

Minutes
Ashe County Board of Education
September 8, 2020

The meeting was held as scheduled with all members present. Chairman Jones called the meeting to order, welcomed those in attendance.

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Ashe County Middle School student Abby B. Abby participated on the Battle of the Books team who won the district competition.

After reviewing the amended agenda, Dr. Lee Beckworth made the request to move item 4.04 – *MOU for Athletic Training* to closed session. With that change, the agenda was approved by general consensus of the Board.

During open comments, Dr. Cox shared an email from Rebecca Williams from the Ashe County Arts Council. Ms. Williams wanted to recognize the art teachers of Ashe County Schools and that **Arts Education Week** is September 13-19.

“September 13-19 is National Arts in Education Week. This week was designated to promote and showcase the immense role Arts Education has in producing engaged, successful and college and career-ready students. In July of 2010 the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution designating the second week of September as “Arts in Education Week”. The resolution states in part “Arts education, comprising a rich array of disciplines including dance, theatre, music, theatre, media arts, literature, design and visual arts, is a core academic subject and an essential element of a complete and balanced education for all students.” In celebrating of Arts in our School, the Ashe County Arts Council would like to acknowledge our cultural arts teachers : Amber Dillingham, Katherine Greene, Paula Carlton, Shane Greene, Steve Lewis, Benjamin Thomas-Reid at Ashe County High School, Jill Gambill and Melodie Salley at Ashe County Middle School, Callie Lewis and Mazie Sullivan at Westwood Elementary, Elizabeth Hatch and Polly Falls at Blue Ridge Elementary and Jorena Sparks at Mountain View Elementary. We take this opportunity to thank them for their hard work and dedication!

The board recognized the Ashe County Schools Child Nutrition program. An accommodation was received from the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services for spending 100 percent of entitlement funds. They commended the child nutrition team for this accomplishment with all the changes around COVID-19.

Chairman Jones set forth the approval of the Board Meeting minutes from August 3, August 6, and August 24, 2020. Dianne Eldreth made the motion to approve the minutes as presented. Polly Jones gave a second to the motion. The motion passed.

The board approved a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with Wilkes Community College. The MOU had no changes from the prior year. Keith McClure made a motion to accept the MOU as presented. Dr. Lee Beckworth seconded the motion. All approved.

Jamie Little presented a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with AppHealth Care for the School Nurse Funding Initiative. The funding currently provides financial support for four nurses. Dr. Lee Beckworth presented a motion to accept the MOU with AppHealth Care. Dianne Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Jamie Little presented a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Appalachian State University's Foster Grandparent program. Due to changes from COVID, Board Attorney Fred Johnson added a disclaimer about COVID-19. Dianne Eldreth made the motion to accept the MOU with Appalachian State University for the Foster Grandparent program. A second was given by Polly Jones. All approved.

Terry Richardson presented sub-contracts for the NC Pre-K program. The subcontracts are with Learning Thru Play, Inc., BROOC-Head Start, and Ashe Developmental Day School. Ashe County Schools holds the contract with the state to provide services for NC Pre-Kindergarten. Dr. Lee Beckworth made a motion to approve the contracts. The second was presented by Keith McClure. Dianne Eldreth stated she was excited to see pre-k students were attending every day. The motion carried.

Amanda Coldiron presented a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Ashe County Sheriff's Department for the school system to provide funding for two school resource officers. There was no change from the prior year. Dianne Eldreth made the motion to accept the MOU as presented and Keith McClure seconded the motion. The motion carried.

Terry Richardson presented two contracts related to compensatory services. A contract with Appalachian Speech, who provides speech and occupational services, and Kendra Graybeal who provides speech services. Polly Jones made the motion to approve the contracts and Dr. Lee Beckworth offered a second. All approved.

David Koontz and Mitchel Mash each presented the Coaches List to the board. The motion to accept the lists as presented was made by Keith McClure and seconded by Dianne Eldreth. Dr. Lee Beckworth requested clarification on the payment of coaches if the season did not occur. A prorated payment system would be considered if necessary. Dianne Eldreth asked for clarification on the payment of middle school football coaches. Mr. Mash clarified that our MOU with the football league stated Ashe County Schools was responsible for coaching supplements and the league took care of supplies and equipment. All approved.

Dr. Eisa Cox gave the board a summary of an opportunity for Ashe County Schools to participate with Duke University to provide support during the COVID-19 crisis. It is a three-tiered system of support for educational outreach, data to help make decisions and targeted research opportunities at no cost to Ashe County Schools. A memorandum of understanding is required to participate. Polly Jones made the motion to enter into a memorandum of understanding with Duke University and Keith McClure provided a second. The motion was approved.

Dr. Cox presented to the board a recommendation of reduction in force for the Ashe County Schools Child Nutrition program. Due to COVID-19 and the low number of students allowed on campus during Plan B, the participation in meal service is down significantly. In August 2019 meals per labor hour was an average of 14.44. Currently, the program is at 3.21 meals per labor hour. An estimated 16 employees would be laid off. A rubric was created based on board policy 7921 that ranked based on job performance, degrees, licenses, seniority, and other criteria as determined by the superintendent. Dr. Lee Beckworth made a motion to approve the rubric as presented so the superintendent and staff can proceed with the reduction in force. Polly Jones seconded the motion and the motion passed.

Roy Putman provided personnel recommendations to the board. Dianne Eldreth made a motion accept the personnel recommendations as presented and Dr. Lee Beckworth seconded the motion. All approved.

Roy Putman requested approval to increase the cost of the Beginning Teacher Program. The increase will put the cost of the program over the amount which requires board approval. Keith McClure made the motion to approve the additional cost and Dianne Eldreth seconded the motion. The motion passed.

Mitchel Mash presented an update to the board about middle school athletics. Mr. Mash stated that North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NC DPI) governs middle school athletics. NC DPI has defaulted to the local education agencies to determine how to implement sports during COVID-19. Mr. Mash stated the middle school will follow the same calendar as the NC High School Athletics Association with a few adjustments. Preseason workouts will begin on October 5, 2020.

Jamie Little gave an update on the 2020/21 Afterschool Program. The agreement with the Western Youth Network (WYN) was almost complete. A survey to families will be sent out requesting the days needed and how much they can afford. The group is still working on a location and finalizing the job description for the site leader. There are questions concerning how to accommodate all students on Wednesdays.

The superintendent presented comments on the following:

The Early College will be graduating their first class on May 27, 2021. 15 students will graduate with an associate degree.

The superintendent met with Melanie Rector with Shoes for Kids. She was impressed with her heart for kids and her desire for children to have seasonally appropriate shoes that fit.

Dr. Cox referred to Amy Walker for updates on the WIFI Hotspots installed around the county. Mrs. Walker stated that with a partnership from Skyline, Blue Ridge Energies, the County of Ashe IT department, and our maintenance department that WIFI spots had been installed in Creston, Glendale Springs, Warrensville, Fleetwood, New River Fire Department 1 & 2, Shatley Mobile Home Park, Dogget Road, Buffalo Meadows, Friendship Road, Bark parking lot, Radio Hill and Helen Blevins Road. She is also working on installing one at the Helton Community Center.

Dr. Cox informed the board that the National Free Breakfast and Lunch program had extended to December 31, 2020.

The board took a brief break and the met in Closed Session for the purpose of considering a personnel action that involves an officer or employee of the Board (N.C. General Statute §143.318.11(a)(6)).

The board returned to open session at 9:23 pm. A motion was made by Polly Jones to approve the memorandum of understanding with Ashe Memorial Hospital for Athletic training with pending changes. This will allow for more coverage and training for student-athletes. Dianne Eldreth gave a second. The motion passed with Chairman Jones sustaining from the vote.

There being no further business, the Chairman immediately declared the meeting adjourned at 9:35 pm.