

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOL BOARD
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2021

The Staunton City School Board convened for the regular monthly meeting in the Rita S. Wilson Council Chambers of Staunton City Hall, 116 W. Beverley Street, Staunton at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, January 11, 2021, with members in attendance as follows:

Kenneth Venable, Chair
Robert Boyle Natasha McCurdy Amy Wratchford, Vice-chair
Christine Poulson Ronald Ramsey
Dr. Garrett Smith, Superintendent/Deputy Clerk
Brenda Lovekamp, Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

The Chair called the meeting to order.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Chair led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. PUBLIC FORUM ON BUDGET

The Chair reminded of the annual opportunity for citizens to share input regarding budget priorities as the School Board and administrative staff begin the work of developing the school division budget. He invited citizens to comment at either this meeting, next month's meeting, or to share their input via the budget survey posted on the division website.

The Chair opened the floor for those who were present at City Hall and heard from the following speakers:

- Christine Hawley, SEA President, spoke of the need for: additional instructional assistants; raises if the budget permits; a living wage for support staff; and additional technology support.

The Chair noted that Mr. Lundquist, Director of Technology was serving as the host for any calls from citizens who would like to comment at this time. He reminded the callers to identify themselves and to keep their comments to two minutes or less.

- Caller #1 indicated he had no comment at this time.
- Caller #2 hung up without comment.

IV. REPORTS

A. Reports from Superintendent

Budget Survey - Dr. Smith reminded that the annual budget survey was currently posted on the division website and was available for citizens to provide input on budget priorities for the FY22 budget.

Upcoming Holiday - He reminded of the upcoming holiday for all staff on Monday, January 18 in recognition of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

Return to In-Person Instruction - Dr. Smith reminded that the division is still planning for the return to in-person instruction via the hybrid option starting on Tuesday, January 19. He added that Dr. Kornegay of VDH reported today that no large-scale transmissions are happening in schools. Board members and Dr. Smith engaged in conversation regarding the upcoming return to in-person instruction and current COVID-19 case data, noting the following:

- Current case data is in keeping with the anticipated holiday spike, which was the main reason for the decision to delay the return to hybrid until January 19.
- Current data reflects cases from the previous 14 days.
- The decision to return to in-person instruction was not made lightly.
- The Board has heard from many teachers with concerns.
- The current pandemic metrics on the VDH site forecasts that local numbers should improve.
- PPE and other mitigation strategies are in place in schools and on buses.
- Air purifiers will be in place in classrooms this week.
- Vaccinations for school nurses are happening this week, with plans underway for vaccinations to be available to other staff members later this month or early next month.
- There is still no vaccine available for those under 18 years of age.
- Administration will continue to monitor the situation as we move forward.

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOL BOARD
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2021

B. Reports from School Board Members

Members offered the following reports relative to their service on the School Board.

Ronald Ramsey:

- VCTC meeting scheduled for January 20
- Participated in tours of maintenance facilities housed at Shelburne Middle School
- VDOE webinar this week

Natasha McCurdy:

- Decision to return to in-person instruction not made lightly
- Should take advantage of the current window of opportunity to get students back in school

Amy Wratchford:

- Appreciate teachers going above and beyond to help students during this extraordinary time
- Would not be making the decision to offer the hybrid option if the Board did not feel it was safe to do so

Robert Boyle:

- Thanked Mr. Nesmith and Mr. Wilson for their work on the Shelburne virtual band presentations
- Thanked Earl McCray for the tours of the current maintenance and transportation facilities

Christine Poulson:

- Participated in a webinar regarding diversity and inclusion
- Participated in recent athletic boosters meeting
- Upcoming Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) meeting

Kenneth Venable:

- Shared that members of the School Board are thoughtful of ALL citizens in the City, with decisions not being made lightly, but rather with efforts to put necessary safeguards into place as the division strives to move forward with in-person instruction. Encouraged everyone in our community to do what they should in order to get through this difficult time together.
- Thanked Nate Collins for his assistance on a project in honor of the work of Alphonso Hamilton.

V. UPDATES AND INFORMATION

A. Finance Update by Brad Wegner, Budget Director

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, reviewed the finance report for December.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

The Chair opened the public input portion of the meeting. The following persons were present at the meeting to provide comments:

- Christine Hawley, SEA President, reviewed a series of suggestions and questions from SEA for the School Board and administration.

The following persons called in to provide comments:

- Nicholas Palacio expressed concern regarding specific metrics used in making the decision to return to in-person instruction.
- Kristen Shuyler thanked the Board and Superintendent for their hard work during these difficult times; expressed concern regarding reduced synchronous learning time.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

The Chair invited Board members to review the following items listed on the consent agenda:

- Minutes for Work Session and Regular Meeting on December 14, 2020
- Personnel Actions
- Updated 2020-21 Meeting Schedule (adding a work session on the 4th Monday of each month at 5:00 p.m.)
On a motion by Amy Wratchford, seconded by Ron Ramsey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda, as presented.

The Chair announced that with the approval of the consent agenda, the Board had added an additional work session to the meeting schedule for the remainder of this year and would now be meeting in a work session on the 4th Monday of each month.

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOL BOARD
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA
Meeting Minutes
January 11, 2021

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Capital Improvement Plan 2021-2025

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, reviewed the proposed 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Plan. He noted that the Planning Commission would review the plan on January 21, with consideration by City Council on February 11.

On a motion by Ronald Ramsey, seconded by Christine Poulson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Plan, as presented.

Having completed the agenda, the Chair declared the regular meeting adjourned at 6:43 p.m.


CLERK / DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD


CHAIR OF THE BOARD