Hamlet, North Carolina

September 5, 2023

The Richmond County Board of Education met in regular session, on September 5, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Central Office in Hamlet, North Carolina.

The members present: Wiley Mabe, chairman, Bobbie Sue Ormsby, vice-chair, Scotty Baldwin, Jerry Ethridge, Daryl Mason, Ronald Tillman, and Cory Satterfield.

The administrators present: Dr. Joe Ferrell, superintendent, Dr. Julian Carter, associate superintendent of Human Resources, Dr. Kate Smith, assistant superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction, Melvin Ingram, assistant superintendent of School Safety and Operations, Dr. Tesha Isler, executive director for School Administration and Policy, Jennifer Taylor, director of Testing and Accountability, Dawn Jordan, executive director of finance, Steven King, directory of maintenance, Mike Williams, director of Technology Systems and Student Information, Katherine Bendell, director of Instructional Technology, Kylie DeWitt, executive director of Communications, and George Crump, III, board attorney.

After noting that a quorum was present, Wiley Mabe called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

Scotty Baldwin requested a Moment of Silence and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the minutes of August 1, 2023, open and closed meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

The agenda, as presented, was approved by unanimous consent.

Dale Smith from Anderson Smith & Wike PLLC presented findings of the audit for the year ending on June 30, 2023. There were no reportable incidents or significant items of concern.

Jennifer Taylor presented the RCS Local Testing Program information. In compliance with NCGS 115C-174.12(d), a local testing program survey must be submitted to the NC Department of Public Instruction. This survey reports the number of tests administered and the average testing times. Richmond County Schools reported 70 tests administered and an average testing time of 105, which is below the state averages.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Ronald Tillman, the board voted unanimously to approve the local testing survey as presented.

Steven King presented an update on the construction projects at Mineral Springs School, Fairview Heights School, and Richmond Senior High School.

* Richmond Senior High School – working on sub surface – sewer, power, and storm water lines; building pad expected completion in mid-October
* Mineral Springs School – working in parking lot areas and exit to playground; building pad expected completion end of the September
* Fairview Heights School – layout of foundation completed mid-September; building pad and footings expected completion in October

Dawn Jordan presented contracts for board approval:

* #1 – Dysphagia and Voice Therapeutics PLLC
* #2 – Sandhills Childrens Center
* #3– Amanda Y. Hill, M.ED., CCC-SLP
* #4 -Leak Street Alumni, Inc.
* #5 – Sprouting With S.P.O.T.S

On a motion by Cory Satterfield, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to approve the contracts as presented.

Mike Williams presented an update on the Device Plan.

* Applied Data has been contracted by HP to change batteries (about 1200) at their Charlotte office. The elementary school computer batteries will be replaced in about two weeks, after testing is completed.
* Purchase order for 500 laptops has been placed, using the reduced rate per agreement with HP.
* Laptop carts (90) have been placed at RSHS and Ninth Grade Academy. These carts hold 25 laptops.

Melvin Ingram presented information on the transfer of the James Building. The building is currently used by staff (facilitators, EC department, Pre-K, and STEM). The projected cost of updating and maintaining the building is estimated at $500,000.00. The building would be transferred to the county from Richmond Community College, then to Richmond County Schools if approved by board.

Melvin Ingram presented the SRO Coverage Plan. On August 9, 2023, there was a safety and security roundtable discussion with law enforcement, SRO staff, and administrators. Issues determined were funding and lack of personnel and how to have school resource officers in every school every day. In the next NC Safe Schools grant process, application for additional funding will be requested.

Wiley Mabe asked for a short recess at 5:55 p.m. Meeting resumed at 6:05 p.m.

Dr. Tesha Isler presented the changes to the Policy Code 5030 – Community Use of Facilities, Exhibit Code 5030 E-A – Facility Use Agreement, and Exhibit Code 5030 E-B – Facility Rental Form. Changes included additional requirements for payment for use of facilities, reimbursement for personnel expenses of school employees working overtime, and flat rates for rental fees.

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Jerry Ethridge, the board voted to approve the changes to the policies as presented. Daryl Mason voted against the motion.

Dr. Tesha Isler presented the Dress Code Policy (4316) asking for board approval to remove the following wording concerning top attire: “be mid-thigh length” if leggings are worn. The change would read, “Tops must cover student’s backside, if leggings are worn.”

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted to waive the 30-day review.

On a motion by Cory Satterfield, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted to approve the change in the dress code policy. Jerry Ethridge did not vote in favor of the change to the policy.

Dr. Tesha Isler presented the policies for 30-day review:

* 6402 – Participation by Historically Underutilized Businesses
* 6410 – Organization of the Purchasing Function
* 6430 – Purchasing Requirements for Equipment, Materials and Supplies

Dr. Tesha Isler presented the following policies for board approval:

* 7340 – Employee Dress and Appearance
* 7503 – Teleworking
* 7810 – Evaluation of Licensed Employees
* 7815 - Evaluation of Non-Licensed Employees

On a motion by Corey Satterfield, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to approve the policies as presented.

Melvin Ingram presented the Field Trip Requests:

* RSHS - JROTC – SCSU Army ROTC Day – Orangeburg, SC – October 7, 2023 – 40 students
* Ellerbe Middle – Beta Club – National Beta Leadership Summit – Concord, NC – October 8-10, 2023 -15 students
* RSHS – Beta Club – National Beta Leadership Summit – Concord, NC – October 8-10, 2023 – 17 students
* Rockingham Middle – National Beta Leadership Summit – Concord, NC – October 8-10, 2023 – 18 students
* L J Bell – Second Grade – Plant/Animal Education – McArthur Farms, Bennettsville, SC – October 13, 2023 – 93 students
* RSHS – JROTC – Army JROTC Drill Meet – Hopkins, SC – October 14, 2023 – 20 students
* RSHS – JROTC – Regional Raider Meet – Green Sea, SC – October 21, 2023 – 20 students
* RSHS – JROTC – National JROTC Raider Challenge – Fort Knox, KY – November 2-5, 2023 – 16 students

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to approve the field trips as presented.

Dr. Joe Ferrell presented the Surplus Item for board approval.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted unanimously to approve surplus item as presented.

Comments from board members: school visits, great opening of the new school year, well-planned and organized Open Houses at schools with parent participation, wonderful Convocation, congratulations to Felisha Gulledge, teacher-of-the-year, Joyce McRae, principal-of-the-year, and Ishmael Gomez, assistant principal-of-the-year, thanks to the Griffin and Altman families for the support of the teacher-of-the-year program, thanks to the volunteers who assisted with the opening of school, and appreciative of the support from the local law enforcement departments

Dr. Joe Ferrell presented the Superintendent’s Report:

* Opening of school went very well. Transportation went smoothly. Will complete visits of all schools by tomorrow.
* Students are grateful not to be in uniforms. The only issue with the Dress Code policy was the top attire over leggings.

Wiley Mabe citing NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3),(6) requested a motion to go into closed session.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Cory Satterfield, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 6:48 p.m.

The board returned from closed session at 8:35 p.m.

Scotty Baldwin made a motion to approve the assistant superintendent contract for Melvin Ingram, effective September 5, 2023, and ending June 30, 2026. Ronald Tillman seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

Dr. Joe Ferrell presented the personnel report, and the addendum.

On a motion by Cory Satterfield, seconded by Jerry Ethridge, the board voted to approve the personnel and addendum reports as amended. Ronald Tillman voted no on approval of the personnel reports.

There being no further business, on a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Daryl Mason, the board voted unanimously to adjourn at 8:36 p.m.