Minutes
School Board Meeting
Greene County Schools
County Meeting Room
January 8, 2025

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.

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 move into closed session in accordance with 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. Greer made a motion to reconvene in open session in the County Meeting Room. Ms. Alberts 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 that Cara Bickers is unable to be here tonight so we are going to do an Electronic Participation Motion. In accordance with Greene County Public Schools' Policy BDD: Electronic Participation in Meetings from Remote Locations – The Greene County School Board must approve Ms. Bickers' request to participate electronically by a majority vote of members present.

Mr. Taylor asked if there was a motion to allow Ms. Bickers to participate electronically in this evenings meeting. Ms. Alberts made a motion to approve Ms. Bickers' request to participate electronically in accordance with Greene County Public Schools' Policy BDD. Ms. Greer seconded. All Ayes, motion carried. Ms. Bickers stated for the record she was missing this meeting due to personal reasons in accordance to Policy BDD.

Mr. Taylor opened the floor for nominations for position of Chair for the Greene County School Board.

Ms. Alberts made a motion to nominate Brooks Taylor as School Board Chair.

Mr. Taylor asked if there were any other nominations. No other nominations.

Ms. Alberts made a motion to approve Brooks Taylor as School Board Chair. Ms. Greer seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor asked is there was a motion for a slate of officers: Vice-Chair, Clerk of the Board, Deputy Clerk, Blue Ridge Virginia Governor's School Representative, PREP Representative and PREP Alternate Representatives for 2025.

Ms. Alberts made a motion to nominate a slate of officers:

School Board Vice-Chair: Becky Roach
Clerk of the Board: Rhonda Houchens
Deputy Clerk: Dr. Kyle Pursel
Blue Ridge Virginia Governor's School Representative: Kelly Greer
PREP Representative: Cherish Alberts
PREP Alternate Representatives: Brooks Taylor, Cara Bickers, Becky Roach, and Kelly Greer.

Mr. Taylor asked if there were any other nominations. No other nominations.

Mr. Taylor asked if there was a motion to approve the slate of officers.

Ms. Alberts made a motion to approve the slate of officers:

School Board Vice-Chair: Becky Roach
Clerk of the Board: Rhonda Houchens
Deputy Clerk: Dr. Kyle Pursel
Blue Ridge Virginia Governor's School Representative: Kelly Greer
PREP Representative: Cherish Alberts
PREP Alternate Representatives: Brooks Taylor, Cara Bickers, Becky Roach, and Kelly Greer.

Ms. Greer seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor requested a motion to approve the Schedule of Regular Meetings for Calendar Year 2025.

Ms. Greer made a motion to approve the Schedule of Regular Meetings for Calendar Year 2025. Ms. Alberts seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Taylor requested a motion for the VSBA Code of Conduct for the School Board for 2025.

Ms. Greer made a motion to approve the VSBA Code of Conduct for the School Board for 2025 as presented in the packet. Ms. Alberts seconded. Mr. Taylor stated the Board will certify by roll call vote: Ms. Greer, Ms. Alberts, Ms. Roach, Ms. Bickers and the Chair all vote Aye, motion carried.

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

Ms. Bickers – abstain

Mr. Taylor requested a motion to approve the agenda.

Ms. Greer made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Alberts 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:

11-1724 December 11, 2024 Meeting Minutes
11-1725 December 3, 2024 Expenditures
11-1726 December 9, 2024 Expenditures
11-1727 December 13, 2024 Expenditures
11-1728 December 19, 2024 Expenditures
11-1729 December 20, 2024 Expenditures
11-1730 Monthly Finance Report
11-1731 Field Trip Requests
11-1732 Enrollment
11-1733 Staff to be Approved List

Ms. Greer made a motion to approve the consent agenda items 11-1724 to 11-1733 as presented. Ms. Alberts seconded.

Mr. Taylor shared the items in the consent agenda.

No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

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

There were no public comments at this time, so Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Ms. Jen Myers presented action item #11-1734, Gifted Plan. Ms. Myers provided a presentation to show how gifted education is support in GCPS. The presentation included definition of giftedness, characteristics of gifted learners, identification process, screening procedures, referral procedures, identification procedures, multiple criteria used for evaluation, supporting gifted learners in the classroom, individualized gifted plan, differentiation, sample strength-based IGP goals and acceleration and advanced coursework. The Local Plan for the Education of the Gifted was presented at the December meeting and is an action item at this meeting.

Ms. Greer made a motion to approve action item #11-1734, Gifted Plan as presented. Ms. Alberts seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Trenton Fisher presented information item #11-1735, Parent Square Presentation. Mr. Fisher shared that GCPS will move from SchoolMessenger and replace it with it's new communication app: Parent Square. Mr. Fisher shared this new system will be used beginning February 1st. Mr. Fisher's presentation included what is Parent Square, key features, parent and staff pages on website.

Ms. Jess Peregoy presented information item #11-736, CTE Spotlight. Ms. Peregoy's presentation included information regarding Career Day, CTE at the Middle School, dual enrollment CTE, Career Exploration Field Trips, Girl Power Training, CTSO winners, and hands-on learning. Mr. Phillip Lamb shared information on work-based learning and career strategies, student services, student experiences, and the impact of work-based learning. Ms. Peregoy provided an update on the construction at the Tech. Center.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented information item #11-1737, FY2026 Budget Presentation. Dr. Whitmarsh stated she was going to share information on the FY2026 budget. Dr. Whitmarsh shared a budget is a reflection of our priorities and should be guided by our strategic plan. Dr. Whitmarsh shared the division's vision and core values. The presentation included the VA code mandates that it is the duty of the Superintendent to prepare a budget with an estimate of the amount of money deemed to be needed to support the school division. This is commonly referred to as a needs-based budget. Dr. Whitmarsh gave an overview of FY2026 Influencing Factors – Enrollment – our current ADM is 2702.10 and FY2026 budget planning was ADM of 2634.15. This is the second year of the new biennium and our VRS rate are expected to remain the same at 16.6%. The Local Composite Index - this is the second year of the biennium and it doesn't change this year. It changed last year to .3411 from .3505. The Composite Index determines a school division's ability to pay education costs fundamental to the commonwealth's Standards of Quality. It is calculated using: true value of real property 50%, adjusted gross income 40% and table retail sales 10%. This is also on a two year lag. Our current LCI is .3411. Each locality's index is adjusted to maintain an overall statewide local share of 45 percent and an overall state share of 55 percent. Operating Expense – we expect utilities electricity and water rates will have small increases. We should be able to offset that within the existing structure. Other economic factors – social security payments increased 1/1/2025 = 2.5% and the current inflation rate is 2.7%

Dr. Whitmarsh shared she received the calculation tool yesterday and now it's called a planning tool. When we receive the calculation tool it also includes information for the year we are in so there are revisions made to the budget during the year as well as information for next year. The state funding for FY2025 $27,730.967 based on budget ADM of 2702.10. For FY2026 state funding $27,921,777 based on budget ADM of 2,634.15. This year we are expected to receive $114,447 less due to a lower enrollment. It will be less than that because our enrollment is lower. The budget does include a 3% compensation increase. This is the third year for All in Virginia funds. That funding was provided in FY24 for attendance, literacy and learning. At this point we intend to carry over $300,000 into the last year of those funds.

For the federal funds we have seen a decrease in almost every program. We anticipate the balance is going to be about the same. FY2026 will be the first year without any Pandemic Funds. They had to be expended by September 30, 2024.

Dr. Whitmarsh shared the local funding county fund amounts for the last three years. She shared you will notice the funds are the same for FY24 and FY25 because when we got that supplemental appropriation we went back and said we did not need as many local dollars. We have other funds are comprised of funds from sources such as rents, regional programs, insurance payments, insurance settlements, sale of equipment or the miscellaneous revenue. For FY25 we have $230,750 there.

Dr. Whitmarsh stated VRS rates for FY26 are the same as FY25. Dr. Whitmarsh shared the employee, rate and employer rates. She stated the VRS FY25 Budget was $4,392,830.

Dr. Whitmarsh shared the FY25 Budget amount for healthcare is $4,295,058. She shared we don't know the exact renewal yet. She shared some estimates.

Dr. Whitmarsh shared payroll is 54.2% of the budget, health benefits 8.2%, VRS 8.3%, FICA 4.0%. So 75% of our budget is wages and benefits for our personnel.

Dr. Whitmarsh shared raise percentages for 3%, 4% and 5% raises. The Governor's budget did include a 3% compensation increase. Dr. Whitmarsh shared a chart of expenses.

Dr. Whitmarsh shared the results of the FY2026 Community Budget Survey. She also shared top budget priorities, internal budgeting process and next steps and timeline.

Tyler Crenshaw shared information regarding the WMHS student budget survey responses.

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

Mr. Taylor closed public comment.

Tyler Crenshaw presented Student Board Member Spotlight. Tyler shared information on supports that were provided over Thanksgiving and winter break. Some of those items were self-care items, food and hygiene items. The items were distributed during lunch and some students participated during Christmas break. Tyler stated he would like to show gratefulness for being able to be up here. He stated he feels lucky to be able to comment on things like these.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented the Superintendent's Report item #11-1739, Superintendent's Update. Dr. Whitmarsh shared information on the extended winter break and we have now moved into asynchronous days. We know closures are hard and disruptive for families. A lot of our back roads are not clear. Safety is our top priority. We are very appreciative of the nutrition staff handing out meals today. We served 22 meals. A huge shout out to our maintenance and custodial staff for getting here and cleaning our campus. It's no easy call. It's been a tough job. 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. There will be no school on January 20th and offices will be closed for the observance of Martin Luther King Day. Our next board meeting will be January 22nd this will not be a regular board meeting this will be a work session.

Mr. Taylor welcomed board member comments.

Ms. Greer thanked everyone that braved the cold to come and attend in person and to those who might be watching virtually. She thanked Ms. Myers for the gifted plan presentation. She thanked Mr. Fisher for the ParentSquare presentation. She stated she is onboard with it and it's a great move. She spoke about the CTE Spotlight and Work-based Learning presentation and stated it was great. She thanked Dr. Whitmarsh for the budget overview and for keeping our student's safety in mind with closures.

Ms. Bickers thanked Ms. Myers for her presentation it was very informative. She spoke in favor of ParentSquare and thanked Mr. Fisher. Ms. Bicker's stated that Ms. Peregoy you lead with intendment and enthusiasm is why the CTE Program is a huge success. She thanked Dr. Whitmarsh for the budget presentation and everything you'll do. She stated she's excited for Tyler to be a part of the board. You are an asset to all of us.

Ms. Roach reiterated what was already said. She spoke in favor of the Gifted Plan and thanked Ms. Myers. She said she's looking forward to ParentSquare. She said the CTE Spotlight holds a big place in heart. I speak about that all the time and it's such a big part of helping kids excel. She's excited about the building and giving kids more opportunities. She spoke about the budget presentation. Ms. Roach stated it was so nice having Tyler and Olivia on the board. She stated she appreciated all the maintenance staff and she thanked everyone for coming tonight.

Ms. Alberts stated she is taking on the roll of PREP Representative. She gave a big thank you to Ms. Roach for being the PREP Representative for the past few years. She gave a big thank you regards to Toy Gift to Danelle Murphy of Murphy's Coffee and Bagel House and his new event space the barn. He generously let us use it for the elaborate process of the selecting gifts and stocking stuffers for each

child. She gave a giant heartfelt thank you to Redeemed Brotherhood MC for their sponsorship and support for Toy Gift. The work by all community members and staff of the school did not go unnoticed. Ms. Alberts shared she has had the pleasure of working with Dawn Thomas who is our liaison for Toy Gift and our schools and when I contacted her to thank her for all she does each year she stated quote "There are many hands that make this work". I just wanted to thank as many as I can. Ms. Alberts spoke about staff retention. She stated we are in trouble. As a board we have talked about how we can help. So we have to think outside of the box. She shared information regarding a less traditional school calendar.

Mr. Taylor thanked everyone for their presentations. They were great as usual. He thanked his colleagues and shared he is humble and grateful for the nomination to be chair again. Your trust in my leadership means a lot. We have a lot of great things on the way. He congratulated other members and officers in their positions. He thanked everyone for what they do. Mr. Taylor spoke about the cell phone policy going into effect Monday. He stated to please be careful going home and thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

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 8:42 pm.

Chair

Clerk