

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, September 14, 2021. The meeting was held at Maury River Middle School.

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 5:31 p.m.

Chairman Lovell stated that this is a public meeting with a mask mandate in place and it would be appreciated if the audience would adhere to mandate.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

RECOGNITION / SPECIAL PRESENTATION:

Ms. Vicki Stevens, Assistant Principal, Maury River Middle School, provided a presentation on the Project Based Learning (PBL) "Light Up the New Year" that is taking place at MRMS for the 2021-2022 school year. MRMS students and staff were excited to "light up the new year" by celebrating their sense of community and their joint mission in education.

The following are highlights of the presentation:

- PBL Committee: Billy, Thomas, Vicki Stevens, Kim Pollock, Shauna Palmer, Courtney Diette, Gretchen Dowless, Michael Loret.
- The goal of the PBL project was to create the strategic story of Maury River Middle School - where we come from, how we work together, and where we are going. Students made community connections through a walking tour, identifying safety landmarks and procedures, and learning about their physical surroundings. School counselors provided lessons on social emotional learning and growth mindset.
- The project generated two finished products: 1) the students created brochures about our community; 2) the students created digital flipbooks to document their learning, which included the timeline of Maury Middle School. Ms. Stevens reflected that the project gave students a sense of community and has led the students to feel ready to soar even higher.
 - S – Safety First
 - O – Own It
 - A – Actions Matter
 - R – Reach for the Stars
- Chairman Lovell inquired if there are plans to continue with the PBL project at Maury River Middle School.
 - Ms. Stevens stated that there are already plans in place for each quarter.

CONSENT AGENDA

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board voted 5-0, the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) August 10, 2021 [Regular Meeting]
- Field Trip / Bus Use Requests
- Fundraising Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- **Appointments and Resignations**

APPOINTMENTS

Support Staff

William Eagle, Custodian, Mountain View Elementary School, effective September 15, 2021

David Eagle, Custodian, Mountain View Elementary School, effective September 15, 2021

Lindsey Morrow, Teacher Assistant, Maury River Middle School,
effective September 15, 2021

Susan VanNess, Teacher Assistant, Maury River Middle School,
effective September 15, 2021

Morgan White, Clerical Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School,
effective September 15, 2021

David Kirby, Teacher Assistant, Mountain View Elementary School,
effective September 15, 2021

Leyna Hansley, 21st Century Grant Coordinator, Natural Bridge Elementary School,
2021 – 2022 school year

Angie Snyder, Teacher Assistant, Central Elementary School, 2021 – 2022 school year

Joyce Harris, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School, 2021 – 2022 school year

Car Driver

Sheena Thomas

Substitute Teachers

Kathleen Gross

Evelyn Knick

Mary Lawhorne

Elizabeth Oweremohle

Daniel Wheeler

Boys' Head Basketball Coach – RCHS

Robert Winfield

Fall Coaches**Volleyball**

Graceon Armstrong, Volunteer Coach

Retirement**Professional Staff**

William Thomas, Principal, Maury River Middle School, retiring January 31, 2022.

Resignations**Professional Staff**Matthew Morris, Teacher, Fairfield Elementary School,
resigned end of 2020 – 2021 school yearRebecca Bowden, Supervisor of Elementary Special Education, Division,
resigning effective September 24, 2021**Support Staff**

Kristi Floyd, Clerical Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School resigned effective August 20, 2021.

• **Business Items**

- Approve new grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$4,131,544.
- Approve budget adjustment and expenditure transfer in the amount of \$300,00.
- Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$3,259,423.22.

• **Religious Exemption Requests****PUBLIC COMMENT:**

Vice-Chairman Hostetter stated that according to the Governor's guidelines, this is a business meeting and there is a mask mandate in place.

One patron addressed the board in opposition of requiring the wearing of masks in schools.

Five patrons addressed the board in opposition of adoption of the proposed club policy.

One patron addressed the board in support of adoption of the proposed club policy.

One patron addressed the board in support of teaching Virginia African American History in schools.

Three patrons addressed the board in opposition of teaching the Critical Race Theory and addressed books in the libraries of Rockbridge County Public Schools with inappropriate language.

One patron addressed the board regarding the lack of transparency in school curriculum of Rockbridge County Public Schools.

Three patrons addressed the board in opposition of teaching the Critical Race Theory.

One patron addressed the board regarding their lack of concern for RCPS families and how well the school board operates. Patron also announced that there would be a town hall meeting at the Virginia Horse Center to meet the local candidates.

BUDGET PLANNING: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS: None

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. Jason Kirby, Chief Business Officer, provided information on the Pay Policy Revision for Timesheet Employees to be paid in 24 installments, with distribution on the fifteenth day and the last working day of the month. Vice-Chair Hostetter requested that this be moved as an Action Item in this meeting.

Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer, provided information on Rockbridge County Public Schools Comprehensive Improvement Plan – Combined Summary – FY 2022 – FY 2029. This report reflects updated figures and budget numbers, noting that the current year contains no changes and that the largest project is Floyd S. Kay Vocational and Technical Center renovation. Mr. Walters stated that the same report will be presented to the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors at the Joint Meeting of September 16, 2021.

- Trustee Berkstresser inquired if the projected increased costs may reduce as materials become more available.
 - Mr. Walters responded that Quinn Evans Architects staff do predict that costs could go down for that were to occur.

ACTION ITEM:

Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer, presented the Rockbridge County School Division Wide Feasibility Study Addendum by Quinn Evans. The report included the following:

Program Survey (existing uses)

- Program Assessment
- Facility Assessment
- Stakeholder Survey
- Recommendations: the recommendations included Building Recommendations for the Floyd S. Kay (FSK) Vocational and Technical Center, Levels of Renovation (light renovation, moderate renovation, heavy renovation), Phasing Recommendations which includes a projected timeline
- Project Cost Scenario that includes amounts based on current and historic knowledge construction market conditions as of July 2021 and are projected to the anticipated midpoint of construction at Fall 2023, which bidding in Fall 2022.
- Chairman Lovell stated that the community will benefit greatly in that FSK will enable students to learn great skills, hit the work force after graduation, and hopefully stay in the community.
- Superintendent Thompson requested permission to request the Board of Supervisors to provide funding which would enable Rockbridge County Public Schools to get the A & E Study going.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Berkstresser, the board voted 5-0, to request funding from the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Tim Martino, Assistant Superintendent, provided information on the Student Organizations / Clubs Policy as an Action Item. Mr. Martino stated that if the policy is passed, a regulation will also be written.

- Trustee Burant requested that the regulation also specify roles of the supervisors and teachers.
 - Superintendent Thompson expressed his agreement that this would provide clarification.
- Chairman Lovell expressed that she appreciates the concern for all students and stated that there is no movement to discriminate against any club. She also expressed her appreciation for the time dedicated to students, parents, and club advisors and that she feels this policy shows support for all stakeholders.

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Hostetter, the board voted 5-0, to approve the Policy IGDA (Student Organizations / Clubs) as presented.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Hostetter, seconded by Chairman Lovell, the board voted 5-0, to approve the Payroll Procedures / Payday Schedules (DL-R) as presented.

NEW BUSINESS:

Superintendent Thompson provided a COVID update within the school system. He noted that he feels the school division is doing well. The goal of the school division was to have students in schools for five days a week, as safely as possible. There has been a total of 65-67 total cases, 7 of whom were staff members, with an 85% vaccination rate. Mitigation strategies are working well. He noted there have been daily letters, when needed, reflecting quarantined students, which is to enabling the schools from having to shut down.

- Chairman Lovell expressed her sentiment that the presentation by Ms. Stevens on behalf of the MRMS PBL program, reflects that students want to be in school.
- Trustee Burant expressed appreciation for the work that has been done to keep students in school.

Superintendent Thompson expressed his appreciation to teachers and administration in reminding students of mitigation strategies. He also offered his appreciation to the nurses of Rockbridge County Public Schools, as they have been phenomenal in handling the pandemic situation.

SCHOOL BOARD:

The next regular monthly meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, October 12, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at Maury River Middle School, 600 Waddell Street, Lexington, Virginia.

CLOSED MEETING

Under Section 2.2-3711.A (1) of the State Code, Chairman Lovell recommended that the Board go into a *Closed Meeting* to discuss one personnel matter. Motion was made by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 5-0 vote.

The Board entered into the *Closed Meeting* at 7:00 p.m.

The Board returned to open session at 7:59 p.m.

Vice-Chair Hostetter read the following motion to Certify the Closed Meeting:

WHEREAS, the Rockbridge County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this School Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Rockbridge County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered.

Upon initial motion of Certification of Closed Meeting by Vice-Chair Hostetter, and seconded by Trustee Burant, the motion passed by the following roll call vote:

Trustee Berkstresser	- Aye
Trustee Burant	- Aye
Chairman Lovell	- Aye
Trustee Whitmore	- Aye
Vice-Chairman Hostetter	- Aye

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon motion by Trustee Hostetter, seconded by Trustee Burant, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:02 p.m.

Wendy W. Lovell
Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman

Rhonda B. Humphries
Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board