



VIRGINIA BEACH CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS CHARTING THE COURSE

School Board Services

Carolyn T. Rye, Chair
District 5 - Lynnhaven

Kimberly A. Melnyk, Vice Chair
District 7 – Princess Anne

Beverly M. Anderson
At-Large

Sharon R. Felton
District 6 – Beach

Jennifer S. Franklin
District 2 – Kempsville

Dorothy M. Holtz
At-Large

Laura K. Hughes
At-Large

Victoria C. Manning
At-Large

Jessica L. Owens
District 3 – Rose Hall

Trenace B. Riggs
District 1 – Centerville

Carolyn D. Weems
District 4 - Bayside

Aaron C. Spence, Ed.D., Superintendent

School Board Special Meeting MINUTES

Wednesday, September 1, 2021 5:00 p.m.

School Administration Building, Building 6, Municipal Center
2512 George Mason Drive, P.O. Box 6038
Virginia Beach, Virginia 23456

- Call to Order and Attendance:** Chairwoman Rye called the special meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. on the 1st day of September 2021 and announced pursuant to the Virginia State Health Commissioner’s Order of Public Health Emergency Statewide Requirement to Wear Masks in K-12 Schools issued August 12, 2021, and Virginia Acts of Assembly No. 1303, Chapter 456, and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)’s guidance for K-12 schools, and the School Board’s 2021-2022 Reopening Plan adopted August 10, 2021, and the School Board’s vote on August 24, 2021 to follow the health mitigation protocols used by the School Administration, it is determined physical distancing will be used in School Board Chambers as a health mitigation strategy therefore there will be limited public seating available on a first-come, first-served basis beginning shortly before the meeting today. Members of the public will also be able to observe the School Board Meeting through livestreaming on www.vbschools.com, broadcast on VBTV Channel 47, and on Zoom.

The following School Board members were present in the School Board chamber: Chairwoman Rye, Ms. Melnyk, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Owens, Ms. Riggs (arrived at 5:04 p.m.), and Ms. Weems. Chairwoman Rye noted Ms. Franklin and Ms. Manning were absent due to family obligations and Ms. Hughes due to out-of-town travel.

- Purpose of Special Meeting call:** Chairwoman Rye noted the School Board has called this Special Meeting for the purpose of reviewing, making recommendations or taking actions regarding how the School Board conducts meetings, accepts public comments at certain meetings, prepares for meetings and handles decorum, order and safety or health mitigation protocols for meetings. The School Board reserves the right to address related matters that arise during the Special Meeting. All School Board Members were notified of the purpose of the Special Meeting at the August 24, 2021 Meeting and by subsequent communication and by publication of the agenda for the meeting.
- Adoption of the Agenda:** Chairwoman Rye called for a motion to approve. Ms. Holtz made a motion, seconded by Ms. Anderson. Without discussion, Chairwoman Rye called for a vote. The School Board Clerk announced there were seven (7) ayes in favor of the motion: Chairwoman Rye, Ms. Melnyk, Ms. Anderson, Ms. Felton, Ms. Holtz, Ms. Owens, and Ms. Weems. Note, Ms. Riggs was not present in the School Board chamber at the time of the vote.

Chairwoman Rye noted the purpose of the Special Meeting is to devote time discussing and proposing solutions or changes to how the School Board conducts meetings and how public comment is incorporated into meetings; focus discussion on making recommendations that will address concerns and if recommendations require changes to Bylaws or Policies those recommendations can be forwarded to Ms. Riggs and the Policy Review Committee to develop language for amendments; if changes do not involve Bylaw or Policy changes, the School Board member can either make a Motion or ask to have proposals added to a future agenda; consider priorities to discuss.

Chairwoman Rye opened the floor for discussion. The discussion started regarding the change, about four years ago, in which speaker time increased from three minutes to four minutes; suggestion to return to the three minute time; important to hear speakers but with many speakers, cannot get to business of the School Board; timing of speakers; suggestion of a graduated timing system; broadcasting all speakers; allow speakers to discuss any topic – not separated by Agenda and Non-Agenda; consider minors/students come to speak first; have every speaker speak; limiting time of speakers to 1.5 hours or 2 hours; may be an issue if a student is speaking and the parent is also; reason for dividing the topics into Agenda and Non-Agenda – names being mentioned, protection of students and employees; if large number of speakers, not sure if graduated system would work; reasons for broadcast and non-broadcast; do not want to limit the time of speakers (i.e., 1.5 or 2 hours); need to listen to public; easier to speak if did not have agenda and non-agenda, speak on anything to do with education; on topic/off topic puts Chair in a subjective position.

Not limiting number of speakers but stopping speakers at a certain time then resuming speakers after presentations; challenges of late hour and making decisions; keeping Agenda and Non-Agenda items separate; rationale for not broadcasting non-agenda speakers; reducing speaker time to allow more speakers; clarification of graduated time (example if 20 speakers signed up each speaker allowed 4 minutes, if 40 speakers signed up each speaker allowed 3 minutes); agenda order; need to hear speakers before School Board members vote; would like to have speakers speak for three minutes; need to hear from public but need fair amount of time to get to business of meeting; if consider students speaking first, need to make clear procedures on how students are going to speak; overall time of meetings; considerations – adjust time limit for individual speakers or adjust time limit for total number of speakers; suggestion of agenda order – have speakers until 8 pm, go back to business of information and consent items, return to speakers, if speakers are discussing Action topics, the agenda has flexibility to vote on those items on remaining action items; merging agenda and non-agenda items.

School Board Legal Counsel, Kamala Lannetti mentioned as of July 1st the Virginia Freedom of Information Act was amended, one quarter of your meetings provide an opportunity for the public to speak (not time) – a quarter of your meetings total during the year; mentioned previous cases; brief examples of various parameters regarding speakers and topics; concerned all speakers should have same amount of time; use of time of informal workshop.

The discussion continued regarding clarification on the quarter of meetings for speakers; speakers having three minutes; continuing with Zoom speakers; speaker sequence (in person then online); look at options for speakers; concerns about staff being named during non-agenda speakers; discussion on gaveling at meeting; Chairwoman Rye provided a brief recap of discussions and general consensus of board; more feedback on agenda order; not supportive of limiting speakers; support changing agenda with a pause; want to hear speakers before a vote; reducing time in meetings – presentations in both workshop and

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formal meeting, repetitive; taking care of business of the board – in favor of keeping agenda speakers separate; better use of workshop time; purpose of workshop; items of interest to go back to Policy Review Committee – speaker time, agenda order and pause discussed, merging of agenda and non-agenda speakers, student speakers; suggestion of having workshops on off week of meetings; special workshop meetings for a limited amount of time.

The discussion continued regarding 6 feet of distancing verses 3 feet of distancing; CDC guidance; guidance regarding distancing; warning letters; needs to be a Board discussion; subjective; not a good idea; concerns about developments at meetings; matter of decorum; conduct at meetings; warning system; content and conduct; more conversation needed regarding issue; boundaries are needed; plan of progressive steps; open to further discussion; issue to Policy Review Committee or Governance Committee to be discussed then back to the School Board to be vetted.

4. **Motions by School Board Members to vote on any matters relevant to the Special Meeting:** There were no motions presented to the School Board.

5. **Summary of actions to be handled at a later date:** Chairwoman Rye mentioned items discussed during recap; matters going to Policy Review Committee (PRC) from discussions; further discussion on handling appropriate sanctions; Ms. Riggs noted the next PRC meeting is scheduled for September 16, could be moved a week before then to September 9; official notice to follow regarding meeting date.

6. **Adjournment:** Chairwoman Rye adjourned the meeting at 7:02 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

Regina M. Toneatto, Clerk of the School Board

Approved:

Carolyn T. Rye, School Board Chair