

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, November 8, 2022 at Maury River Middle School.

Present: Chairman Wendy Lovell; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Catie Brown, Kathy Burant, and Neil Whitmore; Superintendent Phillip Thompson, Clerk Rhonda Humphries.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lovell called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

STUDENT / STAFF RECOGNITION:

Ms. Lauren Fauber, Principal, Fairfield Elementary School, provided information about an ongoing recycling project the fourth and fifth grade students are currently participating in. She stated that Project Based Learning (PBL) is effective because it tasks students to solve real world problems and provides an authentic learning opportunity. She explained that the current PBL project has a two-fold purpose with the first being that students are figuring out ways they can positively impact their community and local environment through recycling. Fourth and fifth grade students currently circulate through the building on Thursday afternoons and collect paper from all of the classrooms. North Rockbridge Women’s Club also assists by taking the paper to the recycling center. The fourth and fifth grade students are learning how these practices can extend to plastics and are looking for ways to recycle plastic around the school. The students are looking for ways to encourage the student body to use reusable water bottles instead of single use plastic. The second purpose of the PBL project is that the fourth and fifth grade students have noticed that it is very difficult to fill up their reusable water bottles instead of single use plastic. Fifteen fourth and fifth grade students read letters they had written to the Rockbridge County School Board, in which they asked for a water bottle filling station, which could be a solution. Some of the common problems mentioned that when filling their reusable water bottles at the water fountain, it makes a mess in the floor, or that water runs back out of student water bottles when filling, or that other students put their mouth on the water fountain. The students who read their letters to the School Board were: Ben Brown, Olivia Gaydos, Alejandra Guashpa, Jaelyn Hite, Adam Marshall, Aubree McCormick, Corben McCown, Abby Mullen, Zoe Nuckols, Amelia Olewine, Levi Poulin, Lea Thompson, Jase Wimer, Logan Wood, and Emily Woodford. A video of the students demonstrating the problem issues was also shared.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Burant, the board approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) October 11, 2022 [Regular Meeting]; 2) October 19, 2022 [Discipline Committee Hearing]; 3) October 20, 2022 [Joint Meeting with Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors]
- Field Trip and Bus Use Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Applications for Use of Facilities
- Appointments and Resignations

Appointments

Support Staff

Carolyn Ramsey, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School,
effective November 14, 2022

Ashley Waterman, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School,
effective December 5, 2022

Abreena Burchfield, Benefits Specialists, Central Office, effective December 5, 2022

Substitute Teachers

Ronella Daniel

Natalaie Fleshman

Jessica Goodbar

Diana Hatcher

Nathan Railsback

Johnna Riley

Brianna Rogstad

Substitute Teachers (continued)

Cynthia Sparks
 Pamela Steimel
 Bradford Stephenson
 Thomas Taylor
 Chelsea Wade
 James Williams

Substitute Nurses

Melissa Bennington
 Amanda Henry

Substitute Food Service Workers

Stephanie Stemmer
 Dawn Clark

Car Driver

Josh Powell

Support Staff**Resignation**

Stephanie Thomas, Teacher Assistant, Maury River Middle School resigning effective November 22, 2022

Support Staff**Retirement**

Lisa Zitmore, Secretary, Rockbridge County High School, retiring effective June 1, 2023

- **Business Items**

- Approved the Treasurer of Rockbridge County to pay debt service in the amount of \$554,375.00
- Approved appropriations to Fund 50 for new grants in the amount of \$275,251.00
- Approved appropriations to Fund 56 in the amount of \$23,000.00.
- Approved appropriations to Fund 50 for carryover grants in the amount of \$2,795,645.21.
- Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$3,356,146.70.

- Religious Exemption Requests

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BUDGET PLANNING: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Trustee Burant provided a report on the Floyd S. Kay Renovation Advisory Committee. She stated that architects and designers from Spectrum Design met with CTE teachers, Paige Owens, Randy Walters, and other division administrators on October 27, 2022. She stated that Spectrum Design brought enlarged original and updated plans for teachers to review and presented the new individual room configurations for close-up examination and to make any changes or to write down new ideas. The CTE teachers made recommendations such as how to improve the flow, configuration, lighting, electrical outlet and cord locations, storage and classroom needs, air handling and ventilation, and desired furniture and equipment. She stated that Spectrum Design is working to ensure better accessibility to the outdoors, creating space for clients to access student services available to the public, soundproofing of walls, the need for consideration of green space, the best use of square footage determined for storage and accessibility to materials, high visibility and flexible spaces, and the best angles configured for car lifts and bays, equipment and lockers. She expressed her sentiment that the renovated office space leading into the building should reflect information about F.S. Kay, the man for whom the building was named. She expressed her sentiment that this is a first class renovation for which our community can be very proud.

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:

Mr. Paige Owens, Director of Technology and Career and Technical Education, stated the Virginia Department of Education made the CTE Work-based Learning program a priority several years ago. Rockbridge County Public Schools began focus last year with the beginning of a part-time position, filled with a staff member while also teaching full-time. Ms. Robyn Sherman is working full-time this year as the Work Based Learning Coordinator for Rockbridge County Public Schools.

Ms. Sherman provided the following highlights of the CTE High Quality Work-based Learning Programs: Supervised Agricultural Experience, Service Learning, School-Based Enterprise, Externship, Cooperative Education, Clinical Experience, Internships, and Business Partners for High Quality Work-Based Learning.

Mr. Owens stated that it is the hope to grow all enrollment numbers as the program flourishes.

- Chairman Lovell expressed her appreciation to Ms. Sherman for her role working part-time last year and now being full-time in this position.
- Trustee Whitmore inquired how many students currently participate in the program.
 - Mr. Owens stated that there are currently 300 or more students participating in the program.
- Trustee Berkstresser inquired if businesses contacted Rockbridge County Public Schools to participate or did RCPS have to make contact with invitation to participate.
 - Ms. Sherman stated that it was a combination of both types of communication.
- Chairman Lovell inquired if there is an assessment piece in place for the CTE program students Ms. Sherman stated that CTE teachers do follow-ups with CTE program completers.
- Chairman Lovell suggested that a presentation be given to the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors so they may see the benefits of the program and effects on the economic value and business partnerships within Rockbridge County.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer, provided information on a one-year renewal of the lease for Rockbridge Church for the use of Maury River Middle School. The contract is set to expire on December 31, 2022. This will be presented as an Action Item at the December meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board, with no changes to the contract.

Mr. Timothy Martino, Assistant Superintendent, provided information on VSBA Policy Manual revisions to File IIA / Instructional Materials; and File IIAB / Supplementary Materials Selection and Adoption. This will be presented as an Action Item at the December meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board.

ACTION ITEMS: None

NEW BUSINESS:

Superintendent Thompson shared that Dr. Alice Waddell, a long-time educator from Rockbridge County, passed away today. He shared the following tribute to her memory:

"For those of you who do not know Dr. Waddell, she began her teaching career in Rockbridge County Public Schools in 1973. For many years, she was a classroom teacher (primarily eighth grade Civics) at Brownsburg Intermediate, and later called Brownsburg Middle School, and also at Highland Belle Middle school. She eventually felt a calling to enter into the world of administration and served for many years as the Principal at Central Elementary School, and later as Principal at Natural Bridge Elementary School.

In 2001, Alice moved to the central office in the capacity of our Grants Administrator. She worked at the central office until her retirement and continued to assist our office in grant writing up until recently when she began her battle with cancer.

Alice absolutely loved teaching and in 2004, she began teaching graduate and undergraduate courses in the College of Education at Mary Baldwin University. She mentored and supervised countless numbers of student-teachers and helped them carve their own path into classrooms all across the Shenandoah Valley, and beyond.

On a personal note, Alice made a tremendously positive impact on me at the age of 14 when I had the privilege of being in her classroom back at Brownsburg Middle School. Ms. Waddell (as we called her then) was always so inspirational and encouraged all of us students to never doubt our abilities. Most importantly, she helped us believe that even kids from a small community could make a difference in this world. And, there are an awfully lot of educators in this room now and all up and down the valley who have proven her to be correct.

I know Alice loved Pawley's Island, SC, and she loved the beach. She went every time she got a chance. She also loved whenever she had the opportunity to read a great book. My prayer for her is that right now she is sitting on that beach in heaven with the sun on her face as she settles into that next great read. For all of her service to children and educators her entire adult life, she deserves no less. Thank you, Alice."

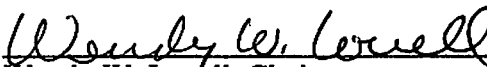
SCHOOL BOARD

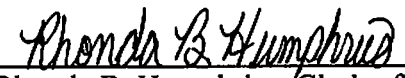
There will be a special called meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board for a Budget Work Session on Thursday, November 10, 2022 / 4:30 PM / Location: Rockbridge County School Board Office, 2893 Collierstown Road, Lexington, VA.

The next regular meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be on Tuesday, December 13, 2022 / 5:30 PM / Location: County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, VA.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:26 p.m.


Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman


Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board

The Rockbridge County School Board held a special meeting on Thursday, November 10, 2022. The meeting was held at the Rockbridge County School Board Office.

Present: Chairman Wendy Lovell; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Catie Brown, Kathy Burant, Neil Whitmore; Superintendent Phillip Thompson and Clerk Rhonda Humphries.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lovell called the meeting to order at 4:32 p.m.

BUDGET WORK SESSION

Superintendent Thompson stated

This is the first budget work session for the new biennium. His goals for this meeting were:

- *To bring the board up to speed with the available information concerning the FY23 budget process;*
- *To leave this meeting with priorities of the Rockbridge County School Board members would like to have set as priorities for FY24.*

Mr. Jason Kirby, Chief Business Officer, provided an overview of the budget preparation for Fiscal Year 2023-2024. The following are presentation highlights:

RCPS School Board Mission, Vision, and Goals

RCPS Local Composite Index (LCI)

The state determined Rockbridge County to have a higher ability to pay for education when compared to the last biennium. The current LCI is .4506, with .4530 for the years 2022-2024, which equates to a lesser percentage of state funding for RCPS over the next two fiscal years. The Rockbridge County School Board continues to advocate with our representatives in the General Assembly in hopes they would support revisiting how the LCI is calculated to ensure a more fair distribution of state funds to areas of true high need such as Rockbridge County.

- Chairman Lovell expressed her sentiment that the issue is not with our local politicians but it is at the state level.

RCPS Average Daily Members (ADM)

The RCPS FY23 budget is based on a state projected ADM of 2298. As of now, RCPS projected ADM is 2260, a difference of 38 fewer students. If there is no Hold Harmless, there may be a potential loss of \$227,608. The state projected ADM for FY24 is 2287, a difference of 12 fewer students. RCPS will be using this ADM count for budget preparation purposes for FY24. This low ADM count is out of the norm when compared to the last decade and can be attributed to COVID, mask mandates, other issues, and large graduating classes in recent years. Mr. Kirby stated that we do need to begin adjusting for these lower ADM numbers planning accordingly.

Mr. Kirby stated that when budgeting for FY24 and using an ADM of 2287, the estimated increase in state funding revenues will be approximately \$810,877 more than FY23 state revenues. A \$1,023,967 compensation supplement must be used to give staff a five percent pay increase. We must give at least 3% to get any proration of this money.

- Chairman Lovell inquired about the 50 non-compliant students related to home instruction.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that most of our home instruction families do a wonderful job providing a meaningful education for their children and follow the proper legal procedures well but there are many who do not. There are families who provide home instruction because they want something other than a traditional school setting. There is a required annual evaluation component, which is to be provided to his office, but there are many at this point who are legally non-compliant. His office follows-up with letters containing directives with deadlines and then with a visit by the School Resource Officer.
 - Chairman Lovell stated that she realizes that this is only part of the story and is concerned that there are children who are not receiving an education. She feels that the Board of Supervisors need to understand the resulting potential future tax burden.
 - Superintendent Thompson stated that the burden falls primarily on his office to monitor the home instruction students. The Virginia Code has requirements and provides options for parents to provide year-end evidence of achievement. There are some home instruction parents who seem to believe that they have the right to do what they want in regards to home instruction, but there are requirement directives from the Code of Virginia, as well as the Virginia Department of Education. Parents and guardians are given the deadlines upon approval of the application to homeschool and several reminder letters are also sent.