

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION MINUTES

WORK SESSION

September 25, 2023

The Caswell County Board of Education met in a work session on Monday, September 25, at 3:00 p.m. in the Administration Building of Caswell County Schools. Members present: Chairman Mel Battle, Vice Chair Vennie Beggarly, Gladys Garland, Nicole Smith, Tracy Stanley, Joel Lillard, and Trudy Blackwell. Others present include Interim Superintendent Dr. Douglas Barker. Connie Kimrey recorded the minutes. (*Note: Others may have been present but did not sign the roster or names were not legible*).

CALL TO ORDER

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Mel Battle.

AGENDA TOPICS

- Capital Outlay Budget

Dr. Barker reviewed the budget and shared information regarding budget codes as well as items the board needs to be aware of. He discussed fund balance and shared that this is something that should be used for a "one time" expense and not on a recurring basis. Other line items that are important and should be included in the budget include contingency line item and school match. He reviewed what these items are and how they have been used in the past. The board should always be aware of the budget and receive quarterly reports as well as budget amendments when money has been moved. Although the policy states the superintendent has authority to spend \$10,000; it is good business practice to continue to share budget amendments with the board as a way to keep up with funding and what has been used and appropriated.

Dr. Barker gave a short overview of the budget and budget codes as a whole to help the newest board members gain a better perspective on how to review the budget.

Budget Codes include:

- (1) = Fund 8
- (2) = Local
- (3) = Federal
- (4) = Title I
- (5) = Child Nutrition
- (6) = Scholarships
- (7) = Before and After School Care
- (8) = Restricted Funds

Dr. Barker shared that the board should feel comfortable whenever a budget is presented to ask questions and if recommendations are needed to share them with the finance officer and superintendent. Quarterly reports need to be shared in a timely manner as well so the board is abreast of the funding.

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Dr. Barker shared that he asked the finance officer along with Kim McVey to look into the lottery funding. At this time, it was found that there is \$800,000 in lottery money to be used for "repair and renovation" which has not been used. He has requested the maintenance director to prepare a listing and approximate cost of items needed for the Page Gym and the old gym and bring back to the board with a figure for the board to review.

Dr. Barker shared, in his opinion, the superintendent needs to have knowledge of the budget or the finance officer should have a good working knowledge of the budget. Dr. Barker shared the recent hire of the maintenance director was a good hire and he has been willing to learn and go the extra mile.

Dr. Barker shared that having Kim McVey assist our finance officer has been a plus as she is familiar with working with budgets in the format with line items as used here in the past. One issue with hiring new personnel has been not having a salary scale and the inconsistencies of how people have been paid with no rationale. The new salary schedule will assist with budgeting in the future.

- Accountability Data

Dr. Barker shared there are state mandates on things we have to do regarding the recent accountability data. A timeline has been shared with principals. The overall concern is how are we going to change things to get a different result and this will be reviewed with the board. By October 5th information will be required on what is required by the law and by November 5th a preliminary improvement plan as well as parent notification will be due.

- Child Nutrition / Updates

Jolandria Graves, Child Nutrition Director, shared a spreadsheet with the board on the increases in a la carte items. It was shared with Ms. Graves that the board would like to be aware of increases so when they are questioned by the public they can give better feedback.

Other concerns included the request for two hot lunches. Ms. Graves shared she was under the impression that she was to implement two hot lunches in October. It was questioned if she has the capability to do this. Ms. Graves shared staffing and equipment are concerns she will face. Dr. Barker shared that this is an example of using fund balance noting that if you are aware of a piece of equipment that needs repairing, this would be a "one time" expense. The biggest issue we face is the communication piece and this needs to be shared.

Ms. Graves was instructed to make a list yearly of what is needed for Child Nutrition.

Concerns were discussed with the two hot lunches and if it is feasible. Joel Lillard made a motion to proceed with two hot lunches. The motion died for lack of a second.

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Dr. Barker suggested that he has given direction for Ms. Graves to implement two hot lunches and at this time he would suggest moving forward as things are already in place to do this and to see how it works out. Although there are issues, we have provided two hot lunches in the past. He suggested to move forward and Ms. Graves can provide updates to see how it goes. Ms. Graves was also instructed to give a list of items that needs to be repaired to the superintendent.

- Caswell Online

Tracy Stanley shared she wanted this on the agenda just to make everyone aware of the opportunities this program provides noting students have access to foreign languages not offered at the high school, etc. It is something that parents need to be informed of. She questioned what funding is used for this.

- Legal Representation

Mel Battle shared that copies were included in the packet of request for quotes for legal services as examples of what other districts have used in the past. Discussion took place on the expense of using alternative legal resources. It was shared that Caswell has used Tharrington & Smith for certain situations. It was felt that other attorneys may cost the system over the \$50,000 which is allotted in the budget for attorney fees.

It was agreed to send out the information to receive feedback on costs.

- Superintendent Search

Information was shared with examples and timeline of what was done in the previous search in which the board conducted themselves. It was agreed that dates will be brought back to the October 9th meeting. Chair Mel Battle will get with Dr. Barker and Connie Kimrey to work on this information.

Mel Battle shared an example of the evaluation instrument was included in the packet for new board members to review. He noted this may need to be looked into with the dates and the new policy guidelines. Dr. Barker shared when using this, the focus should be on what does the board want the superintendent to improve upon and use it as a growth instrument.

- School Calendar

Discussion took place on various districts who chose to begin school early without receiving any penalties. The board would like to look at a draft calendar showing the dates to start early to assist with having exams prior to winter break.

- Clear Book Bags

Discussion took place on the need for clear book bags noting that other districts have begun implementing this. Requirements for athletes were discussed and all felt if implemented, a decision may need to be made prior to the winter break so information can be shared with students and parents.

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Concerns shared included the current bookbag procedure at NL Dillard Middle School in which students cannot take their bookbags to class. It was shared that perhaps this should be changed prior to requiring students to have clear bookbags. Other ideas shared were to have hooks installed in classrooms so students can place their bookbags on the hooks and they would not be in the floor and present a safety concern.

The board agreed to review this topic and if a decision was needed that it be made before Christmas in order to alert the public, parents, and students.

- Coaching Supplement

Mel Battle shared information from Caswell and surrounding districts which was included in the packet for board to review. He asked that Dr. Barker review and make a recommendation to look at increasing the amounts. Dr. Barker agreed that the schedule needs to be reviewed yearly as well as looking at what the state approves in funding and raises.

It was agreed for Dr. Barker to review this and bring back information to the board.

- Admission Prices

Mel Battle reviewed the information in packet regarding admission prices. He shared that the North Carolina High School Athletic Association does not dictate the pricing and other school districts have various admission pricing. Concerns shared were the cost that have went up for athletic games especially if you have a large family as well as inconsistencies (i.e., small children getting in free). This information was shared just to keep members abreast of the cost. It was noted that a season pass was offered earlier on which offered a reduced price. Dr. Barker shared that all schools would prefer to not charge admission in order to have a large crowd at the games; however, the cost of officials and the number required at games factors into the costs as well.

ADJOURN

Gladys Garland made a motion to adjourn the meeting at 6:25 p.m., Nicole Smith seconded the motion and it carried unanimously. The next regular meeting of the Board of Education will be held on October 9, 2023 at 9:00 a.m. in the Caswell County Schools Administration Building.

Mel O. Battle
Chairman

Dr. Douglas Barker
Interim Superintendent