

Board Minutes

DATE: January 11, 2021

PRESENT: Chair Melinda Fagundus, Vice Chair Tracy Everette-Lenz, Amy Cole, Caroline W. Doherty, Worth Forbes, Benjie Forrest, Don Rhodes, Anna Barrett Smith, James E. Tripp Jr.

ALSO PRESENT: Dr. Ethan Lenker, Dr. Steve Lassiter, Jennifer L. Johnson, Matt Johnson, Debra Baggett, Dr. Kristi Rhone, Karen Harrington

IN-HOUSE COUNSEL: Emma J. Hodson

TIME: 6:30 P.M.

PLACE: Carolina Room, The Kathy Taft Center, 2010 Allen Road, Greenville, NC 27834 and via <http://go.pittschools.org/livestream1>

1. Start of Meeting

A. Chair Melinda Fagundus called the Board of Education meeting to order in Regular Session on January 11, 2021, at 6:30 P.M. in the Carolina Room at the Kathy Taft Center, 2010 Allen Road, Greenville, NC 27834. All Board members were present.

B. Benjie Forrest led the Board members in the Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence, ending with a prayer.

2. Routine Business

A. Adjustments to the Agenda

Chair Fagundus asked if there were any changes to the agenda. Hearing none, she asked for a motion to approve the agenda. Caroline Doherty moved to approve the agenda as written with a second from Worth Forbes. The Board voted to approve the agenda as written unanimously.

B. Spotlight on Teaching and Learning

Jennifer Johnson, Public Information Officer, shared updates with the Board regarding student and staff recognition, the COVID-19 dashboard, and information to be sent to families regarding COVID and when to stay at home.

C. Public Expression

Chair Fagundus noted that over 40 individuals had submitted Public Expression. Pursuant to Policy 2310, Chair Fagundus asked that Ms. Johnson share 6 comments from individuals advocating in each topic area.

Ms. Johnson shared public expression from the following individuals:

- Advocating to suspend face-to-face instruction in favor of all virtual instruction: Jonathan Redman, Bridgett Luckey, Paula Mitra, Amber Reel, Andrea Kelly, and Katrice Ward
- Advocating to change the COVID-19 dashboard: Erin Perkins, Nicole Stokes, Shelley Armour, Harry Claus, Tom Morse, and Amy Carrere
- Advocating that the Board show greater respect for teaching faculty: Jennifer Krajna, Prosie Palad, Tiffany Munn, and Dalana Pate.
- Advocating that the schools remain open for face-to-face instruction: Nancy Keith, Meghan Weaver, Laura Chabo, Kyle Harner, Andrea Drake, and Heather Harris-Parker
- Advocating that the Board consider issues related to the closure of Eastern Elementary school: Steven Emory and Amy Sweezy

3. Consent Agenda

The Consent Agenda items included the following items:

- December 7, 2020, Board Meeting minutes
- December 14, 2020, Board Work Session minutes
- January 5, 2021, Special Called Meeting minutes
- Personnel Report for January 11, 2021

Anna Barrett Smith moved to approve the consent agenda with a second from Caroline Doherty. The Board voted unanimously to approve the items on the consent agenda.

4. New Business

A. Matt Johnson, Assistant Superintendent of Operations, shared updates with Board members regarding the A.G. Cox construction project/ LOBS 2021. Mr. Johnson shared that the contractor and County have agreed that the Board may borrow up to \$1,273,500.00 from the Article 40 and 41 to start foundation work, purchase steel, and cover architectural and engineering fees incurred to date, while approval of the LOB is pending. Mr. Johnson stated that the contract has been divided into two parts to cover the first portion of the project. Benjie Forest made a motion to approve the contract as presented, with a second from Anna Barrett Smith. The motion passed unanimously.

B. Proposed Resolution to Graduation Requirements

Dr. Lenker presented a proposed resolution, for the school year 2020-2021, to suspend the local requirements for graduation and allow seniors to graduate pursuant to state requirements. Worth Forbes moved that the Board accept the resolution regarding graduation credits, with a second from Benjie Forrest. The motion passed unanimously.

C. COVID-19 Related Issues Discussion

Dr. Lenker presented COVID-19 updates to the Board of Education regarding the status of vaccination of school staff, fill rates for requests for substitute teachers, 983 students have been quarantined as of last week and that the district has had over 1,000 quarantines with only 3 possible transmissions within schools to date, that Eastern and Ridgewood closures are not likely the end of closures, and finally, that while he prioritizes in-person instruction, he would recommend that the Board consider pursuing two virtual weeks for the entire district.

Anna Barrett Smith made a motion to pivot Pitt County Schools to virtual instruction effective immediately through January 22, and to further moved that Dr. Lenker be empowered at that time to extend virtual learning at individual schools or grade levels as he sees necessary with a second from Caroline W. Doherty. Chair Fagundus asked for further discussion, receiving none, the motion passed 7 to 2 with Amy Cole, Don Rhodes, Anna Barrett Smith, James E. Tripp Jr., Caroline W. Doherty, Vice Chair Tracy Everette-Lenz and Chair Melinda Fagundus, voting in favor and Worth Forbes and Benjie Forrest voting against.

5. Closing Comments

Closing Comments were made by Dr. Lenker, Board members and Chair Fagundus.

6. Adjourn

Caroline Doherty moved to adjourn the meeting with a second from Don Rhodes. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 8:39 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Melinda Fagundus, Chair

Dr. Ethan Lenker, Secretary