

**GOOCHLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD  
SPECIAL MEETING  
DECEMBER 1, 2009  
ANNEX CONFERENCE ROOM  
6:30 P.M.**

**MINUTES**

**CALL TO ORDER**

Raymond A. Miller, Chairman, called the meeting to order at 6:34 p.m.

**Present were:**

Raymond A. Miller, Chairman  
Maxwell G. Cisne, Vice Chairman  
Mr. Ivan O. Mattox, Sr.  
Mr. Andrew A. Meng, III  
Mr. James L. Haskell  
Dr. Linda A. Underwood, Superintendent

**Also attending were:**

Peter M. Gretz, Assistant Superintendent  
Francie Ball, Principal, Goochland High School  
Johnette Burdette, Principal, Goochland Middle School  
Stacey Austin, Principal, Randolph Elementary School  
Thomas DeWeerd, Director of Secondary Education  
Lynne Venter, Director of Finance and Operations  
Sonny Turner, Supervisor of Maintenance  
Betty Thurston, Supervisor of Transportation  
Connie Foreman, Gifted Specialist  
Brad Franklin, Research and Information Services Analyst  
William Quarles, District 2 Supervisor  
Ned Creasey, District 3 Supervisor  
Rebecca Dickson, County Administrator

**The Media was represented by:**

David DesRoches, *The Central Virginian*  
Ken Odor, *The Goochland Gazette*

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS/CHANGES TO AGENDA**

Dr. Underwood presented additions and changes to the agenda.

**FIRST PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

- Karen Myrick spoke regarding the budget process stating the process is confusing. She asked the Board to not cut any academic programs. Ms. Myrick also asked the Board convey to parents how the School Board and the Board of Supervisors are working together. Stated she would not support any budget that cut academics.
- Dave Hollis, a Goochland resident with no children in school, spoke and asked to know what authority the school board has to make changes in Goochland schools before any and all approvals have been made to the budget, specifically

employee layoffs. He asked that the board look at the positions at the top rather than looking at the lower end of the scale before making cuts.

- Kristin McNaron, a parent of a gifted child, asked the board to look at constrained budget and not take away academics. She asked board to look at other ways to make cuts such as staggered bus runs. She asked if the school board is working with the Board of Supervisors on the budget and asked that the two boards work together.
- Riley McNaron, a student at the Goochland Elementary Specialty Center, spoke regarding the gifted program and asked that the gifted center not be cut.
- Jen Hefner, a parent of a gifted child, echoed Kristin McNaron's sentiments and stated that should the gifted be cut she shared concerns. She also listed a number of questions to which she requested answers.
  1. If this is a plan that you continue to pursue, I would like to know in what way you feel you can meet the requirements of these gifted students in moving them from a full time program to a part time program?
  2. What will happen in the classroom?
  3. How many levels of students will teachers be asked to teach at the same time?
  4. What is the current ratio of gifted teachers to gifted students?
  5. What is the state and federal requirement for this?
  6. How will the program be affected with any changes?
  7. Would the program survive a state and federal audit if we make these changes?
  8. What additional training will be provided to the regular education teachers to ensure that all students receive the level of instruction they deserve?
- Meredith Hefner, a 3<sup>rd</sup> grader at Goochland Elementary Specialty Center, spoke about gifted class and things they are learning. She asked about fund raising to get money for the program.
- Nancy Ashley spoke stating she understands that some programs will be cut and some will be restored, but feels that if Maggie Walker is cut, it will not be restored. She feels that if the Maggie Walker slots are given up then GCPS will not be able to get them back in the next year or so. She asked that the School Board not cut the Maggie Walker program.
- Margaret Reynolds, a parent of Goochland Middle School student, has comments questions and suggestions.

Comments: She is not in favor of the proposed cuts discussed and feels they are short-sighted. She feels that Goochland County Public Schools' test scores are on the rise in part due to gifted programs and other enrichment offerings. She feels that

to eliminate any of the core offerings is a betrayal to teachers and past administrators who worked so hard to make them happen.

**Questions:**

1. Why are you saying again that you are going to cut Goochland participation in Maggie L. Walker Governor's School, one of the top ranked public high schools in the country?
2. What can our system afford to provide in its place for the very brightest of our students?
3. If you are contemplating cutting the newly formed Goochland Middle School volleyball team for girls, isn't that a violation of Title 9?
4. What about the possibility of more collaboration with the county government in a purchasing position and with health care plans?
5. About fixed costs, how have you examined ways to reduce them?
6. When Dr. Hamzey of Dominion Power spoke before you at a public hearing on the budget two years ago, did you follow up with him?
7. I understand that PowerSchool is very expensive and SchoolMessenger is as well, are you considering something less expensive?
8. I'd like to see the budget and have more informed conversations between my administrators, teachers, and parents. Where is it?
9. I think what disturbs me most is that parents have not been truly a participatory partner in this process. Why not have a community budgetary advisory board as you appear to do with other advisory boards?

**Suggestions:**

1. Look carefully at cutting non-teaching staff and overall pay cuts
2. Consider charging a small fee for transportation
3. Eliminate frivolous spending, like the Goochland High School athletic sign, iPhones to staff, helicopter to dry football field, and rings to football players
4. Mirror the county's transparency with the open check register

Ms. Reynolds stated she would like to see more evidence of due diligence in the public eye and asked that the School Board work on the relationship with the Board of Supervisors and parents. She stated she is not in favor of proposed cuts and wants to see the budget. She would like answers to questions, and asked that teamwork and transparency guide deliberations

- Jo D. Hosken spoke regarding potential cuts, stating that cuts should begin with employees making the highest salaries rather than the lower positions. She asked the following questions:

1. How many people in Central Office will be taking salary cuts or losing their jobs?

2. How many people in Central Office have positions that we don't see but the positions are there?
3. What does the speaker for GCPS do?
4. Where will cuts in administration be made other than 2-day furloughs?

Mr. Miller explained that this year the Board has been asked to the budget by \$2.9 million dollars. He stated the Board is in that process and public comment is part of that process. No decision has been made to cut any program or any person. Mr. Miller stated the Board must have a Reduction in Force (RIF) policy in place that is fair and relevant because we don't know what budget we will get and whatever budget we do get, what is approved, is what we must operate under. Once that budget is approved, there are timelines that we have to meet under federal and state law that we have to be ready. Mr. Miller explained that the Board hears what the public is saying and it will be a part of the decision making process.

After making that statement, Mr. Miller asked others to continue with public comment.

- Jane Christie spoke regarding giving notice of positions that are going to be cut and asked that the School Board give the Board of Supervisors more time before cutting positions. Ms. Christie stated it is important for citizens to consider larger budget before worrying about cutting jobs. Ms. Christie stated she would be willing to pay higher property taxes in order to retain the current budget.
- Katie Shedden, a 10<sup>th</sup> grader at Goochland High School, was part of gifted program and spoke in favor of keeping center-based gifted program in place.
- Jessica Shedden, a student in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade gifted program, asked the School Board to not shut down the gifted center.
- Beth Hardy, a parent of four children in Goochland County Public Schools, spoke regarding the budget. She stated she had spoken at the Board of Supervisors' meeting earlier and had asked for greater transparency and allowing more time for the budget process. Ms. Hardy does not feel the process allows enough time for citizens to review.
- Scott Turner spoke regarding the budget process, stating that when it comes to Goochland, it is not only Goochland citizens who appreciate good schools, it is also people from other states who move here for the schools. He spoke in favor of keeping the gifted children in center-based program.

#### **INFORMATION ITEMS:**

##### **PRESENTATION OF CIP**

Dr. Underwood presented the recommendations from the Facilities Committee on the Capital Improvements Program (CIP). The county will get back to us with a due date for the CIP and it will be on the regular Board agenda for approval.

## BUDGET REDUCTION

Dr. Underwood presented an overview of the possible budget reductions, explaining the process including funded and unfunded mandates. Cost center presentations were made by Sonny Turner for Maintenance, Betty Thurston for Transportation, and Tom DeWeerd for Technology. Dr. Underwood asked the School Board to provide any suggestions for additional suggestions to the possible reductions and adjustments will be made. Dr. Underwood will provide at the next meeting what class sizes will be if positions are eliminated. The Board will be asked to approve the budget on January 12 to be presented to the Board of Supervisors on January 13, 2010.

## **OLD BUSINESS**

Dr. Underwood presented a copy of the revised Reduction in Force (RIF) policy, stating it will be on the website for staff to review.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

None.

## **SECOND PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

- Jodie Pillow asked why the gifted center was set up as center-based in the first place. She asked that the Board look at the center-based gifted program along with research to support the center-based system.
- Belinda Bowles asked when the citizens would receive answers to their questions. Dr. Underwood responded stating that responses would be given as soon as possible, and that some will be answers in the Frequently Asked Questions page of her blog.
- Laurel Heiser spoke and asked if there is anything citizens can do to help raise money for the children. She also stated she does not like the possibility of split schedules for schools.
- Belinda Bowles spoke asking when citizens will see what will be presented to the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Miller answered stating it will be at least January 12, 2010, which is when the School Board will vote. Mr. Miller also stated the public hearing on the budget will be December 15, 2009. Ms. Bowles would like to know at what point parents will actually know what is being cut. Dr. Underwood stated that with the Governor's budget information coming out on December 18, she will take that information to the School Board and will at that time publish the proposed budget on the website.
- Charlotte Cerne spoke regarding eliminating the center-based gifted center stating it will not help the gifted program. Ms. Cerne feels the gifted program loses its strength without being center-based. She also asked the Board to look at cutting Central Office positions as well as cutting electrical costs.
- Nancy Ramsbottom spoke regarding center-based gifted versus integrated gifted. She asked the cost per student to attend Maggie L. Walker Governor's School.
- Adeeb Hamzey spoke in favor of an energy conservation program and asked if one had been implemented. Mr. Hamzey asked the School Board to look at conservation before cutting instruction. Mr. Hamzey also stated he had heard no mention of cutting principal positions at GHS/GMS.

- Jane Christie listed questions she would like answered by the Board:
  1. When can the public expect to see a detailed list of potential reductions?
  2. Can the items be made available to the public now with dollar amounts attached?
  3. Ms. Christie would like an explanation of how the revised gifted classes will work. Will that give them a lower quality education?

Mr. Christie also spoke regarding the staggered bus schedules stating that she sees it as impractical and does not see it working.

- Belinda Bowles asked if it is determined that bus schedules are not going to stagger or not close the gifted center, what will the Board cut next?
- Laurel Heiser again asked the Board what parents can do to help.
- John Grigg spoke regarding budget cuts and suggested pay cuts across the board versus cutting positions.
- Adeeb Hamzey spoke regarding the technology cuts, specifically the antivirus software, and asked if administration is separate from the schools. Mr. Hamzey also asked if the schools and the county have two health insurance programs.

**CLOSED MEETING**

None.

**ADJOURNMENT**

The meeting was adjourned by the Chairman.

**APPROVED:**

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*Raymond A. Miller*

*Diane Bennett*

Signature

Signature

*1/12/10*

*1/12/10*

Date

Date