

Committee on Joint School Services

MINUTES

December 12, 2019

The Committee on Joint School Services met in a regular, bimonthly meeting on Thursday, December 12, 2019 at Jackson River Technical Center with the following members present:

Jonathan Arritt	Covington City School Board
Gerald Franson	Alleghany County School Board
Matt Garten	Alleghany County Board of Supervisors
James Griffith	Alleghany County Board of Supervisors
Tom Sibold	Covington City Council
Jacob Wright	Alleghany County School Board

Also present were Mr. Eugene Kotulka, Superintendent, Alleghany County Public Schools; Mrs. Melinda Snead-Johnson, Superintendent of Covington City Schools; and Christy Armentrout.

Mr. Wright called the meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. and led in a moment of silence and the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Approval of minutes:

Mr. Wright asked the committee members to review the minutes from the December 5, 2019 meeting. After reviewing the minutes, Mr. Arritt made a motion to approve the minutes as presented. Mr. Garten seconded the motion, and it was passed by unanimous aye vote.

Chairman's update:

Mr. Wright informed the committee members that Troutman Sanders had been in touch with him to see if the members of this Committee would be interested in speaking to people from Martinsville/Henry County, as they are in

the process of a reversion/merger and would like to seek guidance in those matters. Troutman Sanders informed Mr. Wright that members of the Committee on Joint School Services would need to be willing to meet with them and sign a confidentiality waiver.

Old Business:

Update on Fiscal Report. Mr. Wright gave an update on the fiscal study that is being finalized by Mr. Jim Regimbal. It is expected that, upon the completion of a review by the attorneys, that the results of this report will be formally presented at next week's December 19 meeting.

In advance of this presentation, Mr. Wright wanted to let the committee know that the payroll equalization ideas that were examined exclude pay for bus drivers (since some bus drivers at Covington City Schools are also custodians), the central office staffs, cafeteria workers, and administrative staff. To equalize pay for teachers, teacher's aides, and custodians the difference would be \$465,000.00. Mr. Wright noted that this figure does not include health insurance premiums.

Mr. Wright also noted that Mr. Regimbal's report made suggestions for capitalizing on some further opportunities to save money. This included increasing the per pupil ratio of Allegheny County Public Schools' classes by 1 student and providing early retirement incentives to employees nearing their full retirement requirements. These incentives would include allowing these members to earn 15% of their salary and have health benefits provided until age 65 if they work 10-15 days a year. The schools could potentially realize \$1,000,000.00 savings under this option. Mr. Wright also noted that if the lower composite index of the two schools were used in calculations that \$100,000.00 savings would be realized.

The report includes other recommendations that the committee could reasonably ask for 6 years of financial assistance from Richmond. The plan would include eliminating duplicate positions in central office staff. Other duplicated positions would be eliminated through attrition and the budgetary numbers should move in a positive direction over time with these changes.

Update on Capital Improvement Assessment. Mr. Wright has contacted several firms that could potentially conduct a capital improvement assessment. The firms interested in conducting the studies will have information available to the committee members by the December 19 meeting. Mr. Wright asked the board to be prepared to examine the offers and get an idea for what they could do with this study. He noted that it had already been determined that it would be

beneficial to include the athletic facilities, and that Mr. Spangler had asked that Jackson River Technical Center be included in the assessment.

New Business:

Payment of bills (1-16). Mr. Franson made a motion to pay bills in the amount of \$12,348.00. The motion was seconded by Mr. Garten and carried by unanimous aye vote.

Sub-committees (1-17). Mr. Wright asked committee members if they thought it would be beneficial to break some of the larger ideas that are currently being dealt with down into projects for sub-committees to handle, such things as the capital improvement assessment. Mr. Sibold noted that he feels more knowledgeable people, people with expertise in the specific areas being discussed, should be called upon to handle this type of task. Mr. Arritt stated that he believes the committee should work with the staff members of each school division on this. Mr. Sibold also stated that if the 3 major obstacles this committee initially decided to look at, governance, budget, and equalization of salaries, are satisfied, then that is the time that other people who are better equipped to deal with the more detailed issues should be brought on board.

Mr. Franson asked if the committee should plan on going before the school boards in order to get support to talk to Richmond once the committee is certain that the 3 major obstacles have been settled. It was noted that submission of any request to the General Assembly must be made by January 8, 2020.

The committee members agreed that the idea of sub-committees should be tabled until after the results of next week's meeting are known.

Calendar (1-18). Mr. Wright noted that next week's December 19 meeting will most likely be a longer meeting than usual because of the financial update from Troutman Sanders and the presentations regarding the capital improvement assessment project. He also mentioned that Delegate Terry Austin is planning to be at this meeting to listen to the results. Mr. Wright then noted that next week's meeting had previously been placed on the schedule as an opportunity for public

comment with a to-be-determined location. He stated that it would be premature to hold a public comment at that meeting since most of the answer to the lingering questions will be attained after the presentations that will be given on the 19th. After some discussion, it was agreed that the committee would meet at Jackson River Technical Center on December 19, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. and would determine the course of further meetings at that time.

Adjournment:

Mr. Wright called for a motion to adjourn. Mr. Arritt made a motion, which was seconded by Mr. Garten, and the meeting was adjourned at 7:05 p.m.

Date Approved

Clerk

Chairman