

## SCOTT COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

### MINUTES OF SPECIAL CALLED MEETING JUNE 18, 2021

The Scott County School Board met for a Special Called Meeting on Friday afternoon at 2:00 p.m. at the Scott County Career & Technical Center, 387 Broadwater Avenue, Gate City, VA 24251 with the following members present:

David Templeton, Chairman  
Lon Stephen "Steve" Sallee Jr., Vice-Chairman  
Linda Gillenwater  
Gail L. McConnell  
Robin Hood  
William "Bill" Houseright

ABSENT: None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** John I. Ferguson, Division Superintendent; Will Sturgill, School Board Attorney; Beverly Stidham, Purchasing Agent/Clerk of the Board; Angela Johnson, Head Start Payroll Clerk/School Nutrition Agent/Deputy Clerk of the Board; Vickie Kitts, NEA Representative; Jenny Gose, Teacher; Alicia White, Teacher/Assistant Principal; J. Meade, Teacher; H. Castle, Teacher; Christy Stapleton, Teacher; Suzy Burke, Teacher; J. Houseright, Teacher.

**CALL TO ORDER/MOMENT OF SILENCE/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE:** At 2:00 p.m. Chairman Templeton called the Special Called Meeting of the Scott County School Board to order. He asked everyone present to observe a moment of silence and then he concluded the moment of silence by leading in citing the *Pledge of Allegiance*.

**ITEMS TO ADD TO THE AGENDA/APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA:** With the addition of Board member comments before the Closed meeting, (Item #4) and the addition of Public Comment, a motion was then asked by the Board to approve the agenda with the new additions.

On a motion by Mr. Steve Sallee, seconded by Ms. Linda Gillenwater, all members voting aye, the Board voted to approve the agenda with the additions noted above.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:** Chairman David Templeton read aloud a letter he drafted in response to the issue of raises within the School System and addressed the agenda item for tonight's Special Called Meeting of the amendment of the 2021-2022 School Operating Budget/Cafeteria Budget/Salary Scales. Superintendent Ferguson (**Appendix A**) read a statement he prepared in response to the Budget/Salary Scales agenda item for tonight's meeting. Superintendent Ferguson emphasized that Scott County School System is the largest employer in the County and that 80% of our employees reside in Scott County. Even though 20% of our employee population may not reside in the County, they have ties to the County such as childcare, property owners, etc. Mr. Robin Hood stated that his motto throughout his life and coaching career has always been to do things right and make things happen. He stated to our employees that the Board will be fighting for them and supporting them to do what is right for them in any way that they can and how much they are appreciated for all that they do.

**PUBLIC COMMENT:** Ms. Makayla Jaramillo, Teacher and VEA Representative spoke to the Board and thanked them for their continued support of staff and teachers especially during this past challenging year.

Ms. Kathy Musick-VPE (Virginia Professional Educator's Representative) thanked the Board for support of all staff. She emphasized how the teachers, especially during the Pandemic, were "shining stars" and how important their dedication to both academics and athletics are to our students.

Ms. Vickie Kitts, VEA Representative also thanked the Board for their support of Scott County staff and stated that Richmond is aware of the current situation with the budget and she will be working with legislators to help make this raise for our staff a reality.

**CLOSED MEETING:** Mr. Steve Sallee made a motion to enter into closed meeting at 2:20 p.m. to discuss candidates for employment and the assignment/performance of Personnel, Teachers, Teaching Assistants, Principals, Nurses, Secretaries, Custodians, Bus drivers, Maintenance Staff, Cafeteria Staff, Mechanics, School Resource Officers, and Central Office Staff. The motion was seconded by Mr. Gail McConnell, all members voting aye.

**RETURN FROM CLOSED MEETING:** All members returned from closed meeting at 2:59 p.m. with a roll call vote being held, and on a motion by Mr. Steve Sallee, seconded by Mr. Gail McConnell, the Board returned to regular session and Mr. Steve Sallee cited the following certification of the closed meeting.

**CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING:**

*WHEREAS*, the Scott County School Board has convened a closed meeting on the date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Freedom of the Information Act and,

*WHEREAS*, Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia requires certification, by this Scott County School Board that such meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

*NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED*, that the Scott County School Board hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies and (ii) only such public matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Scott County School Board in the closed meeting

**ROLL CALL VOTE:**

AYES: David Templeton, Steve Sallee, Linda Gillenwater, Gail McConnell, Robin Hood and Bill Houseright.

NAYS: None.

ABSENT: None.

**DISCUSSION/APPROVAL OF THE 2021-2022 SCHOOL OPERATING BUDGET-**

Superintendent Ferguson explained to the Board that the original budget was last adopted on May 25<sup>th</sup> reflecting a 5% raise for full-time staff which would also include a step advance for staff members who had not advanced to the top of the salary scale. The new budget for approval will now reflect a 3% raise for staff with a step increase for those not topped out on the salary scale as of June 18, 2021.

On a motion by Mr. David Templeton, seconded by Ms. Linda Gillenwater, all members voting aye, the Board voted to approve the 2021-2022 School Operating budget as presented on June 18, 2021.

On a motion by Mr. Gail McConnell, seconded by Mr. Steve Sallee, all members voting aye, the Board voted to approve the 2021-2022 Cafeteria budget as presented on June 18, 2021.

On a motion by Mr. Steve Sallee, seconded by Ms. Linda Gillenwater, all members voting aye, the Board voted to approve the 2021-2022 Salary Scales as amended on June 18, 2021.

**BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS:**

Mr. Steve Sallee stated that the Board is doing the best for Scott County staff that we can do with the budget.

Ms. Linda Gillenwater wished to thank all of the teachers for the great job they are doing. She made the statement that we are all in this together and everyone needs to stop playing the blame game and do what is best for the County.

**ADJOURNMENT:** There being no further business to discuss, the Special Called meeting of the Scott County School board was adjourned at 3:10 p.m.



David Templeton, Chairman



Beverly Stidham, Clerk of the Board

**Appendix for June 18, 2021 Special Called Meeting:**

**A. Statement from Superintendent Ferguson**

## Statement Regarding Comments About Scott County Public Schools

The Scott County Board of Supervisors took a vote on the upcoming 2021-2022 budget to not fund \$238,935 of local money which in turn the school division would have received \$1,019,279 in state funds. These monies would have been used to give all Scott County employees a 5% increase in their salaries. Their reasoning is since we can't fund a cost of living increase for our county employees then we cannot support appropriating funds for the school division to give a salary increase. This all came to me through a phone call I received on June 16, 2021. I have had no prior communication from the Board of Supervisors or any invitation of a meeting with them regarding funding for the upcoming school year.

The last communication that I had received was May 17, 2021 in which an email stated it was estimated that the school division would receive \$6,512,043, which is bare minimum of the Required Local Effort and Match, from county funds. Since then, our School Board voted to adopt a budget which included the 5% pay increase for all staff members.

Scott County Public Schools is the largest employer in Scott County. We employ around 600 people whether full or part-time. Approximately 80% of our employees reside within our county lines. Approximately 20% do not. Of these 20%, a good majority bring their children to our school division. Others who live outside the county lines bring their children to our school division because they have past/present ties to the county. Many have family members who live in or own property in Scott County. Parents of these students whose address is outside the boundaries of Scott County have caregivers who watch over their children after school hours. They, the caregivers, reside in Scott County. We have students who have no ties at all to Scott County but their parents support our schools and community by purchasing necessities such as gas, groceries, and food at local restaurants. These families bring in additional revenue to our county.

Comments about overcrowding in our border schools is incorrect. Student populations in these schools has declined in recent years. Many of the comments already given is nothing more than hearsay and not fact.

Last year the Board of Supervisors withheld \$179,000 which was appropriated and approved. Not only was that money withheld, they did not fully fund their financial obligations as required.

The School Division has had to keep up its buildings without any financial support from the locality. A line of credit has been established year after year to pay salaries and bills until the county's revenue starts to come in because they do not have the monies to fund these amounts which costs the school division even more.

The Scott County School Division has taken on a lot of additional financial responsibilities without any support from the locality's governing body. Negative comments about supporting our staff financially have been made. Our School Board has been very supportive of our staff members by contributing additional financial support. But we have been looked at by others very negatively by doing so.

There is an opportunity to show support of our staff members. You need to do so.