

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
FEBRUARY 7, 2017**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a joint meeting with the Board of Education on Tuesday, February 7, 2017 in the Media Center at Pasquotank County High School.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cecil Perry, Chairman
Dr. William R. Sterritt, Vice-Chairman
Jeff Dixon
Joseph S. Winslow, Jr.
Bettie J. Parker

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lloyd E. Griffin, III
Frankie Meads

OTHERS PRESENT: Rodney Bunch, County Manager
R. Michael Cox
Sheri Small, Finance Officer
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

Also present were School Superintendent Dr. Larry Cartner, members of the Board of Education, and school staff.

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 PM by Chairman Perry. Board of Education Chair Sharon Warden introduced Ms. Amy Fyffe, Principal of Pasquotank County High School. Ms. Fyffe thanked the Board for coming and said she is pleased to host the meeting this evening. She stated that she has been principle at PCHS for nine years. She introduced Jennifer Loeffler whom she said she had the privilege of hiring a couple of years ago. Ms. Loeffler teaches both AP English courses this semester, as well as 12th grade English.

Ms. Loeffler gave a brief demonstration of the new chrome books. She stated that her classroom has been using chrome books for seven days now and she is very excited about them.

Chairman Perry said he is excited to be here, because when the two boards work together they can do more than when they work alone. He said our schools are very important and our Board will do whatever we can to help our schools. Dr. Cartner thanked students for preparing the wonderful meal.

Dr. Cartner said in the spirit of not having any surprises for the Board throughout the year, he would like to give an update. He presented a PowerPoint presentation. He stated that they currently have \$190,000 in grant proposals outstanding in addition to the second Golden Leaf grant of \$200,000. Early college will begin in August 2017 for 9th graders only. He anticipates a principle being in place in March. He noted that the state will pay for four months of principal planning time. He said the early college will start with one grade per year. By 2021, 9th – 12th grades will be established.

Dr. Cartner said the school system is currently going through their five year reaccreditation process. He said he feels really good about where they are in the strategic plan. They are doing monthly and bimonthly check ins and every indicator in the plan is ahead of schedule.

Dr. Cartner said last year they made their budget work, but this year there are many more unknowns in the schools budget such as the state budget, class size mandate, salary increases requiring local match, increases in hospitalization and retirement, and federal allotment. He provided a handout on teacher supplements. He said they are looking very hard to see what they can do to have an increase in teacher supplements. He noted that our strongest regional competitors are Camden and Currituck. He said Pasquotank County pays significantly lower supplements to its teachers and principals than the statewide average. He said to increase supplements by 2% it would cost \$24,431.

Dr. Cartner stated that their budget is starting with a \$1.139 million deficit. He noted that they used \$1.1 million of their fund balance last year and it is now basically depleted. In 2016-17 they were funded at \$10 million, which was a deficit of \$2.4 million. They reduced their budget by \$1.26 million. He said their total current expense this year was \$11.139 million. He stated that \$1.8 million is needed to maintain 2016-17 levels of staffing and service.

Dr. Cartner stated that fixed costs in the local budget include: current supplements, utilities and insurance, matching salary and supplement increases – state raises, increased costs in retirement and hospitalization, guaranteed benefit payouts, fixed state bonuses for locally paid employees, state mandated programs that require additional local funds (AIG, ESL, et.), and local portions of grants. He said areas of potential reduction in the local budget include: non-certified personnel, existing supplements, school instructional supply money, and co-curricular funds (band, athletics, and graduation). Significant issues for 2017-18 include: the ECPPS fund balance is depleted, expansion of 1:1 - \$277,793 (\$316,900 if class size mandate goes through), employee supplements, and a new wrecker. If the class size mandates goes through, 13-18 new positions will be required. If 18 new teachers are required, he estimates an increase in cost of \$1,316,695 without facility costs.

Dr. Cartner said large capital needs for 2017-18 include: roofs, HVAC replacements and upgrades, painting, vehicle replacement and equipment, and a new bus wrecker.

Roofs projects include: Sheep Harney Phase II at \$225,000, Pasquotank Elementary Phase I at \$210,000, Northeastern High School Gym Addition at \$40,000, and HL Trigg at \$45,000 for a projected roof total of \$520,000.

HVAC Projects and window replacements include: Replacing heat pump at Central Elementary for \$90,000, replace heat pump at Northeastern High School for \$90,000, connectivity upgrade at Administration Building for \$12,000, and Phase II of window replacements at Sheep Harney Elementary for \$200,000. Total projected windows and HVAC total \$392,000.

Painting projects include: River Road Middle at \$229,000, JC Sawyer Elementary at \$145,000, and HL Trigg at \$47,000. Total projected painting totals \$421,000.

Vehicle replacement and equipment include replacing two vans at a cost of \$60,000 and replacing the phone system at PW Moore Elementary School for \$50,000.

Dr. Cartner reported that the projected cost of a wrecker body is \$93,000. He said the chassis will be purchased by DPI. He noted that their current wrecker is out of compliance and no longer functions for bus towing. He said significant weight increase in newer buses requires tandem axle wreckers. A new wrecker will meet their needs for many years. He said currently to tow a bus they depend on availability of commercial wreckers. Often, much time passes before a commercial wrecker can respond. He noted that outside service wrecker calls this year totaled \$3,688.

Dr. Cartner stated that there has been student growth at multiple schools due to growth in six developments. Last year 56 teachers did not meet their growth goals and this year that number was reduced to 34. He said six 3rd grade reading teachers were in the top 25% of the state this year. He said they received significant bonuses.

Chairman Perry asked if there are increased supplements for math and science teachers. Dr. Cartner said the school system does not differentiate between teachers, but they do offer sign on bonuses in some areas and math is one of them. He said we lost some teachers this year to higher supplements. He said supplements are very crucial in retaining good teachers. Assistant Superintendent Steve Lassiter said they are working very hard to fill positions in middle and high school math, science, elementary education, and special education teachers. He stated that they filled one of their last vacancies in math today with a very strong candidate. They have started a very aggressive campaign to identify candidates who would like to come and live in this area. He said they are physically sending principals to twenty locations to recruit teachers, and they are holding training sessions on how to recruit, as well as an online virtual job fair. He went on to say that we need to continue increasing supplements in order to recruit and keep our existing teachers.

Vice-Chairman Sterritt said there is talk in Raleigh of doing away with art, physical education, athletics, music, and drama and that is very disappointing to him. He said educators need to remember that all of those areas are areas that peak students' interests in school and without some of those areas we will lose some students. Dr. Cartner agreed.

Commissioner Dixon asked if living next to a metropolitan area impacts hiring and maintaining teachers. Dr. Cartner said it impacts the system bigtime, because teachers will go where more supplements are offered.

Commissioner Winslow thanked the Board for their vision. He said he is very proud of our school system and the direction it is heading. Dr. Cartner credited his Board and staff.

Dr. Cartner met with the Interim President at COA yesterday and they both reaffirmed their commitments to making an early college happen.

Commissioner Parker said she is proud of the teachers who recently received bonuses. She said word gets around and gives the other teachers incentive to work harder and to be proud of where they are and what they are doing.

Chairman Perry said he wishes the bond referendum had passed. He said the poverty rate in our community is very high and it is difficult for the Board of Commissioners to do what they need to do with the amount of funds available. He noted that our Board has to make cuts as well. He said the Board wants to satisfy all the school's need and they will do everything they can.

Commissioner Winslow asked what is being done in the technical area for students. Dr. Cartner said he is pleased to tell the board that the Pasquotank County Schools actually ranked 5th in the state this year for the number of student certifications in CTE. He suggested looking into offering certifications for renewable energy. Dr. Cartner said one of the career pathways is going to be an associate's degree in engineering. He said they will start with the expectation that students can complete both their high school and associates degrees while enrolled in early college.

School Board Chair Sharon Ward said there is a petition going around to try to bring back the Teaching Fellows Program. She said the program did a great deal for our state in helping to encourage our young people to go into teaching. She encouraged the Board to speak to anyone they can on the legislative level to support the program coming back.

Motion was made by Joe Winslow, seconded by William Sterritt to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:00 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD