

**MINUTES**  
**VIRTUAL SCHOOL BOARD MEETING**  
**ALEXANDRIA CITY SCHOOL BOARD**  
**February 4, 2021 (4:00 p.m.)**

**Meeting Held via Zoom**

On March 12, 2020, Virginia Governor Ralph Northam declared a State of Emergency in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, in accordance with Va. Code § 2.2-3708.2(A)(3) and Acts of Assembly Chap. 1283 § 4-0.01(g), virtual School Board meetings held during the State of Emergency are limited to:

- addressing the public health emergency declared on March 12, 2020 (Va. Code § 44-146.17); and
- business that is necessary to continue school division operations and to discharge the School Board's lawful purposes, duties, and responsibilities.

Notice of any virtual School Board Meetings will be posted on the ACPS Calendar and on the School Board Meeting web page, where the public may link to join or watch live meetings. Virtual Special Called School Board Meetings may also be watched live in Alexandria on Comcast Channel 71. Video recordings and minutes for these meetings are posted online as soon as available after the meeting.

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## **ROLL CALL**

THE FOLLOWING WERE PRESENT AT THE MEETING:

**BOARD MEMBERS:** Meagan L. Alderton  
Cindy Anderson  
Ramee A. Gentry  
Jacinta Greene  
Margaret Lorber  
Veronica R. Nolan  
Michelle Rief  
Christopher A. Suarez  
Heather Thornton

**ALSO IN ATTENDANCE:** Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr., Susan Neilson, Shanel Hill, Lorraine Johnson, Ashley Sanchez-Viafara, Mia Humphrey, Mr. Theodore Thorpe, Erika Gulick, Dr. Alicia Hart, John Finnigan, Dr. Teri Mozingo, Dr. Stephen Haering, Pierrette Peters, Peter Balas, Dr. Stephen Wilkins, Darrell Sampson, Ingrid Bynum, Terry Werner, Dr. Elizabeth Hoover

### **Call to Order**

**1. Meeting Called to Order by Chair Alderton**

Chair Alderton called the meeting to order at 4:05 p.m. All members of the School Board were present at the start of the meeting except for Vice Chair Nolan who joined during public comments.

### **Adoption of Meeting Agenda**

**2. Adopt the Meeting Agenda for the February 4, 2021 Virtual School Board Meeting**

Ms. Lorber moved to adopt the meeting agenda for the February 4, 2021 Virtual School Board Meeting. Ms. Greene seconded the motion.

Ms. Gentry moved to amend the agenda by adding “Superintendent Contract Provision: Addendum to Other Work Activities” to the Consent Calendar, and removing “Deed of Easement for Dominion Power Charging Stations” from New Business.

Mr. Suarez seconded the motion.

The vote to amend the meeting agenda was, 8-0. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.

The vote to adopt the meeting agenda as amended for February 4, 2021, was 8-0. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.

## **Moment of Silence**

### **3. Observe a Moment of Silence**

A moment of silence was observed.

## **Communications & Addresses to the Board**

### **4. Public Hearing on the FY 2022 Combined Funds Budget**

Ms. Cindy Hart, Special Education Advisory Committee (SEAC) Chair, submitted written comments asking the School Board to fully fund the Special Education Operating Budget and advise increasing special education teacher reserve positions from four to six.

### **5. Report from Student Representatives Lorraine Johnson and Ashley Sanchez-Viafara**

Ms. Amy Smith, ACPS parent, spoke about social distance plans for Samuel Tucker classrooms and expressed her distrust for the data being conveyed to the community and School Board. Ms. Smith pleaded with the School Board to meet the needs of students.

Mr. Kyle Martin, ACPS parent, shared that ACPS’ updated school matrix for school reopening and does not properly reflect the intent of Virginia Department of Education Guidance.

Ms. Carla Macuri, ACPS alumna, shared that she is currently in the process of creating an outreach program targeted to educate Middle School and High School students in Environmental Sciences. Ms. Macuri asked the Board for their support and guidance in allowing this outreach program to come to fruition.

Ms. Marianne Talbot, ACPS parent, asked the School Board for transparency regarding the qualifications for hiring temporary workers as monitors in classrooms without in-person teachers.

Ms. Suzie O’Brien, ACPS parent, shared that virtual learning has caused educational deficits in students. She also questioned the differences in definitions of critical learners as ACPS and VDH has differing definitions. Ms. O’Brien encouraged the School Board to return students back to in-person learning.

Ms. Gina Baum, ACPS parent, spoke about the protocols to returning to in-person learning and encouraged the School Board to put the students first and transition them back to in-person learning.

Ms. Emily Turner, ACPS parent, shared that the current return to school plan does not have an option for five day a week in-person instruction. She also asked if there is data to support that a two day a week plan would be any safer than a five day a week option.

Ms. Laura Haines, ACPS parent, spoke about the challenges her son and other special needs children are facing in a virtual learning environment. Ms. Haines expressed her hopefulness that ACPS will be prepared for five days a week in-person learning this fall.

Ms. Suzanne Heiler Brown, ACPS parent, asked the School Board to refocus on curriculum and programs for students. She thanked teachers for all of their hard work and dedication during this challenging time. Ms. Heiler Brown asked the Board to dedicate their time to focusing on the safe transition of students back into schools.

At the conclusion of public comments, Mr. Theodore Thorpe, T.C. Williams High School Advanced Choir Teacher, introduced Ms. Mia Humphrey, a senior at T.C. Williams, who thanked the School Board Members for their hard work. She performed her original song, "Summer 17," for the School Board. Superintendent Hutchings shared that he had more surprises in store for School Board Members since February is School Board Appreciation Month.

The following written public comment was submitted:

Ms. Fran Vogel, President of the Strawberry Hill Civic Association, wrote on behalf of her community regarding the use of school properties for colocating adult housing. Ms. Vogel shared that the members of the association have stated unequivocally that they favor restricting the colocation policy so as not to permit adult housing on school property, ensuring that school property is reserved for school related uses.

**5. Report from Student Representatives Lorraine Johnson and Ashley Sanchez-Viafara**

Ms. Lorraine Johnson shared that her absence last week was due to her volunteering at T.C. during the vaccine distribution. She thanked Mia Humphrey for her performance. Ms. Johnson thanked the School Board and the Superintendent for being thoughtful in the re-opening process and including the community in every step despite some community backlash. She appreciates that the division waited until all of the health metrics were in place in order to safely transition students back into schools.

Ms. Ashley Sanchez-Viafara extended a Happy Black History Month to the Board and the community and shared an update regarding her plans to meet with Middle School Representatives, Giselle Hughes and Scott Price monthly to ensure that their thoughts and ideas will be communicated with the Board. Ms. Sanchez-Viafara also reported that the City of Alexandria has created a racial and social justice initiative called "All Alexandria." which is focused on reducing inequities and disparities confronted by communities.

**Consent Calendar**

- 6. FY 2021 Monthly Financial Report Ending December 31, 2020**
- 7. FY 2021 Budget Transfer Report Q2**
- 8. Revisions to A, B, C and E Policies and Regulations**
- 9. Appoint Kamilah Lawson to the Athletic Hall of Fame (AHOF) Advisory Committee**
- 10. Appoint Annika Eelkema as the Student Representative to the Athletic Hall of Fame (AHOF) Advisory Committee**
- 11. Appoint Raul Castro to the Career and Technical Education (CTE) Advisory Committee**
- 12. Minutes for the January 21, 2021 Virtual School Board Meeting, the January 28, 2021 Virtual Special Called School Board Meeting, and the January 21 and January 28, 2021 Virtual Work Sessions**
- 13. Superintendent Contract Provision: Addendum to Other Work Activities**

Ms. Gentry moved to adopt the Consent Calendar. Ms. Lorber seconded the motion.

The vote to adopt the Consent Calendar was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.

**Items Pulled from the Consent Calendar**

There were no items pulled from the Consent Calendar

## **Old Business & Action Items**

### **14. High School Project: Vote on Colocation**

Ms. Erika Gulick, Director of Capital Programs, Planning and Design, shared about the recently held civic association meetings and the Community Open House held on January 25, 2021. During the Community Open House, she was able to receive feedback regarding the High School Project which has been shared with the School Board.

Ms. Anderson moved that the School Board exclude consideration of affordable housing from the design of the Minnie Howard redevelopment to allow for maximum flexibility for current and future ACPS use.

Ms. Gentry seconded the motion.

The vote to exclude consideration of affordable housing from the design of the Minnie Howard redevelopment project was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.

### **15. Update on Hybrid Phased Re-Entry Transition Plan**

Superintendent Hutchings, along with Dr. Terri Mazingo, Chief of Teaching, Learning and Leadership, and other ACPS staff members shared an update on the Hybrid Phased Re-Entry Transition Plan. The presentation included an update on teacher in-school status versus teacher remote status, the availability of classroom and hallway monitors, facility and operations support and the updated Staff and Student Return to School Timeline which included communications via a Division-Wide Staff Webinar that was held on February 3, 2021 and information on a Priority Day for ACPS Staff to receive the vaccination through the Alexandria Health Department on February 4, 2021.

Dr. Stephen Haering, Director of the Alexandria Health Department updated the Board on community health metrics, risk of transmission in schools, core indicators, the five key mitigation strategies, and noted the decline in positive cases within the last two weeks.

School Board Members asked questions regarding communications, class transitions at secondary schools, class monitors and buses.

## **New Business and Reports to the Board**

### **16. FY 2021 CIP Quarterly Report for Q2**

Mr. John Finnigan, Acting Director of Educational Facilities, reviewed the FY 2021 Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Report for Quarter 2, which outlines the progress and budget status of all projects in the Capital Improvement Program (CIP). The report is organized by school site and noted 27 projects were in the implementation phase, and the remaining projects were either in the initiation, planning/design, or closeout phase from October 1, 2020 - December 31, 2020. Mr. Finnigan further addressed the financial standing of the CIP budget.

Ms. Erika Gullick, Director of Capital Programs, Planning and Design, gave a brief overview on the High School Project process and other on-going Q3 projects.

Board Members asked questions about the plan for community input on the design concept for the High School Project, Facilities Project Schedules and the HVAC systems in schools.

Ms. Anderson moved to accept the FY 2021 CIP Quarterly Report for Q2. Mr. Suarez seconded the motion.

The vote to accept the FY 2021 CIP Quarterly Report for Q2 was unanimous, 9-0. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.

### **17. FY 2021 CIP Quarterly Reserve Update for Q2**

Mr. Finnigan provided the Board with an update regarding the CIP Budget Reserve for Quarter 2. He shared that the CIP Reserve Account balance is currently at \$235,759.77 and outlined all of the Board-approved budget transfers that have led to this current balance.

### **Chair's Report**

#### **18. Report from Meagan Alderton**

Chair Alderton shared an update to the Identity Project in which the second poll for voting on the suggested names for the renaming of T.C. Williams High School and Matthew Maury Elementary School is currently live on the ACPS website. Chair Alderton also shared upcoming key budget dates, including the Add/Delete Work Session #1 on February 10, 2021 and Add/Delete Work Session #2 on February 16, 2021. The School Board will adopt the FY 22 Combined Funds Budget during the Virtual School Board Meeting on February 18, 2021.

### **Superintendent's Report**

#### **19. Report from Dr. Gregory C. Hutchings, Jr.**

Superintendent Hutchings acknowledged that it is National School Counselor week and thanked the School Counselors for all of their hard work. Dr. Hutchings also recognized the School Board and thanked them for all of their hard work.

### **Announcements**

#### **20. Announcements from School Board Members**

Ms. Cindy Anderson shared about her work on the VSBA Federal Advocacy Committee. During a recent Advocacy Day, the committee met with U.S. Representatives for Virginia Don Beyer, Gerry Connolly and Jennifer Wexton, as well as U.S. Senators for Virginia Tim Kaine and Mark Warner. The group discussed three main issues: waivers for SOL testing for the current school year, fully funding IDEA grants, and improving internet infrastructure for students and teachers. She reported that while there was full support for creating better internet infrastructure, she noted that IDEA Grants needed more than full funding for this year during COVID-19. Ms. Anderson also reported that waivers for SOL testing was a topic that needed more discussion and she suggested that Board Members reach out to our representatives to advocate on behalf of ACPS.

### **Closed Meeting and Certification of Closed Meeting**

#### **21. Closed Meeting**

Vice Chair Nolan moved that the Board convene a Closed Meeting pursuant to Virginia Code 2.2-3711(A)(1) for the discussion and consideration of employment, performance, and contractual matters for one specific public employee, specifically to complete a mid-year evaluation of a senior level administrator.

Ms. Lorber seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, 9-0, to convene a Closed Meeting. The motion carried.

The Board moved into a Closed Meeting at 7:15 p.m.

#### **22. Certification of Closed Meeting**

Vice Chair Nolan moved that pursuant to Virginia Code 2.2-3712, that the Board certifies that to the best of each member's knowledge, only public business matters identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened, and which are lawfully exempted by the Freedom of Information Act, were heard, discussed or considered by the Board in the Closed Meeting held on February 4, 2021.

Ms. Gentry seconded the motion. The vote was unanimous, 9-0, to certify the Closed Meeting.  
The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.  
The Board returned to open session at 8:26 p.m.

**Adjournment**

**23. Adjourn**

On a motion by Ms. Anderson and seconded by Ms. Lorber, the Board voted unanimously, 9-0, to adjourn. The motion carried. The vote was taken by roll call.  
The meeting ended at 8:28 p.m.



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Meagan Alderton, Chair



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Clerk/Deputy Clerk

These minutes were adopted at the February 18, 2021 School Board Meeting.