

**BRISTOL VIRGINIA SCHOOL BOARD
REGULAR SESSION
February 5, 2024**

The Bristol Virginia School Board met in Regular Session on Monday, February 5, 2024, in the Bristol Virginia Public Schools Administration Office, 280 Lee Street, Bristol, Virginia. A quorum was present with the following Board members in attendance:

Mrs. Breanne Forbes Hubbard, Chair
Mr. Randy Alvis
Mr. Frank Goodpasture

Mrs. Vanessa Guffey, Vice Chair
Mr. Steve Fletcher

Also present were:

Dr. David Scott, Superintendent
Mrs. Stephanie Austin, Deputy Clerk

Mr. Gary Ritchie, Assistant Superintendent

Absent:

Mrs. Tammy Jones, Clerk

Mrs. Breanne Forbes Hubbard, called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. She welcomed all in attendance and opened the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard asked for a motion to approve the Agenda. Mrs. Vanessa Guffey so moved. Mr. Steve Fletcher seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 2(A) Public Hearing on Proposed 2023-2024 School Board Budget. Dr. David Scott, Superintendent, presented a PowerPoint outlining tentative budget summary for the 2024-2025 budget. Dr. Scott highlighted the following:

Over the next few months, we will be presenting information as the budget development process for next year's budget – fiscal year 2025 – nears completion and as we seek approval for the budget. We have some slides to share as we open this discussion, and Dr. Scott added he wanted to temper everyone's excitement and expectations by reminding the members of the school board and the public that the information that we are about to present is only informed at this point by what Gov. Youngkin has proposed in his budget bill, which was released in December. The Governor's budget bill traditionally receives help, from our perspective, from the General Assembly. Neither the House nor the Senate have revealed their proposed changes to the Governor's bill at this time, so again, please understand that the information we are about to share is subject to change and hopefully improvement.

He noted as we look to next school year, we know that a major undertaking will be opening The Virginia Intermediate and Virginia Primary schools and making sure that all of our schools continue to be great learning environments and safe environments for our students and teachers and the community in general.

Dr. Scott added his hope was to highlight a few of the numbers and major features that are part of the budget development process for this year – and although she is not able to be here this evening, he wanted to thank Mrs. Tammy Jones for her time and talent in putting this presentation together.

From a revenue standpoint, the Governor's proposal would yield approximately \$1.3M in new money or growth for our operating budget, and that is strictly looking at a comparison of current-year state funding to next year's state funding (so federal dollars are not part of this calculation on the front end). When we

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add in expected revenue from the alternative education program we operate, we are closer to \$1.44M in growth in our state funding.

When we look at the local funding picture, we are operating under the assumption that City Council will be hard-pressed to increase funding beyond the current level, which is just barely above the Required Local Effort. In very basic terms, the state funding model attempts to equalize the cost of educational expenses by providing a higher rate of funding per student in localities that have low fiscal capacities, or put differently, the state attempts to share the cost to a greater extent with localities that have poorer than average tax bases. In Bristol, the state share of every dollar that is required is approximately 70 cents on the dollar, and the locality pays the other approximately 30 cents on the dollar. What that means in the total funding picture is that City Council, according to the Governor's proposed budget bill, will be required to contribute close to \$8M. That does not count capital projects that are paid with local dollars or the debt service on the central office building. So, we understand the economic position that the City and all of us are in, and we are just assuming that the City will find a way to budget at the minimum level for Required Local Effort.

Our priorities are listed there on slide 8, and they are pretty straightforward.

On the next slide, slide 9, you can see our main goals for the upcoming budget. We want to give a step-increase for all employees so that we are not causing anyone to be frozen in place and then having to play catchup at a later date. To the greatest extent possible, we want to give step increases annually.

We also see trends in the cost of health care premiums and insurance costs in general. Our hope is to take on those increases within the school budget rather than to pass the cost of those increases onto our employees. In a year when the perceptible increase in pay is bound to be modest compared to the two previous years, the last thing we want to do is wipe out any kind of raise by having our employees pay an increase in insurance costs.

The next item speaks to preserving positions that have been funded by Federal funds, particularly COVID relief or ESSER funds. It is no secret that the ESSER funds are expiring, and there is going to be a shortage, comparatively speaking, in total available budget. So, we are hopeful to retain as many of these positions as possible because the people who hold these positions are valued members of our Bearcat Family.

And the last goal listed here points to expected increases for certain services. Cost of Living Adjustments, or COLA, are overdue in many respects, and we need to budget in anticipation of cost increases related to COLA.

The obstacles we face—Dr. Scott noted he had already touched on some of this—include making staffing decisions that relate specifically to those positions which have been funded by recent grants. As the grant money is removed from the total budget, we know that the remaining state and local dollars will not be able to fund all the positions that we have filled in the past three years. As mentioned, the City has a challenge ahead of it in terms of the landfill and long-term debt. And, about the time our budget passes, our new school construction will be complete, and payments will begin on it.

When we meet back in a month, we will likely not have additional information from the General Assembly, but we are planning to put a budget in front of you for approval. That, however, is subject to discussion as we keep an eye on the current legislative session and see what changes, if any, begin to emerge.

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Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 3 (A) Superintendents Report. Dr. David Scott, Superintendent, presented the following:

School Construction progress is moving right along, and completion is still on target.

Dr. Scott noted he was proud to re-share some good news items. He highlighted he would like to commend Mrs. Allison at Virginia Middle School for securing a GOTEK grant for her classroom and students. This is a \$105K award for some hi-tech equipment that will allow our students to explore emerging technologies and create interest in new career fields. Mrs. Allison, based on the interactions he has had with her this year, has always been the kind of teacher to find ways to make learning interactive and hands-on for her students, so this grant will almost surely be an enormous win for her and for the students.

He also highlighted and wanted to make sure that we recognize our own student representative to the School Board, Miss Katie Rankin, for her recent accomplishment. Katie received the Harry F. Byrd, Jr. Leadership Award on Friday in Richmond. Katie is one of 11 recipients this year and was the recipient from the 9th Congressional District. This is an outstanding accomplishment, and a \$25,000 scholarship, and we all know Katie, and are all so proud of her, and know that this is just a little taste of what lies ahead for this impressive young woman. So, congratulations, Katie!

He noted he believed last month he reported that our School Nutrition department had 98% of its employees SERV Safe certified. Well, Mrs. Leeah Parks and her dedicated employees maxed it out and reached 100%. Congratulations, Leeah, and congratulations to your entire department.

On February 1st, which was last Thursday, Mr. Rader and Mr. Blackburn, Mrs. Hurt, Dr. de Nobriga, Ms. Taylor, Mr. Childress and Mr. Burress – and he added he didn't know if he was missing anyone – hosted family representatives from all four elementary schools on a tour of Virginia Intermediate School. Dr. Scott thanked everyone who pulled that event together, and also thank you to the parents for their support. We will continue to host events like this until everyone is supportive on the move.

In that same spirit, we have continued to look for opportunities to get the staff members from our four elementary schools to work together as members of the two new schools they will inhabit next year. On our last half day of school, Mr. Rader and Mr. Blackburn were able to address their will-be staff members for the first time, which is really pretty unique if you stop to think about it. Dr. Scott added, just about every principal he has ever known sees great value in having a day to speak to the staff before beginning to work in a new school. To be able to speak with the staff before the new schools before construction and renovations have been completed is really something.

We have another team building event coming up on February 20th, and this will be a self-care session. As we continue to prepare everyone for both the emotions that come with retiring our beloved schools and the excitement that comes with opening two new schools, we want to make sure that everyone knows that it's the people inside of those schools that matter the most.

Curriculum Expo and Wellness Event – During the worst snow the City of Bristol has seen in a lifetime, maybe if we're talking about someone very young, we hosted a Wellness Event. Mrs. Hudson and Dr. Scott spent a lot of time planning the event and it was almost postponed because of the weather – Dr. Scott noted he was kidding by the way – credit for the planning goes almost entirely to Mrs. Hudson, and she received cooperation from the City and her own staff and a lot of hands along the way. But it was a hugely successful event, and it was saved by generous efforts of everyone who helped to mitigate the

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snowfall from earlier in the week. Dr. Scott noted he believed Mr. Hudson deserves some recognition in that regard, too.

The maintenance staff put in a lot of hours and hard work to ensure that as much of the first snow was removed as possible before the snow late in the same week could take effect. He added he was very happy that Bristol was able to return to school sooner than some of our neighbors, who unfortunately got a double dose of the snow. So, kudos to the maintenance staff for their efforts.

The snow did, however, cause us to move our curriculum expo to February 1st, and he noted he would like to thank everyone who put time and energy into making that event happen. While he was not able to attend, he added he saw some pictures and believe that we did some important work to showcase the great course offerings that we have at Virginia High School. We have a CTE program to be proud of, and we offer many fine opportunities for our students. As other pathways for CTE programming becomes available in our region of the state, He added he wanted us all to be fully aware of the great experiences that can be offered within our own building.

Just a couple of quick notes about what is on the horizon. In addition to budgetary work and ramping up our training efforts for the Virginia Literacy Act and the Division Literacy Plan, we are also expecting to begin to see some of the outputs from our bus routing software in February. While there will surely be some unknowns about next year at the close of this year, Dr. Scott noted he is hopeful that we will be able to talk about our transportation plans and traffic patterns and bus routes etc., between the March and June board meetings.

On the athletics front, are speeding into the end of the winter season and have some important dates and news to share:

The Bearcat Swim Team was crowned Southwest District Champions on 1/31 – Congrats!
VHS will host the Region 2D Diving tomorrow at 6:00 and the Region 2D Swimming on Wednesday, February 7th.

Wrestling hosted a tournament this past weekend and will be hosting the Region 2D Tournament on Saturday the tenth from 10:00 to 4:00 at the high school.

And both the Girls' and the Boys' Basketball teams are in first place in the Southwest District. If this continues to hold true, we will be hosting both boys and girls Southwest Tournaments between February 15 and 17th.

We are going to announce dates for some of the celebrations for the elementary schools that have served this community for so long. We still have a little bit of pinning down to do, but it looks like in the month of April, we will be inviting current and past staff members to host the community for tours of our school buildings before the buildings are retired. We will host these send-off celebrations in the evenings and hope that the alumni from past decades can have one more opportunity to walk the halls of their old schools and relive some of those good memories. We will have more information coming out about that very soon.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard thanked Dr. Scott for his report.

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Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 3 (B) School Board Representative Report. Student Representatives presented a PowerPoint on the following:

Second Semester

- Because of the snow days, the start of second semester was pushed back for our high school students.
- Students began their new classes on Monday, January 22nd.
- Some of the underclassmen students that we have spoken to have reported that they were excited to start the new semester.
- A few of the seniors told us that the start of the semester was bittersweet, due to this being their last few months in high school.

Scholastic Bowl

- On Saturday, January 27th, the Scholastic Bowl team traveled to Richlands for the Southwest district tournament.
- They earned second place in the tournament, earning them a spot in the region tournament at Ridgeview the following week.

Queen of Hearts Campaign

- Queen of Hearts Campaign has been implemented in our school for nearly 15 years by Virginia High's Spanish teacher Mrs. Clear. The goal of the program is to raise money for the American Heart Association.
- Any girl in who is interested is recruited as a candidate. Past girls have achieved up to 3,000 dollars to the AHA (American Heart Association). Our two candidates this year is Carlei Keeney and Paris Martin. On Friday, Carlei Keeney will kick off the start of the campaign at the school on National Wear Red Day, where you can purchase a raffle ticket to be eligible to win a 20\$ Chick-fi-la gift card.

Sports

- Virginia High School hosted the annual Ballard Lee Tournament. Teams from all over the United States played in this tournament including our very own basketball team.

Elective Expo

- The elective expo is used to get middle schoolers to see what Virginia High offers. Which includes forensics, art, drama, culinary, and many more electives you can take in the school. The goal is to kid middle schoolers excited for what is to come and put their all into what they enjoy, giving them a pleasurable experience in their high school years.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard thanked everyone for their report.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 3 (C) Discussion of Vaping Policy. Mrs. Forbes Hubbard discussed attending the Capital Conference and while there listening to a compelling hour-long discussion from Dr. Pace of VCU, regarding the dangers of vaping. She noted her hope was to engage in conversations on what effects and the frequency of vaping in our schools. After a lengthy discussion, the Board decided to vote on approving a policy which will be emailed to Board Members. Mr. Frank Goodpasture moved approval, Mr. Randy Alvis seconded the motion and the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Jackie Nophlin addressed the Board during Public Comment.

Dr. Scott addressed Item 5 (A) Recognition of School Board Appreciation Month. Dr. Scott presented Board Members with a certificate of appreciation.

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Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 6 (A) Approval of Consent Agenda. Mr. Goodpasture moved approval. Mrs. Guffey seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Approval of Payment of Bills
- B. Approval of Minutes – Regular Session – January 8, 2024

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 7(A) Approval of School Board Budget Revision #5. Mr. Steve Fletcher moved approval. Mr. Alvis seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 7(B) Approval of 2024-2025 and 2025-2026 School Calendars. Mr. Alvis moved approval. Mrs. Guffey seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 7(C) Approval of Contract Purchase Greater than \$50,000.00 – Evolv: TIPS Contract and Contracts - \$477,382.58. Mr. Alvis moved approval. Mr. Fletcher seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 7(D) Approval of Contract Purchase Greater than \$50,000.00 – Centegix Crisis Alert System - \$122,600.00. Mr. Alvis moved approval. Mrs. Guffey seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard addressed Item 7(E) Approval of Revision of Cell Phone Regulation – JFC-R2. Mr. Alvis moved approval. Mr. Fletcher seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia, Mrs. Guffey moved that the Board convene a Closed Meeting for the purpose of discussing the following specific matters as authorized by Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) the Code of Virginia, Specifically,

- A. Discussion of Certain Personnel and Recommendation for Employment and Resignations

Mr. Goodpasture seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

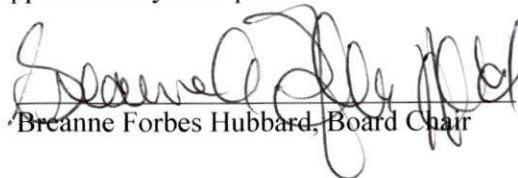
The Board went into Closed Session at 7:06 p.m.

Back in Public Session at 7:58 p.m., Mrs. Guffey moved Certification of Closed Meeting as such: the Bristol Virginia School Board certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting and only such public matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were considered. Mr. Goodpasture seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Alvis moved Approval of Attachment (A) as recommended. Mrs. Guffey seconded the motion, and the motion carried unanimously.

Mrs. Forbes Hubbard adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:00 p.m.


Stephanie R. Austin, Deputy Clerk


Breanne Forbes Hubbard, Board Chair