

The Rockbridge County School Board held a special meeting on Monday, November 27, 2017 at the Rockbridge County School Board Office.

Present: Chairman David McDaniel; Trustees Kevin Brooks, Wendy Lovell, Laurie Strong; Superintendent Phillip Thompson; Clerk Rhonda Humphries. Absent: Trustee Albert Lewis.

CALL TO ORDER

School Board Chairman McDaniel called the meeting to order at 4:42 p.m.

The purpose of the meeting was to conduct a Budget Work Session.

BUDGET WORK SESSION

Superintendent Thompson stated that he took direction from the last budget work session meeting and that central office staff has gathered figures and numbers. He stated that the budget overview is considered a draft of an early budget and cautioned that it is a work in progress.

Superintendent Thompson provided an overview of the budget priorities as developed by the board members and presented at the work session of October 10, 2017. FY19 budget considerations and associated cost estimations were presented as follows:

1. Budget Considerations:

- Virginia Retirement System (VRS) – Approximately \$102,000 potential savings:
The VRS Board of Trustees have certified an employer contribution rate of 15.68% for the teacher plan for the 2018-2020 biennium budget. This rate is lower than the General Assembly-approved FY2018 contribution rate of 16.32%. The General Assembly will need to vote when the new legislative session opens in January to officially set the VRS rate for the new biennium.
- VRS Associated Charges for Group Life and Health Care Credit – Approximately \$5,000 potential savings:
The General Assembly sets the new VRS associated rates for Group Life Insurance and Health Care Credit. The General Assembly will need to vote when the new legislative session opens in January in order to officially set these rates for the new biennium.
- Health Care Premium Increases - \$180,000:
The health insurance broker for Rockbridge County Public Schools is estimating an increase of approximately 10%. This increase does not account for any new participants electing to enroll in the health care plan provided by Rockbridge County Public Schools for the 2018-2019 school year.
- Property and Casualty Insurance – unknown at this time:
The rates have not yet been set for FY19 but the increase/decrease is, historically, minimal.

2. School Board FY19 Budget Priorities:

- Reduce funding for utilities in accordance with expected savings from performance contracting in the estimated amount of \$181,981.
- Reduce funding for maintenance supplies with expected savings from performance contracting in the estimated amount of \$30,941.
- Request Chromebook funding move from CIP escrow to operating budget in the estimated amount of \$40,355.
 - Jason Kirby, Director of Personnel and Technology, provided a status update and stated that he will provide a digital conversion presentation at the January 2018 meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board.
- Request funding for Instructional Technology Resource Teacher (ITRT) in the estimated amount of \$79,000.
- Employee salary increase:
Superintendent Thompson stated that Rockridge County Public Schools does not meet average salary expectations when compared to state salary averages, averages from school divisions “adjacent” to Rockbridge County, or averages from school divisions of similar size to Rockbridge County. Options for potential salary increases and their associated costs including estimations for required benefits – FICA, VRS, GLI, and HCC would be developed.

Superintendent Thompson stated that is important to note that the expenses for operating a public school division will continue to rise in future years and that teacher salaries must improve significantly for Rockbridge County in order to attract and retain highly qualified staff members. Comparisons with other school divisions in the region, having the same number of students and having similar "ability to pay" status as Rockbridge County, reflect that RCPS teacher salaries lag behind at every level.

Superintendent Thompson also stated that Rockbridge County High School, with the attached Floyd S. Kay Vocational Center, is in need of substantial renovations and expansion in order to provide adequate facilities to meet the needs for providing a 21st Century education.

Superintendent Thompson presented a FY19 Budget Preparation Tentative Schedule.

Chairman McDaniel expressed his appreciation for the good information, good discussion and requested that Superintendent Thompson notify the board when to schedule the next budget work session once all requested data is complete.

ADJOURNMENT

Upon motion by Trustee Brooks, seconded by Trustee Lovell, and passed by 4-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 6:22 p.m.



David B. McDaniel, Chairman

Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board