

# **HICKORY PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE HICKORY BOARD OF EDUCATION**

Monday, June 9, 2014

The Board of Education of the Hickory City Administrative School Unit met on Monday, June 9, 2014, beginning at 5:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the Administrative Services Building. Members present included: Chairperson Reginald Hamilton; Vice Chair Charlotte Williams; Board members Sallie Johnson, Margaret Pope, Rev. T. Anthony Spearman, Amy Monroe and Julie Correll.

Also present were Board Attorney Jeff Mackie; Dr. Walter Hart, Superintendent; Dr. Denise Patterson, Chief Academic Officer; Shawn Clemons, Director of Accountability; Adam Huckabee, Director of Facilities; Dr. Timothy Sims, Director of Federal Programs; Amanda Byrd, Director of Exceptional Children's Programs; Jeff Tice, Director of Technology; Tracy Sigmon, Personnel Officer; Rebecca Allen, Director of Child Nutrition; Beverly Snowden, Public Information Officer; Adam Steele, Finance Officer; invited guests; and Mary Duquette, Clerk to the Board.

Chairperson Hamilton called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m.

The first item of business to come before the meeting was a discussion of the agreement between the Hickory Public Schools and the Hickory Police Department for the services of school resource officers. Dr. Hart thanked Chief Adkins for being present at the meeting and for the long-standing partnership with the Hickory Police Department. Dr. Hart stated that the agreement is a renewal of the current contract which provides four (4) school resource officers at a cost of \$90,000 which reflects no increase from the previous contract. There being no questions, Dr. Hart stated that this contract would be presented for approval by the Board at its June 23 action meeting.

The next item of business to come before the meeting as a memorandum from the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that set forth new nutrition standards and guidelines being implemented for the 2014-2015 school year for food sold in schools. Ms. Rebecca Allen, Director of Child Nutrition, advised the Board that all food sold to students in schools between midnight and thirty (30) minutes after the school day ends must be in compliance with the new nutrition standards. She further indicated that there are no exemptions. Concession sales at school events that are conducted more than thirty (30) minutes after the end of the school day will not be affected. Dr. Hart stated that the Board would be asked to take official action on these new standards at its upcoming meeting.

Mr. Adam Huckabee provided the Board with an update on capital projects for the current school year. He stated that security upgrades are about 85% complete, re-keying of the district is about 90% complete and should be finalized during the summer, and the chiller replacement at Southwest Elementary School has been completed. He reported that work in the Oakwood gym will begin once school is out and will be completed over the summer. For next school year, Mr. Huckabee reported that the County Commissioners approved six capital projects which include the following: the addition of mobile units at HCAM; the HCAM parking lot; district re-keying;

renovations at the existing Longview Elementary School; replace the HVAC units at Southwest Elementary School; and the purchase of an activity bus. Once renovations are complete at the existing Longview, Mr. Huckabee reported that the Maintenance Department staff will relocate from the Green Park Building to the Longview facility. Dr. Hart further advised the Board that a couple of agencies in the community have expressed an interest in renting space at the Longview facility and that he would keep the Board apprised of this matter.

Dr. Hart reminded the Board that the County Commissioners passed the local budget and have provided a 1% increase in funding to Hickory Public Schools bringing the per pupil funding to \$1,476. However, Dr. Hart advised the Board that, due to a projected decrease in student enrollment of approximately 100 students, the total funding from the county will decrease by approximately \$76,000. In addition, he reported that the local budget is responsible for inflationary costs (i.e., utilities, health insurance, retirement, salary increases). These inflationary costs together with the decrease in local funding due to the decrease in ADM will create a \$200,000 deficit for the district.

Finance Officer Adam Steele provided highlights of the key areas in the Governor's and the Senate's budgets and stated that the House budget is expect sometime later in the week and stated that he would keep the Board apprised as information is received.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a discussion with representatives from ARAMARK, Dwight Teague and Joan White. Dr. Hart reminded the Board of the current agreement in place with ARAMARK: when the district has a custodial vacancy available, ARAMARK fills that position and then that individual is an employee of ARAMARK. He stated that the district has been very pleased with the level of service being provided. Dr. Hart stated that consideration is being given to the possibility of ARAMARK assuming all custodial positions. Current employees of the district would become employees of ARAMARK which could offset much of the \$200,000 shortfall previously mentioned.

ARAMARK representative Joan White advised the Board that the intent of ARAMARK is to continue to be a good partner to the district and, with the transition being considered, it would help provide the district with a savings. All current custodial employees would be offered employment with ARAMARK and would be eligible to participate in its benefit programs. Dr. Hart stated that ARAMARK currently provides the district with nine custodians and that this transition would affect an additional 16 full-time and 9 part-time employees. He further advised the Board that three of the full time employees are currently eligible for full retirement benefits from the State.

There was some discussion among the Board relative to the comparison of wages and benefits between the district and ARAMARK and the impact it would have on these employees. Dr. Hart stated that this is an option for the Board to consider as the district works to find \$200,000 in savings to cover the budget shortfall for the upcoming school year. He stated that the Board would be presented with a formal proposal from ARAMARK at a later date but that he wanted the Board to be aware that this is an option to be considered.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a proposal from Mr. Billy Marsh with Communities in Schools of Lincoln County (CISLC). Dr. Hart reminded the Board that one of

the goals in the district's strategic plan is to improve the dropout rate for Hickory Public Schools. Mr. Marsh shared information with the Board about the CISLC program stating that its mission is to surround students with support that empowers them to stay in school and achieve in life. Through a dropout prevention grant, Mr. Marsh would provide \$8,000 towards the salary of the graduation coach at HCAM. In exchange, the district would pay an administrative fee of \$8,000 making the agreement budget neutral. Dr. Hart advised the Board that, by entering into the agreement with CISLC, Mr. Marsh will work to secure grant opportunities on behalf of the Hickory Public Schools which will provide funding to support dropout prevention programs for the most at risk students in the district. Mr. Marsh stated that the goal of the partnership between CISLC and Hickory Public Schools is to create a cohesive partnership allowing for community partnerships, volunteer resources, dropout prevention programs and services to be delivered to the children within the Hickory Public Schools. Dr. Hart advised the Board that he would recommend approval of the agreement with CISLC and that it would be on the agenda for the Board's next meeting. He encouraged Board members to contact him with questions.

The next item of business to come before the meeting was a discussion of the proposed cell tower on the campus of Hickory High School. Mr. Adam Huckabee, Director of Facilities, introduced Mr. Bill Hildebran of the Berkley Group who was present to entertain questions from the Board. Mr. Hildebran reported that his company is involved with 2,000 sites in the Carolinas and was interested in creating a partnership with the district. He stated that Verizon would pay a monthly rental fee of \$1,000 for the first carrier and a 3% increase each year. He further stated that the monthly rental fee would be increased as additional carriers are added. The lease is for 30 years and the company would need 24/7 access to the tower.

Dr. Hart stated that meetings with Hickory High's school improvement team, as well as a town hall meeting at the school, will provide input from the Hickory High community on the installation of the tower on its campus. He further stated that he would anticipate the earliest an agreement would be presented for Board approval would be in the Fall.

Dr. Hart called on Ms. Angela Simmons, Director of Student Services, to review contracts with the Department of Social Services (DSS) for school social workers and mental health therapists and Catawba County Public Health for school nurses.

Ms. Simmons reported to the Board that the school nurse contract with Public Health provides 4.5 nurses at a cost of \$60,347. She stated that currently the student to nurse ratio in the district is 1:940 which is below the state recommended average but is average for Hickory Schools. Ms. Simmons stated that school nurses provide a variety of services to the schools.

Ms. Simmons reported that the contracts for social workers with DSS remain the same as last year and reflect no increase in fees. Those contracts include three (3) social workers who serve the five (5) elementary schools and a half-time social worker at both Hickory High and HCAM. She further reported that DSS added a new contract which provides a mental health therapist at HCAM at a cost of \$18,293 to replace the services previously provided by the day treatment program.

Dr. Hart stated that contracts with the Department of Social Services the Public Health would be presented for official approval by the Board at its next action meeting on June 23.

Dr. Hart announced three (3) additional contracts which are up for renewal and which will be presented to the Board for official approval at its next meeting. Those contracts include the Western Piedmont Symphony, the Hickory Museum of Art, and the North Carolina Driving School, Inc. for drivers' education services to students in the district.

Dr. Hart announced that the Board has been requested to consider the reappointment of Mr. Charles Snipes to the Catawba Valley Community College Board of Trustees to serve as the representative of the three boards of education in Catawba County. Dr. Hart stated that official approval will be requested by the Board at its next meeting.

Dr. Denise Patterson reported to the Board on Read to Achieve and summer reading camp. Dr. Patterson reported that summer reading camp will be conducted for three (3) weeks, July 7, July 14 and July 21. She stated that all staff has been secured for the program and it will be held at Viewmont Elementary School. Currently, 60 students have been identified as not meeting a good cause exemption and will receive letters that will encourage parents to have their child attend the camp.

Dr. Hart invited Hickory High Principal Dr. Ann Stalnaker and Assistant Principal Rebecca Tuttle to share information with the Board relative to the implementation of the SMART Lunch program being piloted at Hickory High School for the 2014-2015 school year.

Dr. Stalnaker shared statistics from a parent and staff survey stated that 83% or 186 Hickory High families are in favor of implementing the SMART Lunch program for next school year. Ms. Tuttle reported that the Hickory High administration has been diligent in getting the word out about the SMART Lunch program through presentations conducted in classrooms to students, town hall meetings, information shared through morning announcements and Sunday night calls to parents.

Dr. Hart thanked Dr. Stalnaker and Ms. Tuttle for the work they have done and stated that at this time he would like to recommend to the Board that it approve the piloting of the SMART Lunch program at Hickory High for the upcoming school year.

Upon motion made by Ms. Johnson and seconded by Ms. Monroe, the Board voted 7-0 to approve the implementation of the SMART Lunch program at Hickory High for the 2014-2015 school year as presented.

Dr. Stalnaker thanked the Board for its support.

Upon motion made by Ms. Pope and seconded by Ms. Williams, the Board voted 7-0 to approve the following field trip requests as presented:

1. Northview Boys' Basketball team to attend basketball camp at Clemons, June 20-22;
2. Hickory High Senior Beta Club to attend the National Beta Convention in Richmond, VA, June 25-28;

3. Hickory High JROTC to attend Bud Schiele Camp in Rutherfordton, NC, June 14-18;
4. Hickory High Men's Basketball team to participate in a basketball tournament in Concord, NC, June 19-June 20;
5. Hickory High Men's Basketball team to participate in a basketball tournament in Marshville, NC, June 24-25;
6. Hickory High Men's Basketball team to participate in a basketball tournament in Concord, NC, June 27-June 28.

Ms. Williams made a motion that the Board go into closed session for the following reason: to consider candidates recommended for employment by the administration as provided for in G.S. 143.318.11 and in accordance with the North Carolina Personnel Act. The motion was seconded by Ms. Monroe and the Board's vote was 7-0.

Upon return to open session, Ms. Pope made a motion that the Board approve Personnel List No. 17 as presented. The motion was seconded by Ms. Williams and the Board's vote was 7-0.

There being no further business to come before the meeting, upon motion made by Ms. Pope and seconded by Rev. Spearman, the Board voted 7-0 to adjourn.

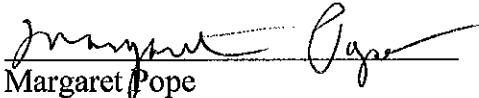
The meeting adjourned at 8:50 p.m.



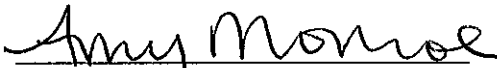
Reginald Hamilton, Chair



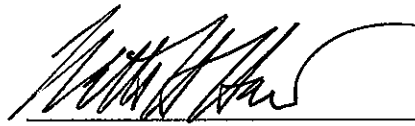
Charlotte Williams, Vice Chair



Margaret Pope



Amy Monroe



Walter H. Hart, Secretary

Sallie Johnson



T. Anthony Spearman



Julie Correll