

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, November 9, 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 5:30 p.m.

Chairman Lovell read the public health order and asked that all wear a mask, regardless of vaccination status and encouraged those who do not want to wear a mask to participate virtually.

CHANGES TO THE AGENDA: None

RECOGNITION / SPECIAL PRESENTATION: None

CONSENT AGENDA

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

- Minutes: 1) October 12, 2021 [Regular Meeting]
- Field Trip / Bus Use Requests
- Fundraising Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- **Appointments and Resignations**

APPOINTMENTS

Professional Staff

Raegan Paxton, School Counselor, Maury River Middle School, 2021 - 2022 school year

Support Staff

Christie Seaman, Central Elementary School, Teacher Assistant, 2021 – 2022 school year

Loretta Branch, Natural Bridge Elementary School, Teacher Assistant,

2021 -2022 school year

Tristan Ayers, Natural Bridge Elementary School, Teacher Assistant,

2021 – 2022 school year

Substitute Teacher

Keller Blackburn

Haley Darr

Winter Coaches 2021-2022

Rockbridge County High School

Boys' Basketball

Jonathan Williams JV Basketball Coach

Swimming

Erica "EJ" Bisailon Assistant Swim Coach

Wrestling

Mike Wood Assistant Wrestling Coach

Maury River Middle School

Girls' Basketball

Susan Nye Head Basketball Coach

Rebecca Stratton Assistant Basketball Coach

Cheerleading

Mallory Wurster Head Coach

Retirement

Professional Staff

Sarah "Sally" Moore, Teacher, Mountain View Elementary School, retiring end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Drusilla Milford, Librarian, Mountain View Elementary School, retiring end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Jeffrey Mason, Data Manager, Central Office, retiring June 30, 2022

Tammy Nicely, Mountain View Elementary School, retiring end of the 2021 – 2022 school year

Ellen Hotchkiss, Teacher, Central Elementary School, retiring end of the
2021 – 2022 school year

Business Items

- Authorized the Treasurer of Rockbridge County to pay debt service in the amount of \$554,375.00 for duly appropriated debt service.
- Approved appropriations to Fund 70 in the amount of \$3,097,134.00.
- Approved appropriations to Fund 50 from CIP ESCROW account in the amount of \$250,000.
- Approved carry over grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$1,748.00.
- Approved Monthly Financials in the amount of \$3,159,291.68.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Thirteen patrons addressed the board requesting that the banning of the Confederate flag and imagery from the dress code policy.

One patron addressed the board against the removal of the Confederate flag from schools and further stated if the flag is banned that all BLM imagery should be banned in schools as well.

One patron addressed the board stating that children are caught in the crossfire as they are being taught CRT, have access to porn books in the libraries, and are forced to wear masks.

One patron addressed the board against transgender policies and expressed concern with the safety of the school restrooms.

One patron addressed the board expressing belief that CRT and the other issues are not the real problem; hearts of people are the problem and that we all need to love one another and get along.

One patron addressed the board stating that parents have not been given their rights, policies have been developed with no consideration given to parents and feels the policy on mask wearing has not been communicated with parents. Also stated that porn needs to be out of the schools.

One patron addressed the board stating that their child does not attend RCPS because of dislike of the direction the Rockbridge County system. Patron stated that if the Confederate flag is banned so must the LGBTQ imagery and reminded the board that when a student leaves the school system to attend elsewhere, money is lost by the school system.

One patron addressed the board expressing appreciation to teachers and principals for all that is being done for the kids and supports the way that things are being done in Rockbridge County Schools. Patron feels the current issues involve behavior more than the teaching of CRT and the transgender policy. Patron stated that parents who want to help their child need to learn the curriculum, ask to sit in their child's classroom, participate in their child's lives and that parents must show respect to their child's teachers and principals.

One patron expressed appreciation to the Rockbridge County School Board, teachers, and administration for their incredible work. Also requested that Confederacy imagery to be banned from the dress code policy as there are other ways to celebrate southern heritage.

BUDGET PLANNING: None

COMMITTEE REPORTS:

Trustee Burant provided an update on the Floyd S. Kay Renovation Update. She stated that she and Trustee Berkstresser both serve as board representatives on the Floyd S. Kay renovation project. She stated that FSK needs a lot of renovations and that plans are moving along. The mandatory Pre-Proposal Conference was held on November 8, 2021, where specifics were discussed and the Feasibility Study was considered. She stated that the RFP's (Request for Proposal) are due from the architects on December 16, 2021.

Trustee Heather Hostetter provided an update on the Ad Hoc Committee. She stated that the Ad Hoc Committee met on October 14, 2021. Items discussed were the FSK renovation and the CIP, as it pertains to Rockbridge County High School. The Ad Hoc Committee will keep open lines of communication with a strategy to mesh the students of Rockbridge County and Lexington City, with a goal of seamless transition. She stated that Rockbridge County High School stands as one student body and work together as a team.

INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT: None

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:

Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer, provided information on a one-year renewal of the lease for Rockbridge Church for the use of Maury River Middle School. The contract is set to expire on December 31, 2021. This will be presented as an Action Item at the December meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board.

Mr. Timothy J. Martino, Assistant Superintendent, provided information on the 2022-2023 School Calendar draft.

- Superintendent Thompson stated that with the current school calendar, five days were taken from students for the addition of workdays. There are more teacher workdays for 2022-2023 and keep the calendar at 180 student days.

Mr. Martino stated that the draft 2022-2023 School Calendar provides 180 days that are protected and will help ensure to get students on track.

Dr. Matthew Crossman, Director of School Services, and Penni Allen, School Nurse Coordinator, provided information on the Virginia School Screening Testing for Assurance (VISSTA), COVID-19 Screening Testing Program. The following are highlights of their presentation:

- VISSTA Covid Testing was developed by the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) and the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE).
- All of the necessary tests, resources and tools to implement testing are provided by the Commonwealth of Virginia. Screening testing provided as an additional layer to COVID-19 mitigation protocols.
- The goal is to test a group of people at regular intervals (at least weekly).
- PCR Testing is used to identify the viral genetic material of COVID-19. The testing is the gold standard for detecting an active infection. The test is processed in the lab with a turnaround time of 24-48 hours.
- The screening test consists of a nasal swab sample with test results in 24-48 hours. The test will be administered by a trained health care professional who will wear appropriate PPE. The nasal swabs are placed in testing cards after collection.
- The scenarios of the PCR Swab Test are:
 - Negative Results: staff member stays at school; no symptoms; fever free.
 - Positive Results: Once results are determined, the positive individual will isolate for ten days; Return if symptoms are improved.
- This is a voluntary program for staff; staff "opt in" by signing a consent form. This testing does not replace RCPS COVID-19 mitigation protocols in place.
- Chairman Lovell asked and received confirmation that the goal is to identify Covid positive persons quickly.
- Trustee Burant inquired if the program is for vaccinated as well as unvaccinated persons.
 - Dr. Crossman stated that the test is for those who are asymptomatic for early detection with the purpose is also to reaffirm that teachers and students are not positive.
 - Mr. Martino added that it will provide comfort for staff members and ease minds.
- Chairman Lovell inquired if it will be offered to students in the future.
 - Dr. Crossman stated that the VDOH and VDOE may offer it in the future.

ACTION ITEM: None

NEW BUSINESS: None

SCHOOL BOARD:

The next regular monthly meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be held on Tuesday, December 14, 2021 at 5:30 p.m. The meeting will be held at Maury River Middle School, 600 Waddell Street, Lexington, Virginia.

ADJOURNMENT:

Upon motion by Trustee Burant, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:43 p.m.


Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman


Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board