

**Jackson County Board of Education
Minutes of Regular Meeting
Sylva, North Carolina
Central Office**

398 Hospital Road, Sylva

January 26, 2021

6:00 p.m.

The Jackson County Board of Education met in regular session at 6:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 26, 2021, at the Board of Education Administrative Office Board Room, 398 Hospital Road, Sylva, North Carolina. Due to N.C. Governors Executive Order 121, the meeting was conducted using video and telephone conferencing to limit the number of people present for the meeting. The following members were present via telephone and/or online platform:

Alison Laird-Large, Chairperson

The following members were present:

Elizabeth Cooper, Vice-Chair
Margaret McRae
Wes Jamison
Abigail Clayton
Chris Campbell, School Board Attorney

Also present were Dr. Tony Tipton, Interim Superintendent; Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent; Dr. Kevin Bailey, Executive Director of Human Resources; Jeremiah Jackson, Chief Technology Officer; and Cora Fields, Board Assistant.

CALL TO ORDER

Board Chairperson Alison Laird-Large called the business meeting to order.

Mrs. Laird Large led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board voted unanimously to approve the Agenda.

OPEN SESSION FOR PUBLIC COMMENTS

Kelley Dinkelmeyer, parent of a 7th grade student at Cullowhee Valley Elementary School (CVES), spoke to the board and asked them to please change the mascot and logo of the school. She said that she loves and supports the school as a volunteer and substitute teacher. She said that some people have viewed her as an outsider trying to change local heritage, but she is from a small town in Alabama and has a strong southern heritage and pride. She stated that some students see the Rebel mascot as a negative symbol and that it is not a good representation for all the students. She thanked the board for allowing her to speak at the meeting.

CONSENT ACTION AGENDA

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:*

- A. Open Session Minutes of Regular Meeting of December 15, 2020.

INFORMATION AGENDA

- A. **Agenda Item:** Superintendent's Report
Presenter: Dr. Tony Tipton, Interim Superintendent

Dr. Tipton reported on the following:

1. Congratulations to Blue Ridge Early College Varsity Volleyball coaches and players. This year's team ended the regular season with an overall record of 10-0 and finished first in conference with a 5-0 record. This year's volleyball team is the first team or possible second team in school history to go undefeated in the regular season. Earlier this month the Lady Bobcats won their first-round match in the state playoffs. With this win, they moved into the second round of the playoffs for the first time in school history. While they lost a close match in the second round, they had a memorable history making season. At Smoky Mountain High School, both the men's and women's cross-county teams advanced to the Regionals in the state playoffs. Both teams finished their season in 7th place in the Regionals. The winter season of sports in this year of COVID 19 began in early January. Currently basketball, cheerleading, the swim team and men's soccer have all begun. Football practice will begin in February.
2. JCPS has had a smooth start to the academic second semester of school. The word smooth is a moving target this year, JCPS employees have stepped up to the challenge. While offering both in person and remote learning at the same time is not ideal, the staff is delivering the best education possible under these scary isolated conditions.
3. Everyone acknowledges that students being on an A-B schedule or fully remote are not receiving the same instruction as they would have without COVID 19. Mrs. Angie Dills, Chief Academic Officer, is currently in the early stages of working on some type of summer remediation. This will be designed to offer additional support to students for the loss of instructional time over last fall and this school year. There will be more updates as this planning moves forward.
4. JCPS COVID numbers across the district remain lower than many of the surrounding districts. The exception to this was Cullowhee Valley School. This school was remote only last week. Then last Friday, district team members and the Cullowhee Valley principal met and reviewed the numbers for both staff and students. With many of the staff members returning to work, JCPS was able to return Cullowhee Valley to their face-to-face instruction yesterday.
5. JCPS learned that staff vaccinations scheduled for the week of January 19th were not going to be given to employees. Then Wednesday of last week, Mr. Steve Heatherly, President and CEO of Harris Regional Hospital, informed JCPS that they had 350 vaccines available but needed to be able to arrange a mass vaccination clinic by Friday. With this good news JCPS staff went to work to make that happen. Dr. Kevin

Bailey will provide a more detailed report of the Friday vaccination later tonight. Dr. Tipton thanked parents for understanding the need for the early release last Friday. This time was needed to get the vaccination site at Smoky Mountain High School ready and to allow staff from the nine schools to be able to attend the vaccination. He also thanked all the nurses and central office volunteers for their time in supporting the hospital staff. Dr. Tipton gave a special acknowledgement to Mr. Jacob Buchanan for his leadership as the point person for JCPS schools throughout this school year and throughout the COVID process. Mr. Buchanan has been **the voice** for the vaccination of JCPS employees. We all owe him a sincere thank you.

6. Dr. Tipton stated that we must remember that just getting the vaccine does not end the COVID 19 threat. That will take several months to achieve. JCPS students and staff will continue to wear a mask, wash hands, and social distance. While it is not the end, it is the beginning of the end of COVID 19. As Governor Cooper stated in one of his press conferences, the vaccine offers hope, but it will take several months for that hope to be fully realized.
7. The week of February 8th through 12th JCPS will celebrate **Love the Bus Week**. Each February, students, schools, and educators are invited to highlight the important role of the yellow school bus in their communities and show appreciation for the school bus drivers who transport students to and from school every day. Dr. Tipton shared a few numbers - during normal times, 38 yellow buses transport 14,700 students per day and drivers travel 2,315 miles per day. These numbers point out the important role bus drivers play in the safety of JCPS students on a daily basis. He encouraged everyone associated with JCPS schools to join him in showing their appreciation for the school bus drivers of Jackson County.
8. Dr. Tipton acknowledged January as National School Board Recognition Month. He took the opportunity to say thanks to each member of the school board for their service and hard work for Jackson County Public Schools. He said that every conversation with this board has been centered around how to offer the best educational opportunities possible for the students of Jackson County.

B. Agenda Item: Superintendent Search Update

Presenter: Christopher Z. Campbell, Board Attorney

Mr. Campbell provided an update for the JCPS Superintendent search. Mr. Campbell said that board members have reviewed the 21 applications that have been received. During the next two months, media searches and telephone interviews will be conducted. A final selection will be made during the month of April and will be announced the beginning of May. Mr. Campbell stated that this is a confidential process, the candidate names will not be made public, and that there will not be any public meetings for this selection.

C. Agenda Item: COVID-19 Vaccination Clinic Update

Presenter: Dr. Kevin Bailey, Executive Director of Human Resources

Dr. Bailey informed the board that JCPS held a COVID 19 vaccination clinic at SMHS last Friday. He said that Harris Regional Hospital and JCPS staff came together and provided 313 vaccines which is more than 50% of the JCPS staff. Work is underway to set up an additional vaccination clinic to accommodate the remainder of the staff that were unable to attend the first clinic. The required second vaccine clinic will be held on February 19th at SMHS from 3 to 6 p.m. Students

will be released at 1:30 p.m. to allow staff members to attend. Dr. Bailey thanked the board for their support and attendance at the clinic.

D. Agenda Item: 2020-2021 School Calendar Update

Presenter: Angie Dills, Chief Academic Officer, and Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent

Ms. Dills and Mr. Buchanan presented changes to the 2020-2021 school calendar. Mrs. Dills informed the board that March 4th and 5th, and June 4th, will be converted to student days in the event of inclement weather closures. Mrs. Dills said that remote learning days will also be an option if needed.

E. Agenda Item: Unaudited Financial Summary

Presenter: Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent for Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Buchanan presented the Unaudited Financial Summary for January 2021.

ACTION AGENDA

A. Agenda Item: Cullowhee Valley Elementary School Mascot

Presenter: Alison Laird-Large, Chairperson

Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper made the following motion about the Cullowhee Valley Elementary School mascot: "I move that the Board of Education hereby directs that the current mascot name and logo at Cullowhee Valley Elementary School (CVES) be discontinued. Furthermore, I move that the student of CVES shall be permitted to select a new mascot name and logo by no later than the beginning of the 2021-2022 school year. The timeline and process for selection by the student body shall be left to the discretion of the Superintendent and the administration of CVES."

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison the board voted unanimously to approve the discontinued use of the current Cullowhee Valley Elementary School mascot and logo, and to allow the student body to select a new mascot and logo by no later than the 2021-2022 school year, at the discretion of the Superintendent the CVES administration.*

B. Agenda Item: Budget Amendments

Presenter: Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent for Kristie Walker, Chief Financial Officer

Mr. Buchanan presented budget amendments to the State Public School Fund, Local Current Expense Fund, Federal Grants Fund, and Other Specific Revenue Fund and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison the board voted unanimously to approve the budget amendments to the State Public School Fund, Local Current Expense Fund, Federal Grants Fund, and Other Specific Revenue Fund.*

C. Agenda Item: Synovia Solutions Synsurance Renewal

Presenter: Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent

Mr. Buchanan presented the Synovia Solutions Synsurance renewal that provides GPS tracking and time-keeper management for school buses and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison the board voted unanimously to approve the Synovia Solutions Synsurance renewal.*

D. Agenda Item: Indian Education Policies and Procedures Annual Approval

Presenter: Angie Dills, Chief Academic Officer

Mrs. Dills presented the Indian Education Policies and Procedures update and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton the board voted unanimously to approve the updated Indian Education Policies and Procedures.*

E. Agenda Item: Policy Updates

Presenter: Jacob Buchanan, Assistant Superintendent

1. Accountability Standards (3425)
2. Equal Educational Opportunities (4001)
3. Student Fees (4600)
4. Safety and Student Transportation Services (6305)

Mr. Buchanan presented changes to the above listed policies and asked for board approval.

Action: *Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Margaret McRae the board voted unanimously to approve the policy updates as listed above.*

CLOSED SESSION

The board unanimously approved a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison to enter into closed session pursuant to G.S. 143.318.11 for the following purposes: under subsection; (a) (1) to prevent the disclosure of privileged or confidential personnel information pursuant to G.S. 115C-319-32 and (a) (3) to discuss matters protected by attorney-client privilege.

Upon a motion by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Margaret McRae, the board voted unanimously to return to open session.

OPEN SESSION

Action: *Upon a motion by Mr. Wes Jamison and seconded by Mr. Wes Jamison, the board unanimously approved the consent action agenda:*

1. Closed Session Minutes of Meeting on December 15, 2020

PERSONNEL ACTION AGENDA

Action: *Upon a motion made by Mrs. Elizabeth Cooper and seconded by Mrs. Abigail Clayton, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel agenda as recommended by Jacob Buchanan. The board unanimously approved the following recommendations:*

Employee Recommendations:

1. Ammons, Matthew – Bus Driver, FES
2. Bennett, John Max – MS Athletics Bus Driver and Substitute Bus Driver, SMHS
3. Bishop, Johnnie – School Nutrition Substitute, CVES
4. Carpenter, Donna – EC Bus Monitor, CVES
5. Hack, Samantha – Instructional Support Assistant, BRS
6. Howerton, Caleigh – Instructional Support Teacher Assistant, FES
7. Hummer, Suzanne – Afterschool Tutor, SMES
8. Jamison, Charity – Afterschool Tutor, SMES
9. Mullan, Kimberly – Teacher Assistant, FES
10. Pruett, Tonya – Afterschool Tutor, SMES

Employee Resignations:

1. Miller, Jason – Teacher, SMHS
2. Moss, Keagan – Instructional Support Teacher Assistant, FES

Employee Retirements:

1. McGaha, Betty Sue – Custodian, CVES
2. Setzer, Ronald – Custodian and Bus Driver, SMHS

Employee Separations:

1. Taylor, Penny – Certified Nursing Assistant, FES

Staff, Non-Staff and Returning Coach Recommendations:

1. Brindley, Rick – Assistant Winter Athletic Director, SMHS – Returning Staff
2. Capps, Zeb – Head Coach Men’s Golf, SMHS – Returning Staff
3. Carnes, Scotti – Head Coach Winter Varsity Cheer, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
4. Deitz, Mary – Head Coach JV Softball, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
5. Dezarn, Megan – Head Coach Women’s Track, SMHS – Returning Staff
6. Dillard, Morgan – Head Coach Varsity Softball, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
7. Ellenburg, Jeremy – Head Coach Varsity Baseball, SMHS – Returning Staff
8. Frizzell, Nathan – Head Coach JV Baseball, SMHS – Returning Staff
9. Gribble, Corina – Head Coach JV Women’s Soccer, SMHS – Returning Staff
10. Hawk, Derrick – Assistant Coach Varsity Baseball, SMHS – Returning Staff
11. Matthews, Rachel – Assistant Coach Varsity Softball, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
12. Mitchell, Scott – Assistant Coach JV Baseball, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
13. Moody, Madison – Head Coach Winter JV Cheer, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
14. Moody, Tony – Head Coach Varsity Wrestling, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
15. Orr, Kelli – Assistant Coach Winter Varsity Cheer, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
16. Parsons, Jonathan – Assistant Coach Varsity Women’s Soccer, SMHS – Returning Staff
17. Parsons, Stephen – Head Coach Varsity Women’s Soccer, SMHS – Returning Staff

18. Quinn, Tony – Assistant Coach Varsity Wrestling, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
19. Reddin, Colby – Head Coach JV Wrestling, SMHS – Returning Staff
20. Richards, Keith – Head Coach Middle School Wrestling, SMHS
21. Shuler, Pam – Assistant Winter Athletic Director, SMHS – Returning Staff
22. Stewart, Heath – Assistant Coach Varsity Wrestling, SMHS – Returning Non-Staff
23. Wilson, Eric – Assistant Coach Middle School Wrestling, SMHS

Special Requests: Leave of Absence:

1. Fisher, Katrina – EC Teacher – Intensive Needs K-2, CVES

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The next regularly scheduled business meeting of the Board of Education is February 23, 2021, at 6:00 p.m., at the Board of Education Central Office, Sylva, North Carolina.

ADJOURNMENT

There being no objection, Chairperson Ali Laird-Large adjourned the meeting at 7:05 p.m.

Alison Laird-Large, Chairperson

Dr. Tony Tipton, Secretary