

DICKENSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Special Called School Board Meeting
May 17 & May 22, 2017
5 p.m. – School Board Office

PRESENT: Susan Mullins, Chairman; Rocky Barton; Shanghai Nickles; Rick Mullins; Reba McCowan, Clerk; and Haydee Robinson, Superintendent.

ABSENT: Dr. Lurton Lyle

ROLL CALL AND MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN, SUSAN MULLINS:

Chairman, Susan Mullins: I would like to call this meeting to order and note that all Board Members are present except Dr. Lyle. As well our Superintendent, Mrs. Haydee Robinson and our Clerk, Mrs. Reba McCowan. We will begin with the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence. Thank you and please be seated.

We have an agenda before us; are there any additions? I need a motion to approve the Agenda.

Mr. Rocky Barton: made the motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Shanghai Nickles seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: That brings us to Item II: Mrs. Robinson.

DISCUSSION OF THE FY 2017-2018 DCPS OPERATIONAL BUDGET:

Superintendent Robinson: Mrs. Mullins would you like to say anything about the budget or anything or would you just like us to present.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: Go ahead.

Superintendent Robinson: Good afternoon Board Members, thank you for being here today. On Monday we received official word from the County Administrator of our appropriations for the 2017-2018 school year: \$6.4 for Operations, \$150,000 for Capital Projects that can only be spent on Capital projects for the schools, and \$90,000 to purchase a school bus.

Since then, we have been meeting as a leadership team looking at ways we can address the shortfall. The shortfall comes in that the Board requested \$7.2 in operations and we've received \$6.4; so we are looking for ways and strategies to do that. That will leave us with about \$812,000 that the Board will need to address the shortfall for next year. We have prepared a document for the Board. This is only a discussion meeting today. Dr. Lyle is out of town and I know the Board will need time to consider other options. These are just the options we looked at off the top of the \$812,000. We are going to provide the Board with other options for their consideration, but this is certainly not all the options. If there are any options that you would like us to look at then certainly this would be the time that we would need to do that.

What we would like to do and what we would like to accomplish tonight is a direction from the Board. Which direction do we go?

Chairman, Susan Mullins: Can I ask a question? The \$90,000 for a bus, are they going to buy one besides that or did we have money in our budget for a bus?

Superintendent Robinson: We do have money in our budget for a bus. We are going to leave the purchase of a bus in our budget right now simply because we need buses.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: So that would be 2 buses.

Superintendent Robinson: We are projecting 2 buses and that is one of the things we are recommending to the Board. Yes.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: Did we have any money in our budget that we presented for a sewer project or a roof?

Superintendent Robinson: It was in the Capital.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: That was in the \$7.2 that we requested?

Mr. Larry Barton: No, it was in the Capital budget that we were asking for.

Superintendent Robinson: We were asking for two pots of money: one for Operations, which was \$7.2 and the other one was Capital projects, which was \$258,000. What we did was identify all the capital projects that need to be done in the next five years.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: I remember. But, for some reason I was thinking we asked for \$6.9 and with the capital amount that made it \$7.2.

Superintendent Robinson: No ma'am. We first asked for \$6.9 and then the Board asked to reconsider the retiree's family health insurance and that was added back to the \$6.9 to make \$7.2.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: So that made ours \$7.2 plus capital.

Superintendent Robinson: Correct. So that I'm clear, there was a \$7.2 request for Operations and then \$258,000 for Capital projects and we asked for that for the next five years. So, we can get done some of the projects in our three elementary schools.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: So they actually gave us \$240,000 including \$90 for the bus. That's pretty good.

Superintendent Robinson: Last year we received a total of \$6.1 and this year we have received around \$6.64. We are very grateful for the amount for the bus and capital projects,

the issue we are going to have to address this evening is the operations; the everyday running of the school. You have a chart before you and I'm going to ask Mr. Barton to come and go through each line item with you and you can see where we are. The first box is what we, administratively are recommending; the second is additional items for the Boards consideration. We are asking for direction which to go and it takes a lot of time and planning. Any question before Mr. Barton begins?

Mr. Larry Barton reviewed and presented the following:

1. Proposed Changes to Budget	Amount
Beginning Deficit Balance	(812,000)
Eliminate Extra Positions for Drama & Chorus (incl benefits)	118,611
Adjust Health Insurance Renewal from a 5% increase to 3.5%	72,297
Not replacing Teacher 1 position (Resigned)	56,500
Not replacing Teacher 2 Position (Resigned)	60,600
Not replacing Teacher 3 position (Resigned)	66,917
Not replacing Teacher 4 position (Retired)	93,331
Add School Psychologist (Internship)	(49,300)
Adding Pre-K Special Ed Teacher (Currently have a Part-Time in position)	(36,000)
Additional Aides for 2 additional Pre-K classes	(14,000)
Includes: Purchase of bus, 2% Raise in July, adding 2 Pre-K classes	
No increases in employee health ins	
Does not include: Art / Music in Elementary Schools, Drama at RMS, Chorus at RHS	
Remaining Deficit	(443,044)

2. Additional Options for Consideration	Amount
Not replacing Teacher 5 position (Considering Retirement)	69,304
Changing Retiree Insurance to Employee Only Coverage (Retirees would have option to pay full individual premium amount for spouse or family)	306,053
Increasing Employee Health Insurance Premiums by 50% OR	150,500
Increase Deductible on Health Ins by \$200/\$400 & max OOP by \$500/\$1,000	150,000
Closure of Ervinton Elementary School (Net Savings)	164,000
-Projected Enrollment Loss of 30 students – Revenue Loss of \$217,000	
-Loss of Technology Funding – Revenue Loss of \$26,000	
-Utilities, Supplies, Building maint, etc – Savings of \$92,000	
-Elimination of 4 Professional and 2 Non-Professional Staff, considering Cost of Unemployment – Savings of \$315,000	

Superintendent Robinson: As you can see, we've been working since we received this information on Monday.

Concerning the 2% raise, I strongly recommend giving our staff that increase and starting it July 1. We've been getting our tests scores in and you know the kind of year that we've had. They have accomplished a tremendous job with little resources. We are strongly recommending and advocating that the raise begin July 1 for all of our employees.

Questions or comments?

The Board reviewed and discussed each option for consideration. Concerns were raised of enrollment loss if the closure of Ervinton Elementary was an option and the enrollment projections in Kindergarten for the upcoming school year.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: So we are supposed to be thinking about these additional options and then have another meeting sometime soon?

Superintendent Robinson: We would like for the Board to consider these options to give us direction this evening as to which options we are not going to look at, which options the Board wants to have further information on. We have the June 15th deadline and if we are going to let people go then they would have to be notified by the 15th. We have a couple of deadlines that we are trying to meet. We don't want to let go of any staff. We are fighting hard for that, but if we have any resignations or retirees we are trying to fill those with other teachers in the system. Even with this, we still have a deficit. We looked at different scenarios this afternoon and even if the Board picked some of these we are still looking at \$30,000 to \$35,000 deficit that we are going to have to try to find somewhere.

Mrs. Robinson clarified for the Board that the closure of Ervinton Elementary School's net savings of \$164,000 included the following: Projected Enrollment Loss of 30 students – Revenue Loss of \$217,000; Loss of Technology Funding – Revenue Loss of \$26,000; Utilities, Supplies, Building maintenance, etc. – Savings of \$92,000; Elimination of 4 Professional and 2 Non-Professional Staff, considering cost of Unemployment – Savings of \$315,000.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: I think from the feeling I get, we can go ahead and eliminate that option. All four of us here I think is in agreement.

Superintendent Robinson: So we will eliminate the closure of Ervinton Elementary School with its net savings of \$164, 000. Is there anything else that the Board would like for us not to look at?

Chairman, Susan Mullins: If we had another suggestion I guess we should say that now.

Mr. Rick Mullins: I would like to explore the Trane payment and the escape clause and to see if we don't have to pay that.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: That saves us how much?

Superintendent Robinson: \$263,000

Chairman, Susan Mullins: That would be a lot.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: That could take care of some people and our kids.

Mr. Rick Mullins: If we can get some help from the Board of Supervisors with a letter; that will certainly increase our chances.

Superintendent Robinson: So the Trane payment in the amount of \$263,000 is an option the Board would like us to consider. Any other option to consider or any option that is off the table; you do not want us to consider?

Mr. Rocky Barton: Increases in the health insurance premiums for our employees and their deductibles; I would like to try to stay away from that if there is any way.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: I would kind of like to stay away from the retirees and really I wouldn't want to do any of it. I guess we have to look at everything at this point though.

Superintendent Robinson: We understand that and increasing the insurance rates and deductibles would negate that 2% raise. We strongly recommend beginning the raise for all employees on July 1.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: If we pushed it out to December how much would that save?

Mr. Larry Barton: That would save \$130,000. We have to do it by February but we do have flexibility and I can provide numbers for you.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: In an effort to secure bus drivers maybe offering insurance to our bus drivers again. Do you know what that would cost? I think we need to look at that.

Superintendent Robinson: Even if our drivers have single insurance it would still be a great cost because they only pay \$50 per month. We will get those numbers for the Board.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: I know that will be a large number but we do need to look at that.

Mr. Larry Barton: A single policy for our bus drivers would cost about \$145,000; that's just a rough number.

Superintendent Robinson: To make sure that I understand. Closure of Ervinton Elementary School is not a consideration. We will look at the Trane payment; calculate costs for bus drivers insurance.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: I'm going to ask an obvious question. If we have more money from the Board of Supervisors this year than we had last year and everything stayed the same. We should be in better shape this year than last year, but obviously we still have an \$812,000 deficit. Did we lose money because of enrollment?

Mr. Larry Barton: We lost money from the State for enrollment but also our Federal Programs went down too, so our budget depends more on funds from the local level; the County.

Superintendent Robinson: For our budget next year we are estimating 2,000 students. We started the year with 2,103 so we are looking at 2,000 and hoping that's where we will be in August. We are very concerned about that and if it's less than that we will be looking again for savings. We did not anticipate the enrollment loss that we experienced this year.

We will prepare some more numbers based on the recommendations and bring it back to the Board for a special called meeting or we can recess this meeting.

The Board discussed possible time and date to reconvene.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: Do I have a motion to recess this meeting?

Recess:

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: made the motion to recess until Monday, May 22, 2017 at 3:00 pm. Mr. Rick Mullins seconded the meeting. All votes aye.

Recessed: 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Reconvened: May 22, 2017 @ 3:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Susan Mullins, Chairman; Rocky Barton; Shanghai Nickles; Rick Mullins; Reba McCowan, Clerk; and Haydee Robinson, Superintendent.

ABSENT: Dr. Lurton Lyle

Chairman, Susan Mullins: I would like to call this meeting back to order. This meeting was recessed on Wednesday, May 17th. All Board Members are present with the exception of Dr. Lyle. Present, as well, is our Superintendent, Mrs. Haydee Robinson and our Clerk, Mrs. Reba McCowan.

We have a new agenda before us; do I have a motion to approve the Agenda?

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: made the motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Rocky Barton seconded the motion. All votes aye.

PRESENTATION ON THE FY 2017-2018 DICKENSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS' OPERATIONAL BUDGET:

Chairman, Susan Mullins: Mrs. Robinson.

Superintendent Robinson: Before you is a potential budget cuts chart and we have copies for anyone who would like one.

Superintendent Robinson reviewed the following from the handout:

1. Proposed Changes to Budget	Amount
Beginning Deficit Balance	(812,000)
Eliminate Extra Positions for Drama & Chorus (incl benefits)	118,611
Adjust Health Insurance Renewal from a 5% increase to 3.5%	72,297
Not replacing Teacher 1 position (Resigned)	56,500
Not replacing Teacher 2 Position (Resigned)	60,600
Not replacing Teacher 3 position (Resigned)	66,917
Not replacing Teacher 4 position (Retired)	93,331
Add School Psychologist (Internship)	(49,300)
Adding Pre-K Special Ed Teacher (Currently have a Part-Time in position)	(36,000)
Additional Aides for 2 additional Pre-K classes	(14,000)
Includes: Purchase of bus, 2% Raise in July, adding 2 Pre-K classes	
No increases in employee health ins	
Does not include: Art / Music in Elementary Schools, Drama at RMS, Chorus at RHS	
Remaining Deficit	(443,044)

At this time I will ask Mr. Barton to come to the front.

Mr. Larry Barton: Good afternoon and I appreciate your time today. As we start at the top; it's the same as we had last time.

Mr. Barton reviewed the following from the handout:

2. Additional Options for Consideration	Amount
Not replacing Teacher 5 position (Considering Retirement)	69,304
Changing Retiree Insurance to Employee Only Coverage (retirees would have option to pay full individual premium amount for spouse or family)	306,053
Increasing Employee Health Insurance Premiums by 50% OR	150,500
Incr Deductible on Health Ins by \$200/\$400 & max OOP by \$500/\$1,000	150,000

Pushing 2% Raise out until September OR	29,000
Pushing 2% Raise out until December	97,000
Providing Single Health Ins Coverage to 9 Bus Drivers	(62,000)

Mr. Larry Barton: Last week when we were talking about the number of bus drivers; we have 9 drivers who are not covered right now for a total of 42 drivers. 25 bus drivers have benefits, 2 also work maintenance positions and receive benefits with that job, 7 teacher drivers, 8 bus drivers without benefits and 2 long term subs, one of is a teacher driver and the other is a non-benefit if something were to happen with that position. So to cover 9 positions would be a cost of \$62,000.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: So our buses hold 64?

Mr. Larry Barton: Most of our buses are 65 passenger buses.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: You're a mathematician. So if we have 2,000 students and we have 65 passenger buses, how many buses would we need?

Mr. Larry Barton: The problem we run into....

Chairman, Susan Mullins: I understand, but we are trying to shorten routes. How many would that be?

Mr. Larry Barton: That would roughly be around 32 buses.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: This would be if this was a perfect world.

Mr. Larry Barton: Yes, if it were a perfect world.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: If we had 50 kids on every bus that would be what?

Mr. Larry Barton: About 40 buses.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: So, is it possible that instead of buying 65 passenger buses that we could potentially save some money by buying 50 passenger buses?

Mr. Larry Barton: Mr. Mooney has looked at that and we've talked about that before but the price difference is very, very little. The reason is the chassis is same. It's only about a \$3,000 difference.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: It seems to me it would cost less fuel to operate a smaller bus.

Superintendent Robinson: I don't know but we can certainly find that out.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I just wonder what the weight difference would be because that is where your fuel savings would be.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: You know 2,000 kids aren't riding the bus. How many are pick-ups? Is it 60%, 75%? How many are riding the bus?

Superintendent Robinson: When you look at your high school students; they drive. If you look at an area such as Clintwood and Sandlick; I would say it's close to 40% to 50%. So I would say we are close to 60%.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: So, perhaps this is where we can look at combining some bus routes.

Superintendent Robinson: We will be looking at that again. When we've looked at combining buses or letting one bus do more runs it does, in our area with our roads, it does extend the time that children are on the bus.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: It seems to me if we are at 60% our buses are less than half full.

Superintendent Robinson: There are; yes.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: Can we not operate a small vehicle and save some money? It just seems to me that is a logical place to save some money. Maybe it's a bad idea. I don't know.

Mr. Rocky Barton: No, I don't think it's a bad idea at all. I understand about the little difference in costs with the same chassis. I always thought when we opened Ridgeview up that we would have to have some smaller buses.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: Perhaps it could even shorten the time if we had like those Head Start type buses to pick up the kids on the outer lying area and come straight in. It seems to me that would shorten the time and cost less money.

Superintendent Robinson: We can certainly ask Mr. Mooney.

Mr. Larry Barton: That's one area that costs us more money that we get in SOQs because of our county roads.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: It just seems we have these big buses and they're only half full or less. I know that we don't have substitutes sometimes and the other drivers pick up extra on their runs to make it work because of no substitute. So if they can do it one day, why not do that every day.

Superintendent Robinson: I think what they do sometimes is they will do two runs. For example, some children will be later remaining at school or later to be picked up, because one bus driver will do their run and then come back and do the other run. We can certainly look at the cost of buses from smaller to larger.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: And potentially reducing the number of bus routes.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I don't know if this will make a difference in how many kids get on the bus but after talking to Mr. Deel down at Sandlick the other day. He was saying they got kids, because of the bus situation, waiting there until 25 minutes to 30 minutes. I know at Ervinton they are waiting 25 to 30 minutes. I don't know how long they wait over here. I asked him what would solve the problem and he said if they can get the Middle School to let out at 3:05 p.m. I don't know if that's possible. I'm not going to tell Mr. Whitner what he does with his schedule. He knows what he's got to have, but that might be a thing where we could end up with a smaller bus or two.

Superintendent Robinson: I think one of the things that we are looking at there and we've done this at Ervinton. At Ervinton students that live within 15 to 20 minutes, they are going ahead and taking those students home. We probably will do that at Sandlick next year. Mr. Deel and I spoke about that about 6 weeks ago and we decided that if we were going to begin doing that we would wait until the beginning of the year. There are children that remain after school for 20 to 25 minutes.

Regarding Mr. Whitner's schedule, the high school is getting out at 3:10 p.m. and he releases his students at 3:15 p.m. For his classes and his encore classes, it's better for him to release at 3:15 p.m. By the time the middle school gets out the high school is already in the buses.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I was just thinking about the teachers at Sandlick that is putting them 40 to 50 minutes a day extra and getting nothing. I don't know if we can compensate that; I'm just asking the question. It makes for an extremely long day.

Superintendent Robinson: The students are getting out at 3:15 p.m. and then the last buses are running from there at 3:50 p.m. What they do is that not all our staff is remaining but bus duty teachers. It would be about 3 or 4 and you do it on a rotating basis four different teachers every week. That is something to look at Mr. Nickles. Mr. Deel has shared that with us before.

Mr. Larry Barton: Any other questions you have for me?

Mr. Rick Mullins: Those 9 bus drivers, was that with insurance for the spouses or without?

Mr. Larry Barton: That was single insurance coverage on that.

Superintendent Robinson: Any other questions? I think we heard looking at buses, small buses and their costs and concerns about students that are remaining at Sandlick, Ervinton

and Clintwood after school is out 20 to 25 minutes or so. Mr. Mullins did you want the cost of family coverage for the bus drivers, if we were going to do family coverage?

Mr. Rick Mullins: I was just curious as to the cost.

Mr. Larry Barton: The rough numbers on that would be a cost of around \$180,000 for family.

Superintendent Robinson: We will have to look at. I don't know if legally we can offer our bus drivers just individual coverage and not offer family coverage. I don't know what the legalities of all that is. That is something we will ask Mr. Mullins to look at.

Is there anything else or issue?

Chairman, Susan Mullins: So we will move on and go to closed session.

CLOSED SESSION:

Chairman, Susan Mullins: That brings us to Closed Session. PURSUANT TO Section 2.2-3711A of the Code of Virginia I move that the Board convene a Closed Session for the purpose of discussing personnel VA Code 2.2-3711 A (1) and to consult with legal counsel PURSUANT TO Virginia Code section 2.2-3711 A (7). Mr. Rocky Barton seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Chairman, Susan Mullins: We are now in Closed Session.

OUT OF CLOSED SESSION:

Chairman Susan Mullins: I now entertain a motion to go out of Closed Session. Mr. Shanghai Nickles made the motion and Mr. Rocky Barton seconded. All votes aye. Chairman Susan Mullins stated; pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia, I move to certify that during the closed meeting just concluded the Dickenson County School Board discussed only matters lawfully exempt from the open meeting requirements under Section 2.2-3711 of the Code and identified in the motion convening the closed meeting. Mr. Rocky Barton, Mr. Rick Mullins, Mr. Shanghai Nickles and Chairman Susan Mullins; all certified true.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mr. Rocky Barton: made the motion we adjourn the meeting. Mr. Shanghai Nickles seconded. All votes aye.

Adjourned: 4:45 p.m.

Susan Mullins

CHAIRMAN

Approved: 6/28/2017

Reba McCowan

CLERK