

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, June 14, 2022.
The meeting was held at Maury River Middle School.

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

CALL TO ORDER

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

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

RECOGNITION / SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Moment of Recognition for 2022 Retirees

2021 (Summer/Fall)

Curtis Austin, Lindley Newcomer, Tammy Shomo, Linda Weeks

2022

David Alexander, Alecia Armentrout, Gail Clark, Tonya Fontenot, Barbara Harris, Ellen Hotchkiss, Patricia Jennings, Bernie Kirby, Paula Lilly, Pam Lotts, Kimberly Loy, Jeffrey Mason, Drusilla Milford, Lewis Moore, Sally Moore, Tammy Nicely, Daniel Pruett, Sabra Richards, Earnestine Runkle, Bonnie Snyder, Cindy Snyder, Donna Straub, Billy Thomas, Laura Thomas, Sandra Thompson, Rebecca Traylor, Christine Wood

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board voted 5-0, the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) May 10, 2022 [Regular Meeting]
- Field Trip / Bus Use Requests
- Fundraising Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- Appointments and Resignations

APPOINTMENTS

Professional Staff

Erin Poulin, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Audrey Nester, Teacher, Natural Bridge Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Jacob Wheeler, Teacher, Fairfield Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Haileigh Clark, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Stephanie Tyree, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Stephanie McRae, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Ashley Rhodenizer, Director of Special Education, Division, effective July 1, 2022
Daniel Fallen, Assistant Principal, Rockbridge County High School, effective July 1, 2022
Shawna Fridley, Teacher, Central Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Krista McDaniel, Teacher, Natural Bridge Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Jennifer Nelson, Teacher, Natural Bridge Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year

Appointments

Support Staff

Tracy Shafer, School Secretary, Maury River Middle School, effective June 1, 2022
Jessica Irvine, Custodian, Maury River Middle School, effective July 1, 2022
Ann Schrader, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Emily Clements, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year
Toni Ball, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School, 2022 – 2023 school year

Coaches 2022-23

Mike Wood, Head Wrestling Coach, Rockbridge County High School
Kassidy Beagan, Head Volleyball Coach, Rockbridge County High School

Resignations

Professional Staff

Allisand Axline, Teacher, Central Elementary School, resigning end of 2021 – 2022 school year
Andrea Kelly, Teacher, Central Elementary School, resigning end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Resignations – (continued)

Professional Staff

Julie Sobutka, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, resigning end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Brian Dietz, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, resigning end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Amy Henson, Teacher, Central Elementary School, resigning end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Katherine Quigley, Teacher, Maury River Middle School, resigning end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Resignations

Support Staff

Virginia Hilliard, Teacher Assistant, Rockbridge County High School, resigning end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Emma Kirk, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School, resigning end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

- **Business Items**
 - Approved debt service payment due July 1, 2022 to US Bank for Rockbridge County Public School lease for Energy Performance Contract at Rockbridge County High School in the amount of \$422,502.86.
 - Approved debt service payment due July 15, 2022 to US Bank for Rockbridge County Public School VPSA bonds in the amount of \$2,385,935.30.
 - Approved appropriation to Fund 50 in the amount of \$87,195.00.
 - Approved new grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$2,213.00.
 - Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$3,384,186.79

Superintendent Thompson stated with the approval of the consent agenda, Ms. Ashley Rhodenizer is the new Director of Special Education effective July 1, 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

BUDGET PLANNING: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Trustee Burant provided an update on the FSK building renovation. The first meeting took place on June 1, 2022 at Maury River Middle School. Discussions involved the renovations of the FSK building, and how programs have progressed over time. They also talked about other improvements such as outdoor learning spaces, signage, displays, and location of certain programs to maximize their impact. They are considering taking field trips to other schools for design ideas. The next step will be for the design team to meet with teachers in order to understand their program needs and the next meeting is in July.

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:

Dr. Mike Craft, Principal, Rockbridge County High School, and Mr. Bobby Hinkle, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, provided an update on the Alternative Placement Program for Rockbridge County High School. Dr. Craft stated that this program has already met with success and it has the potential to benefit many of our students. COVID has shown that we need to individualize instruction for some of our students in order for them to be successful. The program focuses on three types of students: students with challenging behaviors meaning the classroom serves as an alternative-to-suspension, students lacking success in a traditional environment, and students who need social and emotional support. These students are selected by the administration although anyone can refer students. Three different rooms with capacity of 12 or fewer students will be used. One room is for social and emotional needs and the other two rooms will support students and their needs. Some students will not remain in this alternative program all day, as they may go out and for their elective classes. Some students will come in and out of these rooms as needed. This allows for support to students in subjects, as they need it. Students can exit the program, as they are ready, such as students with social and emotional difficulties. Students exiting the program will create space for other students in need. The goal is small group instruction that focuses on individual needs. It will also allow for focus on credit recovery to accelerate their

progress so students can catch them up quicker so they do not give up. We want to partner with community organizations to provide character and social skills as well as expose them to different career pathways. We want to increase the graduation rate and decrease the drop-out rate. Mr. Hinkle then shared a couple of success stories with the Board.

- Trustee Whitmore asked how many teachers were involved in the program.
 - Mr. Hinkle stated that he currently is the only one. The hope is that next year there will be three classrooms with three instructors, which will allow to serve more students.
- Trustee Burant stated that it was a Zen like atmosphere in Mr. Hinkle's classroom. She thanked Mr. Hinkle for making those students feel welcome and comfortable.

INFORMATIONAL ITEM:

Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer, provided an update on school safety. School harm is often stopped by someone speaking up and we have to constantly remind everyone to speak up and report any suspicious activity. Every school has a threat assessment team. This team is a set of officials who meet to identify potential threats to our school safety. Many of our school safety improvements come from the results of those meetings. The following is a list of improvements and updates that have been done for each school:

Rockbridge County High School:

Updated security camera system; Electronic buzz in system installed; installation of interior set of safety doors; installation of entry way into the library, security doors installed; installation of electronic gate to secure outside Vo Tech area; installation of a new store front entryway to Vo Tech; installation of safety film on entrance doors and windows; interior door replacement; and window replacement.

RGHS students took the Virginia School Safety survey this past May and reported:

- I feel safe traveling to and from school: 92.2%
- I feel safe outside on the grounds of the school: 90.3%
- I feel safe in the hallways and bathrooms of the school: 70.5%
- I feel safe in my classes: 86.2%

Maury River Middle School:

Installation of safety film on entrance doors and windows; installation of additional fencing along perimeter; and purchased additional hand held radios for teachers to use when classes are outside and for use during emergency training exercises.

Fairfield Elementary School:

Purchased additional hand held radios for teachers to use when classes are outside and for use during emergency training exercises; installation of new intercom system; entire school received new door locks and key system; installation of electronic buzz in system; installation of safety film on entrance doors and windows; playground safety assessment completed and improvements made; and installation of security cameras for interior of building.

Mountain View Elementary School:

Installation of safety film on entrance doors and windows; purchased additional hand held radios for teachers to use when classes are outside and for use during emergency training exercises; installation of electronic buzz in system; installed additional security cameras for interior of building; and playground safety assessment completed and improvements are in progress.

Central Elementary School:

Purchased additional hand held radios for teachers to use when classes are outside and for use during emergency training exercises; installation of new intercom system; installation of electronic buzz in system; and installation of safety film on entrance doors and windows.

Natural Bridge Elementary School:

Purchased additional hand held radios for teachers to use when classes are outside and for use during emergency training exercises; installation of new intercom system; installation of electronic buzz in system; new key system giving teachers one key to access the building and classrooms; relocated playground to a location close to the building; installed additional security cameras; and installation of safety film on entrance doors and windows.

Division Level:

Installation of a division wide phone system in progress; all faculty and staff members have received ALICE training; purchased hand-held metal detector wands for each school; division is working to implement InForce911 instant alert app; conversion to digital radio system giving all administrators direct access to the 911 center and all emergency response personnel; division level threat assessment training; Safety Assessment conducted by *Armor-One* security firm; all schools conduct a school safety assessment annually; extensive school safety audit conducted every three years; School Climate Surveys conducted for DCJS Emergency Management; division level administrators participate in monthly meeting with Rockbridge County Emergency Management Personnel; required drills conducted each year; all schools annually review school crisis plans; and MOU with Rockbridge County Sheriff's Office for 3 school resource officers.

Transportation/School Bus:

All bus drivers trained by *Armor-One* trainers on intruder response driving tactics (March 2019); reliable Fleet; back-up cameras on every bus; at least 4 cameras per bus; Digital Radio System; Synovia Solutions (GPS) Tracking Software; and required Evacuation Drills – twice a year.

The Rockbridge County Public School division also receives security grants to purchase equipment. Below is the information regarding the process:

- School divisions may apply for up to \$250,000 per year
- Requires a local match of 25%
- Applications due Aug. 1 each year
- Awards are announced sometime in December each year
- Qualifying list of equipment
- Past Awards
 - 2021: \$164,000
 - 2020: \$143,000
 - 2019: \$92,000
 - 2018: \$56,075

Mr. Walters stated that we are always planning and looking for ways to improve our school safety measures including:

- Continuously seeking new safety equipment or strategies to improve school safety
- Annually review and update crisis plans for each school
- Annually Conduct a thorough school safety audit with each building principal, law enforcement representatives, and members of emergency management
- Meet with local law enforcement officials to continue collaborate
- Meet with Emergency Management Personnel
- Installation of equipment/software to allow remote access to camera system for emergency personnel and first responders
- Installation of vape detectors at the middle school and high school
- Digital Mapping of all schools for emergency personnel

Mr. Walters also stated that due to the sometimes confidential nature of trying to keep students and staff safe, Rockbridge County Public Schools administration does not publicly publish all efforts in this area.

Dr. Thompson stated that it is important that our community understands what Rockbridge County Public Schools has done. We know that there are areas in which we need to improve and having that digital radio system is key because it has been expanded to the point that it has increased our capacity to communicate. Dr. Thompson commended Mr. Walters on his hard work and Mrs. Hinty for her work on getting grants so we can continue to purchase and provide safety materials to protect our children and staff. We are not resting, as we know that we have more to do but we wanted to provide you an update with what we have done so far.

- Chairman Lovell stated that she has served on the board since 2016 and she commended the excellent collaboration that happens between Rockbridge County Public Schools and the Rockbridge County Sheriff's Office. There is a lot that is not seen and there is a lot that happens to get funding and work behind the scenes to make sure our schools are safe. She emphasized that it takes all of us to maintain school safety.
- Trustee Whitmore inquired as to when *ArmorOne* rated our schools, how do we know what we need to do.
 - Mr. Walters stated that they do not give a rating but a general report with suggestions to improve the safety in our schools.

- Trustee Burant expressed her appreciation for the idea of rekeying in respects to thinking about the fumbling of the keys that happened in Texas. She also inquired what Inforce 911 app is.
 - o Mr. Randy Walters explained that Enforce 911 is an app that can be downloaded to every machine that we have in our division. With the push of a button, teachers and administrators can report an incident and it goes to our RCSO.

ACTION ITEM:

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Whitmore, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, the board voted 5-0, to approve for the school division to apply for individual and consolidated state and federal entitlement grants.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board voted 5-0, to approve the Title I Parent and Family Engagement Plan as presented.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Burant, the board voted 5-0, to approve Heritage Hall Emergency Evacuation Shelter Agreement for five years, through June 30, 2027.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, the board passed by a 5-0 roll call vote, the Board unanimously approved the Virginia Public School Educational Foundation Notes and Resolution.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board voted 5-0, to approve the Updated FY23 Line Item Budget in the amount of \$34,754,467.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, the board voted 5-0, to forgo July Regular School Board Meeting.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Whitmore, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, the board voted 5-0, to approve the Superintendent/Designee to process July 2022 financials, accounts payable, payroll, fund appropriations, and fund transfers as necessary for the month of July 2022. A final report summarizing these actions will be distributed during the month of August 2022. All transactions will require signatures of two of the following staff positions: Superintendent, Assistant Superintendent, Chief Business Officer, Chief Operations Officer, or Director of Financial Services.

NEW BUSINESS:

Trustee Burant stated that she would like to offer a memoriam for two educators we have lost over the last month: Mr. Chuck Koch, Technology Education teacher at RCHS and Mr. Warren Schmid, Volunteer RCHS baseball coach and substitute teacher and administrator. On behalf of the Rockbridge County School Board, she expressed their deepest condolences and love to their families, students, and friends.

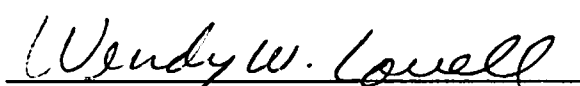
SCHOOL BOARD:

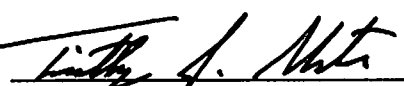
There will be a joint meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board and the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors on Tuesday, June 21, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. for the purpose of discussion. The meeting will be held at Maury River Middle School, 600 Waddell Street, Lexington, Virginia.

The next regular monthly meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, August 9, 2022 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at County of Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:36 p.m.


Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman


Timothy J. Martino, Deputy Clerk of the Board