

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
February 2, 2015**

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Facilities Master Plan Proposal
2. FY16 Budget
3. Capital Outlay/Bond Information

The Transylvania County Board of Education held a work session/planning retreat at 5:00 p.m. on February 2, 2015 at the Morris Education Center. Cindy Petit led in a moment of silence and Tawny McCoy led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman McCoy welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The following board members and staff were in attendance:

BOARD MEMBERS: Tawny McCoy, Chair; Cindy Petit, Vice Chair; Marty Griffin; and Betty Scruggs

STAFF: Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent; Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant; Jeremy Gibbs, Director of Human Resources; Norris Barger, Director of Business Services; Brian Weaver, Director of 6-12 Curriculum & Instruction; Audrey Reneau, Director of K-5 Curriculum & Instruction; Arleca Chapman, Director of Career/Technical Education; Tammy Bellefeuil, Director of Student Services; Chris Whitlock, Director of Technology Services; Kevin Smith, School-Community Relations Coordinator; and Greg Stroup, School Resource Officer

A working dinner was provided for board members and staff. Dr. McDaris thanked Carolyn Barton and the Child Nutrition staff for providing the meal.

Facilities Master Plan Proposal

Clark Nexsen representative, Chad Roberson, gave an overview of the fee proposal for the new facilities master plan for Transylvania County Schools. The proposal includes evaluations of each of the nine schools, the central office, and the plant operations/transportation facility. In addition to buildings, the assessment will include grounds, infrastructure, athletic facilities, playgrounds, security and lighting, and incorporate feedback, preferences and requirements from TCS staff. The assessment will compare existing conditions with DPI standards and establish a baseline to determine shortfalls and/or overages and what is needed to bring facilities up to modern educational standards. The report will provide feasibility and cost analysis data to help the Board develop long-range plans for the schools. The base fee for the study/plan is \$50,000.

The proposal also included a school population trend study for an additional fee. Mr. Roberson reported that Clark Nexsen would perform the population study if the Board chooses; however, he believes the Board would get more “bang for the buck” by using another source for the population study. Jeremy Gibbs reported that he has been in contact with a research center at North Carolina State University (NCSU) that has expertise in school population studies. The Board agreed to review the NCSU proposal at the next regular meeting on February 16. The Clark Nexsen fee proposal will also be submitted for approval at the February 16 meeting. Mr. Roberson estimated that the facilities study could be completed by July. Mr. Barger stated that this would allow a thorough study and also position the Board for the FY17 budget cycle and a possible bond referendum in 2018.

FY16 Budget

Mr. Barger presented an updated list of anticipated budget changes to local current expense funding for FY16. The Board discussed the addition of approximately \$140,000 to cover salary and benefits

for two instructors for a JROTC program for Brevard High School and Rosman High School. Directors discussed needs in their respective departments, and the Board discussed possible staffing scenarios associated with the curricular options that were presented at the January 27 work session. Mr. Gibbs reported that most of the options would lend themselves primarily to reallocation of existing funds, barring unknown factors. Mr. Griffin requested an update on driver's education funding. Mr. Barger reported that the state provides a set amount to pay driver's education instructors and sets a cap on what students can be charged. The current fee in Transylvania is \$45 per student, which falls in the middle of the cost range statewide.

Capital Outlay/Bond Information

Mr. Barger reviewed the capital outlay plan, noting that new items could be added to the list after the school facility tours. Mrs. Petit expressed frustration that the same capital needs have been discussed for the past six years because the Board cannot afford to make significant improvements under current funding levels. It was noted that the county's multi-million dollar fund balance increases every year.

Mrs. Scruggs asked about the Buncombe County Schools' capital funding arrangement. Dr. McDaris reported that some years ago Buncombe County was recognized as having some of the poorest school facilities in the region. The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners, Board of Education, and legislative delegates were able to get a bill passed that sets aside a portion of the county's annual sales tax into a sinking fund for the schools' capital needs. The sinking fund enables the school board to fund its capital needs internally, thus eliminating the need to argue about capital budgets every year.

Mr. Barger noted that bonds are the funding mechanism for large scale capital improvements in approximately 99 percent of school districts. Chairman McCoy added that it is a normal process for school boards to ask for a bond referendum periodically to pay for capital needs. Mr. Barger pointed out that the county's largest expenditure to pay off the last bond will be finished in 2016, and the money that has been used to retire that debt could easily be used for another bond.

Mr. Gibbs gave an update on the TCS salary study. He reported that the last state salary increase gave large pay raises to some teachers, smaller raises to other teachers, and only \$500 (or approximately \$42 a month) to employees in transportation, plant operations, and other non-teacher categories. Mr. Gibbs discussed the importance of running an organization that values and respects its employees by paying them appropriate wages. He stated that while raising the teacher supplement every year is a worthy goal, there is also a need to recognize that a large portion of the TCS workforce (22%) has not received any significant increase in a long time. He recommended that the Board begin work to address these and other compensation scale issues. Mr. Gibbs stated that he would send the Board some preliminary figures for review.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. GRIFFIN, SECONDED BY MRS. SCRUGGS, the meeting was adjourned at 8:07 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary