

COVINGTON CITY SCHOOL BOARD
Minutes
October 7, 2019

The Covington City School Board held its regular meeting in the Board conference room on Monday, October 7, 2019, at 6:30 p.m. with the following members in attendance:

Tamala Preston, Chair
Jonathan Arritt
Bert Baker
Erika Hunter
Tonya Jones

Superintendent Melinda Snead-Johnson was present as were Cynthia Morgan, Principal of EPS; and Rebecca Irvine, Clerk.

Mrs. Preston called the meeting to order and requested a moment of silence. Those in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

RECOGNITIONS/DELEGATIONS

The School Board recognized the following 2019 retirees and thanked them for their service:

Phyllis Gibson	Administrative Assistant	1977 – 2019
Lynn Whitehead	Administrative Assistant	1989 – 2019
Eugenia Morrissette	Teacher	2005 – 2019
Jonathan Wright	Teacher	2006 – 2019
Natalie Rose	Teacher	1991 – 2019
Leslie Downer	Nurse Coordinator	1997 – 2019

Mr. William Windham, Chief Executive Officer of Lewis Gale Hospital – Alleghany, addressed the Board. Mr. Windham noted several changes/additions at the hospital in the areas of general surgery, cardiology, and primary care. Renovations to the 4th floor are in process and a new outpatient clinic will open in Covington in January, 2020.

Tara Brewster, CHS Girls Basketball Coach, addressed the Board regarding the team trip to Florida, December 18 – 23, 2019. Mrs. Brewster noted that the team continues to hold fundraisers with \$3,800 in additional funds needed.

Several teachers addressed the Board to express concern regarding the school merger discussions.

Kevin Hanna, president of the CEA, presented the results of a membership survey with 59 employees responding that they were opposed to consolidation; 2 responding in favor, and 12 undecided. Concerns expressed by staff included working conditions, curriculum, and salaries.

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Steve Dressler, CHS teacher, addressed the Board and read a letter from staff that expressed concern that the Committee on Joint School Services was moving too quickly to prepare an adequate plan for consolidation. Mr. Dressler also noted that the Committee on Joint Services was making promises that would ultimately be decided by a new Joint School Board. He also

expressed concern that two members of the existing Covington City School Board are employed by Alleghany County Schools, and he feels this is a conflict of interest.

Sara Zeek, CHS teacher, addressed the Board and encouraged them to read the letter and concerns presented by Mr. Dressler. Mrs. Zeek has also submitted a letter presenting many questions regarding the proposed merger plan being developed.

Julie Meadows, CHS teacher, addressed the Board and asked specifically why consolidation is needed and how it will benefit students.

Shannon Holloway, teacher at EPS, addressed the Board to express concern about consolidation and the disruption for students and the impact of the project-based learning for Special Education students.

Amanda Burns, teacher at EPS, addressed the Board and encouraged them to give any decision their full consideration and try to get all questions answered.

Board members thanked staff for their comments and assured them that this decision would not be taken lightly.

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Upon a motion by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. Baker, the Board unanimously approved the minutes of September 9, 2019.

FINANCE

Upon a motion by Mr. Baker, seconded by Ms. Jones, the Board unanimously approved invoices totaling \$885,548.96.

The Board reviewed expenditure allocations from CHS, JWIS, and EPS and the division-wide budget analysis through September, 2019.

Mrs. Snead-Johnson noted that that current enrollment for all schools is 963, which is 22 students short of the budget projection of 985.

SMART GOALS UPDATE/STRATEGIC PLAN

Mr. Baker reiterated his goal of striving for a “less paper” throughout the division, and particularly for Board meetings. He noted that City Council is moving toward paperless

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meetings and perhaps the School Board could explore this option. Mrs. Snead-Johnson noted that Google Docs is one possibility.

CHS BAND & CHOIR SPRING TRIP

Mrs. Snead-Johnson noted that that CHS Music Department has requested approval for a Spring Trip to Gatlinburg, Tennessee, April 9th-April 11th. The Board tabled this item until more Mrs. Peters could be present to provide more details of the trip.

NATIONAL SCHOOL LUNCH WEEK

Upon a motion by Ms. Jones, seconded, by Mr. Arritt, the Board unanimously approved a proclamation designating October 14 – 18, 2019, as National School Lunch Week to encourage awareness about nutrition habits in hopes of achieving a more healthful citizenry.

TITLE I FAMILY ENGAGEMENT

ADVISORY BOARDS/COMMITTEES

Mrs. Snead-Johnson recommended Board approval of the following advisory boards and committees:

CHS Career and Technical Advisory Board

Health Occupations/Sports Medicine: Skylar Dressler, Kiersten Hicks

Health Occupations/Sports Medicine: Laurel Haynes, VATL, ATC

Business and Information Technology: Harlie Reynolds, Abbie McDaniel

Business and Information Technology: Tina Dressler, Nathaniel Hale, Skipper Reyns, Zelpha Withrow

CHS Teachers: Charity Hale, Linda Lewis

CHS Principal: Derek Cantrell

CCHPS Director of Instruction/Technology: Shannon Fuhrman

Jackson River Technical Center: Glenn Spangler

Title I Advisory Board

Parents: Tiffany Billups, Sarah McKinney, Trisha Persinger, Tonya, Amanda Burns, Shannon Holloway, Dawn C. Lewis

Title I Staff: Amanda Burns, Tonya Easton, Susan Givens, Amanda H. Taylor, Jessica Fauber, Shannon Fuhrman, Cynthia Morgan

Special Education Advisory Board

Margaret Burks, Citizen

Holly Fasig, Parent

Shannon Fuhrman, Director of Instruction and Technology

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Natalie McClelland, Parent
Lee Ann Gray, Speech and Language Pathologist, EPS
Tammie Harmon, Parent
Kathy Harris, Citizen
Susan Kincaid, Special Education Teacher
Kelly Calhoun, Parent
Melinda Snead-Johnson, Division Superintendent & Director of Special Education
Shannon Ware, Principal-Rivermont School
Jennifer Turner, Family Preservation Services
Beverly Baker, Administrative Assistant
Jessica Fauber, Literacy Coach, CCPS

Virginia Preschool Initiative Advisor Board

Jessica Fauber, Literacy Coach, CCPS
Lee Ann Gray, Speech Language Pathologist, EPS
Amanda Burns, Family Engagement Specialist, EPS
Cynthia Morgan, EPS Principal
Tammie Hoke-Looney, ECSE Teacher, EPS
Melinda Snead-Johnson, Division Superintendent & Director of Special Education
Kit Staunton, School Counselor, JWIS
Amanda M. Taylor, Pre-K Teacher, EPS
Teresa Weintraub, Pre-K Teacher, EPS

Upon a motion by Mr. Baker, seconded by Ms. Jones, the Board unanimously approved the Superintendent's recommendations for each of these advisory boards/committees.

VPSA REFUNDING/2013B POOL BONDS - AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED

Mrs. Snead-Johnson noted that she recently received notification that the Virginia Public School Authority (VPSA) is considering the refunding of its 2013B Pool bonds this fall. Any saving from this refunding will be passed along to localities. Potential savings to the City of Covington if refunding occurs could total \$660,866.35 over the next 20 years. Mrs. Snead-Johnson recommended Board approval to authorize her signature on a Certificate of Refunding to receive and potential Refunding Credits.

Upon a motion by Mr. Baker, seconded by Ms. Jones, the Board unanimously authorized the Superintendent's signature on the refunding certificate.

BULLY PREVENTION MONTH

Mrs. Snead-Johnson read the Certificate of Recognition signed by Governor Northam recognizing October, 2019 as Bullying Prevention Month. While staff address bullying throughout the year, special prevention activities occur during the month of October, and principals will provide updates in November.

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COMMITTEE & JOINT BOARD REPORTS

Mr. Arritt reported the Committee on Joint Services met on September 26th. At this meeting the committee defined the Scope of Phase 1 of the process to include the following: 1) Options for Local Funding; 2) Cost of Pay Equalization; 3) Options for Board Governance. Meetings were scheduled for 10/17 and 10/24. Public comment will be allowed at the meeting on October 24th.

Mrs. Snead-Johnson noted that Atif Qarni, Virginia Secretary of Education, will visit area schools on Wednesday, October 9th.

The JRTC Joint Board of Control will meet on Tuesday, October 8, 2019, at noon.

SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT

Cindy Arthur, GEAR UP Virginia Coordinator for Covington City Schools, presented an update on activities at CHS. Students (65) who began participation in the GEAR UP Program as 7th graders will be graduating from CHS in 2020.

The Board expressed their appreciation to Ms. Arthur, and Mrs. Hunter noted that her daughter participates in the GEAR UP Program.

Amanda Burns, Title I Family Engagement Coordinator, addressed the Board to inform them of several community partnerships that are in place to enhance family participation and engagement in student success.

Jessica Fauber, Literacy Coach, at EPS presented an update on major pro-active reading efforts that occurring at EPS and JWIS. Students are being tested early and intervention strategies put in place to address reading deficiencies.

Mrs. Snead-Johnson noted that CHS and JWIS are fully accredited and EPS is accredited with conditions. The conditions involve improvements needed for some subgroups in reading. A DOE representative will be visiting schools on October 17th to assist principals with an areas needing improvement.

Mrs. Snead-Johnson noted that a copy of the school activity audit was included in the Board packet, with comments from each principal addressing any audit concerns.

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Upon a motion by Ms. Jones, seconded by Mr. Arritt, the Board unanimously approved an executive session at 8:15 p.m. to discuss matters in relation to the Code of Virginia, Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) Personnel.

Upon a return to open session at 9:55 p.m., the Board agreed to certify the closed session under the Code of Virginia, Section 2.1-3711 (A) (1) Personnel with a roll call vote.

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PERSONNEL

Upon a motion by Mrs. Hunter, seconded by Ms. Jones, the Board unanimously approved the following personnel appointments:

James, Charlesetta
Sizemore, Oliva
Schell, Barry
Jennings, Jean
Hepler, Rachel

Substitute Teacher/Aide
Substitute Teacher/Aide
Substitute Teacher/Aide
Substitute Nurse
Volunteer Girls Basketball Coach

ADJOURNMENT

The Board adjourned at 10:05 p.m.

Tamala Preston, Chair

Rebecca Irvine, Clerk

