

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOL BOARD
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA
Meeting Minutes
July 12, 2021

The Staunton City School Board convened for the regular monthly business meeting and annual reorganization in the Rita S. Wilson Council Chambers of Staunton City Hall, 116 W. Beverley Street, Staunton at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, July 12, 2021, with members in attendance as follows:

Robert Boyle
Ron Ramsey

Natasha McCurdy
Kenneth Venable

Christine Poulson
Amy Wratchford

Dr. Garrett Smith, Superintendent/Deputy Clerk
Brenda Lovekamp, Clerk

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Smith called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

II. PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Dr. Smith led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance.

III. ANNUAL REORGANIZATION

Dr. Smith explained that the first order of business was to elect a School Board Chair. He opened the floor for nominations.

A. Election/Appointment of

1) Chair

On a motion by Amy Wratchford, seconded by Natasha McCurdy, **Kenneth Venable** was nominated for the position of School Board Chair.

Hearing no further nominations, the nomination process was closed. The School Board voted as recorded below:

Votes: Robert Boyle–aye	Natasha McCurdy–aye	Christine Poulson–aye
Ron Ramsey–aye	Kenneth Venable–aye	Amy Wratchford–aye

Kenneth Venable was named Chair of the Staunton City School Board for the 2021-2022 school year.

B. Dr. Smith turned the meeting over to the Chair, Kenneth Venable. The meeting continued with the election/appointment of the following:

1.) Vice-Chair

The Chair opened the floor for nominations for the position of School Board Vice-Chair.

Amy Wratchford was nominated for the position by Ronald Ramsey, seconded by Christine Poulson. Hearing no further nominations, the nomination process was closed. The School Board voted as recorded below:

Votes: Robert Boyle–aye	Natasha McCurdy–aye	Christine Poulson–aye
Ron Ramsey–aye	Kenneth Venable–aye	Amy Wratchford–aye

Amy Wratchford was named Vice-Chair of the Staunton City School Board for the 2021-2022 school year.

2.) School Board Clerk

On a motion by Christine Poulson, seconded by Robert Boyle, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Brenda Lovekamp as Clerk of the Board for 2021-2022.

3.) School Board Deputy Clerk

On a motion by Ronald Ramsey, seconded by Christine Poulson, the Board voted unanimously to appoint Garrett Smith as Deputy Clerk of the Board for 2021-2022.

C. Appointment of Designee of Superintendent

On a motion by Christine Poulson, seconded by Ronald Ramsey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the recommendation of the Superintendent to use any member of the senior leadership team as the Superintendent's designee for 2021-2022 in the event that the Superintendent is absent or unable to attend a School Board meeting.

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D. Approval of School Board Meeting Dates

On a motion by Robert Boyle, seconded by Natasha McCurdy, the Board voted unanimously to approve the schedule of regular meeting dates for 2021-2022.

E. Approval of School Board Member Assignments

On a motion by Amy Wratchford, seconded by Ronald Ramsey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2021-2022 assignments, as determined by the School Board members.

III. REPORTS

A. Reports from Superintendent

Dr. Smith made the annual reminder announcement that the division's policy manual is available online on the school division's website.

Dr. Smith noted that he had received a few inquiries last week from parents and community members regarding Critical Race Theory. He shared that, while Critical Race Theory is not part of the SCS curriculum and is not being taught in our schools, the school division does believe that teaching history accurately and from multiple perspectives is very important and therefore strives to do so continuously.

B. Reports from School Board Members

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

Christine Poulson:

- Visited the garden at Bessie Weller Elementary School – a wonderful partnership with Project Grows.

Robert Boyle:

- Thanked Mr. McCray and his staff for their work at McSwain Elementary School during recent basement flood.

Ronald Ramsey:

- Expressed appreciation to City Council and the Economic Development Authority for the joint meeting to discuss the need for a consolidated operations facility.
- Took part in VSBA webinar on equity.
- Scheduled to attend the VSBA Conference on Education later this month.

Natasha McCurdy:

- Attended several PTA meetings for the schools to plan for the upcoming school year with more coming up this week.

Amy Wratchford:

- Congratulated Brent Hull, who was named Coordinator for SVGS.

Kenneth Venable:

- Reported on the recent birthday celebration held for the late Alphonso Hamilton – a day now recognized at Alphonso Hamilton Day on June 26 each year.

IV. UPDATES AND INFORMATION

A. Finance Update by Brad Wegner, Budget Director

➤ **Finance Report**

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, reviewed the FY21 year-to-date finance report through June 30.

➤ **Proposed FY22 Budget Amendment #1**

Mr. Wegner reviewed the details of the proposed FY22 budget amendment #1, totaling \$4,469,554, including a portion of the school division's allocation of funds from ARP ESSER3, noting that ARP ESSER3 funds are to be used to safely reopen and sustain the safe operation of schools and address the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on the nation's students. He reminded that school divisions are required to reserve at least 20% of these funds to address

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learning loss, while the remaining funds may be used on a wide range of activities to address needs arising from the pandemic. He added that SCS is currently considering projects that address learning loss as well as renovations and improvements to school facilities to effectively maintain the health and safety of students and staff. He reviewed the details of the budget amendment and how those funds will be used. He explained that, in addition to the budget amendment, public input is being sought on how the school division should use the remaining funds since the budget amendment allocates only a portion of the total allocation for SCS.

Public Hearing on Budget Amendment & Public Input on use of ARP ESSER3 Funds

The Chair opened the public hearing/public input session on the budget amendment and use of ARP ESSER3 funds as reviewed, and called upon any who were present at the meeting and wished to comment, hearing from the following speakers:

- Christine Hawley, President of the SEA, reviewed the results of SEA's survey regarding use of the ARP ESSER3 funds.

As there were no citizens calling in to comment, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

B. Summer School Report by Stephanie Haskins, Executive Director of Instruction; Shaun Sparks, Supervisors of Student Services

Mrs. Haskins and Mr. Sparks provided an overview of the SCS Summer Student University, held at the three elementary schools, the middle school and the high school. Program highlights: ran for 4 weeks; served a total of 490 students; employed 187 staff members; provided transportation to and from; served breakfast, lunch and snacks daily; partnered with the YMCA at the elementary level; excellent attendance at all levels; awarded 133 high school credits; tremendous academic growth shown in reading and math, etc. Ms. Haskins noted that on the last day of the program at McSwain, the basement was flooded due to a waterline break. Instead of canceling the last day, the program was moved to Staunton High School, the students and staff traveled together to the high school and were welcomed by the SHS staff. The students greatly enjoyed seeing and learning in the new building, and the last day program for parents was a huge success.

C. Update on Plans for 2021-2022 by Administrative Staff

Administrative staff provided a presentation on plans for the 2021-2022 school year, highlighting the following:

- Focus for the school year will be on student learning, positive relationships, and high expectations.
- Will return to in-person learning for 5 days per week, with the VDOE requirement for 180 instructional days or 990 hours being fully reinstated.
- School arrival and start times will be different, responding to the preferences of families to have secondary students start a bit later in the morning.
- The state will be requiring two rounds of testing this coming year instead of one, and adding a third round of testing the following year.
- Free breakfast, lunch and snacks will be provided for all SCS students.
- Hotspots will remain with families as needed to allow for digital access.
- Staunton Parks and Rec's HEART Program will resume as a paid option for after-school childcare.
- Upgrades for health and safety: Bipolar Ionization (BPI) units installed in all schools; touchless faucets, toilets and water bottle fillers installed in all schools; HEPA filters installed on all buses; renovations in the Shelburne Library and in the Family & Consumer Sciences to provide additional student spaces.
- Reviewing and considering expansion and renovation options at Shelburne as part of the proposal for a consolidated Operations Facility, which will allow the middle school to recover spaces currently used by the maintenance department and use those as educational spaces instead.
- Updated guidance from CDC released on July 9 regarding physical distancing and mask wearing, but still awaiting updated guidance from VDOE on implementation for public schools for 2021-22. Mitigation measures such as handwashing, staying home when sick, monitoring community transmission measures, cleaning schedules, etc. should continue to be implemented.

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D. Update on Model Policies and Equitable Practices by Dr. Jelisa Wolfe, Executive Director of Student Services; Shaun Sparks, Supervisors of Student Services

Mr. Sparks provided an overview of the work for equitable practices in SCS, noting that the work is guided by the educational philosophy and the nondiscrimination policies – both of which outline an expressed commitment to equal opportunity for students so that ALL students are able to achieve academically, socially, emotionally, and physically. He highlighted the work completed since 2017, including the work in partnership with Virginia Center for Inclusive Communities.

Dr. Jelisa Wolfe reviewed the new law (Code of Virginia §22.1-23.3, Treatment of Transgender Students) which was approved in 2020, with the requirement that local School Boards have policies in place for the start of the 2021-22 school year. As a part of this new law, VDOE was instructed to release model policies, and has done so, concerning the treatment of transgender students in public schools. She reviewed the applicable SCS policies and how they reflect the division's ongoing equity work, compliance with the Code of Virginia, as well as the school division's commitment to remove barriers so that ALL students have equal educational opportunities, and ALL students know they are safe and valued for who they are. She reviewed how these policies will be put into practice within our schools, including: use of preferred names and gender pronouns, athletic participation, use of bathrooms, etc. She reminded that SCS will continue its practice of operating under the motto of *100% of the Students, 100% of the Time*, as that is always the right thing to do.

V. PUBLIC INPUT

Before opening the public input portion of the meeting, the Chair reminded that the School Board allots this time to listen to the comments and concerns of the Staunton community members, but reminded that any specific concerns should be addressed with the Superintendent. He reminded the speakers to be respectful of everyone and set a good example for the children.

The Chair opened the public input portion of the meeting called upon any who were present and wished to comment, hearing from the following speakers:

- Nitch Narduzzi, Jefferson Street, spoke in favor of inclusive policies.
- Emily Sproul, N. Madison Street, thanked the School Board for its support of transgender students.
- Jordan Zipser, College Circle, spoke in favor of nondiscrimination based on sex, sexual orientation, gender, etc.
- Daniel Nicholson, Glen Avenue, spoke in favor of Title IX and adopting and implementing the policies.
- Allison Profeta, Farrier Court, spoke in favor of model policies and equitable practices.
- Sheila Ahmadi, College Park, spoke in favor of transgender equity.
- Deborah Kushner, N. Augusta Street, spoke in support of transgender students.
- Yvonne Wilson, First Street, spoke regarding the model policies and the need for public discussion and diversity of thought.
- Dwight Williams, Jefferson Lane, Waynesboro, representing a friend who is a resident of Staunton, spoke in opposition of the model policies.
- JoAnn Tigert, N. Augusta Street, spoke regarding transgender issues and critical race theory.

As there were no citizens calling in to comment, the Chair declared the public input period closed.

VI. CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes of Work Session and Regular Meeting on June 14, 2021
- Minutes of Called Joint Meeting with City Council and Economic Development Authority on June 17, 2021
- Personnel Actions

On a motion by Natasha McCurdy, seconded by Amy Wretchford, the Board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as presented.

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VII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Updates to the 2021-2022 Student Handbook & Code of Conduct

Dr. Jelisa Wolfe, Executive Director of Student Services, reviewed the briefing detailing the updates to the Student Handbook and Code of Conduct for 2021-22. She noted that, upon approval, the changes would be incorporated into the handbook, which would be reformatted as needed and posted to the division website.

On a motion by Robert Boyle, seconded by Ronald Ramsey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the updates to the 2021-2022 Student Handbook & Code of Conduct as presented.

B. Proposed Policy Revisions

Dr. Garrett Smith, Superintendent, recommended the Board approve the proposed policy revisions as reviewed during the previous month's work session.

On a motion by Christine Poulson, seconded by Natasha McCurdy, the Board voted unanimously to approve the policy manual revisions included in the June 14, 2021 policy packet, as presented.

C. VSBA Policy Services Agreement

Dr. Garrett Smith, Superintendent, recommended the Board approve the continuation of the VSBA Policy Services agreement for the 2021-22 school year.

On a motion by Amy Wratchford, seconded by Ronald Ramsey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the VSBA Policy Services Agreement as presented and authorized the Chair to sign the agreement.

D. FY22 Budget Amendment #1

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, requested the Board approve the budget amendment as reviewed earlier in the meeting.

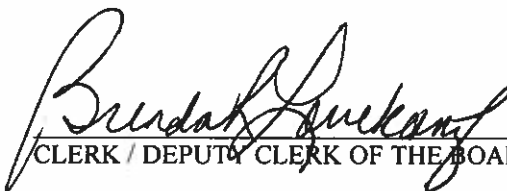
On a motion by Ronald Ramsey, seconded by Robert Boyle, the Board voted unanimously to approve FY22 budget amendment #1, and to approve the appropriation of \$4,469,554 as outlined in the budget amendment.

E. Surplus Property

Earl McCray, Director of Operations, reviewed the briefing outlining the items deemed to be no longer usable by the school division. He requested that the Board authorize the donation of the surplus items to Project Grows, a local educational non-profit organization.

On a motion by Christine Poulson, seconded by Amy Wratchford, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the donation of the listed surplus items, as noted.

The Chair declared the regular business meeting adjourned at 7:42 p.m.


CLERK / DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD


CHAIR / VICE-CHAIR OF THE BOARD