

Hamlet, North Carolina  
April 8, 2025

The Richmond County Board of Education met in regular session on April 8, 2025, at 5:00 p.m. The meeting was held at the Central Office in Hamlet, North Carolina.

The members present: Cory Satterfield Chairman; Bobbie Sue Ormsby, Vice-Chairman; Jerry Ethridge; Ronald Tillman; Scotty Baldwin; and Bess Shuler. Daryl Mason was absent.

The administrators present: Dr. Joe Ferrell, Superintendent; Dr. Julian Carter, Associate Superintendent of Auxiliary Services of Operations and Athletics; Dr. Kate Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction; Melvin Ingram, Assistant Superintendent of School Safety and Support Services; Dr. Tesha Isler, Executive Director of Human Resources; Dawn Jordan, Executive Director of Finance; Cameron Whitley, Executive Director of Communications; and Eva Dubuisson, Board Attorney.

### **Meeting Commencement**

After noting that a quorum was present, Cory Satterfield, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 5:01 p.m. Chairman Satterfield requested a Moment of Silence and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Minutes**

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the open session minutes of March 11, 2025, and the budget work session minutes of March 25, 2025, were unanimously approved.

### **Recognition of Inspiring Excellence Awards**

Cameron Whitley introduced Meredith Norwood, Principal of LJ Bell Elementary School, who presented plaques to two of her staff members: Kacey Matheson and Ernest Patterson. Next, Cameron Whitley introduced Windy Taylor, Principal of Rockingham Middle School, who presented plaques to two of her staff members: Atoria Smith and Charla Jacobs. These recipients were honored for their outstanding contributions and dedication to students and the school community.

### **Backpack Pals**

Cameron Whitley introduced Pastor Steve Crews, Executive Director and founder of Backpack Pals, a local nonprofit organization dedicated to alleviating hunger among school children in Richmond County.

Pastor Crews provided an overview of the Backpack Pals program, which supports students who rely heavily on school cafeteria meals and may face food insecurity over the weekends. The schools identify the number of students in need (no individual student names are shared), and Backpack Pals supplies that number of food bags weekly.

Each Friday, students discreetly pick up their bags from a designated area in their school before heading home for the weekend. Bags are delivered to schools every Thursday. Pastor Crews expressed appreciation for the schools' partnership and

specifically recognized Dr. Wendy Jordan for her support and coordination on behalf of Richmond County Schools.

Currently, the organization packs 445 bags each week. The program is entirely volunteer run, with no paid staff. Volunteers—including some retired military packs and deliver the bags. All funds received go directly into the program, covering food purchases, gas, vehicle maintenance, and minimal utility costs.

Pastor Crews shared that Backpack Pals has already spent \$59,438.84 on food this school year. Rising food costs and increasing student need have strained the program's resources. As a result, the organization is actively seeking financial contributions and community involvement. Donations of both food and monetary support are welcomed, and food drives are another helpful way for groups to participate.

The 2024–2025 school year marks the program's 20th year of operation. Backpack Pals now serves every school in Richmond County—a goal the organization has worked toward since its inception.

In response to questions from board members, Pastor Crews explained that they buy food in bulk from a grocery wholesaler outside of Charlotte, receiving prices comparable to those offered to grocery stores. They are also in negotiations with the new BJ's Wholesale Club in Southern Pines as a potential partner.

Board members expressed sincere appreciation for the work Backpack Pals is doing. As one member noted, "A hungry child can't learn," and the board is grateful for the vital support the program provides to students across the county.

### **Crime Stoppers Poster Contest**

Melvin Ingram presented to the board on behalf of the Richmond County Crime Stoppers organization, which is dedicated to promoting safety and reducing crime within the community. He highlighted the efforts of the organization, including the annual student poster contest designed to engage students in spreading the message of crime prevention.

Crime Stoppers is chaired by Chuck Cobb, with Mechelle Preslar recognized as a previous board member. The Poster Contest was coordinated by Karen Good, district art mentor, in collaboration with district art teachers and the Crime Stoppers Board.

Poster Contest Winners:

- 1st Place: Victoria Bedow, Richmond Senior High School, Grade 12
- 2nd Place: Tha Sui, Richmond Senior High School, Grade 11
- 3rd Place: Caydance Barbour, Hamlet Middle School, Grade 8

### **Athletic Recognition**

Mr. James Johnson, Athletic Director, recognized several student-athletes and teams for their achievements during the Winter Sports season. The recognitions were as follows:

#### **Middle School Recognitions**

- Wrestling
  - Axel Nunez (Hamlet Middle School) – 1st place in his weight class
  - Edgar Soto (Hamlet Middle School) – 3rd place in his weight class

- Kaleb Hairston (Rockingham Middle School) – 1st place in his weight class
- Cross Country
  - Hamlet Middle School Boys Cross Country Team – Conference Champions
  - Special recognition to Coach Blake Kelly, noted as the possible first individual conference champion in school history
- Basketball
  - Hamlet Middle School – Girls Team (undefeated season)
  - Rockingham Middle School – Boys Team (fourth consecutive season)

### High School Recognitions

- Basketball
  - Richmond Senior High School – Girls Team (fourth round state playoff appearance)
  - Richmond Senior High School – Boys Team (third round playoff appearance)
- Indoor Track
  - Amariah Gibson – 55-Meter Champion
  - KaMora Watkins – Long Jump Champion
  - Keonta Bob Pegues – 3rd Place Long Jump
  - Aaron Coleman – 55-Meter Hurdles
- Wrestling
  - Kamari Morgan – 3rd Place Finish at State Championships
    - Noted as a top contender for the state title prior to injury

### **Construction Updates**

Steven King presented an update on projects at Mineral Springs Elementary School, Fairview Heights Elementary School, and Richmond Senior High School.

\*Note: WIP = Work in Progress

- Mineral Springs Elementary School
  - Interior/Exterior punch list items = WIP
  - Phase 3 – Service road off bus circle = Complete
  - Site work – Final grading/seeding = WIP
- Fairview Heights Elementary School
  - Interior/Exterior punch list items = WIP
- Richmond Senior High School
 

Muter updated schedule: Substantial completion June 27, 2025

  - HVAC, electrical, plumbing, sprinklers, and roof trim (WIP)
  - Ceramic tile = Complete
  - Epoxy flooring = Complete
  - Gym painting – Ceiling = Complete, Walls = WIP
  - Ceiling grid = WIP
  - Weight room flooring – Install on April 15
  - Weight room equipment – Ordered to be installed in late April

Change orders approved to date = \$48,518.90.

### **Jumbotron Proposal for Richmond Senior High School**

Steven King presented a proposal for the purchase and installation of a new jumbotron (video board) to replace the existing scoreboard at Richmond Senior High School's football stadium. Steven issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) and received one bid from Daktronics, the company that previously installed the sound system for the current scoreboard. The bid from Daktronics totaled \$260,274.56 and included the jumbotron and installation.

In accordance with board policy, any project exceeding \$90,000 requires a formal bidding process. This requirement was met by posting the RFP on the school website and directly contacting at least three vendors. Only one response was received.

The bid included an optional live camera package, priced at approximately \$7,500, which was requested by Head Football Coach. Brad Denson. The sales representative indicated that this item could be removed if desired, allowing the district to explore alternative options. Similarly, the installation cost, estimated at approximately \$31,000, could be removed if the district chose to hire a certified installer independently. This could provide a cost-saving opportunity without impacting the warranty, provided the installer is approved by Daktronics.

Steven also explained that the new jumbotron will give students the opportunity to create and manage on-screen content, while also offering long-term revenue opportunities to support athletic programs.

On a motion by Ronald Tillman, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to approve the purchase and installation of the jumbotron at a cost not to exceed \$260,274.56.

### **2025-2026 Local Budget Request**

Ms. Dawn Jordan presented the proposed 2025–2026 local budget, seeking board approval to request the full amount of \$12,616,332.94 from the county.

During the board's recent work session, several key components of the budget were discussed:

- **Capital Outlay Budget:** The proposed capital outlay budget remains consistent with the previous year, allocating \$2,005,500 for sales tax projects and \$423,500 for regular capital outlay.
- **Operational Increases:** The budget includes a 5% increase in teacher supplements, a 3% payroll increase (2024-2025 state budget impact), and a 3% increase to cover projected fixed costs.
- **Salary Study Implementation:** The third phase includes teacher assistants, monitors, custodians, and remaining classified positions.

These proposed changes represent an overall budget increase of \$1,337,059.94 compared to the 2024–2025 budget.

Board members discussed the feasibility of implementing the third phase of the salary study all at once versus a phased approach. While acknowledging that all positions are equally important, they noted that addressing teacher assistants separately could be beneficial due to their large numbers, which makes this segment the most costly.

Concerns were raised about the financial impact, suggesting that dividing the implementation over two years might help manage costs more effectively.

Dawn and several board members acknowledged the county's support for initiatives such as local teacher supplement increases and previous phases of the salary study. Some members proposed submitting the entire proposed budget to the county. If the county does not approve the full request, the board will discuss and adjust the budget as necessary.

On a motion by Ms. Bobbie Sue Ormsby, seconded by Mr. Ronald Tillman, the board voted unanimously to approve the presentation of the proposed 2025–2026 local budget and to request the full amount of \$12,616,332.94 from the county.

### **24-25 Budget Amendments**

Dawn Jordan presented the following 24-25 budget resolutions for board approval.

- State Funds
  - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$58,924,064.26 to \$59,426,507.26 representing an increase of \$502,443.00.
- Local Funds
  - The budget amount in the current amended budget is \$11,904,263.00.
- Federal Funds
  - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$22,009,443.50 to \$22,100,916.26 representing an increase of \$22,100,916.26.
- Other Local Funds
  - The budget appropriation has been revised from \$4,402,148.29 to \$4,482,752.57 representing an increase of \$80,604.28.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby the board voted unanimously to approve the budget resolution as presented

### **Policies for Adoption**

Melvin Ingram presented the conclusion of the 30-day review period, asking the board to adopt amendments for the following policies.

Policy Numbers:

- 3620 Extracurricular Activities and Student Organizations
- 5150 Reporting to External Agencies
- 7130 Licensure
- 9110 Use and Selection of Architects, Surveyors, and Construction Managers at Risk

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Scotty Baldwin, the board voted unanimously to adopt policy amendments 3620, 5150, 7130 and 9110.

### **Policies for Review**

Melvin Ingram requested that the board waive the 30-day review period and approve the following policy amendments:

- Policy 4150 – School Assignment
- Policy 6305 – Safety and Student Transportation Services
- Regulation 6305 R-1 – Safety and Student Transportation Services

➤ Policy 6321 – Bus Routes

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted 5 to 1 in favor of waiving the 30-day review period for policy amendments 4150, 6305, 6305 R-1, and 6321. Ronald Tillman opposed.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bess Shuler, the board voted 5 to 1 to adopt policy amendments 4150, 6305, 6305 R-1, and 6321. Ronald Tillman opposed.

### **Field Trips**

Melvin Ingram presented the field trips.

- Richmond Senior High School – JROTC to Columbia, SC – June 14, 2025 – June 19, 2025
- 2024-2025 Beta National Competitions:
- Richmond Senior High School – Beta Club to Orlando, FL – June 22, 2025 – June 26, 2025
  - Richmond Early College – Beta Club to Orlando, FL – June 22, 2025 – June 26, 2025
  - Ninth Grade Academy – Beta Club to Orlando, FL – June 22, 2025 – June 26, 2025
  - Hamlet Middle School – Beta Club to Orlando, FL – June 28, 2025 – July 3, 2025
  - Rockingham Middle School – Beta Club to Orlando, FL – June 28, 2025 – July 3, 2025

The reimbursement costs for high school and middle school students and chaperones attending the 2025 Beta National Competition are:

- High School Costs: \$9,574.42 (RSHS, REaCH, NGA)
- Middle School Costs: \$8,067.61 (HMS, RMS)
- Expenses Covered: Travel, meals, and accommodations
- Total Reimbursement: \$17,642.03

### **Surplus**

Dr. Ferrell requested board approval for Richmond Senior High School athletics to sell a 1996 John Deere tractor, with proceeds going to fund a new tractor or mower. The athletics department proposed a private sale to expedite this process.

A board member inquired about the use of sealed bids in private sales; the board attorney clarified that sealed bids are not customary in such transactions. Concerns were raised regarding ensuring a fair price and public access to the purchase opportunity. Dr. Ferrell noted that Melissa Coulthard researches comparable sales to determine price ranges, estimating the tractor's value at around \$6,400, though the department proposed a \$4,000 sale.

It was revealed that Hodges Landscaping, responsible for field maintenance, offered to purchase the tractor for \$4,000 and would continue using it on school grounds. Several board members questioned the transparency of this arrangement and the lack of opportunity for other potential buyers. After discussion all board members agreed that surplus items should be listed on GovDeals to ensure a transparent process.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Ronald Tillman, the board unanimously approved Richmond Senior High School (RSHS) Athletics to sell the 1996 John Deere tractor through GovDeals to secure fair market value

### **Board Members' Comments**

Jerry Ethridge

- Attended Arts Alive; it was a great event.
- Participated in the CTE Advisory Council meeting, marking Director Greg Norton's final meeting before retirement. He commended Greg Norton for his great work, acknowledging the contributions of Cherie Young, Lisa Campbell, and other supporting staff members.
- Along with Bobbie Sue Ormsby, participated in LJ Bell Elementary School's STEM, Art, and Book Fair night, which featured performances by the chorus and two food trucks. It was very good and well organized.

Bobbie Sue Ormsby

- Praised RCS's arts program, encompassing Art, Music, and Band.
- Gave a report on the Clay Shoot
- Reported on the Education Foundation's recent Clay Shoot fundraiser, noting it was excellent, raised over \$10,000, had good participation, and the teachers that received a grant award were appreciative.

Bess Shuler

- Attended Arts Alive; it was great.
- Attended the CTE Advisory Council.
- Attended the National Technical Honors Society and National Honor Society. It was a great ceremony and great to see that many students being inducted.
- Gave a shout out to Esther Salas, a Spanish teacher and advisor for the World Languages Club at RSHS, for decorating and putting together an unbelievable great quinceañera to celebrate six students for turning 15 years old.

### **Superintendent's Report**

Dr. Ferrell

- Spring Break is April 18-27.

Cory Satterfield citing NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3),(6) requested a motion to go into closed session.

On a motion by Jerry Ethridge, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to go into closed session at 6:29 p.m.

The board returned from closed session at 7:46 p.m.

### **Personnel Report**

Dr. Tesha Isler presented the personnel report and addendum.

On a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Bobbie Sue Ormsby, the board voted unanimously to approve the personnel report and addendum, as well as the extension of Dr. Ferrell's contract, with the new end date set for June 30, 2029.

**Adjourn**

There being no further business, on a motion by Scotty Baldwin, seconded by Jerry Ethridge, Chairman Satterfield adjourned the meeting at 7:48 p.m.