MINUTES OF
THE WILSON COUNTY BOARD OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL MEETING
AUGUST 14, 2024

The Wilson County Board of Education held a Special Meeting on Wednesday, August 14, 2024, at 12:30 p.m. in the Administrative Offices, 113 N. Tarboro Street. Chairman Dr. Christine L. Fitch called the meeting to order at 12:30 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

Others present were Associate Superintendent Dr. Cheryl Wilson, Assistant Superintendent Robin May, Assistant Superintendent Dr. Ben Williams, Chief Finance Officer Shannon Collins, Executive Director of Facility Services Greg Woodard, Director of Facility Services Daryl Woodard, Director of Public Relations Amber Lynch, Springfield Middle School Principal Kelly Thomas, Board Clerk Linda Horrison and Board Attorney Katie Cornetto. Also present were *The Wilson Times* Reporter Olivia Neeley and Executive Vice President Ben Bass with Builder Services of NC. Board Member Rhyan Breen was not in attendance.

The meeting was livestreamed through the Wilson County Schools (WCS) YouTube Channel. The public can go to YouTube to find the video or go to the WCS Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages and the district website for the YouTube link.

After calling the meeting to order, Dr. Fitch amended the agenda by adding Springfield Middle School Update as an information item under Discussion/Action; removing Student Hearings under Closed Session; and adding the Chairman's Comments after the Pledge of Allegiance and Moment of Silence. Dr. Fitch asked for approval of the agenda. Ms. Powell made the motion, seconded by Ms. Boyette and Mr. Mercer, that the agenda be amended and approved. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

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

The purpose of the meeting was to discuss a contract for approval and an update on Springfield Middle School.

Under Chairman's Comments, Dr. Fitch shared her gratitude, thankfulness and despair from the event of the EF3 tornado that struck in the community in the early hours of Thursday, August 8. She shared that despair is felt because of the loss of life of Bryan Barnes. She extended condolences to his family and friends. She added that despair is also felt for families and others in the community who lost homes, businesses, crops and for some, a sense of hope, which includes one of our own employees. Dr. Fitch also felt despair because of the severe damage to our facility, Springfield Middle School. Despite the despair, she also feels gratitude and thankfulness for the generosity and outpouring of support shown from the Wilson County community, school systems, school boards and others from near and far. She

thanked Dr. Mills, Dr. Williams, Greg Woodard and all of our maintenance staff for being on the scene immediately and the assistance of the Sheriff Office, Police Department, Emergency Management, fire departments, EMS, and other first responders who helped in getting the area secured. Dr. Fitch thanked Builder Services for their availability and quick containment to keep a bad situation from becoming worse. She shared that we now have the job of ensuring the successful start of a new school year for all students. She asked for patience from the community as plans are developed and put into place for the Springfield Middle School family.

Under Contract Requiring Board Approval, Board Policy 6420, *Contracts with the Board*, states that any contract for materials, equipment, or services involving expenditures in excess of $90,000 must be reviewed by the Board attorney and approved in advance by the Board unless provided otherwise in Board policy. The following contract exceeds $90,000 and requires Board approval: Builder Services of NC, to provide disaster restoration services to Springfield Middle due to a tornado that damaged the building on August 8, 2024, in an amount not to exceed $2,381,517.28. Dr. Fitch shared that in emergency circumstances, the Superintendent has the availability to enter into a contract and it's the Board responsibility to ratify that contract. Ms. Cornetto shared that within 72 hours, Builder Services came back with a contract with a "not to" exceed amount. An emergency justification memo was drafted that enabled Dr. Mills to act swiftly on the Board's behalf. After discussion, Mr. Mercer made the motion, seconded by Ms. Boyette, Ms. Barnes and Ms. Powell, to approve the contract for Builder Services of NC, to provide disaster restoration services to Springfield Middle School in an amount not to exceed $2,381,517.28. The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Under Springfield Middle School Update, Dr. Mills shared information and provided a brief overview. He thanked everyone that has been involved and shared that the kindness and support have been overwhelming. School systems, board members, friends, family, associates, and old acquaintances have reached out to offer their support. Dr. Mills personally thanked the staff, parents and students at Springfield Middle. He shared that Ms. Thomas met with her staff online right afterwards, and he thanked her for her leadership. Dr. Mills thanked everyone for their patience and understanding; thanked the Crossroads Fire Department for taking time to assist district staff as they accessed the building. Mr. Bass from Builder Services was in attendance to answer questions from the Board. Dr. Mills shared that a daily update has been provided by Builder Services that includes the following:

Yesterday from Builder Services:

- Continued installing a temporary roof.
- Completed removing cabinets in the following areas:

616	608	614	613	612
611	609	708	716	715
714	713	712	711	

- Continued selective demolition in sixth & seventh grade halls.
- Install climate control/drying equipment in both sixth and seventh grade halls.
- Removed necessary ceiling tiles in the cafeteria to replace tile throughout the remainder of the non-impacted building.
- Started preliminary wipe down of horizontal surfaces, easily accessible HVAC vents/registers and flooring in the areas in which ceiling tile replacement was completed.

- Ceiling tiles not installed include tiles supporting cameras, speakers, sprinklers etc.
- Continued and completed the removal of carpet in the auditorium.
- Electricians met and walked with the chief building inspector to inspect the electrical system. Approval given to turn power back on to the building. Electricians started to bring power back on in phases.
- Continued photo documentation.
- Psychrometric readings completed.

Dr. Mills shared currently:

- Power is being restored in phases to the building to check systems and loads.
- PDC engineers are completing the inspection of the structure.
- A building inspector was in the school yesterday and allowed power to be restored.
- Simplex will be on site Thursday to address the fire system sensors to bypass the damaged wings.
- Eastbound Mechanical is installing ball valves in the 6th and 7th grade wings to allow the water to be cut off to those wings as needed and not interrupt service to the rest of the building. The ball valve on the 8th grade wing was locked up and will be replaced at the same time.
- Allred Mechanical is in place to bring the HVAC systems back online and take over for the 50-ton temporary chillers serving the building now.
- Envirocon will be in to address the controllers and segment the building for the damaged wings.

Dr. Mills shared that district leaders met Monday with Ms. Thomas. There is a plan for teachers and orientation is being handled by Ms. Thomas. He shared that technology was in the Media Center and was not damaged. Donations and supplies are being handled and a location has been secured. Ms. Lynch will be communicating more information. The PTO at Springfield Middle will be handling some aspects separate from us. Wilson Education Partnership will handle monetary donations to the school system. Ms. Lynch shared that donations can be made through Venmo or write a check to the Springfield Middle PTO. Information on donations can also be found online.

Dr. Mills shared where are we headed:

- Based on the conversation with Ben Bass of Builder Services and the vendors that have been so helpful in coming to support us, Mr. Bass believes that he can turn the building over to us on Friday evening. The building will be cleaned and floors redone so that the next phase can begin.
- Based on input from Ms. Thomas and her staff and Dr. Mills' opinion and his staff, we are planning on having instruction in the building on August 26. The Administration does not want to use remote instruction and relocating students is disruptive to students, families and staff (if it could even be addressed).
- The goal has been to have school at Springfield Middle on August 26 since Dr. Mills was standing in the 6th grade hall at 3:45 am last Thursday surveying the damage during the storm.
- Ms. Thomas and her staff can make it work until mobile units are in place and they prefer to do so.
- Food service and restrooms are covered and those were the most critical areas.
- The gym floor has been covered and furniture has been cleaned and moved to allow for class space to be created.

- The media center and other ancillary rooms can be used.
- This is manageable and preferred over remote instruction for the time it may take to secure and install mobile units. We are working on several solutions for mobile classrooms to provide space during the repairs.

Ms. Cornetto shared that the damages at Springfield Middle have been declared a covered loss and will be paid by the insurance company. They have shared informally that the district will receive around $15 million for repairs and replacement of contents. This repair process is being handled by the NC Department of Insurance. Once the Governor declared an emergency, this allowed the district to receive assistance from the state. The district is responsible for a $5,000 deductible from our insurance carrier which is provided through the NC Department of Insurance.

At 1:24 p.m., Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Ms. Boyette, that the Wilson County Board of Education go into closed session to consult with the Board of Education attorney and preserve the attorney-client privilege as provided in N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3). The motion passed unanimously, 6-0.

Ms. Powell left the meeting.

At 2:21 p.m., Ms. Barnes made the motion to reconvene to Open Session. The motion, seconded by Ms. Boyette, passed unanimously, 5-0.

There being no further business at 2:22 p.m., Ms. Barnes made the motion, seconded by Mr. Mercer, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously, 5-0.

Christine L. Fitch

Dr. Christine L. Fitch, Chairman

Dr. Lane B. Mills, Secretary