

**Lynchburg City School Board
Special Meeting
March 23, 2010**

**BOARD
MEMBERS
PRESENT:**

Mary Ann H. Barker, Chairman
Thomas H. Webb, Vice Chairman
Keith R. Anderson
Albert L. Billingsly
Regina T. Dolan-Sewell
Darin L. Gerdes
Ingrid M. Hamlett
Trenay L. Tweedy
Charles B. White

**BOARD
MEMBERS
ABSENT:**

None

**ADMINISTRATION
PRESENT:**

Paul McKendrick, Superintendent
Stephen C. Smith, Assistant Superintendent of Curriculum and Instruction
Edward R. Witt, Jr., Assistant Superintendent of Operations and Administration
Beverly A. Padgett, Chief Financial Officer
William A. Coleman, Jr., Director of Secondary Education
Leigh F. Farmer, Public Information Officer
Steven L. Gatzke, Director of Facilities and Transportation
Michael K. Rudder, Director of Elementary Education
Billie Kay Wingfield, Director of Personnel
Pamela D. Smith-Turner, Assistant Director of Personnel
Charles E. Dellinger, Supervisor of Instruction
Wendie L. Sullivan, Recording Secretary/Clerk

**MEDIA
PRESENT:**

Jessie Pounds, *The News & Advance*

**Agenda
Items:**

- A-1. Public Comments
- B-1. Notice of Closed Meeting
- B-2. Certification of Closed Meeting
- C-1. School Operating Budget: 2010-11
- C-2. School Calendar: 2010-11
- C-3. Hutcherson Early Learning Center
- C-4. School Board Policy 5-18: Reduction in Force
- C-5. School Calendar: 2009-10
- D. New business
- E. Superintendent's Comments
- F. Board Comments
- G. Informational Items
- H. Adjournment

The Lynchburg City School Board met for its regular meeting at 5:34 p.m. in the Board Room at the School Administration Building. Mrs. Barker opened the meeting and requested that those in attendance stand and recite *The Pledge of Allegiance*.

A-1. Public Comments

In accordance with School Board Policy 1-41: Public Participation, the school board welcomes requests and comments as established in the guidelines within that policy. Individuals who wish to speak before the school board shall have an opportunity to do so at this time.

The following individuals spoke before the school board:

Kathy Hudson, Lynchburg Education Association

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Heather Ryan-Sigler, Parent, School Calendar: 2010-11

B-1. Notice of Closed Meeting

Upon MOTION by Rev. Anderson, SECONDED by Dr. Gerdes, the school board convened a closed meeting at 5:40 p.m. pursuant to the Code of Virginia §2.2-3711 (A) (1) to discuss employee assignments.

Yes Votes: Mrs. Barker, Mr. Webb, Rev. Anderson, Mr. Billingsly, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Gerdes, Ms. Hamlett, Mrs. Tweedy, Mr. White

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

B-2. Certification of Closed Meeting

Upon MOTION by Mr. White, SECONDED by Mr. Webb, the school board reconvened in open session at 6:30 p.m.

Yes Votes: Mrs. Barker, Mr. Webb, Rev. Anderson, Mr. Billingsly, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Gerdes, Ms. Hamlett, Mrs. Tweedy, Mr. White

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

Upon MOTION by Mr. Webb, SECONDED by Rev. Anderson, the school board approved by roll call vote the following Certification of Closed Meeting:

The Lynchburg City School Board certifies that, in the closed meeting just concluded, nothing was discussed except the matters specifically identified in the motion to convene in a closed meeting and lawfully permitted to be so discussed under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act cited in that motion.

Yes Votes: Mrs. Barker, Mr. Webb, Rev. Anderson, Mr. Billingsly, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Gerdes, Ms. Hamlett, Mrs. Tweedy, Mr. White

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

C-1. School Operating Budget: 2010-11

The school board conducted a special meeting on March 18, 2010, to discuss the school administration's proposed budget and to consider which of those recommendations would be included in the FY 2010-11 school operating budget.

The school division is receiving \$8,835,047 less in funding from the state than last year. The city manager has recommended level funding, There will be an increase in federal funding in the amount of \$254,383, and there will be a decrease in the amount of \$164,730 in miscellaneous and other funding. In order to balance the budget for the 2010-11 school year, the school administration proposes the following recommendations:

- no salary increase
- reduction in force – 66 positions
- increase class size – elementary and secondary
- close Hutcherson Early Learning Center – move program to Perrymont Elementary School
- re-locate the Parent Center
- implement proposed calendar
- reduction of central office department funds by 10 percent
- eliminate drug testing program
- energy conservation initiatives
- reorganization of custodial staff – use of “crews”
- eliminate high school summer school for credit
- reduce school allotments for instructional supplies and field trips
- reduce board contributions to employee benefits for health, dental, and vision insurance
- require employees to pay 1.5 percent toward Virginia Retirement System
- eliminate third session of alternative education at the Amelia Pride Center
- charge students for dual enrollment classes
- increase parking fee for student parking
- reduce off-duty police coverage
- decrease in debt service for lease-purchasing financing

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Following the review of the recommendations, the school board asked the school administration to investigate the possibility of employees paying retirement benefits rather than paying for health and dental insurance. This would be less of a burden for individuals who receive less pay than professional staff. The school administration will gather information and present it to the school board. The school board will consider if it is necessary to its make revisions its budget for 2010-11 once that information is received.

Dr. Gerdes read from an email that he sent to the school board in February 2009:

Fellow Board Members:

I have been very concerned since the last board meeting about the direction of our budget discussions. While cutting staff is unpalatable, we know that it is necessary based on the realities of the economy. It is a painful process, but our actions right now can make it more painful or less painful. This will be our decision.

At the retreat we knew that this was going to be a tough budget year, yet we were not gearing up for this budget but discussing how we could buy a fleet of vehicles. We knew this time last year that it was going to be a tough budget year. The governor said so much. Yet, we did not act proactively to decide what programs or personnel were necessary and what was nonessential. I asked for some prioritization or a budget that would show us what we would want to cut if a) we were on hard times or b) we found something that we felt was more useful. It never happened.

This was just weeks before the national crash.

I raise these items because we have not been demonstrating the foresight and leadership that we need to exercise as a board. This budget was not a surprise, but we were not prepared. I am afraid we were setting ourselves up for this scenario again next year. Please listen to my reasoning:

The public already knows that we intend to cut roughly 80 positions. This is in alignment with what other divisions are doing in this economic environment. Frankly, we should be cutting deeper.

I am not going to say we are “fat” or “bloated” – that would be inflammatory. But IN THIS FISCAL ENVIRONMENT we must go on a diet.

The direction we were heading last week was to restore positions with newly found money [This was a reference to Federal Stimulus money. I also mentioned at the meeting that this was exactly what we were proposing to do again at tonight’s meeting]. If we restore these positions we will be short term heroes but long term villains. I know of no economist that predicts that next year will be any better. I only see projections of the economy being worse (even President Obama’s stimulus will not have had enough time to kick in – and that is assuming it will actually work).

To the degree we add personnel back, we will make next year even more difficult. We will have to make painful cuts again. Please, I beg you to take the difficult pain now or we will be right back in the same position next year. If we were really on our game, we would cut even deeper now and be the only division that is not tossed about by next year’s budget.

I realize some of you would rather restore the staff. I understand and appreciate that position. But, this is a business problem, and it must be dealt with from a business perspective. Please let me be clear. If we have to cut next year (and everything I see in the economy tells me that we will), to the degree that we add staff back this year, this process will be MORE painful to our school system. We need to take the initiative and lead, not be lead by circumstances.

Respectfully, I am your colleague,

- Darin Gerdes

Upon MOTION by Mr. Webb, SECONDED by Rev. Anderson, the school board adopted its school operating budget for 2010-11 and authorized the school administration to forward the document to the Lynchburg City Council for its consideration.

Yes Votes: Mrs. Barker, Mr. Webb, Rev. Anderson, Mr. Billingsly, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Ms. Hamlett, Mrs. Tweedy, Mr. White

No Votes: Dr. Gerdes

Abstentions: None

C-2. School Calendar: 2010-11

During the school board meetings on March 2, March 9, and March 16, 2010, members of the school board received information related to a proposed Lynchburg City Schools academic calendar for 2010-11. The school

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administration developed this calendar proposal in light of the current budget crisis, and it has at its core a reduction in the number of work days for all employee groups as well as reductions in annual operating expenses. The annual operating expense reductions are related to the elimination of the for-credit high school summer program, an additional one-week shut down of facilities, reduced transportation expenses related to the removal of the optional first period bus runs, and the reduced student instructional days from 180 to 172.

In order to account for the fewer number of instructional days, the school administration recommends additional instructional time at each level. The following tables provide the current and proposed times for students and staff.

Program	Current Student Day			Proposed Student Day		
	Start	End	Elapsed	Start	End	Elapsed
High (7)	7:08	2:25	437 min	7:40	2:45	425 min
High (6)	8:00	2:25	385 min	----	----	----
Middle	8:20	2:55	395 min	8:15	3:20	425 min
Elem	8:55	3:30	395 min	8:45	3:50	425 min

Additional components of this proposal include the following:

- 1) the replacement of the optional first-period with a seven-period high school day
- 2) the removal of the current high school exam structure
- 3) the addition of study halls and repeat courses in high school
- 4) the addition of a senior early release option
- 5) the addition of elementary early dismissal days at the end of each six-weeks
- 6) the removal of seven work and professional development days
- 7) the lengthening of the winter break
- 8) the placement of spring break at the week prior to Easter
- 9) the last day of instruction, May 27, 2011
- 10) the scheduling of graduation on Sunday, May 29, 2011

The school administration conducted an electronic survey of employees and recorded more than 640 responses. Eighty-one percent were in favor of the proposed calendar, 10 percent were opposed, and nine percent were undecided. Feedback from the community was much more limited, with 12 responses in favor and nine opposed.

At the March 16, 2010, school board meeting, members of the school administration shared the instructional benefits and challenges of the proposal. The school administration believes that, on balance across all three grade levels, the benefits of the proposal outweigh the challenges.

A calendar for William Marvin Bass Elementary School has been designed to align with the proposed school division calendar, and copies of both were provided as attachments to the agenda report.

Mr. Webb stated that he had received comments regarding the length of the day for elementary school students. Dr. Smith indicated that the addition of 30 minutes to the instructional day would be beneficial to students. However, the school administration will monitor and evaluate the structure of the day and bring information to the school board regarding changes if necessary. Dr. McKendrick also noted that should funding be restored to the 2011-12 school operating budget, the school calendar would most likely return to the 180-day format.

Upon MOTION by Ms. Hamlett, SECONDED by Mrs. Tweedy, the school board approved the Lynchburg City Schools academic calendar and the calendar for William Marvin Bass Elementary School for 2010-11.

Yes Votes: Mrs. Barker, Mr. Webb, Rev. Anderson, Mr. Billingsly, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Gerdes, Ms. Hamlett, Mrs. Tweedy, Mr. White

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

(SEE SCHOOL DOCUMENT FILE, MEETING OF MARCH 23, 2010, EXHIBIT "A," FOR A COPY OF THE LYNCHBURG CITY SCHOOL ACADEMIC CALENDAR FOR 2010-11 AND THE CALENDAR FOR WILLIAM MARVIN BASS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOR 2010-11.)

C-3. Hutcherson Early Learning Center

The school administration recommends the closing of the Hutcherson Early Learning Center due, in part, to the budget shortfall of more than \$8 million during the 2010-11 fiscal year and because of needed renovations to the building. Those costs are projected to amount to more than \$3.5 million.

Proposed budget allocations from the state and the local government requires that the Lynchburg City Schools develop an operating budget for 2010-11 that reflects an approximate 10 percent reduction in revenue as compared to 2009-10. In its budget development deliberations, the school administration has considered the efficient utilization of existing facilities as well as the closing of one or more sites.

During the school board meeting on March 16, 2010, the school administration summarized projected savings of \$56,000 in annual operational costs associated with closing the Hutcherson Early Learning Center (HELC) site and relocating the program to Perrymont Elementary School. The school administration also presented information that outlined the available space at Perrymont Elementary School that would allow for the relocation of the HELC program thereby maximizing the efficient use of the Perrymont Elementary School facility. In addition, the school administration projects that the future capital expenditures of \$3.5 - \$4 million would be eliminated by closing the HELC site. Therefore, because of the aforementioned, the superintendent recommended the closing of the site and its relocation to Perrymont Elementary School.

Upon MOTION by Dr. Gerdes, SECONDED by Mr. Billingsly, the school board approved the recommendation to close the Hutcherson Early learning Center site and relocate the program to Perrymont Elementary School.

Yes Votes: Mrs. Barker, Mr. Webb, Rev. Anderson, Mr. Billingsly, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Gerdes, Ms. Hamlett, Mrs. Tweedy, Mr. White

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

C-4. School Board Policy 5-18: Reduction in Force

The school administration amended School Board Policy 5-18 Reduction in Force at the request of the Lynchburg City School Board. The school board's primary purpose reflected its interest in amending the policy so that the school division recognized service credit for part-time employees. The attachment to the agenda report provided that language. This newly-amended policy also includes language which depicts several other proposed changes, including a time limit for recall rights, the categorization of teacher assistants, the placement of employees on the reduction in force list if they are on plans of assistance, and the denial of recall rights for employees who are on plans of assistance.

Upon MOTION by Dr. Dolan-Sewell, SECONDED by Ms. Hamlett, the school board approved School Board Policy 5-18: Reduction in Force.

Yes Votes: Mrs. Barker, Mr. Webb, Rev. Anderson, Mr. Billingsly, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Gerdes, Ms. Hamlett, Mrs. Tweedy, Mr. White

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

(SEE SCHOOL BOARD DOCUMENT FILE, MEETING OF MARCH 23, 2010, EXHIBIT "B," FOR A COPY OF SCHOOL BOARD POLICY 5-18: REDUCTION IN FORCE.)

C-5. School Calendar: 2009-10

On March 2, 2010, the school administration received a letter from the Lynchburg Electoral Board requesting that the Lynchburg City School Board modify the current school calendar for 2009-10, by using May 4, 2010, as a teacher workday rather than April 30, 2010. The reason for this request is because the Lynchburg City Council election is scheduled for May 4, 2010, and several schools are used as polling places during elections.

During its meeting on March 16, 2010, the school approved closing elementary and middle schools on May 4, 2010, and keeping April 30, 2010, as a teacher workday. However, high schools were not closed on May 4, 2010, due to the Advanced Placement (AP) exam schedule for students.

The school administration has since learned that the College Board's policies allow for the administering of alternate forms of (AP) tests on alternate dates with no additional cost to the school division for certain specified reasons. One of those reasons is in the case of a school closing due to an election.

Therefore, the school administration recommends that the school board consider closing high schools on May 4, 2010.

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Upon MOTION by Mr. Billingsly, SECONDED by Rev. Anderson, the school board closed high schools May 4, 2010, due to the Lynchburg City Council election.

Yes Votes: Mrs. Barker, Mr. Webb, Rev. Anderson, Mr. Billingsly, Dr. Dolan-Sewell, Dr. Gerdes, Ms. Hamlett, Mrs. Tweedy, Mr. White

No Votes: None

Abstentions: None

D. Superintendent's Comments

Dr. McKendrick recognized Karen S. Nelson, principal at Perrymont Elementary School, for her deportment and professionalism during the budget discussions. He also commended members of the administrative team for their hard work during the budgetary process.

E. Board Comments

Mrs. Barker announced that due to the next school board meeting falling during spring break, the meeting has been moved to April 13, 2010.

Dr. Dolan-Sewell thanked Mrs. Farmer for her diligence in keeping everyone well informed during the development of the school operating budget.

Ms. Hamlet announced that March is Athletic Trainers Month.

F. Informational Items

Next School Board Meeting: Tuesday, April 13, 2010, 5:30 p.m., Board Room, School Administration Building

G. Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 7:51 p.m.

Mary Ann H. Barker, Chairman

Wendie L. Sullivan, Clerk

(SCHOOL BOARD DOCUMENT FILES ARE LOCATED IN THE DEPARTMENT FOR FINANCE AT THE SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.)