutting the 403b cash match plans and paying for PSATs.

Ms. Luckinbill said she would prefer to submit the budget as is and trim it once we have the final numbers. Ms. Smith concurred.

Mr. Jenkins said after 31 years working in law enforcement he was fortunate to retire on VRS and Social Security; however, both of those don't amount to a whole lot. He said there are some great educators in Culpeper who may get a little more (403b) but it isn't enough to live on. He said in reality it is not a benefit; it helps them, but they have to go back to work because it is not enough.

Mr. Jenkins said teachers should be held above the private sector because they are better than the private sector because they have invested their time to be a teacher, administrator, or executive director. He said he does not look at the 403b as a benefit. He said staff pays 5% toward their VRS so really they help with that. He said unless we are in dire straits he would not recommend removing the 403b cash match.

Mr. Jenkins asked if the division can offer just one insurance plan - HSA or HMO. Dr. Johnson said the county and school division discussed the issue with Mark III and were told a savings would not be realized when you look at the major claims in both categories.

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Dr. Johnson said she is confident we can back out the \$241,637 for insurance out of the budget. She said we will also have a 5% decrease in premiums that will result in \$256,000; however, we need to prepare for this to cycle back up in future years. She said the employees who are paying into the program will receive a 5% decrease in what they are paying. She said the question is what the Board wants to do with the \$256,000 savings because of the 5% decrease. She said we are being encouraged by Mark III to talk with the county about putting the money aside for bad years to come or a wellness program. She briefly described how the Wellness Program would work.

Dr. Johnson said we have not received new budget worksheets from the state and Mr. Bossio was optimistic the Senate numbers will hold true.

Dr. Johnson said she would not recommend deducting VIRP savings from the budget at this point.

Dr. Johnson said if the Board adds indoor track it could result in another \$15,000 in revenues from student fees.

Mr. Hauman said at the last meeting a Board member asked what other school divisions pay for PSATs. He shared with the Board that the following divisions pay for PSATs: Shenandoah, Warren, Madison, Orange, and Prince William.

Ms. Smith said when students take PSATs and they weren't planning on it statistics show that by offering it more students are successfully advancing to college. She said for \$5,000 it is a worthy investment.

Dr. Johnson said at the last meeting a Board member asked if the division could charge any additional student fees. She said yes; however, the Board would need to determine where the fees would be.

Dr. Johnson noted that the preschool classes can be moved to Emerald Hill without any state implications.

Mr. Jenkins asked what it currently cost for elementary summer school. Mr. Hauman said in the past it was only offered at Title I schools.

Mr. Jenkins expressed a concern with offering elementary summer school, at all the schools, when it could be combined in a few schools. Dr. Johnson said that is good for management and

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efficiency; however, it was felt that more students would take advantage of the offer if it was offered in their own school.

Dr. Johnson said she will back out the health insurance increase in the proposed budget.

Ms. Hutchins stated the Board needs to determine what to do with the insurance savings realized.

On motion of Mr. Beard seconded by Ms. Smith, the School Board voted to adjourn at 7:29 p.m. Motion carried 6-0 by voice vote. (Mr. Houck was absent.)

JEFFREY R. SHOMO, CLERK

ROBERT A. HOUCK, CHAIR