



**SCHOOL BOARD MEETING with Legislators
CHARLOTTESVILLE CITY SCHOOLS
Media Center, 1400 Melbourne Road, 1400 Melbourne Road
Thursday, December 9, 2021 (5:00 PM)**

1.1 Call to Order: School Board Chair Lisa Torres called the meeting to order at 5:02p.m. Video was streamed live on the Charlottesville City Schools Facebook page (<https://www.facebook.com/CvilleSchools/>).

2.1 Roll Call of Board Members:

The following Board Members were present:

Mr. James Bryant
Dr. Sherry Kraft
Ms. Lisa Torres
Ms. Puryear

Ms. Lashundra Bryson Morsberger
Ms. Jennifer McKeever
Mr. Juandiego Wade

The following Board Members were absent:

None

The following Staff Members were present:

Dr. Royal Gurley
Mr. Pat Cuomo
Dr. Beth Baptist
Ms. Leslie Thacker

Ms. Kim Powell
Dr. Katina Otey
Ms. Renee Hoover
Ms. Julia Green

Ms. Torres requested Board approval for Ms. McKeever to attend the meeting virtually due to a personal medical concern. Dr. Kraft made a motion, seconded by Ms. Puryear, to approve Ms. McKeever joining remotely. Upon a roll-call vote being taken, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms Bryson Morsberger, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Ms. Puryear, Ms. Torres voting yes. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Mr. Wade was not present for this vote.

3.1 Approval of Proposed Agenda: Ms. Puryear made a motion, seconded by Mr. Bryant, to approve the proposed agenda. Upon a roll-call vote being taken, the motion carried with Mr. Bryant, Ms Bryson Morsberger, Dr. Kraft, Ms. McKeever, Ms. Puryear, Ms. Torres voting yes. 6 ayes, 0 nays. Mr. Wade was not present for this vote.

4.1 Proposed Legislative Priorities for the 2022 General Assembly: School Board members met with legislators Delegate Sally Hudson and Senator Creigh Deeds (who joined the meeting via Zoom) to discuss Proposed Legislative Priorities for the 2022 General Assembly. Included were VSBA Legislative Priorities. Wyck Knox, Principal-in-Charge and Project Manager for VMDO, presented information on Reconfiguration and the need for a special sales tax to support it.

**Proposed Legislative Priorities for the
2022 General Assembly**

Legislative Topic	Charlottesville City School Board Position
Top Four Priorities	
Special Sales Tax and Needs for Reconfiguration	The division may need a special sales tax to accomplish the reconfiguration. Wyck Knox, Principal-in-Charge and Project Manager for VMDO. will share information to help guide the discussion regarding the needs of the school.
Additional support for timeliness of receipt for Central Registry	All new hires are required to have VSP fingerprint checks and Child Protective Services Background checks. Currently, the VSP check is returned quickly. However, the CPS check is taking weeks to receive which is delaying the start date and in some cases creating an opening if the new employee is not willing to wait for clearance.
Continued mitigation and resources for COVID	While case counts are somewhat volatile, it is important to have the support of schools for continued mitigation including masking, encouragement for vaccinations, funding for substitutes, etc.
Budget and Funding	
Salary increases	If the Governor’s proposal for a 10% salary increase is approved, include funding for all positions and not base it on the SOQ positions.
Educational Employment	
Fact-Finding Panel for Grievances/Dismissals	The Charlottesville City School Board supports a return to the pre 2013 legislation regarding the grievance/dismissal procedure that would allow an option for school boards to utilize a three-member Fact-Finding Panel or a hearing officer. As a result of the 2013 General Assembly, a hearing officer must be appointed for all grievance/dismissal proceedings.

Wyck Knox, Principal-in-Charge and Project Manager for VMDO, presented the following information on Reconfiguration and the need for a Special Sales Tax to support funding.

Charlottesville Special Sales Tax - VMDO:

For nearly 20 years, Charlottesville has been trying to “reconfigure” our schools. However, we haven’t had the revenue for a project of this size.

- Goals
 - Improve our school system
 - By redistributing grades by redistributing grades across facilities to improve the student experience
 - Improve our school facilities
 - by renovating aging facilities + building new space to improve student outcomes & safety

Our school buildings are obsolete. Charlottesville City School (CCS) facilities are aging and of lower quality than many surrounding districts.

- Our last major investment in school facilities was 48 years ago when CHS was built.
- The average age of our school facilities is 66 years.

Our learning spaces are from 1966.

- New and renovated spaces will enhance teaching & learning, reduce operating & utility costs, and help attract & retain teachers.

Major transformations of two existing school sites create positive impacts system wide.

- Step 1: Renovate and expand Buford Middle School
 - Move 6 th grade up to middle school and double existing campus capacity. Return 5 th grade to the elementary schools
 - Update learning spaces designed in 1964
- Step 2: Transform Walker Upper Elementary campus into an Early Childhood Center
 - Centralize Pre K at one facility specially designed for the needs of early childhood
 - Provide the space for future expansion of the program
 - Improve efficiency of wrap around services

Additional student capacity will be created at all nine CCS school sites.

This is a focused investment in the right ages. Our PreK and Middle School populations have more people of color and greater economic disadvantage than the overall school system, and much more than the city as a whole.

Healthy indoor spaces support student and teacher success.

- High performance renovations and new construction will produce.
 - Quieter Classrooms (HVAC system noise reduced from 65dB to 40dB) Students under 15 years old have more difficulty with complex listening tasks
 - Better Daylighting (Increased from 8% SDA to 55% SDA) Access to daylighting and views significantly influences both test scores and stress levels
 - Cleaner Air (Doubled MERV 13 filtration & more outdoor air) Good indoor air quality can improve performance and reduce absenteeism in students, teachers + staff

We have a specific plan in place. Following a public design process, the City Council and School board both unanimously passed resolutions in support of the project in September 2021, and all candidates in the recent election supported it.

- “Shovel ready” voters will know exactly what the 1% additional sales tax revenue is paying for.

School construction costs keep going up. Inflation is outpacing our ability to raise revenue.

- School construction costs have seen significant escalation, including a 13.4% increase in 2021.
- Time is money. Even at a “normal” construction inflation rate of 4%, a project of this size increases in cost by \$3 million a year.
- Doing nothing is also costly. Because of age and deferred maintenance (due to lack of funding sources) the two school sites will require \$10 million over the next 10 years just to keep them as is.

Why a sales tax increase? Real estate taxes alone do not meet our capital funding needs.

- The City has already removed major projects from the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and deprioritized others but we are still facing a shortfall in funding. Despite cuts, a 10.5% increase in the real estate tax would still be required to fund the CIP.
- Affordable housing is a major issue facing Charlottesville and the Commonwealth as a whole. Increasing the cost of housing only makes the problem worse.
- A 1% special sales tax, anticipated to raise \$12m+ annually, would eliminate the need for schools to compete with other critical CIP projects for funding.

Charlottesville needs the same opportunity as other localities to vote on a special sales tax.

- Using a special sales tax to fund schools is popular and bipartisan. In eight out of nine places, local voters have passed it (losing in Pittsylvania County by only 23 votes).
- The special sales tax allows local autonomy and authority over local funding for schools. It exempts medication and groceries, could only be used for school construction, and has a built in expiration date.
- There is a shifting financial burden between the state and local level. All localities should have the ability to offer their voters the choice of a 1% special sales tax.

Senator Deeds and Delegate Hudson both welcomed Dr. Gurley and shared comments of support for the project and noted the importance of navigating the new environment with the change in leadership.

Delegate Hudson noted the importance of building a coalition across the state to advocate for funding.

Dr. Kraft noted that the Division would be happy to provide a tour of some of the aging school facilities. Delegate Hudson responded that she appreciates the offer but with the time frame it would not be feasible. She also noted that most divisions across the state have buildings in similar conditions.

Dr. Gurley highlighted the need for support around finding qualified teachers and noted that one area of concern is the length of time it is taking for Child Protective Services (CPS) to complete background checks in a timely manner which has resulted in losing teacher hires due to the delay. Delegate Hudson responded that her office is currently working with CPS to try to improve processing times and noted that like many other agencies are experiencing a lot of turnover. She also noted the importance of making sure those types of agencies are considered for funding when surplus funds come into play.

Dr. Kraft highlighted the need for after school care for preschool students in the Division and asked if there were any anticipated action around this issue. Delegate Hudson responded that she doesn't believe the Legislature has a clear charge on the needs around the issue and suggested that the Board gather more details on the funding needed.

Senator Deeds and Delegate Hudson thanked Ms. Puryear and Mr. Wade for their many years of service to the Board and community and noted that they are looking forward to working with Mr. Wade as he assumes his position on City Council.

The Board discussed how to provide the information that Delegate Hudson suggested they gather.

Dr. Gurley shared that a group of staff visited the Elon W. Rhodes Early Learning Center in Harrisonburg and shared how the proposed reconfigured preschool center would be a good re-branding for the Division.

5.1 Comments from Members of the Community: There were none.

6.1 Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:57 p.m.

A video of the December 9, 2021 meeting can be located at:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1_IMZf7ay9TjuS9rgBySFK1JIVMESblvX/view?usp=sharing

Lisa Torres, School Board Chair

Leslie Thacker, Deputy School Board
Clerk