

**MINUTES OF THE CITY COUNCIL MEETING
NOVEMBER 18, 2009, 6:00 P.M.
WORK SESSION WITH THE SCHOOL BOARD**

PRESENT: The Honorable Gordon C. Helsel, Jr., Mayor
The Honorable Arthur V. Holloway, Jr., Vice Mayor
The Honorable Carey L. Freeman
The Honorable Frank A. Kreiger
The Honorable E. T. "Tom" Meree
The Honorable Traci-Dale Crawford
The Honorable W. Eugene Hunt, Jr.

Scott Diggs, School Board Chairman
Connie Sledd, School Board Vice Chair
William Smith, School Board Member
Robin Sydnor, School Board Member
Mark Bellamy, School Board Member
Beth Wilson, School Board Member

J. Randall Wheeler, City Manager
Jennifer Parish, School Superintendent
Judy F. Wiggins, City Clerk

The meeting was called to order by Mayor Helsel at approximately 6:08 p.m. in the Poquoson Middle School Library.

Dr. Jennifer Parish, School Superintendent, welcomed everyone and made a brief presentation which included the following information:

- That the Poquoson School System's mission is to empower all students to develop their full potential in order to become contributing members of society by providing an excellent education in a safe and caring environment.
- That SOL statistical information reveals that Poquoson students score well above the State average which ensures our Schools' accreditation.
- That achievement scores on the Federal "No Child Left Behind" Program showed that the Poquoson School System met all of the required targets, except in math by our disadvantaged students, who are those students who qualify for the free or reduced lunch program.
- That this Federal Program, although mandated and supposedly budget neutral, costs localities additional dollars; however, non-compliance would decrease Federal funds to the State which would result in decreased State education funds.
- That SAT scores clearly illustrate that Poquoson students score well above the State and National averages.

- That, although fewer Advanced Placement course tests were taken in 2009, the scores improved by approximately 10% for those offered by PHS which count as college credits. Classes taken successfully through New Horizons are accepted in certain circumstances by TNCC and CNU for specific curriculums.
- That the on-time graduation rate (completion of high school in 4 years) for Poquoson Schools last year was 91.67%.
- That the School System offers a Spanish Program at PES; an environmentally focused education at PES; availability of Virtual Virginia courses at PHS; New Horizon educational opportunities; and international student exchange programs.
- That the School System also offers outstanding athletic, academic and extra-curricular programs.
- That School enrollment has decreased since 2006 and that, according to the Weldon Cooper Center, an additional 8% enrollment decrease is expected over the next few years.
- That the Local Composite Index (LCI), which is determined by the State for each locality from the prior two years, determines the State's school contribution to each locality.
- That the City's LCI of .3524, which will be used to determine the State's contribution for the upcoming budget cycle, equates to an approximate \$460,000 reduction in the State's contribution towards the upcoming School Budget.
- That on December 18th the Governor is expected to release the proposed State Budget which could be worse than anticipated due to decreased sales tax revenues, possible VRS increases and other State cuts.

During the discussion which followed, Council asked the School Board to look for creative and innovative ways to address the expected budget shortfalls and to especially scrutinize student capacity at each of the schools to determine if tuition students could be accommodated.

Council praised the Schools and teachers for providing an excellent education and appropriate learning environment for our students. However, they also expressed concern over the City's FY 2011 budget due to the continued economic downturn.

School Board Members voiced concern over the age and condition of the PMS facility. Dr. Parish stated that upon adjournment of the work session a guided tour of the Middle School would be provided for City Council.

Dr. Parish pointed out that the School System had retained approximately \$500,000 of the stimulus funds and if not needed this year, she assured Council that they can be carried over to the next budget cycle; however, the funds can only be used for specific purposes.

In response to a Council query, City Manager, J. Randall Wheeler, stated that he has not received an update from the State on the possibility of 0% interest loans for school construction projects.

ADJOURNMENT:

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at approximately 7:05 p.m.
A tour of the Middle School then commenced.

ADOPTED: _____

TESTE: _____
City Clerk