

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
October 1, 2018**

INVOCATION / PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE
CALL TO ORDER / WELCOME
BUSINESS ITEMS:
 1. Bond Projects Conceptual Drawings
 2. Bond Update
Recess (Tour of RHS Facility Needs)
Reconvene
Public Comment

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in special session at 6:30 p.m. on October 1, 2018 in the media center at Rosman High School. The purpose of the meeting was to receive community input on conceptual plans for potential construction/renovation at Brevard High School, Rosman High School, and Rosman Middle School. Marty Griffin led in a moment of silence and Alice Wellborn led the Pledge of Allegiance. In addition to approximately 75 guests, the following board members, staff, and others were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS:
Tawny McCoy, Chair
Marty Griffin
Betty Scruggs McGaha
Alice Wellborn

BOARD ATTORNEY:
Chad Donnahoo

PRESENTER:
Sarah Melanson, Clark Nexsen

MEDIA:
John Lanier, *Transylvania Times*

STAFF:
Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent
Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant
Dr. Brian Weaver, Senior Director, Human Resources
Norris Barger, Director, Business Services
Kevin Smith, School Community Relations Coordinator
Jason Ormsby, Principal, RHS
Scott Strickler, Principal, RMS
Mike Hall, School Resource Officer

Chairman McCoy welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. She introduced the head table and gave the following comments:

This bond referendum will be the most important capital investment in our schools in 20 years. It is also an investment in our community. Our schools reflect our values. This referendum will impact two campuses, which will affect all students in our community (private, home school, and charter students as well). It is an investment for all. We have researched consolidation, and as a board made a commitment to focus on community schools. We had an outside study done on enrollment trends. Our county leadership is committed to doing more in terms of economic development, which will lead to higher enrollment. Will the bond cause a tax increase? Yes. The estimated impact of an 11-cent increase on a \$200,000 house would be \$4.23 per week. The last bond referendum had a 12-cent increase. Why have this meeting now versus six months ago? Research shows successful bond campaigns are done in last three months before an election. Does that mean we have only just started working on this? No, our first study was done in 2015. Bond has been on our agendas for months and months. There are needs to be met at the other campuses, but we believe that the high schools have the most urgent needs. We believe the county commissioners will find a way to help us meet those other needs.

ON A MOTION BY MRS. MCCOY, SECONDED BY MR. GRIFFIN, the board unanimously approved the meeting agenda as presented.

RHS OPTIONS

Sarah Melanson, architect, presented two conceptual options for RHS/RMS. Both options would provide a new, multi-story RHS classroom building; major renovations for RMS classrooms; new spaces for CTE, arts, and band; upgraded theater, auditorium, and backstage area; a centralized, singular point of entry; clear drop-off at entry for both buses and parents; internal, secure circulation throughout entire school; centralized commons/collaborative area; administration for both middle school and high school; separate high school middle school core classroom areas; and an option to use the "new old gym" as a middle school gym. Option 1 would keep the campus bisected by Highway 64 as it is now. Option 2 would involve potentially closing a portion of Highway 64 in order to join the two sections of campus for improved student safety. Ms. Melanson noted that structural analysis of the school had revealed some of the newer buildings on campus to be in worse shape than the older ones.

BHS OPTIONS

Ms. Melanson presented two conceptual options for BHS. Both options provide a centralized, singular point of entry; internal, secure circulation throughout entire school; centralized common areas (new cafeteria, media center, main office); consolidated administration, guidance, and faculty area; renovated auditorium; new/renovated instructional areas (core academics, arts, CTE); new school face along Country Club Road; clear drop-off at entry for both buses and parents; and new auxiliary gym with connector to main gym, integration with stadium complex, and JROTC classroom.

Mr. Barger reported that the overall cost of the projects includes a 12% escalation factor per year based on current increases in school construction costs. The board plans to use a construction manager-at-risk at each site to further reduce the risk of price or cost overruns. He noted that the last bond projects done in 1998 came in under budget and on time, and he feels confident that the same will be true this time. Projects will take 3-4 years to complete. Each of the options includes plans for relocating students during phases of construction. Due to the expense involved, modular units will not be used.

Chairman McCoy opened the floor for questions.

At what part of the process do you decide which option to use for each school? Do they all cost the same? Chairman McCoy reported that the board would decide on options based on feedback from community stakeholders. She pointed out that the main differences between the options are the placement of the CTE program at BHS and the question of the road closure at RHS. There is no difference in the amount of money per option.

Do the plans include potential increases in student populations should the county get new investments and businesses? Ms. Melanson reported that program flexibility has been built in based on the current rate of growth. Brevard has been designed for 800 students and could expand core spaces up to 1000 students. Similar growth is built in at RHS.

What assurances do we have that the new buildings will not be of lesser quality? Ms. Melanson reported that waterproofing technologies and soil technologies have improved greatly in the last 20 years. The proposed construction budget contains a 25% contingency for unforeseen issues. She stated that her team cannot answer for what happened in the past, but they can

learn from it and plan for it. The life expectancy for new construction is 30 years, and the expectancy for building envelope design is 50 years.

Have you discussed shooting situations and safety in commons areas (cafeteria, open spaces) where shooters seem to target? Ms. Melanson reported that crime prevention through environmental design is a major goal (singular point of entry controls access; doors not used for entry can be used for egress only; interior and exterior transparency). Increased visibility is important because it deters bad behavior. The concept of territoriality (well maintained spaces giving a sense of ownership) also serves as a deterrent. Creating safer campuses is a priority in all new designs.

Have all the buildings been checked for asbestos? Mr. Barger reported that the school system did system-wide asbestos mitigation in 1999. There is no friable asbestos in the buildings. We do have non-friable (non-dangerous) asbestos in some areas which will be addressed with bond money.

Please explain the property tax increase that would be required for the bond. The estimated taxpayer impact of an 11-cent tax increase on a \$200,000 house would be \$4.23 per week or \$18.33 per month. The 1998 bond had a 12-cent tax increase. Transylvania County currently has a property tax rate lower than 88 out of 100 counties in North Carolina.

Do we know yet if we will get the state grant that we applied for to help with capital improvements? There is no information at this time.

Will Clark Nexsen be the construction project manager? Mr. Barger explained that Clark Nexsen is the firm that did the advance planning study. If the bond passes, they will be one of several firms that may bid on the projects.

Will other campuses benefit from the bond? Not directly. The high school campuses were identified in our facility study as having the most critical needs. However, all students in our county will benefit from new high schools. Chairman McCoy stated that the board would be talking with county commissioners about ways to address needs at the other six schools.

Are you going to have two CMARs or just one? Mr. Barger stated that it is the board's intent to have two construction managers-at-risk, one for each campus. Work will take place at both campuses simultaneously.

Tell us more about the band room and choral space. Plans include a new, larger band room on the second floor. Work could be phased so that choral program could use the space part of the time or use the stage temporarily. It is the board's intent to create minimal disruption to students via phasing.

How much seating will the auditorium have after renovations? With newer and larger seats, the capacity should stay the same or possibly be a few seats less.

What happens if the bond does not pass? Dr. McDaris stated that the needs do not go away. The renovations have to be done regardless. Without bond funding, the cost will have to be born through regular capital outlay funding from the county. This will take much longer and cost much more over time.

Once the bond passes, when does the work start? Ms. Melanson estimated about a year of design work before breaking ground.

How will you collect feedback from the community on these four options? In addition to its public meetings, the board has provided a question/comments section on the district website at www.tcsnc/bond.

When the bond passes, how will we address roof leaks and mold until construction starts?

Chairman McCoy explained that the board will continue to use its annual capital outlay allotment for ongoing capital needs at all schools. The five-year facility study identified \$117 million in total needs system-wide. After much discussion, the board decided on \$68 million to provide for the most critical needs.

How do you explain tearing down newer buildings when there are so many needs in the county?

Chairman McCoy explained that the newer CTE building at RHS would not be torn down, just repurposed. The CTE program has expanded into a larger program than the space we have now. Based on DPI requirements, the square footage does not meet the program needs. Ms. Melanson reported there are significant problems with moisture, soil settling, and foundation cracks in certain areas.

The CTE program is very important to our students. Was any consideration given to building a state of the art centralized CTE school? No. Dr. McDaris explained that would be inefficient due to lost time for travel and also a safety concern by putting students on the road each day. The board believes that having two comprehensive high schools is best.

Will the new CTE space be used by both middle and high school students? Yes, the intent is to use the new maker space for both programs.

Mr. Griffin thanked Ms. Melanson for her presentation and addressing questions from the public.

RECESS & TOUR

The board took a 30-minute recess beginning at 7:55 p.m. to allow Principal Ormsby to lead a brief tour for guests interested in viewing needs within the school. Chairman McCoy reconvened the meeting at 8:30 p.m.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Larry Chapman, speaking “as a citizen and not as a commissioner,” stated that Transylvania County currently has the 12th lowest tax rate in the state. He calculates that the bond would move Transylvania up to 30th place should it pass. He acknowledged that good schools are critical for economic development, but questions what this money will do for education other than provide nice buildings. He reported that our county only receives about \$232,000 a year from the state education lottery, and encouraged everyone to reach out to state legislators to distribute lottery proceeds more equitably. He stated that with a 31% poverty rate and a 55% free/reduced lunch rate, Transylvania is not a wealthy county. He encouraged everyone to think about the impact of a tax increase on our citizens and community.

Missy West, teacher, suggested that the county commissioners take the 12-cent tax increase from the last bond referendum and roll it over to address the needs at the other six schools.

Davis Whitfield-Cargile, candidate for county commissioner, stated that he supports the school bond and thanked the board members for their hard work toward getting it approved. He asked everyone to remember how we got to the point of needing a bond—because for years current and former county commissions have not invested enough capital funding into the schools to keep up with needs. This has put administrators into the position year after year of having to

pick and choose which projects would be funded and which ones would have to wait. He encouraged everyone to vote for the bond in order to maximize student success and community benefits.

Joe Castro, candidate for board of education, stated that all of his children attended public school here and all have completed post graduate degrees. He stated that as a property owner, he is willing to pay tax increases because he understands the need and the resulting benefits to the community. Regarding the bond, he says it is about time. Regarding student safety and dilapidated buildings, he says we can do better. The need is clear. Our students are the future workers and leaders. Businesses considering coming to our county want their employees to be happy. It is incumbent on us as a community to approve this bond.

Chairman McCoy thanked everyone for attending and participating in the discussion.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. GRIFFIN, SECONDED BY MRS. WELLBORN, the meeting was adjourned at 8:43 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary