**Roanoke Valley Governor’s School Regional Board
Minutes of February 7, 2022 Meeting - DRAFT**

The Roanoke Valley Governor’s School Regional Board met on Monday, February 7, 2022, at 6:30 p.m. in the Governor School’s Lecture Hall.

The following Board members were present:

Mr. Mark Cathey Roanoke City Chairman
Dr. Susan Mele Bedford County (attended virtually)
Mrs. Anna Weddle Botetourt County (attended virtually)
Mr. Trace Bellassai Craig County
Mrs. Julie Nix Franklin County
Mr. Mike Wray Roanoke County
Dr. Nancy Bradley Salem City

Also present: Roanoke City Public Schools Superintendent, Mrs. Verletta White, representing the Committee of Superintendents; Governor’s School Director, Mark Levy; Deputy Clerk, Paula Buch; Botetourt County Schools Superintendent, Dr. Jonathan Russ; Craig County Superintendent, Mrs. Jeanette Warwick; Roanoke City representative, Archie Freeman, Salem City Schools Superintendent, Dr. Curtis Hicks, and Dawn Winter-Ware.

Call to Order

Mr. Cathey called the meeting to order at 6:32 p.m. He welcomed newly appointed members Dr. Susan Mele from Bedford County and Anna Weddle from Botetourt County.

Request to Amend Agenda

A motion was made by Mr. Cathey pursuant to Section 2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia (1950), as amended, and Board Policy BDD, requesting the Board approve members Dr. Susan Mele and Anna Weddle to participate in the Board’s meeting by way of electronic communication due to a health matter. The request was unanimously (7-0) approved.

Approval of Agenda

On motion by Mr. Cathey, the agenda was amended noting Dr. Mele and Mrs. Weddle will participate remotely. The agenda was unanimously (7-0) approved as distributed.

Election of Chairman and Vice Chairman

Mrs. White opened the floor for nominations for Chairman. There was a nomination of Mark Cathey for Chairman. Hearing no further nominations, nominations were closed. By unanimous vote, Mr. Cathey was elected Chairman for 2022. Mr. Cathey expressed his appreciation as he continues to serve on the Regional Board.

Mr. Cathey opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman. The nomination was made for Mike Wray as Vice Chairman. Hearing no further nominations, nominations were closed. By unanimous vote, Mr. Wray was elected Vice Chairman for 2022. Mr. Wray expressed his appreciation.

Election of Clerk and Deputy Clerk

Mr. Cathey recognized Cindy Poulton for her years of service on the Regional Board. The Board unanimously approved the appointment of Dawn Winter-Ware as Clerk and Paula Buch as Deputy Clerk for 2022.

Personnel List

The Board unanimously approved the Personnel List as presented establishing the stipends for the Clerk and Deputy Clerk.

Approval of October 4, 2021, Meeting Minutes

Mr. Cathey recognized members coming off the board expressing appreciation for their service. The Board unanimously (7-0) approved the October 4, 2021, meeting minutes.

Legislative Update

Per the current legislative process, House Bill 127 has moved through the House passing on January 22, 2022. This Bill is distinct from some legislation that was proposed last year and would prevent Governor’s School programs from using any direct or proxy measures of race, color, ethnicity, or national origin during the admissions process. Geographic or feeder school distribution of slots or use of factors not considered traditional academic measures would not be permitted if they were intended to give preferential benefit to students based on race, color, ethnicity, or national origin in admissions. Currently under consideration, this was introduced by Delegate Davis from the Virginia Beach area. The Bill will move to the Senate for consideration. Budget amendments by Sam Rasoul and Senator Edwards worked to introduce SOQ based funding for Governor’s Schools. There is no update on where the budget stands as of today. Dr. Alan Seibert is working in Richmond for advocacy and SOQ funding for Governor’s Schools. RVGS does not currently receive SOQ funding and instruction of the formula could yield an increase of more than $100,000 to the budget.

Review of Process to Add a New Member Division

Mr. Levy informed the Board there has been discussion with Floyd County Public Schools concerning their interest in joining RVGS. Mr. Levy wants to be sure that if this were to come into effect, the appropriate number of students would be enrolled based on their population, and that class sizes will not be overloaded. This could be phased in by introducing two students the first year, the next year would consist of adding two new Freshman and two current Sophomores, etc. with a final slot of eight Floyd County students attending RVGS over a four-year period. Mr. Levy expressed that slot allotment would be part of a Board action at the time Floyd County submits an application. Mr. Levy has discussed this at previous Superintendent’s meeting. A formal request has not been made at this time. Mr. Levy stated we need to provide a copy of the Constitution and Bylaws to be reviewed and approved by the Floyd County School Board if the process moves forward. Mr. Levy presented an overview of the steps in the process of adding a new member division to the regional program and stated that an early step would be to visit a Floyd County School Board Meeting. There were no early objections to consideration of an application from Floyd County if they were formally interested.

Proposed Amendment to Constitution and By-laws

Mr. Levy stated there are a few dates and passages in the Constitution and By-laws that warrant consideration of adjustment by amendment. He suggested that if this were to occur, it would be appropriate to do so before sending the Constitution and By-laws to Floyd County Public Schools for consideration. The process for an amendment is spelled out in the Constitution and requires approval by a majority of voting Regional Board members.

After overviewing the rationale and amendment process, Mr. Levy outlined the changes in the proposed amendment. Mr. Levy stated in Section 1 of the Constitution, the date for application by a prospective new district would change from January 1st to September 1st to allow sufficient time for the process to reach fruition. In Section II, the withdrawal date for a division wishing to leave the regional program would change to January 2nd of the current school year, ensuring that would occur before recruitment and budgeting occurred for the following year. Section III would move the deadline for budget approval to better align with the RVGS Regional Board meeting schedule. Mr. Levy stated the second change in that Section allows alignment of the text discussing approval of budget with the proposed change in Section II. Mr. Levy provided an overview document summarizing the rationale of each change and provided clean copy of the amendment proposal for Members to discuss with colleagues on their respective Boards at upcoming Board meetings.

Mr. Levy is not asking for action at tonight’s meeting. This is information only and is a first reading. Mr. Levy would like to thank Roanoke City Public School’s attorney, Mr. David Collins, for making sure the processes are correct. Mr. Levy would also like to thank the Superintendents for their discussion and input. The amendment will be taken up for discussion and potential vote at the April 25, 2022, Regional Board Meeting.

Financial Report

Mr. Levy reported on the current operating report dated January 11, 2022. Mr. Levy stated there is always variation in the income lines based on which districts have submitted their tuition as well as how much we have received from the State. Mr. Levy indicated that repairs and maintenance had a larger expenditure at this point compared to last year due to payments towards upgrades in classrooms, the vestibule area for security purposes and the counselor’s office which was an additional $15,000.00. Carryover will cover this expense if needed.

Mr. Levy reviewed the 2022-23 preliminary budget stating that the budget is similar year to year with no major differences beyond adjustments to income based on estimates and personnel expenses. Tuition is proposed to remain same because if the State comes through with an increase, the required local contributions will remain same. Mr. Levy reported that carryover funds are in a separate account and are now displayed to separate the $400,000 reserve from the remaining unspent funds balance.

Director’s Report

Mr. Levy reported that Project Forum was virtual due to Covid cases at the time, and there was a virtual open house, which was well attended. Mr. Levy informed the Board of links where their school district’s videos could be viewed. Award placement will be emailed to Board members for recognition. Mr. Levy commended students and staff for pushing through Covid, inclement weather, etc. to make Project Forum so successful. Mr. Levy reported on the successful fundraising efforts of the RVGS Foundation this year raising over $36,000 which was $6,000 over our goal.

The Western Virginia Regional Science Fair is March 19, 2022, at VWCC and will be in person this year.

Mr. Levy reported that RVGS informational meetings have been well attended with over two hundred twenty students receiving an application. Applications are in the process of being reviewed at the school division level. Mr. Levy reiterated our commitment to equity and reaching out to students of all communities.

Mr. Levy overviewed student performance and available student supports. He feels positively about the level of success this school year, stating staff is here to support our students in many ways and explained a particular focus on first year students, including weekly tutoring if needed.

Mr. Levy reported the senior dinner will in person on Monday, May 9, 2022, at the Hotel Roanoke and Conference Center. Please be on the lookout for dinner invitations.

Board Discussion Items

None

Superintendents’ Items

None

Next Meeting

Monday, April 25, 2022, at 6:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Mr. Cathey adjourned the meeting at 7:22 p.m.

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 Mark K. Cathey, Chairman

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 Paula Buch, Deputy Clerk