

The Rockbridge County School Board held their regular meeting on Tuesday, December 10, 2019 at the County of Rockbridge Administration Building.

Present: Chairman Wendy Lovell; Trustees Corey Berkstresser, Heather Hostetter, David McDaniel, and Neil Whitmore; Superintendent Phillip Thompson and Clerk Rhonda Humphries.

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Lovell called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**CHANGES TO THE AGENDA:** None

**RECOGNITION / SPECIAL PRESENTATION:**

- Ms. Diane Secord, Principal, Fairfield Elementary School, provided information on the WATCH D.O.G.S. Program at FES, which stands for Dads Of Great Students. The FES PTO paid a lifetime registration in the spring of 2019 to the WATCH D.O.G.S. Program in hopes to provide more volunteers to engage with students. The program was developed in 1998 in Arizona to promote family involvement and to improve student performance because it involves parents' initiative in a students' education. Ms. Secord stated that there are currently twenty men who volunteer in the program, not just dads but other family and community members. She stated that there are two main goals of the program: 1) to be a positive role model for students and to show support for education; 2) and to be an extra set of eyes to help to provide a safe and secure environment for the students of Fairfield Elementary School. A WATCH D.O.G.S. dinner was held in the fall for men and students with over 100 people in attendance. The Top Dog is Gary McCormick, who was unable to attend the meeting. She expressed her appreciation to the volunteers of Fairfield Elementary School and introduced five men who shared their experience in participating in the program at Fairfield Elementary School: Jason Kirby, Ben Marshall, Robert Merchant, Steve Secord, and Timothy McLain. Ms. Secord also expressed her appreciation to the work force for allowing the parents' time off during the day to participate in the program at Fairfield Elementary School, which makes the program successful.
- Superintendent Thompson stated that the school division greatly values when employees go on to extend their education, especially for advanced degrees. He recognized Dr. Mike Craft, Principal, Rockbridge County High School, who recently successfully defended his dissertation from Liberty University. Superintendent Thompson stated that this is a huge success for Dr. Craft, as well as the school division and offered his congratulations.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:**

One patron addressed the board on behalf of the Rockbridge Historical Society in announcing the upcoming History Bee that will be held on March 28, 2020. It is a free event for the high school students of Rockbridge County and will offer cash prizes.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Upon recommendation by Chairman Lovell, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, the board approved the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes: 1) October 29, 2019 [Public Hearing]; 2) October 29, 2019 [Special Meeting]; 3) November 12, 2019 [Regular Meeting]; 4) November 14, 2019 [Joint Meeting with Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors]; 5) December 2, 2019 [Discipline Committee Hearing]
- Field Trip and Bus Use Requests
- Fundraiser Requests
- Application for Use of Facilities
- Enrollment Update
- **Appointments and Resignations**

**Support Staff**

Cynthia Duffield, Teacher Assistant, Natural Bridge Elementary School

Ruth Coleman, Food Service Worker, Mountain View Elementary School

Gail Nickerson, Food Service Worker, Maury River Middle School, time sheet

William Woodward, from Substitute Bus Driver to Contracted Bus Driver,

Transportation Department, effective December 2, 2019

**Substitute Teacher**

Autumn Jenkins  
Bridget Marshall

**Winter Coaches****Rockbridge County High School****Wrestling**

William Valdespino, Volunteer Coach

**Swim**

Elle Boyd, Assistant Swim Coach

**Resignations****Professional Staff****Retirement**

Sue Seaman, Teacher, Rockbridge County High School, retiring end of 2019-2020 school year

- **Business Items**

- Approval for debt service payments in the amount of \$515,453.38 due January 15, 2020 to US Bank for Rockbridge County Public School VPSA bonds.
- Approval for new grant appropriations to Fund 50 in the amount of \$17,156.00.
- Approve Monthly Financials in the amount of \$2,811,562.95

**BUDGET PLANNING:**

Dr. Thompson stated that the work continues to gather data to help establish priorities. The Governor is scheduled to release his budget on December 17, 2019. Once the General Assembly is back in session, the work begins to combine the Governor's budget, Senate budget, and House budget into one budget.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS: None****INSTRUCTIONAL REPORT: None****INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

Mr. Billy Thomas, Principal, Maury River Middle School, and Candace Kincaid, School Counselor, Maury River Middle School provided an overview of the projected Program of Studies for the 2020-2021 school year. This will be presented as Action Item at the January meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board.

- Chairman Lovell expressed her concern that one of the three CTE courses removed for the 2020-2021 school year was "Introduction to the Virginia Teaching for Tomorrow".
  - Mr. Thomas stated that staffing is an issue for the programs. He noted that it had been the hope to be a feeder school for the program at Rockbridge County High School.
  - Chairman Lovell stated that while attending the VSBA Convention, the teacher shortage was addressed frequently. She expressed appreciation that "Introduction to the Virginia Teaching for Tomorrow" is offered at Rockbridge County High School.
  - Mr. Thomas further stated that there are endorsed teachers who can teach the program but who would have to be pulled from another program.

**ACTION ITEMS:**

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board approved the Rockbridge County High School Program of Studies for 2020-2021.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Hostetter, seconded by Trustee Whitmore, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board approved the FY21 Legislative Priorities.

- Dr. Thompson stated that the School Board will meet with Delegate Campbell on December 12, 2019, with a focus of conversation being what is important for the Rockbridge County School System. Dr. Thompson stated that the Legislative Priorities will also be shared with Senator Creigh Deeds. A meeting was not scheduled with Senator Deeds this year due to scheduling conflicts.

Upon recommendation by Superintendent Thompson, motion by Trustee Berkstresser, seconded by Trustee Hostetter, and passed by a 5-0 vote, the Board approved the Rockbridge Church Lease to run from January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2020.

**NEW BUSINESS:**

Chairman Lovell stated that David McDaniel has served on the Rockbridge County School Board since 2012, noting that he has served as Vice-Chairman for two years, Chair for three years, Discipline Committee, Finance Committee, Capital Improvements Committee, and the Executive Committee. She stated that she has served with Trustee McDaniel for four years and expressed that he has been an incredible leader on the Rockbridge County School Board and that they look forward to him taking his leadership skills on to the Rockbridge County Board of Supervisors. Chairman Lovell presented Trustee McDaniel with a picture of the six schools of Rockbridge County.

Trustee McDaniel expressed his sentiment stated that it has been an honor and a privilege to represent the Natural Bridge District and to work with absolute professionals on the School Board, administrators, school administration, all the staff and employees, reflecting that it has been very rewarding to serve as a school board member.

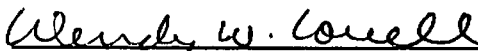
**SCHOOL BOARD**

The next regular meeting of the Rockbridge County School Board will be on Tuesday, January 14, 2020 / 5:00 PM / Location: County of Rockbridge Administration Building, 150 South Main Street, Lexington, Virginia.

The Rockbridge County School Board will participate in Virginia School Boards Association Training on January 24, 2020.

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Trustee Whitmore, seconded by Trustee Hostetter, and passed by 5-0 vote, the meeting was adjourned at 5:31 p.m.

  
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Wendy W. Lovell, Chairman

  
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Rhonda B. Humphries, Clerk of the Board