

**September 15, 2022**

The regular meeting of the Giles County School Board was held on September 15, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the School Administration Office Building Conference Room. Persons present were:

Jason B. Buckland  
Melissa R. Guynn  
Stephen M. Steele  
Mark A. Wilburn

Dr. Terry E. Arbogast II, Superintendent  
Lisa G. Mustain, Asst. Supt. for Curriculum

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman.

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

The Board, on motion of Mr. Buckland, with second by Mrs. Guynn and unanimous voting, approved the Superintendent's September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022 School Board Meeting Agenda.

#### **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Mr. Todd Lusk attended the meeting to discuss the issue of consolidation. He asked Mr. Steele to give them an accurate update on the status of this. He stated the importance of Narrows High School and it being like a family. He stated that it was also always stressful feeling like they needed to prove themselves that their school should remain open. He said he could never be more proud to be from the Narrows community.

Mr. Steele discussed the process that they were in now with renovating the buildings. He stated that they are trying to find out which contracting partner they are going to use no matter what decision they make. We are in dire need to fix HVAC and roofs at the schools. Mr. Steele stated that there was a list of questions that is in the process of being answered as to how it would affect decisions. He wants to make sure we have all the proper information to make decisions. He stated that unless population drastically changes, he doesn't know how we can continue to support two high schools. This board has to make a choice to spend money on two high schools, a middle school option, just one high school, etc. Mr. Buckland stated that they have asked Dr. Arbogast to answer and present questions at the next work session to help the board make the proper decisions. They want to be able to give everyone viable options based on information gathered. He stated that he was in the understanding that regardless of what decision was made, that all schools would be used and that no one school would be closed. Mr. Wilburn stated that he would speak later on the benefits of having a middle school and the options that would be available.

Mr. Chucky Buracker spoke regarding the school buildings and the county wide facility study. He would like to see all of the cost figures that were redacted when given to him. He stated that taxpayers should be able to see this. He asked whether anyone from the school board office went around with the company to look at these buildings? Mr. Steele stated that county maintenance went around with the company. He would like to be able to have more options and data. Mr. Buckland stated that he also thinks that the public should be able to see the cost information provided in the facilities study.

Mr. Joe Goorskey attended the meeting to discuss the issue of consolidation and renovation. He stated that he has been told that a decision/vote would be made in the next 6 – 8 months regarding consolidation and renovation. He stated that it is such a short amount of time to be able to make decisions regarding these matters with the amount of information provided. He discussed student/teacher ratios if consolidation were to happen and the quality of education our kids would get if we had higher class sizes. Mr. Wilburn stated that he had great questions. He stated that he would like to meet with our educators and principals to get answers to Mr. Goorskey's questions. Mrs. Guynn stated that it is news to her that a decision would be made in 6-8 months. She is not aware of that happening. Mr. Steele stated that it was him that would like to see a decision made in that time frame. He would like to keep things moving with the renovations that need to be done. Mr. Buckland stated that he is hopeful to start renovations at Macy McLaugherty soon. He stated that he understands Mr. Steele's sense of urgency from his point of view, but he said this process needs to be deliberate.

Mrs. Sabrina Gautier attended the meeting to ask the board questions about budgetary items and discussed putting money aside to pay for projects. She stated that we should be budgeting money for projects. Mr. Buckland stated that we have had a lot of carry over due to COVID and the county has been very generous to allow them to carry over these funds. Mrs. Gautier stated that she doesn't understand why we can't budget money to cover projects. Mr. Buckland stated that right now we have funds, but in a couple years, we may not be in the same shape we are now. Mrs. Gautier stated that if GHS was going to shut down and they were going to lose jobs, the place here

would be full. Mr. Wilburn stated that he doesn't think anyone would lose job. She stated that if we can build units on to Giles High School, then we can do the same to GHS. She recommended making the Tech Center a middle school and building another Tech Center that the whole community can benefit from.

Mrs. Jane Garrett attended the meeting to also discuss her concern with the proposed absorption/consolidation. She stated that this is a huge decision that needs to be evaluated at all angles and should not be made quickly. She expressed the negative impacts this would have on the students including academics and sports. She respectfully asked that this matter be fully researched before making a decision.

Ms. Tessa Davis, NHS Student, attended the meeting to express her feelings about consolidation. She expressed her love for the tight knit Narrows community, her school, her coaches and her friends and stated what she envisioned when graduating from Narrows High School. She also stated they really have something at NHS that no one would really understand.

Ms. Becky Holmes attended the meeting to share information on the topic of consolidation. She discussed many questions that she had after looking at the facilities study and the six-year plan. She stated that the most recent research she has done did not support a middle school or consolidation. She presented many research articles to board members to review and asked them to explore other options, other than consolidation or a middle school.

Mrs. Sara Bowles attended the meeting to speak regarding the topic of consolidation. She expressed her concerns with closing Narrows High School or making it a middle school. She stated that tearing out the heart and spirit of the community would have devastating impacts. She asked board members what the benefits of having a middle school is and what their research says. She encouraged board members to reach out to middle school educators on this topic. She is very concerned with the timing of this, especially since we are still dealing with the many effects of COVID. She stated that this decision must be a decision that will be best for all students and each community.

Mrs. Carolyn Kirby also attended to speak on the topic of consolidation. She stated that she is a proud alumnus of Narrows High School. She stated that larger schools do not always provide the answer and that smaller schools give children greater opportunities to participate in extracurricular activities. Other examples were given as to why larger schools/classrooms are not the answer. She stated that rebranding is an astronomical cost.

Mrs. Amanda Moser also attended to speak on the topic of consolidation. She discussed her concerns with having larger class sizes. She stated that her child has flourished with smaller class sizes. She said this would affect many children and stated that not as many individuals would get to play sports. She stated that with bigger schools, there is an increase in drug use and teen pregnancy.

#### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT ITEMS**

The Board, on motion of Mr. Buckland, with second by Mr. Wilburn and unanimous voting, accepted the Superintendent's recommendation to approve the following consent items:

#### **A. Meeting Minutes**

1. Regular – August 11<sup>th</sup>, 2022

#### **B. Financial Data**

1. Payrolls
2. Payment of Bills
3. August 2022 Revenue & Expenditure Reports
4. Surplus
5. Field Trips
6. Appropriation Request for October 2022

TO: Christopher McKlarney  
Interim Administrator for Giles County

RE: October 2022 Appropriation

The following is the appropriation request for the months of October, 2022. This is for the fourth month of the fiscal year 2022-2023. I would appreciate the Board's consideration of this request. The request for the operating budget is consistent with the approved operating budget submitted by the School Board.

<b>Original Monthly Appropriation Request:</b>	<b>\$ 2,325,000.00</b>
<b>(Operating + Flow-thru)</b>	
ESSR III Funding - NEMS HVAC	\$ 455,393.90
<b>Total:</b>	<b>\$ 2,780,393.90</b>

This request is one-twelfth of the operating budget and includes the anticipated monthly expenditures in the flow-thru account. Our year to date appropriation and expenditures are contained in the monthly summary.

#### **SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT**

- A. The Superintendent recommended action and Board approval of the following personnel/contractual items:
1. The School Board, on motion of Mr. Buckland, with second by Mr. Pennington and unanimous voting, confirmed the following **Employment**: Transfer of Karen Buzzo from MMS Teacher Assistant to NEMS Assistant, Sara Ferguson – NEMS Teacher Assistant (9/6/22), Karen Hale – EEMS Teacher Assistant (9/6/22)
  2. The School Board, on motion of Mrs. Guynn, with second by Mr. Buckland and unanimous voting, confirmed the following **Athletic Coaching Contracts**: Alicia Lane – NHS Head Cross Country, Austin Cooper – GHS Asst. Varsity Football Coach, Bryan Strader – Varsity Football Assistant, Sam Wright – GHS JV Asst. Football, Jackie Evans – GHS Varsity Football Assistant, Jeff Williams – GHS Varsity Football Head Coach, Benji Ratcliffe – GHS Grounds Keeper, Steve Wilson – GHS JV Head Football, Ricky Cook – GHS Varsity Asst. Football, Tim Munsey – GHS JV Football Asst., Scott Moye – GHS Golf Head Coach, Julia Scott – GHS Spirit Squad, Julia Scott – GHS Cheerleading Coach, Darrell Lucas – GHS Head Cross Country, Heather Ursano – NHS Theatre Coach, Kelcie Lowe – NHS Asst. Volleyball, Chris Helvey – NHS JV Football, Dakota Shrader – NHS Off. Coord. Varsity Football, Josh Sparks – NHS Boys Golf, Kristen Williams – NHS Middle School Volleyball, Shanda Green – NHS JV Volleyball, Sherry Duncan – NHS Head Volleyball, Ethan Lowe – NHS Asst. JV Football, Clyde Turner – NHS Asst. Varsity Football, Bradley Sutphin – NHS Asst. Varsity Football, Ben Woodyard – NHS Asst. Varsity Football, Kelly Lowe – NHS Head Varsity Football, Jon Bowman – Asst. Varsity Football
  3. The School Board, on motion of Mr. Wilburn, with second by Mrs. Guynn and unanimous voting (**Mr. Buckland abstained**), confirmed the following **Volunteer Agreements**: Bruce Frazier – GHS General, McCreery Mann – NHS Football, Bryan Long – NHS Football, Jason Buckland – NHS Football, Jeff Turner – NHS Football, Courtney Whitt – NHS Volleyball, Alvin McGuire – NHS Football, Rodney Perdue – NHS Football, Matthew Mullins – NHS Football, Brian McGuire – NHS Football, Debbie Green – NEMS General, Alicia Lane – NHS Cross Country, Daphne Huffman – NEMS General,
  4. The School Board, on motion of Mr. Buckland, with second by Mr. Wilburn and unanimous voting, approved the following **Resignations**: Sherry Mullins – EEMS Teacher Assistant (8/26/22), Kellan Alls – MMS Teacher Assistant (8/30/2022)
  7. The School Board, on motion of Mrs. Guynn, with second by Mr. Wilburn and unanimous voting, approved the 2022-2023 Substitute List to Date.
- B. The School Board, on motion of Mr. Buckland, with second by Mrs. Guynn and unanimous voting, approved policy revisions as recommended by VSBA and Administration.

#### **CONCERNS/COMMENTS...**

Dr. Arbogast stated that enrollment as of yesterday was 2,182 students in person, 21 full time virtual for a total of 2,203. Also, we have 1,172 Stride virtual nonresidential students.

Dr. Arbogast gave an update on the NEMS HVAC project. The plan is to do test and balancing by mid next week. The next progress meeting will be the 27<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Arbogast discussed the bonus payments for employees. He stated that we have 376 current contracted employees. We would use the October 31<sup>st</sup> payroll for contracted employees and do the bonus on November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Dr. Arbogast stated that they met with ZMM to review the NHS tennis court. There are a few items that need addressed and he is waiting to hear back.

Dr. Arbogast reminded board members that they will be meeting with ESCO's on October 6<sup>th</sup> all day.

Dr. Arbogast had a discussion with board members regarding the substitute bus driver pay. He shared a letter from Nedra Thorn regarding the substitute pay. Dr. Brown met with the Bus Advisory Committee here recently and discussed increasing the pay for sub drivers from \$35 per trip to \$50 per trip. The consensus from them was that this would be helpful for the recruitment of drivers. Mr. Buckland made a motion to increase the substitute bus driver pay from \$35/trip to \$50/trip, effective September 16<sup>th</sup> forward. Mr. Wilburn seconded the motion with unanimous voting.

Mr. Buckland stated that he has had people to request later board meeting times. Dr. Arbogast shared this would be difficult to have educational features at later board meeting times.

Mrs. Guynn thanked everyone for coming to the board meeting and for their input and passion. We are going to look at everything and make a decision that is best for our kids and community.

Mrs. Guynn thanked our teachers and the rest of our staff. It seems like we have had a great start to the school year. Sports programs are up and running well! Also, a special thanks to our bus drivers for getting our kids to school and sporting events. She also appreciates the cafeteria workers and central office for all of their hard work.

Mr. Wilburn stated that he would like to set up a time with administrators to discuss class sizes, space and scheduling. He stated that they will look at all the data and see what's best for the kids before making a decision. He also thanked everyone for coming to the board meeting to share their thoughts.

Mr. Wilburn thanked all of our staff for all they do!

Mr. Buckland stated that it would be great to hear from administrators, but he would like to have the Superintendent compile information from them. He thanked all the individuals that attended the meeting to voice their opinion.

Mr. Buckland stated that he thinks they have had a great start to the school year. He thanked parents for being patient with the HVAC project at NEMS.

Mr. Steele also thanked all of our staff for all they do. Mr. Steele commended Mr. Simmons at Macy for the great start to the school year.

Mr. Steele commended the individuals who attended the board meeting for their tone and comments.

#### **IN OTHER ACTION...**

The School Board, on motion of Mr. Buckland, with second by Mr. Wilburn and unanimous voting, approved the following Employment: Cafeteria Worker – Wendy Cox King.

**NEXT SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**

The next regular School Board meeting will be held Thursday, October 20<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m.

The Chairman, on motion of Mr. Wilburn, with second by Mrs. Guynn and unanimous voting, adjourned the meeting.

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Chairman

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Clerk