

MINUTES

BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE ALBEMARLE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD ALBEMARLE COUNTY

Thursday, February 23, 2023 (4:30 PM)

A Work Session of the Albemarle County Board was held on February 23, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. at the Albemarle County Office Building – 401 McIntire Road, Charlottesville, VA

BOARD MEMBERS: Dr. Kate Acuff, Mr. Jonathan Alcaro, Dr. Rebecca Berlin, Chair Katrina Callsen, Ms. Judy Le, Ms. Ellen Osborne, Mr. Graham Paige, Student Representative Ms. Sanuthi Amarasinghe

ABSENT: None

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Dr. Matthew Haas, Superintendent; Ms. Debora Collins, Deputy Superintendent; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Clare Keiser; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Patrick McLaughlin; Assistant Superintendent, Dr. Daphne Keiser; Chief Operating Officer, Ms. Rosalyn Schmitt; School Board Attorney, Mr. Ross Holden; Chief Technology Officer, Dr. Christine Diggs; Public Affairs & Strategic Communications Officer, Mr. Phil Giaramita; Director of Budget and Planning, Ms. Maya Kumazawa; Interim Clerk to the School Board, Ms. Christine Thompson

Agenda Item No. 1.0 CLOSED MEETING

Agenda Item No. 1.1 Closed Meeting

At 4:31 p.m., Dr. Acuff offered a **motion** that the Albemarle County Public School Board go into a closed meeting as authorized by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia under: Subsection 1 for the discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment and the assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body; and Subsection 8 for consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by the School Board regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel. Mr. Alcaro seconded the **motion**. **Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Acuff, and Ms. Callsen

NAYS: None

ABSENT: Dr. Berlin, Ms. Le – [both Dr. Berlin and Ms. Le arrived shortly after the vote was taken and joined the board in closed meeting]

Motion carried by a 5:0:2 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.0 OPENING ACTIVITIES

Agenda Item No. 2.1 CLOSED MEETING CERTIFICATION

At 6:30 p.m., Ms. Le offered a **motion** that the Board certify by recorded vote that to the best of each Board member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion

authorizing the Closed Meeting were heard, discussed or considered in the Closed Meeting. Mr. Alcaro seconded the **motion. Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Mr. Alcaro Dr. Berlin, Ms. Le, and Chair Callsen
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.2. CALL TO ORDER

At 6:33 p.m., Chair Callsen called the Albemarle County School Board meeting back to order.

Ms. Le offered a **motion** to accept the resignation of employee A. Mr. Paige seconded the **motion. Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Ms. Le, Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Berlin, and, Ms. Callsen.
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 2.3 Pledge of Allegiance

Agenda Item No. 2.4 Moment of Silence

Agenda Item No. 3.0 APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Agenda Item No. 3.1 Approval of Agenda

Ms. Le offered a **motion** to approve the Agenda. Mr. Paige seconded the **motion. Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Dr. Berlin, Ms. Le, Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, Mr. Alcaro, and Ms. Callsen
NAYS: None
ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

4.0 APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

4.1 Approval of Consent Agenda

4.2 COVID-19 Status Update

4.3 National Defense Cadet Corps (NDCC) Program Update

This update on the NDCC program is provided to continue our process for checking in and evaluating budgeted initiatives. The program is still in an implementation phase and will continue to be shaped by

its role in the Global Leadership, Law, and Social Justice Career Learning Community. This summary is provided to update the Board on the current state of the program.

Ms. Osborne offered a **motion** to approve the Consent Agenda. Ms. Le seconded the **motion**. **Roll was called and the motion passed by the following recorded votes:**

AYES: Mr. Alcaro, Dr. Berlin, Ms. Le, Dr. Acuff, Ms. Osborne, Mr. Paige, and Ms. Callsen.

NAYS: None

ABSENT: None

Motion carried by a 7:0 vote.

Agenda Item No. 5.0 ITEMS PULLED FROM CONSENT AGENDA -- None

Agenda Item No. 6.0 PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Tory Selmer lives in the White Hall district. He is a parent and math teacher. He spoke about the middle school class changes. – 8 credits of classes – 13 state and city assessments. Every other day course load. Why are these changes being made?

Mr. Vernon Liechti is a representative with the AEA. He read an open letter re: CB, basic labor rights. The General Assembly law is building broad support among staff. It will achieve the goal of attracting educators. Other localities signed collective bargaining contracts. Work collaboratively with us.

Ms. Filadelfia Soto lives in the Jack Jouett district. She is a teacher and a Golden Apple winner. Stated there is a high percentage of teachers who leave ACPS every year, and we can't continue to lose them. Say yeas to CB.

Mr. Roberto Pineda lives in the Rio district. He is a parent and is in support of collective bargaining. CB could help staff feel supported and valued. Community benefits the most.

Ms. Amy Gaetner lives in the White Hall district. She asks the Board to have faith in them as teachers and to trust them.

Ms. Allison Spillman lives in the White Hall district. She is a parent advocate for teachers in support of collective bargaining. Will help the county achieve goals of the Strategic Plan.

Ms. Sally Chavez lives in the Scottsville district. She is in support of collective bargaining. Teachers should have a say in terms of their employment.

Ms. Melissa Thackston lives in the Rivanna district. She is in support of collective bargaining.

Ms. Lara Harrison lives in the Rio district. She is a parent and in support of collective bargaining. The greatest resource we have is our teachers and staff. The anti-union and right to work attitude perpetuates racism. Reject funding to bring SRO's back into the schools.

Mr. Kayden Wright is a student at MHS and lives in the Rio district. He is in support of collective bargaining and the success of ACPS is because of its employees.

Ms. Pilar Valtierra lives in the Rivanna district. She spoke about the lack of support for teachers and TA's. She believes our children will benefit from the approval of collective bargaining.

Agenda Item No. 6.2 Break – The Board took a break from 7:05 p.m. to 7:10 p.m.

Agenda Item No. 7.0 ANNOUNCEMENTS - None

Agenda Item No. 8.0 SCHOOL BOARD/SUPERINTENDENT BUSINESS

Agenda Item No. 8.1 Discussion of Public Sector Collective Bargaining

Chair Callsen opened up the floor of the School Board members for a discussion on Public Sector Collective Bargaining.

Ms. Amarasinghe commented that she didn't see why it shouldn't be implemented for a healthy school environment so the staff could put their energy into their work. Many of my teacher have left. She thinks it would be beneficial. What would be the reasons to not go forward?

Chair Callsen stated that she was a teacher at a charter school who required staff to be there 6AM to 6PM – it caused a lot of stress. She left after only two years. Collective Bargaining when we discussed it last year, and the need at that time we did not have our own human resources department. We have just come off of raises. I do have some concerns. Those concerns I believe we can work out. If this is the process you want, I can live with that.

Dr. Berlin commented that she wasn't seated on the Board when Collective Bargaining was brought forward. Recognizing I need help is one of the hardest things she does. Where she is, she does want to verify signatures. Is there a certain subsection of staff who are pressing for this?

Ms. Osborne stated that she believes there are two camps; ones who want problems solved and think Employee Voice and Action Committee can do it and the other with Collective Bargaining. Most of my issues have been addressed. She has heard that some teachers have felt as if their arms were twisted to sign cards and some teachers believe by signing cards they have joined the union. A little bit more education behind that piece would make me feel a little better. I think we know CB is coming to AC, the question is when and how many casualties in the process. I don't think this has to be an adversarial process, we all want the same thing. The more cooperative the better.

Mr. Alcaro said he didn't have a lot to say at this point. He stated we do have a labor attorney coming in to speak with us next week and expects to learn a lot – I have a lot of questions. The concept he's not necessarily opposed to, however, we are not allowed to spend funds – we are not a taxing authority – the BOS does not allow that authority to the School Board. We are not authorized to spend money the BOS does not sign off on.

Mr. Paige said he has listened carefully to all of the comments over the last few weeks. When he was in the system as a teacher, he realizes what's it like now in the classroom is like day and night. Our teachers are facing tremendous pressures. That has changed his mind and he is in support of Collective Bargaining. We take great pride in the things we have done, and now we need to take great pride in CB. We need to move to the forefront in CB. We really have to work with AEA to work with the proposal. Charlottesville is in the process of moving forward with Collective Bargaining, if we want to keep our best teachers, we need to as well, or we will lose.

Ms. Osborne appreciated the commenter who talked about us trying to be an anti-racist organization and talked about right to work state, which came from a white supremacy stand point. I'm surprised we have not talked about this before – it's huge. I don't think we're being consistent if we don't adopt CB.

Ms. Le stated that she is in support of Collective Bargaining. She wants to work together and knows it is complicated. We've looked at studies and the outcomes and believes it will only help our employees. I think it's a little bit more complicated than the anti-racist. I know we do not have taxing authority. I know that some of the things we may want to give or do, we may not be able to. She believes in sharing power and is aware we do not have taxing authority.

Chair Callsen commented that one of our goals tonight is transparency and let you know what we are thinking. We probably had more diverse commentary tonight that we have had in a while. The voices I consistently don't hear are the students that are left behind. This is something we can discuss as we move forward. When talking about what we want to achieve together is coming out of school and having better outcomes. This is what we want to achieve together.

Dr. Acuff stated that one of her concerns has been with a state that has not had CB for 50 years; not having a lot of guidance, support and case law. We have three jurisdictions that are in some point in passing Collective Bargaining policies. Since we don't have other guideposts, avoid some of those and adopt some of those success. Broadly, I have always favored unions in the private sector; in the public sector it becomes more complicated. Why don't we look at what they are doing and avoid some of those pitfalls? School divisions do not have taxing authority; we spend 86% of our budget on staff already. You don't want to be the first one to adopt a policy that hasn't been tested. That doesn't mean we can't overcome that, but it may significantly strain the topics we bargain over. I don't think it's fair to say, the only way to show appreciation for staff is through Collective Bargaining.

Chair Callsen announced that the Board has retained a lawyer to get, Collective Bargaining is in the cards and is what they are working towards. They will meet with the lawyer on March 2, in a closed session and after that meeting we will set another agenda item. Thank you all for being very open and honest. Thank you to all who attended, and thank you for all of the people who look like me, it means a lot.

Agenda Item No. 9.0 SCHOOL DIVISION WORK SESSION

Agenda Item NO. 9.1 Budget Work Session #2

https://resources.finalsite.net/images/v1677251494/k12albemarleorg/vacg2ztrjs0ovxanti5z/FY24DraftFundingRequest_WS2.pdf

Ms. Le asked about the exit survey data – how are we getting these trends? – staff will be getting back to the Board on this information.

Dr. Acuff asked with the combination of take-home pay with the 2% increase and insurance increases. – they have done the numbers, and of course it varies by pay scale.

Substitute Program Improvements:

Ms. Le asked commented that 65% is a really broad range for fill rates. – staff stated that it is smaller.

Dr. Berlin asked if we know certain classes that tend to need substitutes longer? – we are having anecdotal evidence and we are giving additional training in those cases.

Dr. Acuff asked if there is the need for filling the vacancies, do we know what PTO (personal time off) looks like? – we don't know the reasons; however, we have made some generalizations, flu, RSV, COVID.

Mr. Alcaro asked – to clarify – the numbers to fill are going to be looked at at the end of the school year? – correct.

Mr. Paige asked about 'problem schools' that we've had in the past. Do we still have that and will this help that? – yes, we do still have those issues and this will help with the numbers.

Dr. Berlin asked if permanent substitutes were on a teacher's salary pay scale or staff pay scale. – they are on the same pay scale as a teacher assistant.

Chair Callsen thanked staff for the presentations, she liked the way it was laid out.

Agenda Item No. 10.0 OTHER BUSINESS

Ms. Le attended the APCS Equity and Opportunities Fair at Burley on February 18. She had lunch with Principal Blount and Ms. Lucille Stout Smith, where they learned about the history of Burley. She spent the afternoon listening to a panel with teachers who are CRT Certified. She learned a lot and enjoyed the event.

Dr. Acuff spent two hours this week at Greer Elementary with Principal Saunders and they talked about the association of Greer and the UVA Football Team who did a day of service. Thirty-five players showed up and have continued to come every week this year. They are each assigned to a classroom and they consistently go. The football players have gotten a lot out of it. After the shooting at UVA Greer made bracelets that say; Greer loves UVA Football. Chair Callsen asked that we send a thank you letter to UVA Football.

Agenda Item No. 10.1 Closed Meeting - if needed - None

Agenda Item No. 11.0 ADJOURNMENT

At 8:31 p.m., hearing no objections, Chair Callsen adjourned the meeting of the Albemarle County School Board.

Chair

Clerk