

STAUNTON CITY SCHOOL BOARD
STAUNTON, VIRGINIA
Meeting Minutes
September 14, 2020

The Staunton City School Board convened for the regular monthly meeting in the Chambers of Staunton City Hall, 116 W. Beverley Street, Staunton on Monday, September 14, 2020, at 6:00 p.m., with members in attendance as follows:

Kenneth Venable, Chair	Amy Wratchford, Vice-chair		
Robert Boyle	Natasha McCurdy	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.

The Chair read a brief statement and held a moment of silence acknowledging the loss of SCS music teacher, Charlotte Gingerelli on August 30, 2020, in a tragic auto accident.

III. AWARDS, RECOGNITIONS, AND PRESENTATIONS

None.

IV. REPORTS

A. Reports from Superintendent

Dr. Smith reported on the various in-person activities taking place at each school to provide small groups of students with opportunities to get extra instructional support, to engage in extra-curricular activities, to socialize with their peers, and build relationships with staff, etc. He added that these efforts will help students, parents, and staff to develop a level of comfort as the division prepares to bring students back to the hybrid model of instruction as soon as possible.

Board members inquired about the criteria for bringing students back to in-person instruction. Dr. Smith spoke of the anticipated spike in COVID-19 cases that was projected, and has indeed occurred, in early September, and the anticipation that the case numbers will again drop back into a lower risk range soon. He added that he continues to meet weekly with VDH and to monitor the COVID-19 data. He stated that once numbers improve again, the plan would be to bring students back to school under the hybrid model.

B. Reports from School Board Members

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

Ronald Ramsey:

- Have been hearing positive comments from parents regarding virtual education.
- Attended VCTC Board meeting and toured that facility.

Natasha McCurdy:

- No report.

Amy Wratchford:

- Have also been hearing strong support for the virtual learning. Appreciate the work Dr. Smith and his team have been doing to make this experience as positive as possible for students and families.
- Attended SVGS meeting. Excited for the work being done there as they work in the hybrid instructional model.

Robert Boyle:

- Continue to get positive comments on the school meals program.
- Enjoyed the story on the local television station highlighting the virtual program.

Christine Poulson:

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- Virtual school has gone very smoothly in our family, once the children got beyond the initial nervousness.

Kenneth Venable:

- Have been working closely with Dr. Smith and appreciate his devotion to this school division. He is dedicated to getting our students back in the buildings, while still following the guidance from the CDC and the health department to keep everyone safe.
- Participated in the VSBA virtual training for new school board chairs.
- Attended the recent VCTC board meeting. Elected chair of that Board for this school year. Appreciate the work of this program to prepare students for successful employment.
- Toured the new Staunton High School with Dr. Smith. Very impressed by the state-of-the-art educational facility that will be available for our students.
- Met with Dr. Smith and Jonathan Venn to look at developing networks to identify outside resources to supplement hiring opportunities, financial resources, product supply services, etc. to assist the school division in the future.

V. UPDATES AND INFORMATION

A. Finance Update by Brad Wegner, Budget Director

1. Monthly Finance Report

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, reviewed the finance report for July and August.

2. FY21 Budget Amendment #2

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, reviewed the proposed FY21 Budget Amendment #2. He explained that this budget amendment transfers to the school division \$1.6 million of the more than \$4 million Federal CARES Act funding received by the City of Staunton. These funds help to cover the additional expenses incurred by the school division due to the Coronavirus Pandemic (COVID-19), such as additional technology, personal protective equipment, sanitation equipment and supplies, meal delivery systems, and childcare for essential school employees, etc. These funds are crucial to the division's ability to respond effectively to the demands imposed on division operations, making it possible to open in virtual mode, and to be prepared to open in hybrid mode, when that time comes. He thanked Staunton City Council for their support in allocating these funds.

Public Hearing

The Chair opened the public hearing on the Proposed FY21 Budget Amendment #2 as reviewed.

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

Mr. Lundquist indicated there were no callers waiting in the queue at this time.

The Chair called upon any who were present at the meeting and wished to comment on the Proposed Budget Amendment.

Having no comments, the Chair declared the public hearing closed.

VI. PUBLIC INPUT

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

- Damon Strickland, 1010 Selma Blvd., spoke requesting an immediate return to 100% in-person instruction.
- Ashley Strickland, 1010 Selma Blvd., spoke advocating for return to in-person instruction.
- Samantha Jordan, 820 N. Coalter Street, spoke regarding concerns about virtual learning and advocated for return to in-person instruction.

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Jessika Rosson interrupted to say that she had arrived late to the meeting and asked for permission to speak at this time. The Chair granted permission for her to speak. Ms. Rosson spoke regarding the frustrations she and her children have experienced in the current virtual model.

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

Mr. Lundquist indicated there were no callers waiting in the queue at this time.

Hearing no further comments, the Chair closed the public input period of the meeting.

VII. CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes for the Board Development Session, Work Session and Regular Meeting on August 10, 2020
- Personnel Actions
- Advisory Committees:
 1. Career and Technical Education Advisory Committee
 2. Special Education Advisory Committee

On a motion by Robert Boyle, seconded by Ronald Ramsey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda, as presented.

VIII. ACTION ITEMS

A. Health and Dental Insurance Rates for 2021 and Self-Insurance Plan Structure

Jonathan Venn, Chief Human Resources Officer, reviewed the exhibit and requested approval. He noted that he was pleased to report that there would be no increases this year for employee or employer health insurance rates, while employee dental rates would see a slight decrease.

On a motion by Christine Poulson, seconded by Amy Wratchford, the Board voted unanimously to approve the 2021 Health and Dental Insurance Rates and Self-insurance Plan Structure, as recommended.

B. Title III Immigrant and Youth Grant

Stephanie Haskins, Executive Director of Instruction, reviewed the exhibit and requested approval. She noted that these funds are available to divisions with a high proportion of immigrant students within the population of English learners, with SCS having 40 immigrant students (55% of the English learners). She requested approval of the application for this grant totaling \$2,715.97.

On a motion by Amy Wratchford, seconded by Robert Boyle, the Board voted unanimously to approve the application for the 2020-21 Title III Immigrant and Youth Grant, as presented.

C. School Activity Funds Audit

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, reviewed the school activity funds audit findings. He noted that the audit was deemed materially correct and requested the Board's acceptance of the audit.

On a motion by Ronald Ramsey, seconded by Christine Poulson, the Board voted unanimously to accept the school activity funds audit, as presented.

D. FY21 Budget Amendment #2

Brad Wegner, Budget Director, requested the Board approve the FY21 Budget Amendment as reviewed and for which the required public hearing had been held previously in the meeting. He reminded that with the Board's approval tonight, the budget amendment would go before City Council for consideration next week.

On a motion by Christine Poulson, seconded by Amy Wratchford, the Board voted unanimously to approve the FY21 Budget Amendment #2, contingent on City Council's

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approval at their September 24, 2020 meeting, for the sole purpose of supporting the Staunton City School's expenses associated with the COVID-19 pandemic, as presented.


E. Policy Deviations for 2020-21

Dr. Garrett Smith, Superintendent, reviewed the briefing outlining those policies that would be temporarily suspended due to restrictions made necessary by the COVID-19 pandemic. He noted that as soon as the policies could once again be carried out as written, a request would be brought forth to reinstate the policies.

On a motion by Amy Wratchford, seconded by Ronald Ramsey, the Board voted unanimously to approve the policy deviations, as noted, for the 2020-21 school year.

Having completed the regular meeting agenda, the Chair adjourned the regular meeting at 6:55 p.m. He announced that the Board would be returning to the second floor conference room to continue in work session.


CLERK / DEPUTY CLERK OF THE BOARD


CHAIR OF THE BOARD