

**Minutes
Transylvania County Board of Education
April 1, 2015**

INVOCATION/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

CALL TO ORDER/WELCOME

BUSINESS ITEMS

1. Approval of Expenditure for Technology Infrastructure
2. FY16 Budget

The Transylvania County Board of Education met in special session at 4:00 p.m. on April 1, 2015 at the Morris Education Center. The purpose of the meeting was to hold a budget workshop and approve an expenditure for technology. Tawny McCoy led in a moment of silence and Cindy Petit led the Pledge of Allegiance. Chairman McCoy welcomed everyone and called the meeting to order. The following board members, staff, and media representatives were in attendance.

BOARD MEMBERS:

Tawny McCoy, Chair
Cindy Petit, Vice Chair
Marty Griffin
Ron Kiviniemi
Betty Scruggs

MEDIA:

Park Baker, *Transylvania Times*

STAFF:

Dr. Jeff McDaris, Superintendent
Jenny Hunter, Administrative Assistant
Norris Barger, Director, Business Services
Chris Whitlock, Director, Technology Services
Alan Justice, Director, Transportation
Audrey Reneau, Director, K-5 Curriculum/Instruction
Tammy Bellefeuil, Director, Student Services
Brian Weaver, Director, 6-12 Curriculum/Instruction
Leca Chapman, Director, Career/Technical Education
Kevin Smith, School-Community Relations Coordinator
Kris Foster, School Resource Officer

1. Approval of Expenditure for Technology Infrastructure

Chris Whitlock reported on the availability of grant funds for technology infrastructure upgrades. Based on its ADM numbers, Transylvania County Schools is eligible for \$530,550 to purchase wireless networking equipment and professional services to provide high density wireless connectivity in each instructional classroom system-wide. Mr. Whitlock reported that the timing of the grant could not be better, as the current wireless equipment is about to reach end of life. He reported there will be no out-of-pocket expense for the upgrades; 80% of the project will be funded with federal e-rate money and the remaining 20% will come from unused *Race to the Top* funds for which the state will reimburse the LEA. Mr. Whitlock reported that the deadline to apply for the funding is April 16, 2015, which means a short time frame to submit bids and procure vendors from the state approved list. The project must to be completed by August. Mr. Kiviniemi asked if the quality of work would be a concern due to the short turnaround. Mr. Whitlock agreed that it could be a concern; however, the grant requires working with the vendor's installers. There was no further discussion, and ON A MOTION BY MR. GRIFFIN, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the Board unanimously approved the expenditure of \$530,555 for technology infrastructure upgrades with reimbursement pending from federal e-rate and *Race to the Top* funds.

Dr. McDaris recognized the student artwork from Brevard High School that was on display in the board room and welcomed SRO Foster to the meeting.

2. **FY16 Budget**

Norris Barger reviewed the anticipated budget changes for FY16. Audrey Reneau reported that the YMCA is going to submit a proposal for continuing the afterschool program. Chairman McCoy clarified that the \$786,657 item labeled “reduce fund balance appropriated to \$0” is not intended to simply replace fund balance; it is being requested to give the Board the ability to balance its budget without having to use fund balance.

Dr. McDaris reported that Child Nutrition may need to increase lunch prices next year based on federal mandates for healthier foods. Current standards call for lower-sodium and whole-grain items, which do not seem to be popular choices with students. He reported that simply eliminating the requirement for every student to take a fruit at breakfast (many of which are thrown away uneaten) could save the program \$75,000 per year. Director Barton is looking at options for staff reorganization and consolidation of food prep sites in order to save money. The group discussed the potential level of local funding that may be needed for the Child Nutrition program next year.

Mr. Barger presented the revised capital plan showing school and board priorities. He explained that items shown with zero as the board priority represent large-scale projects that would be paid through a bond rather than the normal capital outlay budget. He reported that the school system has been funded at \$1.6 million for the past two years, with an understanding that a number of large needs were on the horizon for FY16. Mr. Kiviniemi stated that the Board needs a significant increase in its level of capital funding since it is at least two years away from getting a bond passed. Mr. Barger noted that it could be 2021 before some of the items on the current master plan are addressed. He stated that he would like to see funds freed up for architectural services in order to get started as soon as a bond is approved.

Mr. Barger gave a reminder that some of the schools will receive additional furniture and equipment allotments in FY16, with other schools to receive additional allotments in FY17.

The Board took at 15-minute recess at 4:48 p.m.

Following the recess, the Board reviewed a revised capital plan showing the board priorities in descending order. Mrs. Scruggs noted that current funding levels would only stretch to Item 31 on the list, and questioned how the system could ever catch up on its needs if most of the budget has to go toward recurring items. Mr. Barger stated that the capital outlay budget has to stretch farther each year due to increased state and federal instructional mandates and rising costs of repairs and replacements. He explained that is the reason why a large injection of money, such as a bond, is needed periodically. He reported that the county has historically issued a bond for school facilities every ten years with the exception of the last 10-year cycle. Dr. McDaris reported that there was no bond referendum this time due to the local economic downturn. He added that the last bond of \$24 million should have already been paid off, but the county refinanced several years ago to reduce the monthly payment.

Members discussed specific items on the list. Mrs. Petit stated that she would like to see each school get at least one of their top priorities. Mr. Barger reported that he anticipates significant changes to the capital plan once the new master plan is finished.

Leca Chapman reported that plans are underway to upgrade the CTE infrastructure at Brevard High School to install a commercial kitchen that would equal the commercial-grade

facilities at Rosman High School. Ms. Chapman reported that students interested in culinary arts careers can qualify for high-paying apprenticeships right out of high school with the proper facilities and training. She noted that the upgraded kitchen facilities could be made available for community events as well. Mr. Barger reported that Clark Nexsen planners would be incorporating program needs such as this, and other types of flexible instructional spaces, into the new master plan in order to position the schools for the changing job markets of the next 5-10 years.

Mr. Barger presented a sample format for presenting the FY16 budget request to the county commissioners. He would like to show digital photos and descriptions of each major project for which the Board is requesting funding. Board members were enthusiastic about the photo-style format and directed Mr. Barger to proceed with developing the presentation.

Dr. McDaris reported that the JROTC program is on track for next year. Classroom space at BHS is available and instructor applications are being accepted. Brian Weaver reported that course catalog information for next year has been disseminated, and approximately 45 students have selected JROTC as their first choice with more signed up as second choice. The program requires 70 participants. Mr. Weaver described the transportation plan for bringing JROTC participants from RHS and DRS to the BHS campus. He reported that a large number of those who have signed up are freshmen.

Mr. Griffin asked if a proposed increase in the local teacher supplement would happen. Mr. Barger explained that the district must take care of any mandated increases in health insurance, retirement, and salaries, plus address fund balance, before anything else; after that, the teacher supplement is the next highest priority within funding capabilities. Dr. McDaris reported there is some talk that the legislature may address principal and assistant principal salaries. The administration is working on salary scales for non-certified positions locally. Mr. Barger reported that any salary increase from the state would likely result in cuts to other positions and programs within the state education budget.

Mr. Barger asked the Board to keep in mind that the school system would be losing \$54,000 in restricted grants funding next year.

Chairman McCoy stated that the Board must decide at the next regular meeting the total amount of its budget request to the Board of Commissioners and finalize any changes in priority. Mr. Barger reported that the county manager would like to have the Board's request by May 1. The final deadline to submit the request is May 15.

There was no further business, and ON A MOTION BY MR. GRIFFIN, SECONDED BY MR. KIVINIEMI, the meeting was adjourned at 5:53 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Chairman

Secretary