



Former Wayne County Board of Education Member JoAnn Foster shared her concerns with the board regarding the superintendent selection process.



Local businessman Mylan Wright shared his concerns during public comments

The Wayne County Board of Education met before an overflowing crowd of spectators at their monthly meeting on Thursday (May 18th) evening.

The most controversial item on the agenda during the lengthy meeting was the discussion surrounding the board's request to change the timeline for the recently established dates of the new superintendent search process. During the past meeting, the board had established a lengthier timeline that would have called for the hiring of an interim superintendent during the month of July.

However, Board Chairman Larry Muse recommended a quicker timeline, to give the next superintendent more experience in the new job before school starts. During a split vote, Chairman Muse made the motion and Board Member Joe Hancock seconded the motion with Board Member Jarrod Criswell voting in agreement to amend the timeline. Board Members Melissa Upchurch and Benton Sloan were opposed.

Board Member Melissa Upchurch said, "This is a big decision and it will affect us for a long time," therefore she was willing to slow the process down.

Several comments were made from audience members that they were in agreement with her.

The new timeline calls for applications to close on June 7th and a joint meeting of the Board and Screening Committee will meet on June 12 at 6:15 p.m. The first screening committee meeting would immediately be held following the joint meeting. The second screening committee meeting will be held either on June 16 at 6:00 p.m. or the next morning on June 17th. The third screening meeting will be held on June 20th at 6:00 p.m. and recommendations will be finalized for the Board. A joint meeting will then be held on June 22 at 6:15 p.m. so the Board can receive the screening committee's recommendations and then have a board planning meeting immediately afterwards. The Board will interview candidates from June 23 to June 29. A new superintendent will be named on June 30th, 2023.

The screening committee selection process has been underway with the following elections held to determine the following representatives: Panesia Humble and Kevin Jones - certified staff, Valerie Hutchinson - classified staff, Virginia Cares - principals, Jason Lee - parents, Larry Muse - Board of Education and a minority parent remains to be named.

Several spectators spoke during the start of the meeting's public comments and several past board members, teachers, and community members were in attendance. There were over 75 individuals attending the meeting. Board Chairman Larry Muse said the board members had been receiving threatening and intimidating phone calls and the board had not taken any action. He said he did not know where the rumors had gotten started regarding cutting sporting events. He told the crowd the board would select the best candidate that they saw fit for the position.

There were two outstanding high school students recognized – Sophia Beaudoin for being accepted to both the Craft Academy and Gatton Academy and Elora Garner for making a perfect

36 ACT score. In addition, the Wayne County GEAR Up program provided an informative presentation

The meeting was broadcast live on the school district website and on the school district's new channel 99 on the Community Telecom Service. All of the future board meeting videos (including the past two meetings) will be archived on the Board of Education page inside the front page of the school district website. So, website visitors can watch the board meetings on a delayed basis, as well as live.

In other business:

*Approved the 2023-24 salary schedules allowing for a two percent salary increase for all employees after approving the 2023-24 tentative budget.

*Approved an application of waiver to allow for attendance-based Virtual Learning.

*Approved a new 2023 District Facility Plan as presented by the Local Planning Committee. School Facility Manager Justin Alley agreed to serve as the hearing officer at the upcoming public hearing to review the new plan.

*Approved a revised BG1 for the Wayne County track and soccer field project.

*Approved the next to lowest bid out of four choices for soccer lights. The board approved Ephesus Sports Lighting with a lead time of a couple of months, with three favorable reference checks from other schools.

*Approved a Capital Funds request in the amount of \$1,105,932 (Distributed as follows: \$472,000-technology, \$519,400-athletic field, \$92,000-property insurance, and \$22,500-middle school gym floor leaving \$825,000 at the end of the year to escrow)

*Approved to pay Greg West Land Surveying, Inc. \$5,000 for professional services in relation to the Walker Early Learning Center Renovation Project.

*Approved a Geotechnical proposal from Solid Ground Engineering for Geotechnical Services on the Walker Early Learning Center Renovation Project.

*Approved a pay request #4 for the WCHS Gym Indoor Air Quality Improvement Project for \$969,938.

*Agreed to pay an invoice to Commonwealth Systems, LLC for \$1,513. On the WCHS Gym Indoor Air Quality Improvement Project.

*Approved a BG1 for Bell Roof Replacement.

*Approved a contract with Cumberland Family Medical Center for facilitate the 2023-24 School Health Plan.

*Approved membership for the Council for Better Education.

*Awarded bids for previously declared surplus property.

*Approved participation in the Community Eligibility Provision offered by the USDA's National School Lunch Program.



Sophia Beaudoin accepted a trophy and certificate for her academic achievement being accepted to two academies for high school scholars from Board Chairman Larry Muse after her speech (See Speech Below)

Good evening ladies and gentlemen of the Board.

As I'm certain you all know, I was accepted into Western Kentucky University's Gatton Academy, and I'll be attending there next school year and my senior year. I was invited to this meeting to say a few words, and so before I leave Wayne County, I'd like to say a few things about what this place means to me.

I was born and raised in this town; it's all I've ever known. No matter where I choose to go, I'll always be from Wayne County. My experience here will always be a part of me, and I want to continue to be a part of Wayne County.

Overall, I'd say I had a good experience here. Some of my best memories come from band competitions or academic team meetings. I'll never forget the inside jokes, or the bus rides, or the expressions of the frazzled gas station cashiers as they were swarmed by countless starving children. I have to thank Andy Critz, Jimmie Hafley, and Dean Sumpter for giving me these opportunities to learn and grow, as well as make lasting connections with my peers. Those programs weren't the only ones to offer me that; just last month I went on a group trip to Japan under Vicki Davis. That was my first time abroad. These experiences are the ones that will stick with me.

I'd like to thank all the teachers who have gotten me this far, especially Kelly Brown and Jared Criswell. They wrote the letters of recommendation that helped get me into Gatton, as well as provided me with an amazing education and a sophomore year I wouldn't change. Both allowed me to pursue and explore my passions in science and English respectively. I'd also like to thank Elizabeth Miller for helping me with my applications.

The fact of the matter is that while Wayne County has offered me plenty of things, it's time that I move on. I need to find new opportunities. It's far from an insult to Wayne County that I'm leaving, it proves that someone from here, someone from anywhere, can go where they choose in life. I'll always be grateful for what I've been given here, but if I'm offered more elsewhere, I have to go. I've had all the experiences here that I needed to become a person that I'm proud to be, and that person is one of the handful from this county that have attended Gatton Academy.

All that being said, Wayne County is the home of many of my friends who have impacted me tremendously and who I will miss dearly. I can hardly make a comprehensive list of all of them, but I would like to mention Marissa Hicks, Sam Criswell, Kristina Famulyak, Zoë Blevins, Elora Garner, and Eryka Criswell as some of the people who I wouldn't have been the same without. I want all who have known me to know I will always be shaped by them.

Wayne County will always be my home. No matter where I go, I'll always be a part of Wayne County, and my success is success for us all.

Thank you,

WCHS Sophomore Sophia Beaudoin



Elora Garner thanked her teachers for helping her achieve a perfect score of 36 on the ACT. She aspires to be a paleontologist!



GEAR Up administrators shared their program