MINUTES OF
THE WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORK SESSION
APRIL 20, 2023

The Wilson County Board of Education held a Work Session on Thursday, April 20, 2023, at 5:00 p.m. in the Administrative Office, 113 N. Tarboro Street. Chairman Dr. Christine Fitch called the meeting to order at 5:06 p.m. with the following members present:

Dr. Christine L. Fitch, Chairman
Henry E. Mercer, Vice-Chairman
Velma Barnes
Beverly Boyette
Blake Boykin
Debora Powell
Dr. Lane B. Mills, Secretary

The meeting was livestreamed through the Wilson County Schools (WCS) YouTube Channel. The public could also view the meeting through links on the WCS Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages and the WCS website.

Others present were Associate Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Wilson, Assistant Superintendent of Instructional Services Robin May, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Dr. Ben Williams, Executive Director of Maintenance Mark Letchworth, Director of Public Relations Amber Lynch, Assistant Director of Maintenance Greg Woodard, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent and Board Clerk Linda Horrison, as well as Board Attorney Katie Cornetto, Skinner Farlow Kirwan (SFK) Architects, Barnhill Contracting Company Vice President Building Division John Smith and Preconstruction Manager Joey Wilkins and *The Wilson Times* Reporter Olivia Neeley. Mr. Breen was offsite and participated in the meeting virtually by cellphone. Therefore, the method of voting used during the meeting was by roll call. There were no citizens in attendance.

After calling the meeting to order, Dr. Fitch asked for approval of the agenda. Ms. Powell made the motion, seconded by Mr. Boykin and Mr. Mercer, that the agenda for April 20, 2023, be approved. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Dr. Fitch led the Pledge of Allegiance, followed by a moment of silence.

Under Chairman's Comments, Dr. Fitch shared that the purpose of the Work Session was to continue the discussion of long-range facilities planning for WCS.

Under Long-Range Facilities Planning for WCS, Dr. Mills provided updates on the following: New Frederick Douglass Elementary School (FDES); second elementary school project; consolidation of Stantonsburg Elementary into Speight Middle for the 2024-25 school year; High School Student Assignment for 2024-25; field trip/bus tour projects; new processes with the County Manager; and next steps.

Dr. Mills shared the following information with the Board:

- New Frederick Douglass Elementary School (FDES)
    - Report from SFK was shared with the Board and the County Manager

- Discussion with the County Manager indicated that the County Commissioners will provide $27 million for the new FDES
- SFK has completed a community input event and the student input event at FDES was held today
- SFK will meet with staff on a workday at the end of the year
- SFK provided three options for program of spaces
  - Option A is the smallest school with a total gross square footage of 73,794 - North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI) recommended
  - Option B has the flexible learning commons space for grades 2 through 5 with a total gross square footage of 79,274
  - Option C has a total gross square footage of 84,097
- The Board was asked to provide SFK with direction on the three options

At 5:40 p.m., Ms. Boyette left the meeting to attend another event.

Mr. Boykin made the motion, seconded by Mr. Breen, that the Board authorize the adoption of Plan A and to move forward. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

- Addressing Elementary Utilization
  - New Elementary School on Existing Wells Elementary Site
    - A second new elementary school could involve combining Hearne Elementary and Wells Elementary into a larger school on the Wells site after the completion of the new FDES
    - The Board was asked to vote to provide direction for the Administration to begin the needed planning and for the Superintendent to formally discuss next steps with the County Manager

    Mr. Breen made the motion, seconded by Mr. Boykin, that the Board accept the Wells Elementary site for creation of the next new elementary school. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

  - Retrofit Speight Middle to a K-8 School
    - Existing bus routes can be used for the new K-8 school
    - Need to determine the start time for a K-8 School (elementary or middle schedule)
    - Could be implemented for the 2024-25 school year
    - Requires reallocation of staff and review of positions depending on current/projected openings
    - Maintenance and Administrative Staff are reviewing Speight Middle for any needed changes to the facility to meet requirements
    - The Administration will provide additional information at the next Work Session – The Board will need to vote on this scenario prior to the end of the school year in order to allow for planning, communication and delivery of changes for implementation in 2024-25

        - The Board expressed interest in continuing this discussion at the next Work Session

- Student Assignment
    - High school attendance boundaries will be addressed during the 2023-24 year in preparation for implementation during the 2024-25 school year

- Additional Field Trip/Bus Tour Items
    - Prioritized Projects:
        - High School Security Vestibules (Hunt Hunt and Fike High)
        - High School Science Labs (Beddingfield High, Hunt High and Fike High)
        - High School Auditorium Renovations (Beddingfield High, Hunt High and Fike High)
    - SFK Architecture provided a Cost Estimates Report at the last work session
    - Information has been shared with the County Manager
    - The Administration has asked SFK to revisit the initial design of the security vestibules to seek a reduction in costs while maintaining adequate security – these scenarios would have to be reviewed by NCDPI

- New Processes with the County Manager
    - Monthly meetings with the Superintendent and County Manager
    - Creation of a shared master spreadsheet for all projects involving county funding to allow for a single source of documentation
    - Expecting a draft document from the County delineating the process for capital projects
    - Expecting the County to hire a Project Engineer in the next fiscal year to provide support for district projects
    - Finance Officers have already met and will meet as needed with the Superintendent and County Manager to discuss processes and projects along with the Superintendent and County Manager

- Next Steps
    - Next Work Session – May 8, 2 p.m.
        - Tentative discussion items:
            - Decision on pursuing Stantonsburg Elementary and Speight Middle consolidation
            - Decision on the usage of the Public School Renovation Funds for the CTE Culinary Arts and Esports programs at Beddingfield High and WASH Clinic at Beddingfield
            - Need to discuss a process for prioritizing existing facility needs including athletics and painting
            - The Board was asked to share additional items as needed for the next work session

There being no further business at 6:28 p.m., Mr. Breen made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mercer, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Dr. Christine L. Fitch, Chairman

Dr. Lane B. Mills, Secretary