MINUTES OF
THE WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
WORK SESSION
MARCH 28, 2022

The Wilson County Board of Education held a Work Session on Monday, March 28, 2022, at 4:00 p.m. in the Administrative Office, 113 N. Tarboro Street. Chairman Dr. Christine Fitch called the meeting to order at 4:02 p.m. with the following members present:

Dr. Christine L. Fitch, Chairman
Henry E. Mercer, Vice Chairman
Beverly Boyette
Blake Boykin
Rhyan Breen
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 Human Resources Dr. Norris Parker, Assistant Superintendent for Administrative Services Dr. Ben Williams, Executive Director of Finance Art Stanley, 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 and *The Wilson Times* Reporter Olivia Neeley. There was one citizen in attendance.

Dr. Fitch shared that Ms. Barnes was under the weather and would not be attending the Work Session.

After calling the meeting to order, Dr. Fitch asked for approval of the agenda. Ms. Powell made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mercer and Mr. Breen, that the agenda for the Work Session of the Wilson County Board of Education for today, March 28, 2022, be approved. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

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 meeting was to discuss the proposed 2022-2023 Local Current Expense and Capital Outlay Budgets and Long-Range Facilities Planning for Wilson County Schools. She then turned the meeting over to Superintendent Mills.

Under 2022-2023 Local Current Expense and Capital Outlay Budgets, Dr. Mills advised that the proposed 2022-2023 Local Current Expense and Capital Outlay Budgets request were shared with the Board members for review. The 2022-2023 Local Current Expense Budget request is for $24,798,882 and the Capital Outlay Budget request is for $1,000,000, which is a total request of $25,798,882. Dr. Mills shared that the amount is driven by cost-of-living increases. Dr. Mills then turned the meeting over to Mr. Stanley.

Mr. Stanley walked the Board through the proposed Local Current Expense Budget document and, with the assistance of Dr. Mills, addressed questions raised by the Board members. Among the topics discussed were an increase in retirement rates, hospitalization, benefits and travel reimbursement. There was also a decrease in legal fees that resulted from the Board switching law firms recently.

Following the budget presentation, it was decided that an additional budget work session was not necessary. The final budget will be presented at the April 25 Board of Education meeting. Dr. Mills will present the final budget to the Wilson County Board of Commissioners on May 3.

Under Long-Range Facilities Planning for Wilson County Schools, the Administration shared updates and projects for facilities planning. The Board was asked to set priorities and provide direction for the Administration. Dr. Mills and Mr. Letchworth recently met with County Manager Denise Stinagle to discuss projects. The Board will now need to prioritize projects and requests as part of planning; share a rough timeline for projects; discuss how the Board would like to approach facilities planning overall; and schedule next meetings.

Dr. Mills shared the following information with the Board:

- Priorities Already Set
    - Request for Qualifications (RFQs) will be presented at the April Board meeting for renovations of auditoriums at all three high schools; addition of safety vestibules at Fike High and Hunt High; and new science labs at all three high schools.
    - The RFQ process will begin for the new track at Hunt High. This information was approved at the March Board meeting. The same scope of work as the Beddingfield High track will be used, including a concession stand and outdoor athletic bathrooms.
    - Construction of a new Frederick Douglass Elementary
    - Renovations to Barnes Elementary and Lee Woodard Elementary
    - Requests to the County Commissioners approved at the March Board meeting:
        - Outdoor athletic bathroom renovations for Fike High
        - Fieldhouse construction for Fike High and Beddingfield High
        - New outdoor athletic bathroom construction for all middle schools
        - Renovation of fieldhouse at Hunt High
        - Conversations with the County
- Priorities to Consider
    - Annual funding for athletic facilities
    - Rear driveway at New Hope Elementary
    - Request the installation of gas lines for Lucama Elementary, Rock Ridge Elementary and Springfield Middle
        - If gas lines were installed at these schools, only Fike High and Lee Woodard Elementary would be left to convert.
    - Consider the need for expansion of Rock Ridge Elementary and New Hope Elementary based on city and county growth patterns
    - Painting cycle for all schools
    - Furniture replacement schedule for all schools

- Submit information to the County Commissioners

- Moving Forward
  - The Operations Research and Education Laboratory (ORED) study indicated that Winstead Elementary could be consolidated with Vinson-Bynum Elementary and a few planning areas could be assigned to Hearne Elementary.
  - Daniels Learning Center could be reassigned to the most recent addition to Winstead Elementary (1988) and the current Daniels Learning Center could be closed.
    - The district would need a commitment from the County Commissioners for funding for demolition of the two-story section of Winstead Elementary.
  - Toisnot Middle can serve as the interim location for Frederick Douglass Elementary and future school construction – the district will need to reassign students and staff to Darden, Elm City and Forest Hills middle schools.
  - If the Board acted upon the school usage possibilities:
    - Toisnot Middle would be closed/subsumed
    - Daniels Learning Center would be closed
    - Winstead Elementary would be closed/subsumed
  - Based on the ORED report, these changes would not address all of the capacity and efficiency issues at the elementary level.
  - Additional decisions are needed to address the Commissioners' support for constructing a new school.
    - The Board would need to consolidate another elementary school(s).
    - The Board would need to determine a location for the new school.
  - The Administration needs direction and a timeline from the Board regarding next steps to address these issues.
- Rough Timeline:
  - A plan is needed for the new elementary school construction (including a general idea of an area) and priorities by the May 3 budget meeting with the County Commissioners.
    - Finalize the location and secure land for the new elementary school – Fall 2022.
    - Begin the process of RFQs for architects, funding and design/bids during the Spring of 2023.
  - Create a calendar for on-going facility planning and a process for selecting priorities.
  - The district is expecting a decision in April or May from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction on the Needs-Based Public School Capital Fund Gram application that was submitted for Frederick Douglass Elementary.
  - If WCS is not selected for the Needs-Based funding, the County will seek funding from the Local Government Commission (LGC).
  - RFQs for architects - WCS and the County would need to secure funding.
  - Six months to do designs and bids
  - Transition Frederick Douglass Elementary to Toisnot Middle and Toisnot (staff and students) reassigned to Darden, Elm City and Forest Hills middle schools at the start of the 2023-2024 school year

- Decision regarding assignments must be completed in the Spring of 2023
- Movement of furniture and equipment from Toisnot Middle and Frederick Douglass Elementary needs to be completed the first part of Summer 2023
    - Double move – cannot be done over the holiday break
- Bus routes, School Nutrition, etc. all have to be completed over the summer

The Board discussed the priorities and asked the Administration to focus on the gas lines being installed at Lucama Elementary, Rock Ridge Elementary and Springfield Middle (1st priority); and the rear driveway at New Hope Elementary and expansion (2nd priority). The Board asked the Administration to present the painting cycle and furniture replacements schedule for all schools at a future meeting. Their least priority was new outdoor athletic bathroom construction for all middle schools. The Board also asked the Administration to contact ORED or another company to assist the district in finding locations for a new elementary school. In the future the Board will need to discuss the reassignment of students at Toisnot Middle.

There being no further business at 5:43 p.m., Mr. Breen made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mercer, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 7-0.

Christine L. Fitch

Dr. Christine L. Fitch, Chairman

Lane B Mills

Dr. Lane B. Mills, Secretary