

March 14, 2017

A special convened meeting of the Giles County School Board was held at 3:30 PM on March 14th, 2017 in the School Administration Office Building. Persons present were:

Marion C. Ballard
Eric G. Gentry
Drema K. McMahon
Stephen M. Steele
Mark A. Wilburn

Dr. Terry E. Arbogast II, Superintendent
Amanda J. Tickle, Clerk

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman. On motion of Mr. Wilburn, with second by Mr. Ballard and unanimous voting, approved the agenda.

Chris Hurst, who is running for the Virginia House of Delegates, attended the work session to speak with the board members about their needs in Giles County. He stated that he was intrigued by Giles County. He would like to see what he can do in our school system as far as community service. He asked Dr. Arbogast to put together a list of volunteer activities that he could do.

Board members shared concerns/positives with Mr. Hurst about our school system. Mr. Gentry stated that we need more cash flow to have a quality education for our kids. He stated that he would love to be able to count preschool students in with our ADM number. Mrs. McMahon stated that we used to have grants for School Resource Officers and Nurses and now we don't have that, but we still keep the resource officers and nurses in our schools for our students. Mr. Ballard stated that we really have a lot of medically fragile kids in our school systems.

Mr. Hurst asked the board what the numbers for VRS were and if you wanted to take the 2% raise for SOQ positions and give it to all staff. VRS rates are increasing from 14.66% to 16.32%. Dr. Arbogast stated that the 2% raise would be approximately \$340,000. The state says they will give about \$80,000 in February 2018. Mr. Hurst stated that the SOQ formula needs to be updated. Dr. Arbogast stated that for the last several years, we have combined services with the county on many different things to help with cost.

Mr. Hurst stated that there are some great opportunities and possibilities for this County. Board members stated that we have some great programs here in our school system. The increase in health insurance premiums was also discussed. Upcoming capital improvements were also discussed with Mr. Hurst.

Mr. W.R. Johnston attended to discuss his idea about a possible savings for our school system. He would like to see the school system pay for Medicare for employees 65 and older. The quote he received for a top of the line plan for Medicare is around \$350 dollars. He stated that this would save about \$200 per month per employee that would qualify for Medicare. He is hoping that the rates would decrease if some of the older people come off of the insurance. Board members stated that they will look into this and talk with Barbara.

The board began their discussion on budget. Dr. Arbogast passed out the proposed budget to the board. He discussed e-rate information, insurance (proposing a \$560 cap because of the increase in premiums), increasing librarian contracts, increasing contract for STEM coordinator, Technology network administrator (replacement to train with Mr. Young), debt service reduction, salary scales, etc. Current teachers will get a flat rate raise based on their years of experience, but new teacher hires would go on a salary scale. Board members stated that it is hard to maintain a salary scale if you don't have money. Mr. Wilburn stated that he thinks we need to include the athletic directors for an increase. Dr. Arbogast stated that we don't have any increases currently in the budget for athletic directors or coaching. Mrs. McMahon thinks that we can add it and if we have to cut it, we can. Mrs. McMahon highly recommended giving coaches an increase in pay. Right now, the School Board will be requesting \$381K from the county.

Dr. Arbogast discussed a couple possible retirement incentives. One incentive is to get 50% of their salary and work 50 days. The other incentive is to receive 30% of their salary and work no days. Dr. Arbogast will meet with Mr. McKlarney to see if the county board is willing to help out with this.

Mrs. McMahon asked Dr. Arbogast if he had given any thought of a way to help out the principals so they can spend more time in the classrooms. Dr. Arbogast stated that there is nothing in the proposed budget for an assistant principal. Mrs. McMahon asked if there was a way to get creative so they can get some help.

Mr. Gentry asked if we had thought about bringing in an outside firm to do some of the work in regards to the network/technology position for the school system. There is a guy in Blacksburg that would come in and do a free review of what he could do. He stated that it is a little scary to not have a backup if something were to happen to our Network Administrator. Dr. Arbogast stated that his concern is that it is a company and they don't know education and we need to be able to have access to an individual so they can address any issues that

Minutes – March 14, 2017

Page 2

arise as quickly as possible. Dr. Arbogast stated that this may discourage the individuals in our system that may be interested. Mr. Gentry stated that if there is money savings in it, he thinks we need to investigate it. Board members stated that they feel like Mr. Gentry should call and see what they say and what they can offer us. This would not be a replacement; this would be a safety valve/support until we get replacements for Mr. Young.

Mr. Gentry asked if there was a possibility to combine the bookkeeper and secretary at Narrows High School. Is there an opportunity to make this a “combo” position? He’s not saying he wants to advocate it, but just looking at it as a possible money savings. Mrs. McMahon thinks it would be a good idea to check with the current secretary at Narrows Elementary/Middle to see if it is even an option. Board members decided that it was not an option.

Mr. Gentry stated that an item that should always be on our list to look at is not replacing retirees if possible. He stated that we can’t always do that, but we should keep it in the back of our minds if the opportunity arises.

There was a discussion on the proposed cafeteria food service supervisor. Dr. Arbogast stated that the plans are to create a food service supervisor position that would be responsible for all of the cafeterias. This would consolidate all of the cafeteria accounts into one and would remove some of the workload off of the bookkeepers and principals. Part of the salary could be reimbursed through the cafeteria budget. This would be a “budget wash.”

Mr. Steele updated the School Board on the Macy parking lot. He stated that there should be full approval to do the parking lot after Friday. There will be 34 new spots.

Mr. Gentry discussed custodians. He stated that Mr. White has worked directly with Mr. Mills and customized his own schedule.

Mr. Gentry stated that he called Mr. Spencer and explained to him that he appreciated him thinking about the School Board, but the school board didn’t want to be held to just one specific use like he wanted. He stated that he would be open to use the monies for our kids.

Mr. Gentry discussed more possible saving avenues. Right now, we pay 100% of our retirees insurance. He wanted to see if we wanted to look at phasing that out. Mr. Ballard stated that it is a great incentive. Mrs. McMahon stated that she has had several retirees tell her that it is a big perk. Dr. Arbogast stated that even if it was something we did, we would have to let people know that we will be phasing it out.

The School Board discussed ways to try to purchase a new school bus. Mr. Gentry stated that right now we are bus neutral. We received new buses last year, but we got rid of the old buses.

School Board members discussed the swim team. Principals met with the coach and both agreed to move ahead as a VHSL sport. Other details regarding funding and budget were discussed for swim and other athletic events. Dr. Arbogast is going to check on funding for the last new sport. Board members would like to contribute to the swim team; however, they want to see how funding for a new sport was handled in the past.

The School Board, on motion of Mr. Ballard, with second by Mr. Steele and unanimous voting, adjourned the meeting.

Chairman

Clerk