

**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE SCHOOL BOARD  
CITY OF CHESAPEAKE, VIRGINIA  
March 9, 2020**

A meeting of the School Board of the City of Chesapeake, Virginia, was held on Monday, March 9, 2020, at 4:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the School Administration Building. Ms. Victoria L. Proffitt, Chairman, presided.

**The Call to Order**

Ms. Proffitt called the meeting to order. She welcomed visitors to the meeting and informed them that a printed agenda for the meeting was available.

**Roll Call**

Dr. Jean Infantino called the roll and recorded attendance as follows:

Present:        Mr. Samuel L. Boone, Jr. (Not present for Closed Session)  
                     Mr. C. Jeff Bunn  
                     Dr. Patricia Y. King  
                     Mr. Thomas L. Mercer, Sr.  
                     Mrs. Christie New Craig  
                     Mr. Michael J. Woods  
                     Mrs. Colleen C. Leary, Vice Chairman  
                     Ms. Victoria L. Proffitt, Chairman

Absent:         Mr. Harry A. Murphy

Also present were Dr. Jared A. Cotton, Superintendent; Dr. Jacqueline C. Miller, Chief Student Support Services Officer; Dr. Anita B. James, Chief Academic Officer; Ms. Victoria Lucente, Chief Financial Officer; Ms. J. Paige Stutz, Chief Operations Officer; Dr. Alan L. Vaughan, Chief Human Resources Officer; Dr. Jean A. Infantino, Chief of Staff/Clerk of the Board; Mr. Robert J. Barry, Attorney; and Mrs. Stacy B. Smith, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent.

**Adoption of the Agenda**

Dr. Cotton had no amendments to the agenda, but said he would need a closed session for student matters. Mrs. New Craig moved to adopt the agenda as presented. Mr. Woods seconded the motion, which passed with all Board members present voting in favor of the motion.

**Closed Meeting**

Ms. Proffitt asked Mr. Barry to prepare the language for the Board to go into closed session. Mr. Barry stated that the motion should read as follows:

“The Board should convene in closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia for consideration of pupil matters.”

Mr. Mercer moved that the Board go into closed session as provided in the Code of Virginia. Mr. Woods seconded the motion, which passed with all Board members present voting yes.

### **Reconvene in Open Meeting**

The meeting reconvened in open session. Mrs. Leary moved that the record show the only items discussed in the closed meeting were those specifically cited in the motion to convene into closed session. Mr. Woods seconded the motion, which passed with all Board members present voting in favor of the motion.

### **Action - Closed Meeting**

The Superintendent recommended the extended long-term suspension of Student #1 and Student #4 under the conditions discussed. Mr. Woods moved to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Leary and passed with all Board members present voting in favor of the motion.

The Superintendent recommended the expulsion of Student #3. Mr. Woods moved to approve the Superintendent’s recommendation. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Leary and passed with all Board members present voting in favor of the motion.

Mr. Mercer recommended the expulsion of Student #2. The motion was seconded by Mrs. New Craig and passed with a vote of four to three. Mr. Boone abstained from the vote.

### **Invocation**

Pastor Melvin McCleese, New Life Providence Church – Deep Creek Campus, gave the invocation.

### **Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag**

Hayden Russell, a fifth grade student from Cedar Road Elementary School, led the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag.

### **Awards and Recognitions**

Dr. Anita James and Dr. Sheli Porter recognized the 2019-2020 Senior Class Presidents and SCA Presidents of the seven high schools. The Board also recognized the efforts of staff members from Hickory High School and Hickory Middle School as well as students and staff from Oscar F. Smith Middle School who assisted during recent medical emergencies.

## Hearing of Citizens

Mrs. Debra Hollowell, 1304 Gleneagle Court, Chesapeake, Virginia, spoke regarding nurses' salaries.

Mrs. Sonja Lewczyk, 4125 Berwyn Way, Suffolk, Virginia, spoke regarding the teacher salary schedule.

Mrs. Leigh Ann Newsome, 2621 Norris Lane, Chesapeake, Virginia, spoke regarding the teacher salary schedule.

Mrs. Amy Gowin, 1645 Clark's Circle, Chesapeake, Virginia, spoke regarding teacher salaries.

Mrs. Victoria Nichols, 1124 Mill Lake Quarter, Chesapeake, Virginia, spoke on a variety of topics.

Mr. Blaizen Bloom, 308 Albert Avenue, Chesapeake, Virginia, spoke regarding teacher salaries.

## Consent Agenda

The chairman requested approval of the consent agenda. Items included the following:

- A. Approval of the Minutes of the Previous Meeting
- B. Bid
- C. Social Studies Textbook Adoption
- D. Resolution – Acquisition of Modular/Portable Classrooms

Mr. Mercer moved to approve the Consent Agenda and the motion was seconded by Mrs. Leary. The motion passed with all Board members present voting in favor of the motion.

## Information Agenda

Dr. Infantino announced that Virginia School Boards Association (VSBA) will hold a Hot Topic Conference in Midlothian, Virginia, on April 17, 2020. No members will attend.

**School Board Policies and Regulations Update:** Mr. Robert J. Barry, School Board Attorney, provided proposed new policies, revisions, and requests for first reading for the following School Board Policies and Regulations:

**Proposed New School Board Policy P 4-34 – Educational Facilities Specifications – First Reading:** The proposed revisions will modify the policy based on recommendations made by the School Board attorney and mandated by the General Assembly.

**Proposed New School Board Policy P 4-35 – Construction Planning – First**

**Reading:** The proposed action is based on recommendations by the School Board attorney as mandated by the General Assembly.

**Proposed New School Board Policy P 4-36 – Electronic Room Partitions – First**

**Reading:** The proposed adoption is based on recommendations by the School Board attorney and mandated by the General Assembly.

**Proposed New School Board Regulations R 4-36:** The proposed adoption is based on recommendations by the School Board attorney. Revisions to School Board Regulations do not require Board approval.

**Proposed Revision to School Board Bylaw B 2-10 – Board Organization, Officers and Their Duties:** The proposed adoption is based on recommendations by the School Board attorney and its approval is at the discretion of the Board.

Mr. Bunn requested not to have Bylaw B 2-10 placed on the Consent Agenda at the March 23, 2020, Board meeting to allow further discussion. Mrs. Leary made a motion to add the bylaw revision to the March 23, 2020, Action Agenda. Mr. Mercer seconded the motion. The motion carried with all members voting in favor of the motion

**Action Agenda**

**Superintendent’s Proposed Operating, Categorical, and Special Funds Budgets, 2020-2021 – Work Session:** Dr. Cotton provided information regarding the budget update and introduced Ms. Vicki Lucente, Chief Financial Officer, who presented the most recent information on our current budgetary process. She responded to previous inquiries from Board members, provided additional details on the General Assembly budgets including the differences in the House and Senate versions and reviewed the next steps. Ms. Lucente gave an update on the proposed changes and increases to the salary scales based on projected revenues and recommendation from the salary study. She also gave a comparison of the step increments of the teacher salary scale from the 2008-2009 school year to present and explained the process for “top of the scale” increases as well as budget goals for scale adjustments.

A work session was conducted on the Superintendent's Proposed Operating, Categorical, and Special Funds Budgets, 2020-2021. Mrs. New Craig stated that the General Assembly will reconvene on March 12, 2020, to present the finalized budget. She also spoke on the similarities of the state’s salary schedules which include a cap on the top of the scale as well as compression to the step increments due to past economic downturns.

Mr. Mercer inquired if the vote this evening would be for a two percent increase and if that increase could be adjusted later. Mr. Mercer motioned to continue the budget vote to the March 23, 2020, Board meeting. The motion was seconded by Mrs. New Craig. Dr. Cotton responded that the figure for approval was an overall budget amount that needed to be presented to the City for their budgetary process and could be amended at a later date. Mr. Mercer thanked Ms. Lucente and Dr. Cotton for their hard work on the budget and shared his desire to provide a three percent increase and phase in the compression corrections.

Mr. Woods asked if the budget amount had to be approved this evening in order to present the budget to the city. Dr. Cotton stated again that approval of the Superintendent's Proposed Budget is an approval of the overall budget amount to be provided to the City and that Board can make adjustments to salary figures within the overall budget total at a later date as they have done in the past. Ms. Lucente responded that the City Manager must present his budget by April 1, 2020, which must include both city and school budgets.

Mr. Mercer asked for clarification that the Superintendent's Proposed Budget is based on the Governor's proposed budget which gives a two percent increase to the top of the teacher scale. Mrs. New Craig added that she also wants to clarify with the city that this is not the final budget.

Mrs. Leary inquired about the proposed changes to the pay rates for school nurses and bus drivers. She wanted to clarify that the changes should result in a good raise. Dr. Cotton stated that the starting salaries have been increased and that the raises are in line with the market.

Mr. Bunn inquired if the other members of the Board were okay with leaving the compression of the teacher scale step increments in order to give a three percent raise instead of the proposed two percent. He asked for clarification that the Board's goal is to address the compression as well as provide an average three percent increase. Mr. Bunn also inquired if it was too early for health care numbers. Ms. Lucente stated that is was. Mr. Bunn thanked the Superintendent and his staff for working to expand the number of steps on the scale and noted that the City does have a cap on their salary scale.

Mr. Woods restated that the Board was only approving a gross budget amount and that the Board could decide salary and raise options within the overall amount. Mr. Woods also noted that while a gross budget amount is supplied to the city, the School Board is an autonomous body and can determine how those funds are distributed. Mrs. Leary also stated that the funding formula was a set process and additional funds from the state could increase the budget in order to provide the desired three percent increase.

Dr. Cotton added that the goal is a minimum three percent increase while fixing the compression of the salary steps but there would still be differentiated raises in order to fix the scales moving forward and address market changes. He stressed that this would be a one year adjustment and that giving an across the board increase would not fix the inequities in the scale. Mr. Mercer responded he would like to work toward both fixing the step compression and funding a minimum three percent increase.

Mr. Mercer withdrew his previous motion and moved to approve the proposed budget. The motion was seconded by Mrs. Leary. The motion passed with all Board members present voting in favor of the motion.

**Stop Arm Agreement:** The final contract for the Stop Arm Camera project was presented by Dr. Jacqueline Miller and an action to approve was recommended. A motion for approval was made by Mr. Woods. The motion was seconded by Mrs. New Craig and passed with all Board members voting in favor of the motion.

## **Superintendent's Report**

The Superintendent announced that in response to the first cases of COVID-19 in Virginia being identified over the weekend, Chesapeake Public Schools has provided an update to families and will provide additional updates as new information becomes available. All updates will be posted to the district's website, [www.cpschools.com](http://www.cpschools.com), under District News.

He stated the importance of working closely with local and state health officials to protect the health of students, families, and employees. If any cases of COVID-19 are identified in our area, the district will follow the guidance of these officials to implement appropriate control measures. Notifications will be sent to the school community using the Parent Alert System if recommendations include a disruption to daily operations.

### **Superintendent's Spotlight:**

Dr. Cotton stated that there have been many exciting things going on in our schools recently, and that it was difficult to narrow down his spotlight for this evening to just a few. However, it was easy to decide how to start.

Just last week, our schools celebrated reading and literacy with Read Across America Week. Along with celebrating Dr. Seuss' Birthday, schools hosted special guest readers, participated in spirit weeks and presentations all designed to promote the power of reading. The Superintendent thanked all of our community volunteers who helped make the week special for students. He stated that everyone could tell they had fun based on their smiles!

As February wrapped up so did some incredible Black History Month celebrations throughout our district. As Dr. Cotton visited schools recently, he was proud to see the many unique ways teachers and students were recognizing the achievements of African Americans in the community and beyond. Throughout the halls, impressive displays of creativity on doors, billboards, in student artwork and as part of spirit days could be seen. Western Branch Middle School honored one of their Alumni, Adrienne Warren, who is currently starring on Broadway in the hit musical, Tina.

Several schools also held student-led assemblies and presentations that explored the legacy of African Americans. A particularly powerful performance was held at Western Branch High School on February 28th. The free, public program entitled "African Americans and the Vote" included song, dance, and much more to educate audience members about this important aspect of history.

Another example of student leadership in action took place just last Wednesday when students from all seven of our high schools participated in Mayor's Youth Day. The goal of the annual event was to expose young people to the daily operations and management of both the city and school district. Each student was assigned a mentor for the day and had the opportunity to tour facilities, ask questions, and even participate in a mock city council meeting. Dr. Cotton thanked Mayor West and the City of Chesapeake for sponsoring such a worth-while event for future leaders.

Hugo A. Owens Middle School recently hosted its first Parent Empowerment Workshop to give the adults a closer look into the lives of their kids, while these students got a closer look at what adulthood is really like. The event featured a variety of interactive, discussion-based sessions for parents ranging from an Internet Safety Breakout experience, to an open conversation with one of school psychologists about navigating teenage relationships. The event, hosted by the guidance department and with the support of the PTSA also included dinner and a Chromebook giveaway for attendees.

Dr. Cotton shared an update on the Superintendent's Student Voices Tour through the eyes of the students who participated. He thanked Ariana, Cheyenne, and Erik for sharing their experiences, as well as all of the students who took the time to meet with him. He stated how much he cares about students' voices and recommendations and that the school system is working to address many of them through its strategic plan. Additionally, he looks forward to continuing to collaborate with some of the sophomores and juniors from the group through the Student Advisory Council next school year. Together, they will identify innovative solutions for some of the top challenges our schools are facing today.

### **Board Member Items**

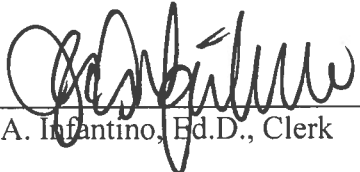
Mrs. Leary thanked Dr. Cotton and Ms. Lucente for their hard work on the budget presentation to help the Board and employees understand the changes. She remarked that the Superintendent's salary reflects his responsibilities and concerns for the district as a whole and noted the respect she has for the Superintendent and his staff. She also stated the budget numbers in no way reflect the value of teachers to the district. She thanked the teachers for attending the meeting.

Mr. Mercer thanked the students and staff who participated in Mayor's Youth Day. He noted that he was extremely impressed with the students' questions.

Ms. Proffitt thanked the Board Members who participated in Mayor's Youth Day. She also reiterated Mrs. Leary's remarks regarding the support and appreciation of the Superintendent, his staff, and the teachers.

### **Adjournment**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:49 p.m.

  
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Jean A. Infantino, Ed.D., Clerk

  
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Victoria L. Proffitt, Chairman