

DICKENSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Regular School Board Meeting
November 30, 2016
5 p.m. – School Board Office

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

ROLL CALL AND MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN, ROCKY BARTON:

Chairman, Rocky Barton: Good evening everybody. I would like to welcome all of you to our November School Board Meeting. All our Board Members are present. So, we will go ahead with our Pledge of Allegiance followed by a Moment of Silence. Thank you.

Has everyone who wants to speak signed up for Public Comment?

Chairman, Rocky Barton: We will need a motion to adopt the Agenda.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make a motion that we adopt the Agenda as presented. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Superintendent Robinson: Mr. Barton, Delegate Todd Pillion will be here sometime, and he is going to make a presentation for the Board. He is listed under Public Comment, and I just ask that when he comes in that we would just get to a good stopping place and let him speak at that time. Then we could have a short recess in case any member of the Board would want to meet with him.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chairman, Rocky Barton: We will go ahead with our Public Comment. I only have two names on the list for Public Comment: Ms. Kathy Musick, VPE, and Allison Mullins.

Ms. Kathy Musick: Good evening Mrs. Robinson, Chairman Barton and Members of the Board. My name is Kathy Musick of the Virginia Public Educators, and I just want to let you know that VPE has endorsed the Coalfield Initiative. Our legislative support came to Richmond and spent some time in Wise as the Commonwealth Institute was there interviewing some of the teachers there so they could better understand what the Coalfield Initiative states. He is going to work hard in Richmond to make sure that those things are carried out. Thank you.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: Ms. Phyllis Mullins, of the DEA:

Ms. Phyllis Mullins: I am Phyllis Mullins, and I am President Elect of the DEA. We are excited about some of our upcoming events. First, on December 7th we are going to have our DEA Banquet, and we would like to invite each of you to come and join us. There will be wonderful food and door prizes and things like that. We would love for every one of you to

come. This is a personal invitation. Our keynote speaker will be our Virginia Education Association President, Jim Livingston. We are hopefully going to be talking about ESSA and some other details about that. We hope to have some more information about that. On October 24th we went to a briefing for our legislative agenda, and on December 12th several of us will be attending the legislative dinner where we will meet with legislators and hopefully talk to them and remind them what Southwest Virginia is. We want to talk to them about Teacher Equity Pay across the State. Of course, DEA has endorsed and adopted the Coalfield Summit. Of course, you know that our President, Mr. Livingston, was there when we met in Wise. We hope to get the ball rolling by meeting with legislators and talking to them personally. Allison Mullins, April Hay, Vickie Barton, Pam Fields and I are going. We will divide up and try to nitpick and put some things out there for them. Again, I want to personally invite each of you to our banquet. Thank you.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: Thank you, Phyllis. Next is Carroll Edwards:

Mr. Carroll Edwards: I don't think I need to speak at this time.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: Well, this is the time for Public Comment, and I don't know if it will be open for you to speak later, Carroll.

Mr. Scott Mullins: Just let me say that this is a Board prerogative. I think I said this to everyone last time that the community discussion back and forth is not the way that our rules and policy is set up. The School Board meeting is for the Board to discuss things, and if we open it up to one, we open it up to everybody. Typically, the way we have dealt with the public is through Public Comment. If there are things of significant interest, we have a Public Hearing. Of course, during a Public Hearing we encourage people to come up and talk. We can go back and forth with them. But the way it has always been for us is that the Board Meetings are for the Board Members to talk to each other and not to have a discussion back and forth with the public. Again, I am not trying to tell you all what to do and not to do. I am just saying that this is the way that the policy is set up and the way we have historically done things. I think if you go to the Board of Supervisors meeting or Wise County meetings you can't simply raise your hand and have a discussion with the Board Members. But it is up to you as a Board.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: If you ask to be on the Agenda, then I think it would be open for discussion.

Mr. Scott Mullins: Exactly. That is a very good point, Rocky. If someone comes in, and a Board Member sanctions it as an Agenda item, then you are exactly right.

Mr. Carroll Edwards: I would just like to hear the discussion of the study before I make any comment. So, go ahead. I have nothing to say at this point.

Mr. Scott Mullins: Members of the Board let me say this. We have always had our Public Comment and the reading of the Guidelines that Shanghai does. That is one of the things that I want to bring back before you because the law may change some. We had the recent Attor-

ney General's opinion that we can't limit people's rights to criticize employees, and that is fine. He talks about talking about specific children which we have typically not wanted people to mention specific children in Open Session. He says that we can't prohibit people from doing that. We have talked about not using profanity, vulgarity and discourse. The Attorney General's opinion opens things up. I would ask Mrs. Robinson and Reba to give me the opportunity to give you something for you to look at regarding Public Comment. You, as a Board, are going to have to decide for every meeting and for every issue that comes up if the members of the public can raise their hand and talk to you. Is that something that you may want to do? It may work just fine for mundane and routine things for a short time, but as you get into controversial issues, it can take up a lot of your time.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: We have done this before, when people have been late to the meeting for Public Comment, we have allowed them to comment later. If Carroll wants to comment after the Board discussion of the study, I don't see any problem with it. If anyone else wants to change it, they can. We have historically done that over the years when someone was late. We have kind of let other people discuss when it has been to our benefit. Whatever the Board wants to do?

Mr. Scott Mullins: I would suggest to the Board that you do what you want to do tonight. But let me share with you a more universal approach, one that is adopted by other School Boards and see what we want to do moving forward.

Superintendent Robinson: Mr. Barton, Delegate Pillion is here with us. Ladies and gentlemen, I would like to present Delegate, Todd Pillion, from the Fourth District of the Virginia House of Delegates. It is a pleasure to have you with us, Sir. He is certainly a supporter of Dickenson County Schools, and we admire him very much and what he has done in Virginia.

Delegate Pillion: Thank you. I am thrilled to be with you all this evening to present a second contribution to the Nursing Program at Ridgeview High School. Early this fall I partnered with Mountain State Health Alliance to supply some equipment to enhance the student experience and program at the high school. Since then I have had additional conversations with parties who are definitely interested in helping the program become even better than it already is. We see this as a great opportunity to further build and enhance quality programs so these kids can get quality skills and so they can stay in the area and find jobs right here in our hometown. I don't have to tell anybody in this room that we are going through some tough economic times right now. This is a nice public, private partnership that shows how both sectors can work together, respond quickly, meet a need and help make a difference for our greatest resource, our children. So it is with great honor that I get to present this check to you from a Dickenson County native, J. D. Nicewonder, for \$10,000 to the Ridgeview High School Nursing Program. (Applause!) Hopefully that won't be the last one.

RECESS:

Superintendent Robinson: Mr. Barton, if we could please have a short recess.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: *I make a motion that we have a recess. Dr. Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.*

MEETING RECONENED:**GOOD NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS:**

Chairman, Rocky Barton: We are ready for Good News from our Schools, Mrs. Robinson:

Superintendent Robinson: We have more Good News to share with our School Board, and it is in your packet. We have the Ridgeview High School DECA program who competed in the Mountain Empire Community College competitive events. I believe this is the first time that DECA has competed as part of the Dickenson County Public Schools. The schools competing were Central High School, Union, Eastside, J. I. Burton and Ridgeview High School. You can see the list of Ridgeview High School students that placed and the name of the event. Mr. Chair, if I may, I would like to read these out loud:

- Madison Mullins—2nd Place—Social Media
- Jazmine Lyall—3rd Place—Apparel and Accessories
- Colton Kiser—2nd Place—Automotive Service
- Logan Stanley—3rd Place—Hotel and Lodging
- Kristen Fletcher—2nd Place—Human Resource Management
- Dawson Sutherland—2nd Place—Quick Serve Restaurant
- Max Fletcher—3rd Place—Marketing Communications
- Hannah Rose—3rd Place—Retail Merchandising
- Emily Fuller—2nd Place—Sports and Entertainment
- Haleigh Jackson—3rd Place—Principles of Finance
- Derek Deel—2nd Place—Principles of Hospitality and Tourism

You will see that five schools competed and many of our students were in 2nd and 3rd place. What an honor for our DECA program. The sponsor for the program is Mr. Chris Robinson. This is the first time that we have had a DECA program in our schools. So, we are delighted to recognize these students. Thank you, Mr. Barton.

CONSENT AGENDA:**APPROVAL OF MINUTES:**

Chairman, Rocky Barton: First on the Consent Agenda is the Approval of Minutes. Has everybody had a chance to check out the minutes?

Mrs. Susan Mullins: *I make a motion that we approve the Minutes as presented. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.*

APPROVAL OF BILLS:

Chairman, Rocky Barton: Next we have Approval of Monthly Bills. Are there any questions about the bills?

Mrs. Susan Mullins: *I make a motion that we approve the Monthly Bills as presented. Mr. Shanghai Nickles seconded the motion. All votes aye.*

School Operating Fund – November 30, 2016 – Bills
 Check Nos. 876596 through 876669 ----- \$365,221.52

School Operating Fund – November 18, 2016 – Payroll
 Check Nos. 387761 through 387896 ----- \$1,699,615.65

SCHOOL ACTIVITY FUND:

Chairman, Rocky Barton—The School Activity Fund is an informational item in your packet. Has everybody had a chance to look over this fund? Are there any comments or questions?

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: Are Activity Funds going great, Mr. Barton?

Mr. Larry Barton: They are improving. Funds are direct deposited right now. Collections are coming in on the Scoreboard Fund. I think \$4,000 came in last Monday so everything looks good there.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I noticed a pretty good amount for Ridgeview High School. Is that some of the scholarship money?

Mr. Larry Barton: Yes, that is included. You can see on the second page the amount of the Scholarship money is \$72,000. Of course, the Athletic Department from the football season had \$136,000.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: That is good considering our gate may have been down just a little bit overall. It certainly wasn't the amount we had from the season last year.

Superintendent Robinson: I think with the School Board funds and all of the things you see that Ridgeview High School is in good financial standing.

APPROVAL OF FIELD TRIPS:

Chairman, Rocky Barton: We are now ready for the Approval of Field Trips.

Superintendent Robinson: Mr. Barton, the only question there is that on December 8th there is a Field Trip to Kingsport, Tennessee. We are asking the Board's approval for the rest of the trips that are in-state.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: *I make a motion that we approve the Field Trips as presented. Mr. Rick Mullins seconded the motion. All votes aye.*

Approved:

- ❖ Ridgeview High School
- October 28th – Grundy High School – Grundy, VA – 8th – 12th Grade
- October 28th – Velma Crabtree's – Clintwood, VA – 9th – PG
- October 29th – G & J Farms – Wise, VA – 9th – 12th Grade

- November 15th – Killen Hollow Cantrell Farms – Pound, VA – 9th – 12th Grade
November 17th–18th –DCER – Clintwood, VA – 9th – PG
November 18th-22nd – Edward College of Osteopathic Med – Blacksburg, VA
November 18th – LaCasa Mexicana – Clintwood, VA – 11th – 12th Grade
December 8th – Hairbenders – Kingsport, TN – 12th Grade
- ❖ Ridgeview Middle School
November 11th – Bays Mountain – Kingsport, TN – 8th Grade
December 16th & 19th – EES, CES, SES – 6th – 8th Grade
- ❖ Clintwood Elementary School
November 10th – Ridgeview Middle/High School – Pre K – 5th Grade
November 18th – DCER – Clintwood, VA – 1st – 5th Grade
November 29th – Clintwood Walking Park – 3rd Grade
- ❖ Ervinton Elementary School
November 18th – DCER – Clintwood, VA – 3rd – 5th Grade
- ❖ Sandlick Elementary School
October 31st – Town of Haysi, VA – Pre K
November 10th – Ridgeview Middle/High School – Pre K – 5th Grade
November 17th – Grundy Theater – Grundy, VA – Kindergarten
November 18th – DCER – Clintwood, VA – Pre K – 5th Grade

INFORMATIONAL ITEMS FOR THE BOARD:

Chairman, Rocky Barton: The next Item is Information for the Board, Mrs. Robinson:

Superintendent Robinson: I would like to ask Mr. Setser to come to the front and share with us the student enrollment information. Mr. Setser:

Mr. Mike Setser: Thank you, Mrs. Robinson. Mr. Chair and Members of the Board I would like to preface this by saying that the numbers in your packet are wrong. Instead of 2099 students at the end of October that number will go up by two which is a good thing. The numbers are wrong but at least it is in our favor. If you look at the number we have lost for the year, it will go from 3 to 2 at least where October is concerned. The reason being that Ridgeview had to add another student in and so did Ridgeview Middle School. So, the number that we actually have at the end of October is 2,101 instead of 2,099.

As far as attendance rates for the month of October, the division finished with a rate of 92.67%. For the year, we are about 93.5% for all schools. The school with the highest attendance rate for the month of October for the 3rd consecutive month with an attendance rate of 93.41% is Clintwood Elementary School. I also want to commend Sandlick Elementary School with a 93.21% and Ervinton Elementary with a 93.09%. The elementary schools did really well for the month of October. I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: The two students who came into Ridgeview were they from Eastern Virginia?

Mr. Mike Setser: No. These are not new students. They are students who left and returned and may not have gotten entered in time. I ran this report on the 15th. I actually sent a report of where the students went to this time. You can see that we had them go as far away as Hawaii.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: What about the elementary schools?

Mr. Mike Setser: Clintwood Elementary School lost two for the month of October, Ervinton Elementary School stayed the same and Sandlick Elementary School gained six during the month of October.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: At least it is a positive with not having a loss at every school like we have been having.

Mr. Mike Setser: Since I have been here at this point in the year if it holds will be minus two which is probably the best attendance.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I felt like the number we lost from the end of the year to the beginning of this year was because a lot of people moved for work. I hope the ones who had to leave for jobs is over.

Mr. Mike Setser: I think the addition of a couple of facilities in Wise County may help some. I hope so. Maybe some more things will pop up in our county.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: Of course, I am on the Buchanan County line and I hear all of the good news from Buchanan County. This week I have heard everything. They are actually taking applications when just a month ago they were closing it. It is all positive right now.

Mr. Mike Setser: I hope that trend continues. Thank you.

OLD BUSINESS:

DISCUSSION OF COMMUNITY CENTER AT THE FORMER DICKENSON COUNTY CAREER CENTER:

Superintendent Robinson: If we are ready for Old Business, we will start with the Discussion of the Community Center at the Former Dickenson County Career Center. Last month we said that this month would be the last time this Agenda item would be discussed. We have not had any contact with either the Clinchco Town Council or anyone else. Mr. Mullins have you heard anything?

Mr. Scott Mullins: No.

Superintendent Robinson: So, with the Board's permission we will take this item off the Agenda. If the topic comes back up, we will put it back on if that is agreeable with the Board.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I think that is fine. We have done everything that we were asked to do and said that we would do.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: We have done it in good faith.

Superintendent Robinson: Since neither I nor Mr. Mullins has had any contact, we will take that item off of the Agenda for next month. Thank you very much.

NEW BUSINESS:

UPDATE ON DEMOLITION PROJECTS:

Superintendent Robinson: Our next item is the Update on the Demolition Projects. We have a report from Skanska.

Haysi High School: You will see that the Haysi High School Outbuildings and Pedestrian Bridge demolition work is completed. The grass will probably grow more now, and we are thankful for the rain.

Clinchco Elementary School: The demolition work is predominately complete.

Ervinton High School: The asbestos abatement is complete. The demolition work began on November 28th and is anticipated to be completed by February 2017.

You will see that the Corps of Engineers is requiring that sidewalks at each site be removed. I spoke to Travis Wilson today at the Corps of Engineers. They have discussed that, and they are going to allow some of the sidewalks to remain at Clinchco Elementary School. So, that is good news and will not increase our demolition cost, and we can use the sidewalk for other things. I think that is a very positive thing.

Budget and Procurement Update: We procured service to remove the mechanical units from the roof of Clinchco Elementary School at a cost of \$1,400. A change order was also made to E. Luke Greene for sidewalks and other issues. Additional costs will be covered from the project's contingency contained within the overall budget which remains \$775,000.

There are pictures, and I apologize because they are not clear pictures. I sent to you today this same report, and you will see the first one is Clinchco Elementary School, and Mr. Burge came by today to tell me that DEQ had been there this week and would begin to seed grass there. You can see what a difference there is in the first and second picture and the demolition in the third picture. Are there any questions or comments from the Board regarding the demolition and removal of debris on the construction project?

DISCUSSION OF THE STUDY FOR THE NEW ELEMENTARY SCHOOL: WHAT SHOULD THE STUDY INCLUDE?

Superintendent Robinson: Our next item is the Discussion of the Study for the New Elementary School and What Should the Study Include? This is an Informational Item for the Board. I wanted to have an opportunity to summarize last month's meeting and ask the Board for direction for the study. Forgive me for reading this, but I thought it would be important for the audience.

On October 24, 2016, the Dickenson County School Board received information regarding the proposed new elementary school. This presentation involved primarily a historical review of prior School Board actions regarding the location of the school. This presentation evolved into a discussion with the public regarding the merits of moving forward with the construction of the school at the Upper Backbone site or obtaining information regarding other locations. Chairman Barton advocated for the school to be located in the Haysi community and for construction to begin as soon as is possible. The remaining Board Members voiced a desire for additional information. No member was opposed to locating the school in the Haysi area, but the consensus was that the remaining members wanted additional information. The Division Superintendent was asked to initiate a study to provide guidance.

For a Historical Perspective: The original plan was to build Ridgeview and the new elementary school at the same time. That plan changed when the Board of Supervisors was ordered to construct a new judicial facility. The county simply did not have the financial strength to obtain interim financing for both the judicial center and the new elementary school. On March 6, 2013, the Board of Supervisors withdrew its support from moving forward immediately with the construction of the elementary school. The stated goal was to monitor future appropriations and move forward with construction as soon as financially possible. This was viewed by the school system as an understandable but nonetheless devastating turn of events. As you recall, the school division and the School Board were looking forward to opening the elementary school and Ridgeview at the same time. But we were not able to do that. On February of 2016 the Corps of Engineers announced that it had received sufficient appropriations to not only pay off Ridgeview but also to complete the elementary school construction. This incredible news was totally unexpected. As you recall, we were looking at 7-10 years or had no idea.

If the Board doesn't mind, let's just discuss the overview of the issues presented. As we prepare to build the new elementary school, the location for the new elementary school has clearly become an issue in the community. There are basically two points of view that are summarized and please feel free to add to these as we go along.

1. The new elementary school should be located in the Haysi area because:
 - The original plan was to build it there.
 - Past and present School Boards support an elementary school in each community Pre-K-5th Grade
 - The agreement with the Corps contemplated that it would be located there.

- The funding for the elementary school came about because of the closure of Sandlick
 - Any other location would create very lengthy travel times for young children.
 - The elementary school is critical for the community's financial needs.
 - The elementary school is critical for the community's identity.
2. The other viewpoint is that the elementary school should be built at Ridgeview because:
- Consolidate all elementary schools.
 - All schools would be located in one central location.
 - Buses would be transporting children to one location.
 - It would be more convenient for parents to pick up children.
 - All elementary school children would have a new school.

The reasons that The Board wanted to evaluate other potential locations are:

1. Dickenson County Public Schools is blessed to have the funding available to build a new elementary school. It is unlikely that we will ever have the opportunity to build a new school at no cost to the local taxpayers in the future. It is imperative that we get it right. We will not get a second chance.
2. The School Board has a commitment to evaluate what is best for the school division. The Dickenson County Public School Policy Manual states that the Dickenson County School Board is committed to providing equal opportunity for every student to achieve maximum intellectual, social, emotional and physical growth and to ensure that each student be equipped to communicate effectively with other people, to be competent both in the work place and in higher education and to feel confident of the ability to make creative and constructive decisions in his/her life. This is Policy AD.
3. There is a clearly established historical trend toward declining student population and declining education funding.
4. In whatever location the new elementary school is built the Board will need to consider the reasonable, predictable future circumstances to make sure the location of the new elementary school best accommodates the needs of all of the children of Dickenson County.

The discussion at last month's Board Meeting was that none of the Board Members wanted to close a school, but the reality of the issue has been that the funding has made the School Board look at things much differently and difficult decisions have to be made by them.

As we move forward with the study, what should the study for the new elementary school include? Here are some things for your suggestions and consideration. Please consider these and if you would like to add or delete, please do so.

1. Student population trends for 5, 10 and 15 years

2. Location of where students live. There is GIS Software Location of students' residences that will give us a visual of where our students live according to their addresses. This would help us see where our students are living.
3. Track bus travel time from different locations to Ridgeview if it is the site
4. Survey the Ridgeview site for possible new construction

I think we look to see if there was enough acreage now at the Ridgeview Complex to do that. Will more land be required? What is there, and can an elementary school actually be constructed there.

For the Board's consideration, a study was asked for as we move forward. Is there anything the Board would like to add, modify or consider anything at all?

Mrs. Susan Mullins: Some of the concerns that I have heard voiced is that parents are having to choose between which ballgame to go watch in the afternoon because some are at the elementary school and some are at the high school. Is it possible to consider an athletic complex somewhere that could house all of the sports from Little League to middle school wherever that is? That is not to say that the school has to be located there, but an athletic complex large enough so that the parents do not have to choose between a middle school child playing ball at Clintwood or Sandlick and another child playing at Ridgeview Middle School.

Superintendent Robinson: Are you asking if an athletic complex could be built in the Ridgeview area?

Mrs. Susan Mullins: Not necessarily be built, but if we could somehow schedule Little League games at a time at Ridgeview so the parents could watch half of the Little League game and walk over and watch half of the 8th Grade game. I don't even know if that is possible, but I think it is something that we should try to consider.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I think the Little League folks have gone and asked for the baseball field and the high school softball field. Eventually all of these--Ervinton, Haysi and Clintwood--kids need to be playing at the same place. That is what they are looking at because it is a field issue. It is just like down at Clinchco right now which would be a good place for the kids to have batting cages.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: You would need something close enough for them to travel.

Superintendent Robinson: The other issue with that, of course, is that we have added middle school. It is a wonderful problem to have. Even if the Little League could play earlier than the JV and middle school program it would alleviate some of that.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: As Chairman Barton said, Clinchco would be a good place to have something like that. It is kind of in the middle so everybody could use it. Once they get into the 6th Grade they are going to be playing together anyway. It would alleviate some of the kids getting home at 10 or 11 p.m. which is happening by the way. I'm not talking about high school kids. I am talking about little kids.

Superintendent Robinson: Is there anything else that the Board would like to consider adding to this study?

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I think that one thing that needs to be mentioned on the study would be the appropriated money that we have is for a facility of 500-600 students. If we consolidated all of our elementary schools, how many would we have, Mike, about 1,100? Where would the rest of the money come from to build a bigger structure?

Mrs. Susan Mullins: Another thing to be considered along with that would be with the declining population would more classes be at Ridgeview? Could we add more grades to the Ridgeview complex?

Superintendent Robinson: I think we could look at the 5, 10 and 15 year student population to share that with you.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I think with our economy looking like a moving target it is going to be hard for any kind of study to be accurate. With net coal being \$300 a ton right now we are hoping that our local economy will come back. Because of that I think it will be hard to get an accurate study, and I hope people will move back to our county. I am sure we will.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: Not to be negative but if we could come up with some kind of prediction if it is located here or there, how many potential kids would leave? If it is in the Haysi area, how many Clintwood kids would leave? If it is at the Ridgeview area, how many kids would leave the Haysi area?

Superintendent Robinson: I think that I mentioned the GIS Software which would tell us something if the school were to be consolidated at the Ridgeview area, for example. Then we could kind of look at the students from the outlying areas leaving our county.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I think people really wanted to try with Ridgeview High School, and they did. I think it takes you two or three years to find out for sure how many you would lose. For example, Mrs. Stevens lives in the Sandy Ridge area, and she is much closer to Coeburn. She said that she just did not have the time. There is a girl who works at Sandlick Elementary School, and she has a child in the 6th Grade who transferred to Council. She said that by the time she left Sandlick and went to Ridgeview to pick up her son after practice, she was getting home at 9 or 10 p.m. She said they tried, but she has in-laws who live in Davenport, and they were helping with her son at Council. I believe that because of people leaving all at once you will never have a true number. I think people would try it until they found out what a hassle it would be.

Superintendent Robinson: The other part of this is that the Dickenson Star reported last week that the Board of Supervisors had passed a resolution. We have not seen it, but the resolution was to have a school in each community. I think ideally that is what we all would want to have. The issue with that is the funding. I hope that as the Board of Supervisors look at the resolution and committed to that resolution that they will also then commit to the

appropriations because it is going to take \$7 million plus to do all of those kinds of things not just for the near future but for several years ahead.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I think from what I understand is that they did not have the resolution completed. In one sense I think that by them passing that resolution they are committing to the funding.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I would like to quote Mr. Peters, the Supervisors from the Sandlick District. "Every month the expenses are greater than what is coming in." If we can get it straightened out where the school is to be, we need to start building it now. Whether it is Sandlick or Timbuctoo, we need to get it going. As you said Mrs. Robinson, someone is going to have to sign on the dotted line that we are going to get this kind of money for these kids. Someone with the Board of Supervisors is going to have to say "yes" we are going to do that and put it down in writing.

Superintendent Robinson: I think that the hardest thing that this Board has had to do is to close schools. Definitely for us as the administrative staff, it has been the most difficult thing. Nobody wants to do that. I think if the Board of Supervisors is looking at the resolution, then perhaps a joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors to see their commitment to the funding, will the funding be there? Dr. Lyle, I think I interrupted you. I'm sorry.

Dr. Lurton Lyle: I think if I read the article right, Mr. Yates indicated that they would have to bite the bullet and raise the money. Now I didn't see anybody make that motion or see it passed, but I am somewhat doubtful that it will happen. That is just my opinion. I think I was going to have this as my Board Comment, but I will go ahead. I applaud their resolution, and I would applaud it much more if they had the money behind it. As you all know, the School Board cannot spend money we don't have. There is a place for people who do that I understand, and it is called a jail. (Ha! Ha!) I don't want to go to jail for any reason. I agree that if they come up with the money for three community schools, I think that is great. But I am not convinced that the funding is there.

Superintendent Robinson: Mr. Mullins, can a Board such as the Board of Supervisors make that kind of funding commitment, Sir?

Mr. Scott Mullins: Generally speaking, if you are not a third party you are not entering into a contract. One Board cannot even bind next year's action. Nevertheless, Boards sometimes make what is called "moral commitments", but it is not a legal commitment. From the vantage point of the back of the room, and time we as a school system have an open discussion with the Board of Supervisors about what is going on in our schools and how we are struggling to make ends meet right now, I think that is a good discussion to have. I think that if the Board of Supervisors is serious about the idea of keeping three schools open then we need to be talking about that with them. They need to know what you know. The Central Office and Mr. Barton know about the things that we are going through in trying to make ends meet right now. We talk about it all the time, but 85% of our budget is being spent on salaries, benefits and employee related issues. The fat left last year and maybe the year be-

fore. We are cutting to the bone. We are cutting essential functions. So, I think having a discussion about that might be a good thing.

Superintendent Robinson: You know we just went through an \$800,000 cut of 42 positions. I think the public and even the Board of Supervisors see us, and they think that we are doing fine. All you have to do is people talk to you about needing this and needing that. We always have to say that we are sorry, but we do not have the funding. It is not that it is not a legitimate need. It is not that it is a need that doesn't need to be met. We just do not have the funding. We are holding our breath until December 18th because that is when we get the 1st mid-term adjustment. We have lost over 50 students during the summer. We understand that we are going to get a mid-term adjustment in this year's budget, and we are going to have to cut from a budget that has already been cut by \$200,000-\$300,000. Quite frankly I will have to ask for the Board's guidance because we don't know where that is going to come from.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: When they adopted the resolution, do you think the Board of Supervisors was aware of all of those issues? Were they fully informed of what they were supporting?

Superintendent Robinson: I don't know, Mrs. Mullins. I was not at the meeting, so I am not quite certain. Ms. Tate, who is here, did an excellent job reporting that. But to answer another part of the question, we have conversations with the county administrator and Board Members to say my expression, "we are being held together with duct tape and a prayer". Our buses, the roof at Clintwood Elementary School and our programs need funding. The thing for me is that we need to raise the salaries of our staff. It is difficult for us to compete with other counties when our salary is what it is. We are losing quality people or not even having quality people apply to us because of our salaries. There are just a lot of issues there, and to answer your question, I just don't know. As Mr. Mullins suggested, it may be a very good idea to call for a joint meeting and let us all talk. We applaud that, but this is what we are going to have to have and can you assure us of that?

Dr. Lurton Lyle: I think we have to make them well aware of the fact that we came very close, in my opinion, to closing an elementary school recently. If the funding is not there to keep it going, we will have to do that or cut something else. As you say, buses need to be upgraded, gas needs to be bought, the roof needs to be replaced and something has to give.

Superintendent Robinson: We are at that point, Mr. Barton. I laugh because poor Mr. Barton has aged several years since he started with us.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: One other thing that I wanted to mention is if you do the study to show if another structure could be built on the Ridgeview Campus, which I don't think we can from what we have been told, I don't think the atmosphere is really good right here. That neighborhood is kind of landlocked to say the least. I don't think the atmosphere of the Board is very good about condemning more property in that location. I know I'm not. The way I see it and the way I have looked around that is pretty much the neighborhood of where

it would have to be. I will not be involved in condemning that property. It will be a 4-1 vote. That is something that you need to be aware of too.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: That will be part of the study.

Superintendent Robinson: Yes, Ma'am, surveying the Ridgeview site and whatever else is needed.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: We need to see if anyone around there is willing to sell their property.

Superintendent Robinson: So, to recap:

1. Student population trends for 5, 10 and 15 years. Weldon Cooper shared with us that 5 years is very reliable, 10 not as much and 15 is projected.
2. Location of where students live and the addresses from our student software and visually we can see where our students are. I think that would give us a very good idea.
3. Track bus travel time. I think with the discussion that we had last month, if you are taking a student from this point to this point, what that adds to the bus survey.
4. Survey of the Ridgeview site for construction and looking to see if additional land is available. Can we see if anyone there is willing to sell their property?

I think Mr. Mullins has asked for the resolution, and as soon as we get that, we will share that with the Board. Sometime in January if the Board of Supervisors is still strongly supporting that, we will have a frank discussion. I think that would be an excellent idea because in January we will know what our mid-term adjustment is and are working on next year's budget. I think the Board of Supervisors needs to understand we are going to need more than \$6 million next year just to function. We can't do that again. Even having any kind of cut some very difficult decisions are going to have to be made. I would love to see music and art reinstated in the elementary school. I would love to see our teachers receive a raise. I would love to see programs that we lost this past year reinstated.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I talked to a lady who works in the cafeteria, and she stated that she had worked here for 14-15 years and never had a step. That is pretty tough when you know you are going to work for less each year. But the thing about it is that we have some great people who work for us. They have sacrificed and there is no doubt about it from the top to the bottom.

Superintendent Robinson: Another suggestion was to try to schedule Little League so it is not in conflict with Ridgeview. Another issue was appropriations for the school. What would it cost to build a consolidated school versus 500-600 students?

Mrs. Susan Mullins: Consider putting the 8th Grade with the high school, and put another grade at Ridgeview.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: We have the room, don't we Mrs. Robinson?

Superintendent Robinson: We don't right now at the middle school and not much at the high school either.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: Do we have any idea about the number of 5th Graders who will be going into the 6th Grade next year?

Mr. Mike Setser: I can give you some numbers, Mr. Nickles. It looks like 84 from Clintwood Elementary School, 26 from Ervinton Elementary School and 70 from Sandlick Elementary School.

Superintendent Robinson: So that is going to be 180.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: How many seniors are we losing?

Mr. Mike Setser: Seniors from the high school if they all graduate would be 154.

Superintendent Robinson: So just look at Ridgeview to see if we could add an additional grade.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: It is not ideal, but some of us went to the 8th Grade at the high school.

Superintendent Robinson: Anything else from the Board?

Mr. Rick Mullins: I think we need Mr. Barton to do us a financial analysis on all of the facets of combining the schools, closing schools, the roof project at Clintwood Elementary School and we need to look at the perimeter throughout the county to see how many kids we would lose on the high side.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: That is an excellent idea. Keep in mind that the kids on the Rt. 72 would be closer to Coeburn, the kids on the Clintwood side would be closer to Pound and the kids at Indian Creek would be closer to Council.

Mr. Rick Mullins: When we go to the Board of Supervisors, we need to be able to show them that exactly and tell them that this is what you are looking at right down to the penny.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: The kids in Dante could potentially go to St. Paul and the kids on Sandy Ridge could go to Coeburn. Depending on where we locate this facility, we need to see how many kids live on the outlying areas.

Mr. Rick Mullins: We also need to look at how many kids will be coming in four years later.

Superintendent Robinson: Mr. Mullins, do you see any of this information that would be a legal issue to share with the Board of Supervisors?

Mr. Scott Mullins: Actually what I was thinking about is some of this information you can get in house where we are not paying for it, and we need to move with that. What I was thinking is we go to the Board of Supervisors with an open mind, or they will come to us with information. Of course, everything that we are talking about would be mute if there were some demonstration that we feel okay that maybe we are going to find the funds to keep three elementary schools open. If they get us to that point, we don't have to worry about any of this information.

Superintendent Robinson: Thank you everyone for your direction. I certainly appreciate your willingness to have that discussion.

UPDATE ON MITIGATION SITES/PROCESS WITH THE U.S. CORPS OF ENGINEERS:

Superintendent Robinson: We are ready for the Update on the Mitigation Sites and Process with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, Mr. Barton?

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I think we have one Public Comment that didn't get here on time. Do you want to wait until we get ready for Closed Session? Okay, Carroll do you want to speak?

Mr. Carroll Edwards: All of the Board knows how I feel. I wrote a letter, and I assume that you all read it. I still stand by that. I would just like to say that every Board Member that I know always said that they were for the kids. The kids come first, so I think we need to stand up for the kids of our county and we will come up with the dollars, I believe.

Superintendent Robinson: Mr. Edwards, I would love for you to share that with the Board of Supervisors because the Board of Supervisors are the ones who fund the school division.

Mr. Carroll Edwards: I have. I told them all that we need to do whatever we can do to fund these schools and thereby keeping this school system in place not tearing it down. Go ahead and build the school where it was supposed to be built at Haysi and use whatever money is left over to update the other elementary schools. I don't think Ervinton needs any update, but I know that Clintwood does. After that we will try to come up with the money one way or another. I think that is the honorable thing to do.

Superintendent Robinson: I think the issue and Dr. Lyle spoke of it. As a Board, we cannot spend money that we do not have.

Mr. Carroll Edwards: I know it comes from the Board of Supervisors so they are going to have to raise taxes. They tried to raise the food tax, but it got turned down by the voters. There are ways to do it that I think can get it done. I told them that I would be the first one to go out and campaign for funds for the school. The schools have to have it, and we have to get it.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: Thank you.

Superintendent Robinson: Okay, back to the Update of the Mitigation Sites and Process with the U.S. Corps of Engineers. Today we met with Vincent Pero with the U.S. Corps of Engineers, Lance Debord with 3M Engineers and Leman Kendrick. I want to recognize two other gentlemen who went with us in the rain, Mark Mullins and Larry Barton. Altogether for the mitigation Mr. Pero visited four sites perhaps Spring Fork and Ervinton Elementary School. As you all know what has been so difficult with the mitigation sites, when Ridgeview was built there were wetlands so the school division has had to mitigate other areas. We had four areas to mitigate. We have done three. The fourth one is the one that has been a challenge. The mitigation has been approved for Ervinton High School or next to the school. As you all know with the discussions with coal companies, the county is trying to leave that site undisturbed so that if Contura wants to come and open a mine there, they can do that. Because once you mitigate an area there are restrictions that prohibit them from mining. That is one issue. The other issue is trying to find land in Dickenson County that the surface owner owns the mineral rights. I have learned more than I really wanted to know about all of this. Part of the issue has been trying to find that. I want to share with you that a Standard Banner representative called on Monday and said that they had two pieces of property and that Standard Coal and Banner Coal would work with us. So, we visited those sites today. We don't know if those sites are going to work or not, but we were very thankful. We only had two other sites besides those. Neither one of them met the criteria, but we hope that together they would work. We were told today that the site at Haysi and the site at Trammel will not work, and we don't have a definitive answer yet on the other two. I just wanted to share that information with you. We have been out in the rain most of the afternoon, but it was a good learning experience. As soon as we know that, we will let you know. I think the directive from the Board was to get this mitigation done as soon as possible. We are already out of compliance, and are trying to preserve the Ervinton High School site as much as possible and try to find something else. What has been even more difficult with that, as some of you may know, is that talking with Contura, they are reluctant to release any of the mineral rights at any of the sites that we could possibly use for mitigation. So, we have to go to a sole owner for that. I just wanted to bring the Board up to date on that. Are there any questions or comments on this? Mr. Barton or Mr. Mullins, did I leave anything out? We all looked like three wet puppies as we came in. I will keep the Board informed on that.

DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF THE DICKENSON COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMPREHENSIVE PLAN: 2017-2020:

Superintendent Robinson: For the Discussion and Approval of the Dickenson County Public Schools Comprehensive Plan I am going to ask Mr. Tony Robinson to go over this with you.

Mr. Tony Robinson: Reviewed the following comprehensive plan and recommended approval. (See Attachment)

Attachment 1: DCPS: Comprehensive Plan 2017-2023

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I don't have a question, but I have a suggestion. Things change, faces come and go. Is this something that we could review annually? We could not only review it

annually, but have a column listing how much progress we have made toward it, and is it still a feasible goal.

Mr. Tony Robinson: That accountability is for you to see if we did what we were supposed to do. When we look at this next year we see how we did in relation to last year.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: The goal should have some measurable outcome. I would like to see some report back to us to see where we are. I think it would be good for all of us.

Mr. Tony Robinson: I think we do that intermittently as we go through cumulative things. We do things like attendance, SOL scores and all of those things intermittently.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: We will pull this plan out next year and say this is what we were going to do, and we need to see what we have done so far. It will show us the areas that we still need to get done.

Mr. Tony Robinson: I think we can do that. I don't think it will be a problem. That is accountability that we need it anyway. If we are going to have everybody else accountable, it needs to be here too.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: *On that happy note, I make a motion that we approve the Comprehensive Plan. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.*

Superintendent Robinson: Board Members that concludes our Open Session.

BOARD COMMENT:

Chairman, Mr. Rocky Barton: That brings us to Board Comment. Dr. Lyle, you are always first:

Dr. Lurton Lyle: As I mentioned earlier, the Board of Supervisors has a resolution that in my opinion, it doesn't have teeth in it yet. When we had the idea of discussing the closing of a school, we had a large crowd. The last two or three meetings when we were focused on another area of the county, we had large crowds. If the discussion was about Clintwood Elementary, we would have large crowds. My point in that is, when we go talk to the Board of Supervisors, we need a large crowd there. We need to show them that we are interested. As Mr. Yates said, they have to fund this. They have to raise taxes in my opinion. That is a bad word, but it has to be done if we are going to be able to keep three elementary schools open. I don't think anybody on this Board wants to close any school, but it may come to the point that one has to go. Like I said earlier, I don't want to go to jail, and I don't think anybody else does either. We need support from the community I guess is what I am saying.

Mr. Rick Mullins: I whole heartedly agree with Dr. Lyle; with everything that he said. I think that with Mr. Barton's expertise we can prepare a Business Model A, Business Model B and Business Model C with all of the facets of closing a school or keeping all of the schools open. It will have some real facts that everybody will be able to look at. That way whatever our decision, it will be just. That is the direction that I would like to see us go.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I guess what might have been left out of this conversation to-night is just what the closure of each elementary school would do to the community or town that it is in. I think the closure of Ervinton Elementary would secure the fact that Nora is gone. There is one business there and a post office. I am sure if the elementary school were to close that business would probably go and maybe even the post office. The town of Haysi is the same thing. Since the high school closed there are multiple businesses that have fallen. Just hearing people talk, if they go to Ridgeview they will run on to Clintwood to do their shopping. They just bypass Haysi that they use to come through. Even the town of Clintwood that is busy two times a day would be devastated if the elementary school were to close. Clintwood has the courthouse and will always have a base. Another thing going into the future we have to show that our communities and our towns are open for business if we ever want to get any kind of economic base in our county. I know we will rely on coal again, and I think coal is going to pick up. I have seen that and people are talking about getting applications and getting jobs. All of these other companies when they look at your county, if they don't have an elementary school in the community they work or live in, they may not come. Like Carroll said, we can't let our personal interest outweigh the students' interests. They have to be number one at heart. So there is a lot to look at. There are people in our community, and I have said this before, that really got into the project and was open to consolidation because they felt like the elementary school was going to stay. There are a lot of people that I feel would have gone the other way on consolidation, and it may have never been done. I would have been one that wouldn't have supported it. Those are some things to keep in mind.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I think all three of you have made very good points. What I see is that it is a crucial decision, and we want to get it right. We need to make sure that we have enough information and look toward the future and figure out what is best for all of the kids because it is about the kids for me. That is the only thing. Believe it or not this is a very thankless job. If it wasn't for my love of children, I would not be sitting here. That is what it is about for me.

Shanghai Nickles: I appreciate Carroll and his passion for our schools and community. I really appreciate that. I appreciate the \$10,000 that came across the table here tonight. There are 10,000 reasons to say thank you for that. We are Virginia's Baby, but we are getting older as a tax-based community. We are an aging community. I agree with Mr. Peters when he said on October 24th, "every month our expenses are getting greater and less is coming in". We have to make the most of every penny that comes in. We have more teachers and employees than anybody, and we seem to be on the back burner on some peoples' minds. I don't think that is right. Sure, we are going to lose some of our teachers. People go elsewhere because they can make better money and in probably in better conditions than other places. They won't work with any finer people. We have teachers in our community who have sacrificed for their kids out of their own pocket. It is the Board's decision to do what they think is right, but once again if the study shows that we need to build a school down at Sandlick, we need to start doing this immediately because that would be a plus in that community. Any school in any community is always a plus, but a community with no school is devastating. That is all I have to say.

Chairman, Rocky Barton: I would like to add one other thing that I thought of today. The folks at Sandlick Elementary never asked for a school. They never asked to be in that flood project. As a matter of fact, the community of Sandlick has been mad ever since the day that we bought that piece of land at Haysi because they are losing their school. They never once asked for a new school. They loved their school at Sandlick. Had it not been for the Corps of Engineers project, it was the only school that had 7 feet of standing flood water, and we would not even be talking about this. Sandlick would never be moved anywhere. So, nobody is begging for a new school at Sandlick. It is just what the money was appropriated for and the hand that we were dealt. That is where we thought we would be at this time. So, I just want to mention that too.

CLOSED SESSION:

Chairman Rocky Barton: Pursuant to Section 2.2-3712 A of the Code of Virginia, I move that the board convene a closed session for the purpose of discussing: 1.) Employment issues relating resignation, transfer request, consideration of employing part-time aides, part-time cooks, PK-6 teacher, substitutes, coaches and superintendent evaluation. 3.) Discussion of evaluation of real property pursuant to VA Code 2.23711 A (1) (3) and to consult with legal counsel on these issues pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.23711 A (6) (6). Mrs. Susan Mullins seconded the motion. All votes aye.

OUT OF CLOSED SESSION:

Chairman Rocky Barton: I now entertain a motion to go out of Closed Session. Dr. Lurton Lyle made the motion and Mr. Rick Mullins seconded. All votes aye. Chairman Rocky Barton stated; we have been in closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3712(a), Section (1) to discuss potential contracts and proprietary information. Pursuant to Section 2.2-3712(d) of the Code of Virginia, he moved 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 of Virginia. Dr. Lurton Lyle, Mr. Rick Mullins, Mrs. Susan Mullins, Mr. Shanghai Nickles and Chairman Rocky Barton; all certified true.

BOARD ACTIONS:

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve the volunteer soccer coaches as presented contingent upon completion of all requirements. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Approved:

- Justin Phillips
- Trey Rose
- John Hamilton
- Ryan Turner

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve the transfer and employment recommendations as presented. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Approved:

- Brenda McCowan – transfer from SES Title I to CES 3rd Grade Math/Science
- Aaron Robinson, Part-time Aide, Ridgeview Middle School
- Michael Mullins, Part-time Aide, Ridgeview Middle School
- Michelle Edwards, Part-time Cook, Ridgeview Cafeteria
- Mary Owens, Part-time Cook, Ridgeview Cafeteria

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make the motion we accept the resignation of Ashley Woods. Mr. Shanghai Nickles seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve the request to advertise for a part-time Nursing Instructor. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve the substitutes as requested contingent upon completion of background checks and all necessary paperwork. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Approved:

- Shauna Counts
- Brini Davis
- Tanesha Little
- Patricia Neece
- Aaron Robinson
- Patricia Stanley

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make the motion we authorize the Division Superintendent, with advice from the School Board Attorney, to negotiate a contract with Skanska for Construction Management Services for the new elementary school. Mr. Rick Mullins seconded the motion. All votes aye.

ADJOURNMENT:

Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make the motion we adjourn. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the meeting. All votes aye.

Adjourned: 8:30 p.m.

Rocky Barton

CHAIRMAN

Approved: December 14, 2016

Reba McCowan

CLERK