

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
5:00 P.M.**

Location: School Board Office, 361 Bears Trl., Bastian, VA

PRESENT

Jerri Harman, Chairman; Gerry Schepers, Vice Chairman; Duane Bailey, Member; Bill Crabtree, Member

OPENING

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM AND CALL TO ORDER

After a quorum was determined, the meeting was called to order by Jerri Harman, Chairman.

INVOCATION

Invocation was given by Duane Bailey.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

AGENDA

Motion was made by Duane Bailey and seconded by Bill Crabtree to approve the agenda.

Vote on this motion: Duane Bailey, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Duane Bailey to approve the minutes of the December 17, 2015 regular meeting, January 5, 2016 special meeting, January 14, 2016 special meeting, and January 21, 2016 special meeting.

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Duane Bailey, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

APPROVAL OF PAYMENTS

Motion was made by Bill Crabtree and seconded by Gerry Schepers to approve the payment of outstanding obligations and those approved by fiscal agent.

Vote on this motion: Bill Crabtree, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Duane Bailey, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

PRESENTATIONS

BLAND COUNTY 4-H

Elizabeth Johnson, Bland County Extension Agent/4-H Youth Development Coordinator, welcomed new members and thanked the school board for their support of the 4-H program. She then introduced, Emma Pennington, a member of Bland County 4-H and the 4-H Interstate Club. Ms. Pennington said that Bland County 4-H currently has 350 members and 100 volunteers. All 4-H clubs completed speeches and the county held its Public Speaking Contest in November. Winners will move on to compete in the Junior Area Contest in Grayson County on April 23rd. Ms. Pennington highlighted 4-H activities for January: 4th grade will build an electric

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 2**

current to learn about electricity; 5th grade will learn about corn products in agriculture; 6th grade will perform skits and learn about budgeting money; and 7th grade will participate in a PowerPoint game to learn about their board members. She also stated that the Senior 4-H club helped judged the speeches and has been participating in service projects including face painting, peanut butter collection for the Bland Mission, and the 4-H Appreciation Dinner. As a member of the 4-H Interstate Club, Ms. Pennington worked on fundraisers last year and the group took a trip to Cozumel and the Grand Cayman Islands where they enjoyed ziplining and swimming with the dolphins. 4-H Summer Camp for Bland and Grayson will be the week of July 18-22, 2016. School board members were presented with a gift of appreciation for the support they have shown for the 4-H and youth of Bland County.

JAM

John Dodson, Director of Mountain Home Center, said that he has always wanted to teach kids traditional mountain string music. Junior Appalachian Musicians is an after-school program for grades 4-8. It is in school systems in SC, NC, and SWVA. In SWVA it is supported by The Crooked Road. Mountain Home Center is helping to fund this in Bland County. Mr. Dodson then introduced Jared Perdue who will be the program director. Mr. Perdue said that last year, in conjunction with Virginia Highlands Community College, an old time music class was added for high school students. He said that JAM was the next logical step. The goal is to teach not only music but also culture, musical heritage, and about Bland. Through funding from Mountain Home Center, they have received 25 new instruments (8 fiddles, 7 banjos, 10 guitars). JAM is an after-school program on Mondays from 4-6 p.m. and for \$5.00/week students will have lessons and a meal.

QUILL GRANT

Annie Whitaker, Assistant Superintendent, gave an update of the educational enhancement grant proposal that was approved by the Quill board to be submitted to the Wythe/Bland Foundation. There are several categories that would allow teachers and administrators to apply for funding: Before and After School Remediation and Enrichment; Student Engagement; Family Involvement; Technology; Career Development; Problem-based Learning; STEM; Arts and Culture; Professional Development; and Teacher and Staff Support. Mrs. Whitaker said that it is an 18-month grant that will wrap to the next August grant cycle. The first year request is \$33,350 and the second year is \$16,675. The in-kind contribution from the school division will be \$11,472.36. Quill will also contribute \$500 in terms of materials and supplies. Mrs. Whitaker said that if awarded the grant, teachers could apply for \$1,000 for themselves or \$1,500 if working in collaboration with another teacher. At the end of the grant cycle there will be a review fair to share the projects that have been done.

STUDENT REGISTRATION PROCESS

Dr. Jill Hopkins, Guidance Counselor, spoke of the scheduling process at Bland County High School. Dr. Hopkins said it begins at the elementary level with career awareness and career planning. She said that by grade 8 all students have to have a career plan. After that, students are met with individually to review what classes are available to meet their career plans, requirements for graduation, and post-graduation needs. Gerry Schepers said that the number one complaint that he has heard from parents is that students are not challenged enough their senior year and it is not preparing them for college. Mr. Schepers asked what needed to be done to create a challenging requirement and/or what classes could be added to provide a superior education so that the board could match that with the budget. Dr. Hopkins said that we do currently offer some dual-enrollment courses and that they will be looking at additional offerings at the Tazewell Vocational School in February. She stated that students also have access to the Virtual Virginia courses and that some students don't take

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 3**

advantage of those. Dr. Hopkins said that there are some gaps that are being looked at such as Dual Physics, Trigonometry and AP Biology. She added that at some point the school will look at adding honor classes at the lower levels. Bill Crabtree said it is important to find out what is needed so that the board can consider if it needs to hire someone or help get a current teacher certified to teach another class because there may be room to add more courses due to the two planning periods teachers currently have. Dr. Hopkins said that on the master schedule it may look like the core teachers do have two planning periods but in fact they are required to do SOL remediation for one of those periods. She said currently 50 percent of students are in remediation. Mr. Schepers concluded, saying that this had been a good exchange and that we will need to continue the process so that the board can budget appropriately.

AWARDS AND OBSERVANCES

None

PUBLIC COMMENT

None

UPDATES

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Don Hodock, Interim Superintendent, introduced Alec Taylor to the board. Mr. Taylor did not have any updates from the school. Duane Bailey inquired about the dress code policy that was brought up last meeting by Danielle Cormier and asked if the student council had been approached in drafted a proposal for the board to review. Mr. Taylor said that he had not heard anything about it yet, but that it doesn't mean it hadn't happened. The board stated that they'd be happy to look at whatever the students came up with.

PRINCIPALS

Deborah Hensley, BCES Principal, welcomed the new board members. She said that January 4th was a teacher's workday and part of that was professional development. Dr. Hopkins conducted a workshop to offer suggestions on ways to incorporate universal screeners in addressing subgroups and on how we can strengthen some academic weaknesses. Mrs. Hensley said that they are working on the Tier 3 students and looking at different ways to teach and help them, including incentives – possibly an SOL reward trip. Mrs. Hensley said they are also working on AR and offering incentives there too. Mr. Crabtree said the Farm Bureau had ordered books for the school and Mrs. Hensley should be hearing from them soon about those. On January 11, Mrs. Whitaker conducted the second round of alternative assessment training. On January 15, Mr. Perdue brought his musicians to perform for the 4th, 5th, and 6th grade students to motivate them to join the JAM program.

Charles Puckett, BCHS Associate Principal, said that Mr. Perdue had a bluegrass group come play for the student body and they enjoyed that. The academic team, MACC, kicked off it's season tonight traveling to Grayson County. Basketball played Grayson last night and will have a quad on Friday with Graham. The Forensics season is under way and Bland County will host the conference tournament next week. Mr. Puckett also complimented Hannah Minnicks who placed first in the state in the VFW essay contest and was awarded \$800. Mr. Puckett stated that even though the math program is under review he believes we have some of our best teachers in the math department and that in the spring we will make benchmarks. He ended by sharing how impressed he

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 4**

has been by all of our students and teachers in the time he has been there.

FACILITY UPDATE

Mr. Hodock began by stating that Tony Hungate, Supervisor of Operations, has done an outstanding job in helping with the school closings and dealing with several issues at schools. Mr. Hodock said that most recently we had an issue with the furnace at Rocky Gap running out of coal and when the furnace quit it was discovered that the auger that runs the bin had rusted and deteriorated where it would not turn. Johnny Gibson said he would be able to fix this but in the meantime the hopper had to be hand-fed every four hours and Tim Harless agreed to do that. Mr. Hodock said that because of their work the school was able to save an estimated \$4,000-\$5,000, complimenting both men for their dedication and work. Mr. Schepers commented that he had different opinions on the matter, saying that when someone comes in every 4 hours Monday through Thursday, that things become very high priority. Mr. Hungate continued the facilities report stating that a new water line was put in at Bland Elementary and during Christmas break work continued at the high school on the bathroom issues. Mr. Hungate said the bathroom issue is managed but he will work this summer on tearing out and redoing it. He stated that there is still a smell and he is considering venting it by putting a fan in the wall but will need to talk with inspectors before doing that. The girls locker room floor was painted by Mr. Puckett and it looks great. Mr. Hungate then proposed the purchase of a John Deere unit with snow blower, snow plow, and mower that is up for auction on Gov Deals. He asked for approval to place a bid up to \$4,100. It was discussed that purchases under \$5,000 did not need the prior approval of the board but that they appreciated him informing them of the purchase. If the superintendent agreed with the purchase the board did not have any objections to Mr. Hungate placing the bid.

ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT

Mrs. Whitaker gave an update on the reduction of vocational funding that we are looking at from the state for next school year. Mrs. Whitaker said that she was able to speak with someone in budgeting and they also believe it is a possible miscalculation of data and are working on it. VDOE had wanted the Tazewell Vocational School to report all students and then manually report which ones were Bland students and that manual data did not go through. Mrs. Whitaker feels once this is corrected there will be a change in that funding. With regard to curriculum strategy, Mrs. Whitaker commended Dr. Jill Hopkins on her work this year. She said that she had also spoken to Wythe County again to see if they would put in writing that we could have free tuition for our students. This is no longer an option for us because the agreement was prior to the new superintendent, but she has not heard back on what the tuition would be.

SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Hodock said that the Department of School Improvement was here today and he complimented Mrs. Whitaker, Mr. Musser, and Dr. Hopkins on their work in getting information together for them. Mr. Hodock said that he had submitted a letter to the State Superintendent stating that he did not feel that we should be in a school improvement status. He was notified that they had received the letter and that they understand our position but they are not changing theirs.

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 5**

SCHOOL BOARD

Ms. Harman asked the board if they had anything they would like to say. Mr. Bailey thanked Ms. Harman, Mr. Schepers, Mr. Hodock, and the staff at the central office for all of their help in welcoming him on board. Mr. Crabtree also thanked Ms. Harman for all of her help and work, especially in regard to the superintendent search. Ms. Harman announced, per the Code of Virginia, that the Bland County School Board will be conducting interviews for the position of superintendent from February 4, 2016 to February 17, 2016. These interviews will be held in accordance with the Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3712.

INFORMATIONAL AGENDA

FINANCIAL REPORT

Mr. Hodock said this year's budget has been working very effectively. Kelli Chewning, Supervisor of Finance, added that she had spoken to County Administrator Eric Workman and the \$250,000 the county gave should be added to the school's current budget and that will be appropriated at the end of the year. Mr. Schepers commented that our budget for this year is looking very positive. Fuel savings are approximately \$20,000 this year. Next meeting he requested to see an in-depth budget analysis that would project the costs for the remaining of the year to see what opportunities there may be for facilities or in purchasing a new bus. Mr. Crabtree mentioned that it was discussed that the field trip money was gone for the year and wanted to know if the senior BETA trip to Williamsburg had been approved yet. It was discussed that the money was not gone, just accounted for differently. Since the BETA trip is scheduled prior to the next board meeting and the request is still under revision, it was decided that a phone or email poll would be conducted once the details were provided regarding the number of days and costs of a charter bus.

ATTENDANCE REPORT

Mr. Hodock stated that we are around 798-800 students.

ACTION AGENDA

CODE OF CONDUCT

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Duane Bailey to approve the VSBA Code of Conduct for Board Members.

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Duane Bailey, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

TABLETS

Board was presented information regarding quotes on three brands of tablets to consider for board members. Pricing included extended warranties. Mr. Schepers questioned the need for an extended warranty, saying an extra tablet could be purchased for the price of the warranty. Denise Tate, Supervisor of Technology, stated that she included that as an option because in her experience the warranty has paid for itself. Mr. Schepers said that he would like to see how much warranty has been used system wide to see the justification in purchasing warranties and asked that Mrs. Tate provide that information at least five years back. Ms. Harman recommended the purchase of the HP tablet without the warranty.

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 6**

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Bill Crabtree to purchase five HP tablets for the superintendent and the board members.

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Duane Bailey, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

BOARDDOCS

Board was presented in their packets with quotes on BoardDocs Lite and BoardDocs Pro. Mr. Schepers asked if there was a recommendation on either. Laura Sage, Clerk of the Board, said that she had been speaking with Heather Freeman, Clerk of the Board for Pulaski County Schools, who uses the BoardDocs Pro. Although the BoardDocs Pro is considerably more expensive, the Lite mostly only allows the ability to prepare an agenda and doesn't have the ability of generating minutes or real time voting. Mrs. Sage also stated that one great benefit of the Pro is its ability to store policies in one place to access at any given time. This option would help us meet one of the essential actions we were given from our accreditation review a few years ago to combine our local and school board policies into one.

Motion was made by Duane Bailey and seconded by Gerry Schepers to purchase the BoardDocs Pro.

Vote on this motion: Duane Bailey, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

Mrs. Whitaker commented that Title I and CTE that are showing on the presented Organizational Chart under Brian Hall, Supervisor of Special Services, needed to be moved back under her title.

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Duane Bailey to approve the Organizational Chart with the modifications.

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Duane Bailey, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

LEAVE AND ABSENCES POLICY

Amendments to the Sick Leave Policy were presented to the board to add a clause addressing bereavement and the ability for an employee to use sick days in the event of a death in the family. Also a change was made regarding the sick bank to now allow for an employee to donate up to 10 days to an ill co-worker that would be transferable as they were used.

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Bill Crabtree to approve the changes to the Leave and Absences Policy.

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 7**

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Duane Bailey, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

SCHOOL NUTRITION DEBT POLICY

Due to a growing problem with outstanding lunch account debt, a new School Nutrition Payment Policy was presented to the board outlining the procedures for handling outstanding debt. Mr. Schepers said that he would like to look at this issue further and discuss it more.

Motion was made by Bill Crabtree and seconded by Gerry Schepers to table the issue.

Vote on this motion: Bill Crabtree, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Duane Bailey, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

BASEBALL FIELD LIGHT CONTRACT

Mr. Hungate presented the board with information regarding a contract for the baseball field lights. The quote presented was \$3,850 for 10 years. Mr. Hungate did state that we were already due a free light change from the company. Board discussed waiting until we had the free light change before making a decision on the contract.

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Bill Crabtree to table the issue.

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Duane Bailey, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

SALARY COMMITTEE

Mrs. Whitaker stated that they have been putting together information on current salary scales and there are big gaps with some staff getting little raise and four people getting a \$20,000 raise. There is a need for a committee to help get this in line. Mr. Schepers suggested that we have at least two members of the board on the committee and that he would like to volunteer as one of them. Mrs. Whitaker said that she would also like to recommend that we have at least a teacher from each school, our BCE representative, some support staff and also someone from the Board of Supervisors. Ms. Harman suggested that a motion be made to approve the creation of a salary committee and then she, as chairman, would meet with Mr. Hodock and Mrs. Whitaker to determine who would be on the committee.

Motion was made by Bill Crabtree and seconded by Duane Bailey to approve to the creation of a Salary Committee.

Vote on this motion: Bill Crabtree, For; Duane Bailey, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 8**

REVISED 2015-2016 CALENDAR

Mrs. Whitaker presented the revised 2015-2016 Calendar. She said that we count both days and hours. Schools are required to attend a minimum of 180 days or a minimum of 990 hours of instructions. Traditionally Bland County has used the hour limit because we rarely get to the days. Five days (February 25, February 26, March 24, March 29, and May 20, 2016) have been added back into the calendar to make up snow days.

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Duane Bailey to approve the revised 2015-2016 calendar.

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Duane Bailey, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

DATE AND TIME FOR NEXT BUDGET WORK SESSION

Motion was made by Duane Bailey and seconded by Bill Crabtree to approve February 8, 2016 at 1pm as the date and time for the next budget work session.

Vote on this motion: Duane Bailey, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

CLOSED MEETING

MOTION TO GO INTO CLOSED MEETING

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Bill Crabtree that pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) and Section 2.2-3711(A)(3) of the Code of Virginia that the Board convene a closed meeting for the following purposes:

1. Discuss personnel employment pursuant to the personnel exemption at 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia.
2. Discuss or consider the acquisition of real property for a public purpose or the disposition of publicly held real property at section 2.2-3711(A)(3).

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Duane Bailey, For; Jerri Harman; For. Motion was passed unanimously.

MOTION TO EXIT CLOSED MEETING

Motion was made by Duane Bailey and seconded by Bill Crabtree to exit the closed meeting.

Vote on this motion: Duane Bailey, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 9**

MOTION TO CERTIFY CLOSED MEETING

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Bill Crabtree to approve the certification of the closed meeting conducted on this date, January 28, 2016, as follows:

WHEREAS, the Bland County School Board has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.D. Of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this school board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Bland County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (I) only such public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered.

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Duane Bailey, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

ACTION AGENDA (CONTINUED)
CLOSED MEETING ITEMS

PERSONNEL

Mr. Hodock recommended the approval of the transfer of sick leave days for both Employee A and Employee B.

Motion was made by Gerry Schepers and seconded by Duane Bailey to approve the request for transfer of sick leave days for Employee A and Employee B.

Vote on this motion: Gerry Schepers, For; Duane Bailey, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

Mr. Hodock recommended the approval of the additions of Ms. Priscilla Maddox, Ms. Janice Buchanan, and Ms. Rebekah Sigman to the substitute teacher list.

Motion was made by Bill Crabtree and seconded by Duane Bailey to approve the additions of Ms. Maddox, Ms. Buchanan, and Ms. Sigman to the substitute teacher list.

Vote on this motion: Bill Crabtree, For; Duane Bailey, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

5193

**BLAND COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR MEETING
THURSDAY, JANUARY 28, 2016
PAGE 10**

Mr. Hodock recommended the approval of the additions of Mr. Christopher Hatcher and Ms. Daisy Ratliff to the substitute custodian list.

Motion was made by Duane Bailey and seconded by Gerry Schepers to approve the additions of Mr. Hatcher and Ms. Ratliff to the substitute custodian list.

Vote on this motion: Duane Bailey, For; Gerry Schepers, For; Bill Crabtree, For; Jerri Harman, For. Motion was passed unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Jerri Harman, Chairman, adjourned the meeting.

Chairman

Clerk