

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOL BOARD
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA
Called Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2021

The Staunton City School Board convened in the Rita S. Wilson Council Chambers of City Hall, 116 W. Beverley Street, Staunton on Monday, March 1, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., for a called meeting with members in attendance as follows:

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

Kenneth Venable and Robert Boyle were both unable to attend this meeting. In the absence of the Chair, Vice-chair Amy Wratchford called the meeting to order and indicated that she would be running this meeting in Mr. Venable's absence.

The Vice-chair shared that the purpose of the meeting was to hear a presentation on the proposed school division budget for the 2021-2022 fiscal year. She called upon Dr. Smith and his staff to present.

Presentation of Proposed FY22 School Division Budget

Dr. Smith shared just a few of the milestones from this past year, including:

- The Staunton High School construction and renovation project was completed on schedule and on budget.
- The School Nutrition Program provided continued meal service and deliveries to our families during the pandemic shutdowns and virtual / hybrid schedules.
- COVID-19 vaccinations were made available and administered to staff.
- The equity committee was created and has been busy working on an equity plan proposal.
- The school division was designated as a School Division of Innovation (only 15 of 132 divisions in the state received this designation).

Dr. Smith reviewed several of the strategic initiatives included in this budget proposal:

- increased compensation to provide a competitive living wages for employees (at least \$11 per hour)
- added an instructional assistant in each elementary school to help with effort to have all students reading on grade level by end of 2nd grade
- expanded preschool program with goal of having no waiting list for preschool
- restored music and art teachers so that each elementary school will have these positions and no longer need to share
- established an additional career pathway at the middle school
- consolidated the operations and transportation departments into one location, thus moving maintenance department out of the middle school basement and allowing that space to be used by the middle school
- put an online credit card/debit card payment system in place
- expanded the summer school program to address learning losses during the pandemic
- added full-time substitute floaters in each school
- increased counselor budgets to allow them the autonomy to address individual student needs while helping students to maintain dignity and respect
- added an additional school psychologist
- added special education teachers and IEP facilitators to provide an intense focus on our most vulnerable learners
- increased capacity to address the increase in numbers of English Language Learners

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, presented the proposed FY22 budget. He indicated that the numbers included in this budget are still preliminary and will most likely change a bit as the state finalizes its budget. He reviewed the revenue and expense projections. He noted that this budget reflects challenges in repairing the damages the pandemic inflicted on teaching, learning, mental health and our community as a whole.

Mr. Wegner highlighted some of the proposed expenditures, including:

- 3% general pay raise for staff
- additional 2% pay raise for operations staff (51 employees: bus drivers, maintenance and cafeteria)
- minimum wage increase to \$11 per hour (applies to less than 10 employees)

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOL BOARD
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA
Called Meeting Minutes
March 1, 2021

- add time to the work day for elementary and middle school instructional assistants to facilitate bus loading and unloading
- equalize salaries for instructional assistants with approximately 20 years of service
- make necessary contract and salary adjustments for individual employees
- budget for projected increase in health insurance premiums
- budget for projected increase in fuel and utility costs (some of which is related to new larger high school facility)
- add the budget for the new Strategic Planning & Partnerships Department

Mr. Wegner noted that the budget gap is currently at \$102,003, but reminded that these numbers are not firm at this time and that the state budget is expected to be complete in the next several days.

Amy Wratford asked when the Board should take action on the future stipend/compensation plan for School Board members. Dr. Smith indicated that he would consult with legal counsel and get back to the Board regarding this matter.

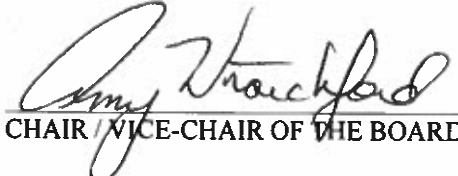
Christine Poulson asked about what might happen with any additional funds that the division might receive. Dr. Smith discussed considerations related to the amount of the pay raise put forth by the state budget and how that might affect this budget. Christine Poulson noted concerns regarding the minimum wage not being a living wage, even with the increase to \$11 per hour. Dr. Smith indicated that he shared those concerns as well.

Public Hearing

Hearing no further comments or questions from the School Board, the Vice-chair opened the public hearing. Having no members of the public present to comment and no one phoning in to comment, the Vice-chair declared the public hearing closed.

Having reached the end of the published agenda, the Vice-Chair adjourned the meeting at 6:35 p.m.


CLERK / DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD


CHAIR / VICE-CHAIR OF THE BOARD