

**Perquimans County Board of Education
Special Session – April 18, 2022**

The Perquimans County Board of Education met in special session on Monday, April 18, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in the boardroom at the Central Office for a joint budget work session with the Perquimans County Commissioners. Audio access was also available to the public by dialing a telephone number and entering a meeting ID and passcode.

Board Chair Dr. Anne White called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting. Arlene Yates led the audience in reciting the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag and said a prayer.

Board of Education members present: Board Chair Dr. Anne White, Vice Chair Russell Lassiter, Matt Peeler, Amy Spough, Leary Winslow, and Arlene Yates. Also present were Superintendent Dr. Tanya Turner, Assistant Superintendent James Bunch, Chief Finance Officer Rube Blanchard, Director of Maintenance Jamie Johnson, Chief Human Resources Officer Michelle Maddox and Administrative Assistant Mary Kay Peele.

County Commissioners present: Chair Wallace Nelson, Vice Chair Fondella Leigh, Joseph Hoffler, Thelma Finch-Copeland, and Charles Woodard. Also present were County Manager Frank Heath, Clerk to the Board Mary Hunnicutt, and Finance Officer Tracy Mathews.

Approval of Agenda

Upon motion by Matt Peeler and second by Russell Lassiter, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda as presented.

New Business

Superintendent Dr. Tanya Turner thanked the Commissioners for their support of the school system. She said the school system had greatly improved its financial standing since 2019 when there was just over \$2,000 in the fund balance. The improvement came from significant cuts to the operating budget and a reduction in force at the end of the 2019-2020 school year. Although COVID was detrimental to the school system and others across the state and country for many reasons, it did help the district recover from the financial crisis experienced at the end of 2019 through some cost savings and additional funding. Though the monies saved and funds received helped to rebuild the fund balance and address many of the needs in the school district, the COVID funds do not address all needs. In an effort to remain transparent with the county, the presentation would explain the process for receiving COVID funds, what those amounts are to date, and how the funds have been used and will be used. This would build an understanding of why the district is requesting additional funds to meet the needs of the school district. Dr. Turner thanked the Commissioners for the increase in \$100,000 in current expense last year. She said the district did not request an increase in capital outlay last year due to COVID funding and would not request an increase this year. There would be an increase in the request for current expense due to the needs in excess of the current funding and outside of what COVID funds would provide.

Assistant Superintendent James Bunch shared information about the application process for ESSER (COVID) funding. Chief Finance Officer Rube Blanchard gave a summary of ESSER funds to date, including state and federal and what those funds have and will pay for. He also explained the Capital Outlay funding sources for 2021-2022.

Director of Maintenance Jamie Johnson shared Capital Outlay budget highlights of 2021-2022, which included a review of Capital Outlay projects, a review of ESSER Funds projects, before and after pictures of PCHS kitchen ceiling, HGS cafeteria service entrance, and PCS parent loop. Mr. Johnson presented Capital Outlay Budget needs for 2022-2023, which included a prioritized list with the cost of each project which totaled \$537,387.00. He also listed prioritized Capital Outlay needs using ESSER Funds which totaled \$1,865,697.07.

Chief Finance Officer Rube Blanchard presented the total Capital Outlay requests for 2022-2023 which totaled \$537,387. This total included the projected expenditures for Priority 1 projects in the amount of \$395,000 and the Technology 1:1 initiative in the amount of \$147,387.

Mr. Blanchard moved on to the Current Expense requests for 2022-2023. He included a history of the ADM and the 2022-2023 total proposed budget for State, Local Fund #2, Capital Outlay, Federal, Child Nutrition, and Other Fund #8, which totaled \$25,270,353. He provided a history of local revenue and a report of the historical fund balance from year ending June 30, 2010 to June 30, 2021. He explained in detail expenditures which impact our local budget which include charter school allocations, increases in employee benefits (retirement rate and health insurance premiums), state salary increases, Low-Wealth state funding, and SRO grant funding.

Dr. Turner provided an explanation for the funding request for a media coordinator and an additional English teacher at Perquimans County High School. Literacy has been identified as a focus area for improvement across our county. The high school reading scores were the lowest in the region. In addition to helping to foster the love of reading, the media coordinator would allow AIG students to be served by an individual at each of the four schools. In regard to the request for funding for an English position, there are four English courses but only three English teachers at Perquimans County High School. Next school year the enrollment of the high school will be higher than it has been in the last five years. With COVID and the loss of instructional time, reducing class size in English will help our students with their individual needs.

Mr. Johnson explained the need for an additional maintenance position that was lost due to a reduction in force. Right now, there are two employees that now grass nine months of the year. In addition to those positions, he is planning to restructure the Maintenance Department to have four skilled positions: carpentry, heating/air, plumbing, and electricity. With the skilled employees, the department would spend less money on contracted services.

Chief Human Resources Officer Michelle Maddox shared the request for additional funding for step increases for classified staff and central office staff. In the salary manual, the state provides pay grades that are assigned to certain classifications of employees such as custodians, child nutrition, and clerical. Within the pay grades, minimum and maximum are given for districts to develop a salary schedule for all non-teaching staff. The school system has salary schedules developed; however, over the years, due to years without pay increases or not enough funds to pay step increases, the salary schedules have become compressed. This year, the Board was able to address two categories of employees—bus drivers and child nutrition staff. Those salary schedules have been completely redone.

Mr. Blanchard shared the overall budget and summary of requests. The FY 2022-2023 Local Current Expense budget request totaled \$3,523,868, an increase of \$523,868 from the appropriation amount for the current year. The FY 2022-2023 Capital Outlay budget request totaled \$475,000, the same amount as the appropriation for the current year.

Dr. Turner, Mr. Bunch, Mr. Johnson, Mr. Blanchard and Ms. Maddox entertained questions and comments during and after the presentation. Board of Education members and staff expressed their appreciation for the support of the County Commissioners in educating the students of Perquimans County.

Commission Chair Wallace Nelson stated the Commissioners appreciated the transparency provided by the school system. He said the school tour was a good thing to see exactly what the schools look like. He also mentioned that the County Commissioners will try to do their part in helping the schools move forward.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:37 p.m.



Dr. Anne White, Chairperson



Dr. Tanya Turner, Superintendent