

The Rockbridge County School Board held a special meeting on Monday, November 15, 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.

Board of Supervisors Members Present: Leslie Ayers, R.W. Day, A.J. Lewis, II, D.E. Lyons; Spencer Suter, County Administrator and Clerk to Board. Absent: David McDaniel

CALL TO ORDER

School Board Chairman Lovell called the meeting to order at 5:05 p.m.

Chairman Lovell expressed her appreciation to the Board of Supervisors for meeting with the School Board to share what is known currently about the FY23 budget and Capital Improvement Projects.

FY23 BUDGET UPDATE

School Mandates and Priorities

Superintendent Thompson stated it is early in the budget season but there are known priorities to share with the Board of Supervisors early in the budget season.

Mr. Jason Kirby, Chief Business Officer, stated there are three main priorities at this point:

- Health Insurance: process has just begun with the hope of having numbers at the next Joint Meeting in January 2022.
- Minimum Wage Increase: Currently, the Virginia Minimum Wage is scheduled to increase to \$15.00 per hour by January 1, 2026 following a schedule that has been developed. This included estimate of costs to implement changes in Minimum Wage. The amount that the budget would increase for FY23 is \$69,867.49 for the increase to the state scheduled \$12 per hour.
- Employee Salaries: Rockbridge County Public Schools have begun to fall behind the middle in comparison to both surrounding school divisions and localities with a similar composite index. The ability to compete at the beginning steps where competition for early career teachers gets tougher each year.

Superintendent Thompson stated that there is not information at this point to have a detailed budget to share.

School Division Capital Improvement Projects (CIP)

Mr. Randy Walters, Chief Operations Officer, provided information on the Major Projects:

- FY22: CES and FES - HVAC jobs are nearing completion; Transportation Office – working with Quinn Evans to have designs which would allow the project to move forward to obtain building permits; RCHS – repair the football stadium concrete – project will begin the next week or so; District – phone system in the process of being upgraded.
- FY23: RCHS – replace visitor side bleachers – RCHS stadium complex; RCHS – Floyd S. Kay Building renovation
- FY24: no major projects
- FY25: CES and RCHS – construction of auxiliary gyms; RCHS – replace gym bleachers; NBE, MVE, and RCSBO – HVAC and parts replacement
- FY26: no major projects
- FY27: RCHS – tennis courts expansion and lights for B/S/T; junior parking lot paving; construction of concessions and restroom at B/S/T area; fieldhouse w/ locker rooms/remodel weight room, field turf at stadium
- FY28: no major projects
- FY29: RCHS – building renovations

County Budget Updates

Mr. Spencer Suter, Rockbridge County Administrator, stated that it is early in their budget process as well. The Board of Supervisors have adopted a budget schedule and budget priorities. The County Capital Improvements Plan call went out for all departments and agencies in October and it is currently being consolidated and will be given to their board soon. Consideration is being given to impacts that are known to come next year such as a mid-year salary adjustment made this year for public safety staff, which is happening all over the region. This adjustment was made to keep the current employees and to attract quality staff moving forward. A salary survey for the rest of the employees will be conducted. Consideration will be

given to the minimum wage mandate. One impact from the state is the initiative of the Marcus Alert, which helps mental health patients who know they may have a problem to be placed on a list so that if there a 911 call to their address, mental health workers would respond as well as law enforcement. He reflected that it is a great concept with a significant cost. On the revenue side, a reassessment is underway now and will impact the year FY24 with the tax rate and real estate tax. The admissions tax will take effect January 1, 2022 and moving forward incrementally for the next seven years. A cigarette tax will take effect on April 1, 2022, but the revenue impact will not be known for a year or two. He expressed his appreciation to the school division for the early information as it helps in their budget preparation.

- Chairman Lovell stated that the first budget work session took place on November 10 and that the school board will continue to communicate updates to the Board of Supervisors.

Superintendent Thompson stated that one positive note to begin the budget preparation is that VRS dropped approximately 2% lower than expected.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Whitmore, seconded by Trustee Burant and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 5:21 p.m.

Wendy W. Lovell
Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman

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