

**Giles County Public Schools
School Board Meeting
NEWS RELEASE
January 24, 2008**

Dr. Terry E. Arbogast, II

Division Superintendent

***Pledge of Allegiance**

The School Board Chairman led the group in the Pledge of Allegiance.

***Organizational Meeting - 2008**

- JB Buckland was appointed as School Board Chairman for 2008.
- Ronald Whitehead was appointed Vice-Chairman for 2008.
- The Board set the third Thursday of each month as the Board meeting day.
- Amanda Price was appointed School Board Clerk for 2008.
- Barbara Perkins and Dr. Terry Arbogast, II were appointed Deputy Clerks for 2008.

***Public Comments - General**

Sonya Meekins attended the board meeting on behalf of the GEA. She stated that she was there to present the GEA's salary proposal to the board. She presented the School Board members with a handout regarding the proposal that she discussed. Ms. Meekins stated that she was looking for the rebenchmark money this year. The proposed 2008-09 teacher salary scale included the following: restructured salary scale with 1.9% index, target scale continues improvement of mid-career and senior staff salaries, starting salary increased to \$34,000, master's supplement is calculated as 6.25% of BA salary, and the longevity supplement would be raised to \$2,000. Mrs. Meekins stated that rebenchmarking only occurs every two years, so this was the golden opportunity to increase the teacher salary scale.

Britt Stoudenmire, member of the Concerned Citizens of Giles County, introduced their attorney, Mr. John Robertson, to speak in opposition to the Cumberland Park Project. Mr. Buckland stated that normally it is the practice of the School Board to have our attorney present if another attorney is going to be present, but he told Mr. Robertson he could speak since he was there. Mr. Robertson stated that he would be brief in his remarks. Mr. Robertson thanked the School Board members for the opportunity to speak at the meeting. He stated that he has been retained by a number of the Giles County Concerned Citizens and told the School Board members that they had the opportunity to make a mistake if the project was not stopped. Mr. Robertson would like the School Board to vote against the project and he was there to persuade them to do that. He stated that he was not at the meeting to throw a legal argument, but was there to provide a human argument. Mr. Robertson has examined the documentation from the Giles County Partnership and asked the School Board to have more direct authority over the Partnership instead of having the School Board attorney work so much with the Giles County Partnership attorney. He closed by stating that he was not asking the School Board members to condemn the project, but he was asking them to "do good."

Britt Stoudenmire, member of the Concerned Citizens of Giles County, spoke in opposition to the Cumberland Park Project. He began by stating that he helped to elect our School Board members and wanted to know when the School Board is going to address the Partnership for violating the Public School Foundation. He then stated that it was not right for the School Board attorney to be coinciding with the Partnership attorney. Mr. Stoudenmire stated that according to a figure from the Roanoke Times, there was 200 tons of fly ash produced each day. He stated that the Partnership may get approximately \$6 million dollars per year by dumping the fly ash. He questioned why the School Board denies that they receive funds from the Partnership. Mr. Stoudenmire stated, "What educational purpose is being served by dumping fly ash at Cumberland Park?" He also had a question concerning the original articles of incorporation stating that the members on the Partnership board were supposed to be elected and stated that they weren't. Mr. Stoudenmire stated that he has received two sets of by-laws from the Partnership and there were several things altered. He wanted to know whether the School Board has reviewed the by-laws that were altered. He stated that the Partnership is clearly a public school foundation. Mr. Buckland stated that at no time did he say that the funds from the Cumberland Park Project were going to fund the Giles Tech Center. He stated that he had no knowledge that any funds were going to be used at the Tech Center.

Mrs. Lawanda Robertson asked Mr. Butch Mullins if he remembered what the intent of the Partnership was when it was started. Mr. Mullins stated that to the best of his knowledge, it was not the intent of the Partnership to be overseen by the Giles County School Board when it was formed.

Mr. Jim McGrath, member of the Concerned Citizens of Giles County, spoke in opposition to the Cumberland Park Project. He stated that in his opinion, coal combustion by-products should be handled appropriately. He stated that by dumping fly ash at Cumberland Park, it will cause property values to decrease, the contamination will lead to sickness and death, and also stated that the cleanup costs would be overwhelming if the fly ash went into the New River. He questioned why the new set of by-laws did not have a date on them. In addition, he presented the School Board Clerk with a FOIA request for all reports reviewing the financial transactions made by the corporation and reported to the School Board of Giles County annually on October 31st from 1991 to 2007.

Mr. Tom Hoffman, member of the Concerned Citizens of Giles County, spoke in opposition to the Cumberland Park Project. He wanted to encourage the School Board to put a hold on the project until people can see what is going on. He stated that fly ash can create a liability and in turn, can cause cancer.

Mrs. McMahon stated that she really did not know about the by-laws until she received a copy of them on December 13th. She read over some information on page 5 of the by-laws where it discussed that the School Board should approve projects from the Giles County Partnership. Mr. Buckland stated that the by-laws were never approved, nor have any projects ever been approved to his knowledge. Mrs. McMahon stated that she had never received a signature page to the by-laws. Dr. Arbogast stated that he had never seen a signature page. Mrs. McMahon then made a motion to put the Cumberland Park Project on hold until the School Board could figure out how they were affiliated with the Partnership. There was no second on the floor, so the motion died. Mrs. McMahon then read information that was contained in the Articles of Incorporation from the Partnership, stating that the School Board was responsible for appointing 5 members to be on the Board of Directors for the Partnership. She stated that the School Board had never done that to the best of her knowledge. She then made a motion to put the Cumberland Park Project on hold until the School Board could elect 5 members to the Board of Directors of the Partnership. There was no second on the floor, so the motion died.

Mr. Danny Robertson stated that Mrs. McMahon had read the legal aspects of the Articles of Incorporation and the by-laws, so the School Board should put the project on hold until things can be figured out.

Dr. Webb stated that his vision was that the Partnership was a completely separate entity in itself, especially if you talk to Dr. McCracken.

Mr. Danny Robertson wanted to know why the by-laws of the Partnership state that 5 directors need to be appointed to the Partnership from the School Board.

Mrs. Leigh Stoudenmire asked the board members if they received the letter from DEQ and they told her that they had. She also asked the School Board members, "Do you not take control of the Partnership?" She suggested that the School Board members contact the tax department.

In a discussion regarding whether the Partnership has ever given the school system money, Dr. Arbogast stated that to his knowledge some Elementary teachers were paid stipends out of the Va. Tobacco Settlement Grants (for Positive Action training) and the Partnership has provided funding to the school system for the New River Connection newsletter done each spring. Otherwise, he was not aware of any other funding that the Partnership provided the school system.

***Educational Feature – Giles High School**

Mrs. Jeannie Layton-Dudding, Mr. Greg Brown, Wyatt Hall, Nicole Stump, Shelley Patton, and Courtney Price attended the board meeting to present the Giles High School educational feature. Mr. Brown first thanked the School Board members for recognizing the drama club. Mrs. Dudding is the sponsor of the FFA program and also an Agriculture Teacher at Giles High School. She was very excited to be able to attend the board meeting to share the accomplishments of the FFA and Agriculture program at Giles High

School. She stated that there are over a half million FFA members in this country. Wyatt Hall, current President of the FFA, spoke about the program of activities for the FFA, which included Student, Chapter, and Community Development. Student Development consists of Area/State Leadership Conferences, Career Development Events, State/National Conventions, Stars of the Six Weeks (honor roll), Ag-Olympics, Officer Training Retreat, Scholarship Awards, Degree Pins, and Chapter Banquets. Chapter Development activities include Recruitment, Financial Stability, Public Relations, Leadership, Homecoming Parade, Pumpkin Party/Holiday Dinner, FFA Week Celebrations, Member Appreciation Breakfast, Adventure World Skating Trip, Big Buck Contest, and Fundraising. A few activities for Community Development include Hunters for the Hungry, Adopt a Highway, Canned Food Drive, Pet Food Drive, Operation GHS, PALS, Faculty/Staff Appreciation Breakfast, Angel Tree, and the Milk Machine that was put in at Giles High School. Next, Nicole Stump, current Treasurer for the FFA program, spoke on how the FFA has helped her realize what she needed and what she wanted to do when she grows up. She is now able to help more on the farm and drive a tractor. She has been able to attend many FFA events. Shelley Patton, a 2007 graduate of Giles High School, came back this year to support horse judging. The horse judging team consists of Tara Hughes, Josh McCann, Shelley Patton, and Kala Smith. Shelley has been able to travel all over Virginia, North Carolina, and Tennessee to practice and compete. She has been able to see many states and it has been a great experience for everyone. FFA has really affected her career path because she is now enrolled in the Ag Tech program at Virginia Tech. Courtney Price, former Giles High School graduate and FFA member, spoke on FFA and how it had an impact on her. She is a current student at New River Community College and plans to pursue her four year degree at Virginia Tech in the Ag program. She discussed the livestock judging team which consists of Wyatt Hall, Amy Henderson, Josh McCann, and Courtney Price. Mrs. Dudding concluded by stating that "We are the FFA... We are the Future."

Board members commended Mrs. Dudding and her students on such a wonderful presentation!

***Presentations**

On behalf of the Professional Advisory Council, the following were nominated for their Outstanding Efforts and Continued Support: Rose Jennings – MMS Bus Driver, Art Terrill – MMS Bus Driver, Erin Lucas – MMS Teacher, Cecilia Peyton – MMS Teacher, Amy Gervich – MMS Teacher, Brenda Smith – NHS Guidance Clerk, Michelle Robertson – NEMS Teacher, Larry Marion – GHS Drama Club, Barbara Scheid – GHS Drama Club, Kristin Radford – GHS Drama Club, Tammy Barnett – EEMS School Nurse

The Giles High School Drama Club students were recognized for their hard work and dedication.

***School Board Approves Consent Items**

- Meeting Minutes – December 13, 2007
- Special Meeting Minutes – December 19, 2007
- Bills in the amount of \$ 623,841.76
- Payroll, December 21st, 2007 and January 15th, 2008
- Revenue for December 2007
- Expenditure for December 2007
- Appropriation Request for February 2008

***The School Board Approves/Confirms Personnel/Contractual Items**

The School Board confirmed the following **Employment:** Transfer of Nikki Pynn from GHS Itinerant Art position to NHS Art position, Patricia Pennington – NEMS Special Education Teacher (effective January 3, 2008)

The School Board confirmed the following **Retirement:** Doris Lynch – GHS Math Teacher (effective end of 07-08 school year), Rusty Kelley – GHS P.E. Teacher (effective end of 07-08 school year)

The School Board confirmed the following **Resignation:** Andrea Martin – NHS Art Teacher (contingent upon a suitable replacement being found)

The School Board confirmed all **Substitute Teachers to Date.**

The School Board confirmed the following **Substitute Custodian**: Travis Bugg (NHS Student – Senior)

***School Board and School Staff Present Comments and Mission Statement Accomplishments**

A board member wished Mr. Whitehead a Happy Birthday!

A board member asked the Superintendent whether the School Resource Officers follow up on absentees of students and the Superintendent stated that they did.

A board member asked whether all of the carbon monoxide detectors have went up and the Superintendent stated that they have to the best of his knowledge.

Board members commended the wonderful educational feature provided by Giles High School.

***In Other Action**

The School Board approved the **Employment** of Lauren Green – GHS Itinerant Art Teacher (effective January 17, 2008).

The School Board confirmed the **Retirement** of Roger Fisher – GHS Bus Driver (effective January 11, 2008).

The School Board approved an additional check run in the amount of \$70,831.75.

The School Board approved the minutes of the January 10, 2008 joint work session.

The School Board approved the Melissa Lawrence Mann Memorial Scholarship in the amount of \$500 to a Narrows High School senior.

The School Board approved an additional check run in the amount of \$17,003.97.

The School Board approved the **Retirement** of Connie McCall – EEMS Librarian (effective end of 07-08 school year).

The School Board approved the **Resignation** of Rodney Croy – NEMS Custodian (effective February 2, 2008).

The School Board approved the 2008-2009 school calendar as recommended by the calendar committee. The Superintendent shared concerns with the School Board from the calendar committee. The Superintendent shared with the School Board members that ultimately, the calendar committee would like to have the four hour early release on the last day of first semester, but if the feeling from the School Board is still the need for a full day, then they would like to go ahead and get the calendar approved. The Superintendent also shared with the School Board members that they felt that they were losing one full day of instruction time in January and adding one in June, which would not be as effective since SOL tests are over.

***Next School Board Meeting**

The next regular School Board meeting will be **Thursday, February 21st at 4:00 p.m.** in conjunction with the School Board Retreat.