

November 23, 2020

The Giles County School Board held a work session at 5:30 p.m. on November 23, 2020. Persons present were:

Jason B. Buckland
Melissa R. Guynn
Phillip A. Pennington
Stephen M. Steele (participated electronically)
Mark A. Wilburn

Dr. Terry E. Arbogast, II, Superintendent
Amanda J. Tickle, Clerk
Lisa Mustain, Assistant Superintendent

The meeting was called to order by the Vice-Chairman.

The School Board, on motion of Mr. Pennington, with second by Mrs. Guynn and unanimous voting, approved Mr. Steele to participate electronically.

The board had a discussion on the CRF funds, in regards to the stipends that were discussed at last week's meeting. Dr. Arbogast stated the stipends would be for the extra duties that staff have had to assume due to COVID19. Teachers have had to prepare for and implement multiple instructional approaches, as well as adhering to cleaning protocols within the classroom and following COVID safeguards for themselves and students. Teacher assistants have been assigned to riding the buses to do temperatures check and help drivers ensure masking is adhered to. Bus drivers have had to ensure masking is being adhered to, as well as adhering to additional cleaning responsibilities of the bus after each run. Cafeteria staff has continued to prepare meals for breakfast, lunch, and packing bags that are being delivered for our virtual students. In addition, looking at the Infectious Disease Preparedness and Response plan (created due to DOLI standards), employees at the schools either fall under the "high" or "medium" exposure risk determination and therefore have had to receive training on the IDPR plan at the beginning of the year. Thus, it makes sense that they would qualify and meet the hazard pay definition. Stipends would not be able to come out from CRF funds for all classifications based on the requirements of the CRF allocation. Dr. Arbogast provided budget information. Mr. Thompson looked at some areas and found some savings to date so far, which included substitute teachers, field trips, salaries, SOL Remediation, Fuel, Sales Tax, etc. Mr. Wilburn stated that he would like to see some funding for remediation to help to catch our kids back up. Dr. Arbogast stated that he would recommend that this be taken out of CARES funding. There will be approximately \$200K taken out of the regular budget to cover the remainder of the stipends. Dr. Arbogast stated that items have been purchased for the high schools that were needed (tables, chairs, carts), the bus has been purchased, the APEX seats and athletic needs for the high schools. Mrs. Guynn's only concern is that we will probably need to utilize substitutes soon and pay money out for these. Mr. Steele stated that he is a little nervous as to what will happen to the budget after inauguration. Mr. Buckland declared that with respect to stipends, he has a special interest in such a transaction, but he can fairly and independently participate and objectively discuss that. His biggest reluctance last week was that we were a 1/3 of the way through our budget and he still thinks the worst is yet to come with the pandemic. With the savings that they have had, they can do this in a prudent manner, but keep an eye on our finances. He wishes we could give everyone a lot more, but this is a small token of their appreciation. All board members were in consensus to give a stipend of \$1000 to all contracted employees.

The board had a discussion on the legal counsel RFP. Mr. Buckland discussed using Sands Anderson for special education services and using Guynn, Waddell, Carroll and Lockaby for other local governmental functions. Dr. Arbogast will check on this to make sure we can do this.

The board discussed back to school dates for grades 4 – 7 and grades 8 – 12. The board was in consensus that grades 4 – 7 would return 4 days on January 11 and grades 8 – 12 would return 4 days on January 26th. Mr. Wilburn stated that he knows our kids need sports, but he is also concerned about when all of our athletes get back together. Mr. Steele stated that we can go ahead and set a tentative date for high schools and see what happens when sports start back. Mr. Buckland mentioned the idea of possibly attending school on Fridays if we would have holidays/days off to be able to get more in-person instruction.

There was a discussion on the Return to Learn Participation plan for athletics. Dr. Arbogast gave the board a copy to review and discussed the plans and guidelines.

Dr. Arbogast stated that Holly Lesko and Ashley Briggs with the health department were able to go to GHS last week and talk with administration and staff.

The School Board, on motion of Mr. Wilburn, with second by Mrs. Guynn and unanimous voting, adjourned the meeting.

Chairman

Clerk