Minutes
School Board Meeting
Greene County Schools
County Meeting Room
December 11, 2024

Members Present: Mr. Brooks Taylor, Chair; Ms. Rebecca Roach, Vice Chair; Ms. Kelly Greer, Member; Ms. Cherish Alberts, Member; Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent; Ms. Rhonda Houchens, Clerk and Ms. Olivia Shifflett, Student Member.

Member(s) of The Greene County Board of Supervisors Present: Mr. Francis McGuigan

Mr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. in the School Board Office Conference Room.

Ms. Roach made a motion to convene in closed session:

- pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711(A)(1) to consider and discuss assignment and appointment of specific officers, appointees, or employees of the Board.

Ms. Greer seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Roach made a motion to reconvene in open session in the County Meeting Room. Ms. Greer seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. in the County Meeting Room.

Mr. Taylor stated: The Board will certify by roll call vote that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and identified in the motion to convene in the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered.

Ms. Greer – certified
Ms. Alberts – certified
Ms. Roach – certified
Mr. Taylor – certified

Mr. Taylor requested a motion to approve the agenda.

Ms. Roach made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Greer seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Taylor stated there were no closed meeting actions.

Mr. Taylor requested a motion for the consent agenda:

11-1707 November 13, 2024 Meeting Minutes
11-1708 November 1, 2024 Expenditures
11-1709 November 8, 2024 Expenditures
11-1710 November 13, 2024 Expenditures
11-1711 November 15, 2024 Expenditures
11-1712 November 22, 2024 Expenditures
11-1713 November 26, 2024 Expenditures
11-1714 Monthly Finance Report
11-1715 Field Trip Requests
11-1716 Enrollment
11-1717 Staff to be Approved List

Ms. Roach made a motion to approve the consent agenda items 11-1707 through 11-1717 as presented.

Ms. Alberts seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for recognitions.

Mr. Taylor introduced Samantha Nitzsche and read the following:

We are thrilled to recognize William Monroe High School sophomore Samantha Nitzsche for her incredible accomplishments this cross country season! On November 16th in Blacksburg, Samantha was crowned the VHSL Class 3 Cross Country State Champion, finishing the 5000-meter run with an outstanding time of 18:03.20. This remarkable achievement marks Samantha as William Monroe's first-ever Cross Country State Champion!

Samantha's victory caps off a historic season, during which she successfully defended her district and regional titles. Additionally, she earned a 2nd place finish in the Ragged Mountain Cup, helping her team achieve the highest placement in William Monroe history for that competition.
Congratulations, Samantha, on your dedication, hard work, and trailblazing success. You have made your school and community proud!

Dr. Whitmarsh and Mr. Taylor presented her with a certificate.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for first public comment on matters not listed below on agenda.

Mr. Taylor welcomed Ms. Danielle Alicea.

Ms. Alicea introduced the preschool students and shared a short video. The preschool students then sang holiday songs for everyone to enjoy.

Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for the public hearing on the FY2026 Budget Priorities.

There were no public comments, so Mr. Taylor closed the public hearing.

Dr. Pursel presented action item #11-1718, Cell Phone Policy. Dr. Pursel shared the presentation of the personal electronic communication device policy was presented in November and he stated he was there tonight recommending to approve the policy as presented.

The board had discussion showing support for the policy.

Ms. Roach made a motion to approve action item #11-1718, Cell Phone Policy as presented. Ms. Alberts seconded.

Mr. Taylor spoke in support of the policy. All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Myers presented information item #11-1719, Gifted Plan. Ms. Myers introduced herself and Ms. Joanne Fox who works with her on the Gifted Program. Ms. Myers provided a review of the draft plan for gifted students in Greene County Public Schools. The presentation included: the process for developing the draft plan, survey respondents, positive feedback, suggest revisions incorporated and not incorporated in the draft plan. Ms. Myers shared a copy of the draft plan is included in the packet.

Ms. Dawn Gillette & Ms. Ally Ingegneri presented information item #11-1720 William Monroe Academy. Ms. Gillette and Ms. Ingegneri shared the mission statement for William Monroe Academy and information regarding the program, goals, students served, academy staff, and details regarding the new building.

The board had some discussion and questions.

Ms. Richards presented information item #11-1721, Preschool Program. Ms. Danielle Alicea the principal at the Primary School introduced Ms. Richards the preschool coordinator. Ms. Richards shared the preschool programs mission statement, preschool programs offered, VIP Eligibility, Unified VA Quality Birth to Five System, and how goals are aligned with Impact 2027.

Mr. Taylor stated it was time for public comment on information items. Mr. Taylor opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Taylor stated no one signed up and no one wanted to speak so he closed the floor for the second public comment.

Mr. Taylor welcome Olivia Shifflett, Student Board Member.

Ms. Olivia Shifflett introduced herself. She is a senior at WMHS and she plans on going into the US Coast Guard. She shared her background at WMHS. She shared some of her passions at WMHS and her support for programs at the GCTEC, PVCC Dual Enrollment Program and extra-curricular opportunities. She suggested we should still budget for those. She shared a budget survey will be going out to students.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented the Superintendent's Report item #11-1723, Superintendent's Update. Dr Whitmarsh welcomed Olivia. Dr. Whitmarsh shared that Tyler and Olivia will be rotating meetings. Dr. Whitmarsh gave an update on the construction at the Tech Center. Dr. Whitmarsh shared we will finish our participation in the VASS Artificial Intelligence Cohort tomorrow. We sent a team from our division to four different trainings to talk all about artificial intelligence and how it impacts our school system. The Governor's budget for FY26 is due to be released next week on the 18th. We look forward to seeing how we will fair for the coming year. We have a community wide budget survey that will be going out tomorrow in addition to the student survey. There are great things happening in Greene. We are very excited to recognize Samantha. What a great accomplishment. Dr. Whitmarsh thanked all the presenters tonight. The high school held its Maker Market last Saturday. The whole school showed off their crafting skills and could sell products to members of the community. The Holiday Assistance and Toy Gift Program was a huge success. Last month you heard from Dawn Thomas and Dr. Wendy Mitchem on the amazing work they have been doing to ensure everyone in the community is able to have a great holiday. Over 400 students will benefit. It's a tremendous amount of work. Tonight WMMS and HS had their winter concert. No doubt it was an amazing performance and a packed house I hear. DECA saw 23 students take home their district competition last month. As a reminder this year, we have partnered with The Cook Center to provide our community with free access to mental health resources through parentguidance.org the online platform led by licensed therapist, offers courses, professional support and a safe community for parents to learn how to support their children and address mental health concerns. For more information you can visit parentguidance.org and I would encourage everyone to do so. Upcoming events: Nathanael Greene will hold its winter choir concert tomorrow from 6 to 7 and Ruckersville Elementary will hold theirs on December 13th from 6 to 7:30. RES will have market day on December 20th where students create crafts and items to sell to learn about business and economics. No school December 23 through January 3 for winter break. We are half way through the school year and end of semester one. We wish everyone a wonderful holiday and our next board meeting will be January 8th and this will be our annual organization meeting.

Mr. Taylor welcomed board member comments.

Ms. Roach thanked everyone for the goodies. She congratulated Samantha Nitzsche. She said the preschoolers coming and singing was very special. Ms. Roach spoke in favor of the cell phone policy and putting that in place. She stated she hoped everyone will be on board county wide. She thanked everyone that presented tonight. She welcomed Olivia to the team and said she was glad to see Tyler there as well. She shared she is a big advocate for the Tech Center also. She thanked everyone for coming out tonight.

Ms. Greer shared the last BRVGS meeting was very brief and everything is going well there. She thanked Nathanael Greene and the preschool program for bringing the cute kids to sing to us. She congratulated Sam. Kudos to how well the academy is going. She shared she really enjoyed the tour. Ms. Greer spoke about the cell phone policy and she hopes everyone will work together. She welcomed Olivia and shared she really likes the student survey for the budget. She stated she appreciate the budget survey for the community as well. This is the time to tell us what is important to you and what you want to see. Congratulations to the DECA winner and she is glad the Toy Gift Program went well that's wonderful. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!

Ms. Alberts thanked everyone for the gifts. She thanked the presenters. She is super excited about the Toy Gift Program and she thanked Ms. Thomas and Dr. Mitchem. She congratulated Samantha. Congratulations to DECA. She spoke about burnout and she hopes this winter break can be restful, refresh, rejuvenation and hopefully come back really enjoying the break. She knows coming back in January and having that very long time is incredibly difficult and we are talking about it. We are trying to find ways to make that better. Happy Holidays!

Mr. Taylor thanked everyone for the goodies. He thanked the presenters. We should start every meeting like that. He spoke about Pearl Harbor and wanted to let everyone know we are thinking about you. Feeding Greene if you are looking to make donations. Mr. Taylor thanked his colleagues for their hard work and points of view and feedback. He stated that they have made his position as chairman very easy. Mr. Taylor shared a quote: The best gift you will ever receive is being grateful for what you already have. He wished students, staff and everyone a Merry Christmas. Hope you have a great holiday spending it with family and friends. Take a second or minute to reflect what the reason for the season and be grateful.

Mr. Taylor requested a motion to adjourn.

Ms. Alberts made a motion to adjourn. Ms. Greer seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Meeting ended at 8:03 pm.

Chair

Clerk