

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, February 11, 2020 at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Lovell called the meeting to order at 4:54 p.m.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

RECOGNITION / SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

- School Board Appreciation Month: February 2020
- School Board Clerk Appreciation 2020

PUBLIC COMMENT: None

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes: 1) January 14, 2020 [Regular Meeting]; 2) January 21, 2020 [Special Meeting]; 3) January 23, 2020 [Special Meeting]
- Field Trip and Bus Use Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- Enrollment Update

• **Appointments and Resignations**

Appointments

Food Service Substitute

Julia Bane, Food Service Substitute, effective February 12, 2020

Spring Coaches

Rockbridge County High School

Baseball

Travis Roadcap	Head Varsity Coach
Nick Perlozzo	Assistant Varsity Coach
Andy Coffey	J V Baseball Coach
Stuart Rogers	Volunteer Coach
Mat Rapoza	Volunteer Coach

Softball

Keston Pelter	Head Varsity Coach
Cari Floyd	Assistant Varsity Coach
Hannah McDaniel	JV Softball Coach

Boys' Soccer

Scott Youngdahl	Head Varsity Coach
Paul Gregory	JV Coach
Josh Elrod	Volunteer Coach
Jim Kahn	Volunteer Coach

Girls' Soccer

Sean Harrington	Head Varsity Coach
Elena Correa	JV Coach
Dirk Van Assendelft	Volunteer Coach
Karon Harrington	Volunteer Coach

Boys' Lacrosse

Robert Hull	Head Coach
Ryan Larsen	Assistant Coach
Sean Capps	Volunteer Coach

Girls' Lacrosse

Susan Nye	Head Coach
Rebecca Stratton	Assistant Coach
Sammy Moore	Volunteer Coach
Erica Semler	Volunteer Coach
Jim Coleman	Volunteer Coach
Amanda Green	Volunteer Coach
Callie Bonnel	Volunteer Coach

Boys' Tennis

Holton Branham	Head Coach
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Girls' Tennis

Mallory Bane	Head Coach
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Outdoor Track

Jennifer Showalter	Head Coach
Julie Tisone	Assistant Coach
Gloria Brown	Volunteer Coach
Mike Brown	Volunteer Coach

Maury River Middle School**Outdoor Track**

Tasha Polly	Head Coach
Johnathan Williams	Assistant Coach

Resignations**Professional Staff**

Alexis Cervenka, School Psychologist, Central Office, resigning effective April 30, 2020
Kilee Covert, Instructional Technology Resource Teacher, Elementary, resigning end of 2019-2020 school year

Retirement**Professional Staff**

Sherry Wilhelm, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, retiring end of 2019-2020 school year

Retirement**Support Staff**

Marilyn Woody, Teacher Assistant, Maury River Middle School, retiring end of 2019-2020 school year

- **Business Items**

- Approval for new grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$150,372.00.
- Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$2,766,473.76

BUDGET PLANNING:

Dr. Thompson stated that there has been good news regarding the health insurance rates. The Senate and the House have not yet completed their version of the budget.

- Chairman Lovell expressed her appreciation to Mr. Chris Gallagher for his comments during the Public Hearing regarding the success of the health care options that were offered for the 2019-2020 school year. She expressed, on behalf of the board, appreciation to employees for making it successful. She recognized that it was a change for some employees, noting that it takes a partnership between employees and the school division to make choices.

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None**INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT:**

Ms. Tracy Hinty, Supervisor for Federal Programs, provided an overview of the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI). She stated that the purpose of the Virginia Preschool Initiative is to reduce disparities among young children upon formal school entry and to reduce or eliminate

those risk factors that lead to early academic failure. There are currently two classrooms. One classroom is located at Fairfield Elementary School (which serves the Fairfield Elementary School, Central Elementary School, and Mountain View Elementary School attendance area) and a classroom located at Natural Bridge Elementary School (which serve that attendance area); eighteen students in each class. There is one licensed teacher and one paraprofessional per class. Rockridge County has a Family Service Specialist who has worked with the program for nineteen years.

Ms. Hinty provided the following highlights of the program: full-day classes for four year old children; transportation is provided; highly-qualified and licensed teachers; research-based curriculum with emphasis on facilitating language development, social skills, problem-solving skills, and physical development; literacy, math science, social studies, art, music and physical activities incorporated into all aspects of the daily routine; breakfast, lunch, and snack is available.

Ms. Hinty stated that eligibility criteria dictates that VPI students must be from a family that meets the following requirements: family income at or below 200% of poverty; homelessness; student's parents or guardians are school dropouts; family income is less than 350% of federal poverty guidelines in the case of students with special needs or disabilities; student must be 4 by September 30 of that school year. The enrollment process begins in early winter for the upcoming year.

Ms. Hinty stated that to obtain state funding, localities must develop a written local plan for programs that include a provision for a quality preschool education, health services, family engagement, facilitation of comprehensive services including health, mental health and nutrition, and a plan for transportation. The VPI program is required to contract with Headstart and partners on collaboration, eligibility, and transition into kindergarten. VPI also assists with the rental of the facility, transportation, meals and snacks. The Head Start Program is located at Fairfield Elementary School.

Ms. Hinty stated that CLASS® observations are utilized and provide essential feedback about the quality of teacher and child interactions (learning environment) in the classroom. This includes external observations and local observations to be conducted every two years, which will result in written feedback to be shared with teachers.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that there is an early childhood education push from Governor Northam tied to more pre-k student slots. The benefit to the initiative is that it assists in getting students ready for K-12. The downside to the initiative is that there are restraints attached to the budget in how funds are to be used.
- Trustee Burant stated that she was pleased with the community involvement and inquired if teachers are also familiar with the CLASS® observations expectations. She also inquired if it is hard to get to parents and how do parents who need help find the program.
 - Ms. Hinty responded that videos are available for teachers to watch which enable them to also learn new ideas to apply in their instruction. She also stated that the program does have a history in the community, which results in families who need help reaching out.
- Trustee Whitmore inquired if there are issues in filling the 36 slots.
 - Ms. Hinty stated that there is a waiting list for those students who meet the eligibility criteria, noting that students do move during the school year.
- Chairman Lovell stated that the Governor's budget includes funding for Early Childhood Pre-K Program childhood for next year and inquired if Ms. Hinty is developing a plan and expressed her sentiments that it is a much-needed resource.
 - Ms. Hinty stated that she and Dr. Thompson have begun discussions on what the new plan may look like and must make a decision by May 15, 2020.

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. Rick Lollis, Athletic Director, Rockbridge County High School and Maury River Middle School, provided information on Rockbridge County High School Athletics, which included the following current spring sports lineup:

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Varsity</u>	<u>Junior Varsity</u>
Baseball	Yes	Yes
Softball	Yes	Yes
Tennis (G)	Yes	No (9-12)
Tennis (B)	Yes	No (9-12)
Soccer (G)	Yes	Yes
Soccer (B)	Yes	Yes

<u>Sport</u>	<u>Varsity</u>	<u>Junior Varsity (continued)</u>
Outdoor Track (G)	Yes	No (9-12)
Outdoor Track (B)	Yes	No (9-12)
Lacrosse (G)	Yes	Yes
Lacrosse (B)	Yes	No

Mr. Lollis also provided information on the teams scheduled to play Rockbridge County High School, lacrosse ticket sales and expenses, revenue from tickets, estimated expenses, additional lacrosse expenses, participation (2018-2019), 2019-2020 lacrosse schedules, additional stadium field games, additional cost information.

Mr. Lollis stated that he must submit team information to VHSL in July and a decision about additional teams would have to be made by that time. He stated that one issue is that there may not be enough interested students to start a new team.

Mr. Lollis provided the following information regarding the scheduling of additional events:

- Stadium and practice fields never get enough downtime to recover (1/2 November, December, January, February are affected by cold temperatures) (June, July are affected by extreme hot weather and the lack of water).
- The fields are constantly being repaired during the season.
- RCHS cannot provide enough practice facilities and teams are transported after school to practice locations, often sharing any ground available.
- RCHS has to work gym availability on days that practice fields are not available due to inclement weather, which is on a rotation basis. Some days teams have to cancel due to no practice facility.
- Having JV sports requires an earlier start time i.e. 4:30 PM, which takes time away from track practice. It also requires early release for Rockbridge County High School, Maury River Middle School, and Lylburn Down Middle School students and class time is lost.

Mr. Lollis offered the following alternative suggestions for grade 8 participants:

- Addition of middle school football, soccer, lacrosse. Many of these students are not physically capable of playing at the high school level and need additional experience and training at the middle school level. Do not keep kids just to fill numbers; this is unfair to the students. This is a common practice with some coaches.
- Having grades 9-12 participating in RCHS sports. If there are enough participants, a JV program could then be formed.

Chairman Lovell inquired as to what Mr. Lollis sees as the biggest problem of having a JV Boys Lacrosse Team, noting that interest is not far from soccer participation. She expressed her concern that if there is not a JV team, where do they develop the skill.

- Mr. Lollis expressed his sentiment that in grades 9-12 there are not enough interested students and that he has hopes that students will develop interest at middle school. He also noted that scheduling of games during the week is a large obstacle.

Chairman Lovell stated that she understands that the fundraising efforts by the coach and students have been successful.

- Mr. Lollis confirmed that the fundraising has been very successful and has allowed for the purchase of extra items.

Trustee Hostetter inquired if it is the scheduling or field maintenance that causes the largest issue.

- Mr. Lollis replied that both are an issue.

Chairman Lovell stated that there appears to be an increase in number of boys interested and that lacrosse is growing.

- Mr. Lollis replied that the number remain steady in interest.

Trustee Burant inquired if there are any expenses that students can incur.

- Mr. Lollis replied that the goal has been for a student not to have to buy equipment in order to play, at the directive of Superintendent Thompson.

Trustee Hostetter requested that the board receive information to reflect what the additional expenses would be to have a JV Boys Lacrosse team.

Trustee Berkstresser inquired what options a student has now who wants to play Lacrosse, asking if the only option would be to play on the varsity team, which results in students being cut.

- Mr. Lollis stated that ideally, there needs to be twenty students on the team and he is doubtful that there would be numbers for a JV team.

Chairman Lovell stated that in looking at the starting line-up, there are two other sports that do not have JV teams. She related this to the fact that those two teams do not compete in the same way (track and tennis). She stated that she feels this may be a safety issue for young students to be playing on a varsity team.

Trustee Burant inquired how the numbers would change if eighth grade students were added to a team and what a cost estimate would be if a JV team were added this year. She also inquired how many estimated games would be scheduled for a JV team.

- Mr. Lollis stated that, based on last years figures, the girls team would not have been able to have a team if not for that factor. He stated that he would anticipate that uniforms would be handed down, 10-15 new helmets, officials fees, and VHSL participation insurance which is due in July. Mr. Lollis stated that distance sometimes causes an issue for a school to play Rockbridge County High School.

Trustee Hostetter inquired how many teams on the varsity schedule have JV teams.

- Mr. Lollis stated that there are seven or eight who do have JV teams and that there a couple of teams trying to begin a team this year but are searching for coaching staff.

Trustee Burant inquired what the additional coaching expense and transportation expense would be.

- Mr. Lollis stated that it is the same standard as soccer in that there must be a head coach and an assistant coach. He stated that currently the teams double up for transportation when possible so there may not be an additional expense.

Trustee Hostetter inquire what the biggest challenge would be in adding a JV boys team.

- Mr. Lollis stated that the expense of purchasing equipment and scheduling would be the biggest challenge.

Chairman Lovell inquired what the next step is for adding a JV team.

- Mr. Lollis stated that the participation report is due to VHSL in July. He stated that he would not be able to add a JV team this spring. He stated that he has inquired on the club playing other JV teams in other school divisions.
- Superintendent Thompson stated that the pro for the program is that it would be a wonderful opportunity for students and would give the opportunity to grow and to work with bigger students. He requested that Mr. Lollis collect information, worst-case scenario, to reflect the cons to adding a JV program; specifically, expenditures including coaching staff, the estimated cost of transportation, and potentially scheduling with other teams (IE four game versus six game season).
- Mr. Haywood Hand, Assistant Superintendent, suggested that it be taken into consideration how a change would impact the other teams who would have boys and girls JV teams in respect to play dates, practices, and organizing game dates for four teams.
- Trustee Hostetter further clarified that it may be helpful to see how other school divisions handle the program of four teams.

Chairman Lovell expressed her sentiment if a JV team is added; the perception of Rockbridge County High School may change in years ahead as students become more experienced players.

Ms. Christine Wood, Director of Special Education, provided information on Policy IKFA-R, "Special Permission (SP) Credit Accommodations for Locally Awarded Verified Credits". She provided the history of developing this regulation and stated that several years ago students with disabilities who were served through an Individualized Education Plan or 504 Plan were able to participate in an alternative assessment called VSEP (Virginia Substitute Evaluation Program). The VSEP is no longer available as an option for identified students and led to the adoption of a policy that would provide an additional option to satisfy the requirements of obtaining a standard diploma. She explained that criteria must be met as follows: students who have an IEP or 504 plan in place; students in general education courses; students who do require significant support; and students who are unable to show content knowledge through multiple-choice format. She stated that the policy outlines the procedure. This provides an opportunity for a student with disabilities to obtain the verified credit toward

their graduation requirements for a standard diploma. This will be presented as an Action Item at the March board meeting.

- Trustee Burant inquired if students are tracked who have been successful up to this point.
 - Ms. Wood stated that the high school staff keep documentation of students who receive locally verified credits and will work more closely with middle school and high school special education staff to make sure they are well versed in eligibility criteria.

Superintendent Thompson provided information on Naming of Facilities in making the following statement:

"Generally speaking, the renaming of any school facility should never be something that is taken lightly. I, for one, am thankful that the Rockbridge County School Board has not renamed any school facility since the consolidation of our three local area high schools into one comprehensive RCHS in 1992. I simply believe in the preservation of the historical events and the cultural foundations of any school facility and a facility's name is critical to this preservation.

However, having made that statement....I believe it is time that I ask for your consideration to do just that – Rename a School Facility.

I grew up in Rockbridge County and am a proud product of our school division. I started my teaching career here and I have been fortunate to spend much of my career in my home of Rockbridge County. Unfortunately, in all my time I have spent here, I never had the opportunity to meet Stephen (Chase) Prasnicki, nor did I meet Andrew Ross. Both of these gentlemen grew up here in Rockbridge County, both attended Central Elementary School, Maury River Middle School, and Rockbridge County High School. While growing up here, people who knew them shared with me that they were model citizens, leaders, scholars, star athletes, and while a year separated them in school, they were close friends.

Upon graduation from RCHS, they both chose to attend the United States Military Academy at West Point. Upon graduation from West Point, they both served in combat units of the US Army....and unfortunately, both paid the ultimate sacrifice in defense of our country.

Since the passing of Lt. Prasnicki in 2012, I have heard from many in our community asking how we could honor him. With the more recent passing of CPT Ross in 2018, I have heard those calls even louder asking now how can we honor both of these young men for all they were as individuals and for what they meant to our community and our country.

In a world in which we are often found looking for exceptional role models and heroes for our children to look up to, I can think of no two individuals that better represent what I believe we all could aspire to be. As I mentioned previously, I did not have the pleasure of getting to meet either of these two individuals. In speaking with others that did know Chase and Andrew, there is no doubt that they were exceptional in every way. They were exceptional men that I would like to get to know better. I would like to honor them and have our students and our community to have the opportunity to get to know them better as well. I feel they should.

I bring to a request for your consideration that you take action at the next regularly scheduled school board meeting and vote to rename the athletic stadium complex at Rockbridge County High School. My recommendation would be that at a ceremony to be held in the near future, the stadium be renamed: "Prasnicki-Ross Field at Veteran Stadium".

This will be presented as an Action Item at the March board meeting.

- Trustee Burant stated that this is an opportunity to demonstrate to our youth and our community what kind of students they were, what kind of people they were, what kind of leaders they were, and especially what kind of men they were in military and death.
- Chairman Lovell stated it is a nice way to honor these two men and all who served.
- Superintendent Thompson stated that both families are in support and appreciate the thought. He further stated that both families will be as involved in the process as they wish to be.

NEW BUSINESS:

Chairman Lovell provided information on "School Board Self-Evaluation". School Board members direct the affairs of Rockbridge County Public Schools by setting goals, developing policy, communicating, and evaluating, all with a focus on the achievement for our students and for our community. The board members aspire to be strong effective leaders to meet the challenges faced by public education today. As a follow-up to recent training with the Virginia School Boards Association, Chairman Lovell requested each board member to use the assessment tool to complete a self-evaluation and return the forms to her by the end of the month. The goal of the self-evaluation is to be a better School Board.

ACTION ITEMS:

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson and passed by a 5-0 roll call vote, the Board approved the 2020 VSBA Business Honor Roll nominations of 1) Virginia Safari Park; 2) Natural Bridge State Park; 3) BARC Electric Cooperative.

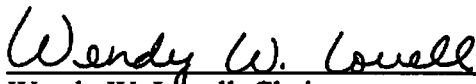
SCHOOL BOARD

There will be a special meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board on Monday, February 17, 2020 at 4:00 p.m. for the purpose of Health Insurance and the Feasibility Study discussion. The meeting will be held at the Rockbridge County School Board Office, 2893 Collierstown Road, Lexington, Virginia.

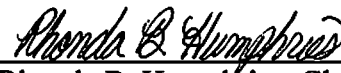
The next regular monthly meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, March 10, 2020 at 5:00 p.m. The meeting will be held at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, VA 24450.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:25 p.m.



Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman



Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board