



**Minutes School Board Meeting
January 13, 2021
School Board/Annual Organizational Meeting
6:00 p.m. Open Session, motion to move immediately into Closed Session William
Monroe High School Media Classroom
7:00 p.m.
William Monroe High School Performing Arts Center Agenda**

MEMBERS PRESENT: Ms. Sharon Mack, Chairperson; Mr. Todd Sansom, Vice-Chairperson; Mr. Jason Tooley, Member; Ms. Leah Paladino, Member; Mr. Jason Collier, Member; Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent; Ms. Rhonda Houchens, Clerk.

MEMBERS PRESENT BY TELEPHONE: N/A

MEMBERS ABSENT: N/A

BOARD OF SUPERVISOR(S) PRESENT: Mr. Steve Bowman, Liaison

Closed session was called to order at 6:00 p.m. in the William Monroe High School Media Lab.

Ms. Leah Paladino made a motion to move into closed session; Mr. Todd Sansom seconded. All ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Sharon Mack moved to reconvene in an open session at 7:00 p.m. in the WMHS Performing Arts Center.

Ms. Mack explained that this regular meeting also includes time for organizational matters. She called for nominations for the new board chairperson. Mr. Todd Sansom nominated Ms. Leah Paladino. There were no other nominations. Mr. Jason Collier moved to approve the nomination, Mr. Jason Tooley seconded the motion. All were in favor, the motion carried.

Ms. Leah Paladino assumed her position as the new board chair and continued with the board elections and committee appointments. She requested nominations for the new board vice chair. Mr. Jason Tooley nominated Mr. Todd Sansom. There were no other

nominations. Ms. Sharon Mack seconded the nomination. All members voted by stating “aye” to approve Mr. Sansom’s election.

Ms. Paladino requested nominations for the new clerk of the board. Ms. Mack nominated Ms. Rhonda Houchens. There were no other nominations. Mr. Tooley seconded the nomination. All ayes from the board, approving Ms. Houchens’ nomination.

Ms. Paladino requested nominations for deputy clerk of the school board. Ms. Mack nominated Jennifer Walker. There were no other nominations. Mr. Tooley seconded, all ayes from the board, approving the nomination.

Ms. Paladino requested nominations for the Blue Ridge Governor's School representative. Ms. Mack nominated Jason Tooley, Jason Collier seconded. All ayes from the board, the motion carried.

Ms. Paladino asked for nominations for a representative for the area of policy. Ms. Mack nominated Ms. Paladino, Mr. Sansom seconded, all ayes from members.

Ms. Paladino requested nominations for a PREP representative. Ms. Mack nominated Mr. Jason Collier and Ms. Sharon Mack and Ms. Leah Paladino as alternates. Mr. Tooley seconded the nomination. All board members approved the nomination.

Ms. Paladino requested a vote to approve the slate of officers and the committee appointments. All ayes from members of the board.

Ms. Mack made a motion to approve the schedule of regular meetings for the calendar year 2021, Mr. Collier seconded the motion. All ayes from members to approve the schedule, motion carried.

Ms. Paladino called for a roll call vote to approve the Code of School Board Conduct as presented. Mr. Tooley, Ms. Mack, Mr. Sansom, and Ms. Paladino voted to approve the Code of School Board Conduct. Mr. Collier voted “nay.”

The Board certified by roll call vote that to the best of each member’s knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and identified in the motion to convene the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered. Ms. Mack, Mr. Tooley, Ms. Paladino, and Mr. Sansom all certified. Mr. Collier abstained from the vote due to his absence in closed session.

Ms. Mack moved to accept the consent agenda as presented, Mr. Sansom seconded. All ayes from members, motion carried.

Ms. Paladino stated members of the audience were welcome to address the board through public comment on matters not listed on the agenda. There were no sign ups and no participants in public comment.

Dr. Bryan Huber presented information/action item #11-985, the Restraint and Seclusion Policy “JM.” He explained the notification timeline has been altered slightly. He also said the policy now requires the division Superintendent establish regulations for the policy. Additionally, it requires an annual review by the school board. Dr. Huber explained the board should anticipate a policy review during the fall in the future. Ms. Mack moved to approve the policy as presented. Mr. Tooley seconded the motion. All ayes from members of the board, motion carried.

Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh presented Information/action item #11-986, Temporary COVID Leave Procedures. She explained that this would be a temporary extension of federal guidance effective April 1-December 30. She proposed accepting up to 80 hours of paid sick leave, without impacting employees’ balance, retroactive to January 4. She outlined exactly which scenarios this procedure would cover and recommended keeping the procedure in place until June 30, 2021. She explained this extension prevents employees from using accrued sick leave and she believes it will encourage employees to be more inclined to disclose instances of exposure and potential illness. Ms. Mack moved to approve Dr. Whitmarsh’s recommendation. Mr. Tooley seconded the motion, all ayes from members, motion carried.

Dr. Huber presented information item #11-987, the Return to Learn Update. He explained that his presentation will focus on some of the next steps the school division plans to take to recover from the long-lasting effects of the pandemic. He said this includes efforts during the second semester on the new strategic plan. He gave a brief update on operations within the school buildings in the various learning models. He explained that some current efforts underway focus on improving practices within the current model, but are simultaneously shedding light on the necessity for focusing on equity as the division works to recover from the pandemic. He said the first step to accomplish that goal is to have the clearest picture possible of the academic, social-emotional, and mental health needs of students. He explained that division leaders predict a significant challenge where only 50% of students will have their needs met through their core instruction, while the other 50% will require additional intervention, after the pandemic. He explained that one thing that will support the recovery is that division leaders will simultaneously begin the next five year journey on a new strategic plan. He says pandemic recovery and equity for all students will be a strong focal point of that plan. The remainder of his presentation focused on recruitment strategies for the upcoming school year and how division leaders are planning to distribute staffing to meet students’ needs.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented information item #11-988, the Superintendent’s Budget Update. She outlined the timeline and what has been done in regards to the budget process so far. She then outlined the next steps in the process. She outlined the FY2022 budget’s influencing factors, including enrollment projections, VRS, operating expenses, and COVID-19 impact. She also explained some anticipated bills in the state and federal

legislature that could benefit school divisions. Additionally, she explained how she would like employees' salary to look after the budget is adopted.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented information item #11-989, the Superintendent's Update. She outlined the additional funding sources to help mitigate COVID-19 within the division. This includes CARES, ESSER, and GEER funding. She explained that those application-based funds have been allocated, due to an established timeline for using those funds. In regards to operations within the school buildings, she explained that the Thomas Jefferson Health District remains confident in the division's mitigation strategies to keep employees and students healthy. Additionally, she clarified the data reflected in the GCPS COVID Dashboard on the division's website. She explained that, at the time of the meeting, employees could sign up to receive a COVID vaccine, since they are all included in the 1B category for distribution within the state.

Mr. Collier clarified why he voted "nay" on the Board's Code of Conduct document. He explained that he understands the expectations involved with being a public official and seems it is unnecessary to be involved with the procedure.

Mr. Sansom thanked everyone who made it possible for the board to meet in-person. He also addressed the tension that is within the community and beyond. He encouraged people to check in on others and make sure everyone is doing okay.

Ms. Mack thanked Ms. Paladino for agreeing to lead the board during her last term, and Mr. Sansom for taking on the role of vice chair. She also thanked Ms. Kristie Spencer for all her work on handling COVID-related funds.

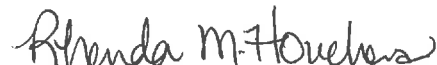
Mr. Tooley thanked all the staff within the division, specifically teachers and staff that do a lot of the work "behind the scenes."

Ms. Paladino thanked her fellow school board members for their hard work during the previous calendar year. She also thanked them for allowing her the opportunity to lead the board during her last term.

Ms. Paladino adjourned the meeting at 8:58 p.m.



Chairman



Clerk