

Buena Vista School Board
Buena Vista, Virginia

Called Meeting
Ramsey Center
July 30, 2020
6:30

School Board Members in attendance: Chairman Teresa Ellison, Lisa Kerr, John Rice, John Roberts, John Butler, Wayne Flint attended remotely due to doctor's concerns, John Keeler, Kelly Linkenhoker Sandy Mohler, Sherrie Wheeler, Donna Frazier.
Audience could also attend via Zoom

Meeting was called to order by Chairman Teresa Ellison, Pledge of Allegiance and a moment of silence was observed.

Approval of Agenda: We have one item to add. Update on opening plans. Do I hear a motion for approval of the agenda as amended?

John Rice made the motion to approve the agenda as amended. Seconded by Lisa Kerr. All other board members voted yes.

Chairman Ellison - Welcome of visitors, parents, and community leaders and public comments: seeing as we don't have anyone here unless anyone objects we will dispense with comments for this evening.

Chairman Ellison-Dr. Keeler's update on the opening plans.

Dr. Keeler: Thank you, we sent back to school forms out and as of 6:00 today we had 405 parents respond. I am proud to say that 73% of responding people said yes we want to send our child back to school 4 days a week. The High School had 71% wanted to come back face to face. The virtual is running 28% with a couple of percentage points for people who want to do remote with packets. But at this rate I am really interested to see where we are Monday morning. We plan to pick up the phone and call parents. We are getting some phone calls already with questions like, if I start off virtual for 2 weeks and all of a sudden I want to come back can I come back? And our answer is yes. We are trying to work with people. We thought some folks were going to be a little cautious to see how it goes, with the changes we are making. I will be honest with you. I really think the video that we showed you on that night has brought some people around because it hit home and I think they would feel safe, you know bring their kids back knowing that we are going to take care of them and the plans we have in line. We have worked hard on this. Our staff has worked hard on this. I cannot believe that new teachers will be here on Thursday/Friday. Back to school supplies give away starts Friday/Saturday and the following weekend 14th and 15th, 9-12 just like normal. I think people are looking for something to get back to, something they can look forward to. And the start of school is an exciting time. Kelly had her staff down here today working in the classroom back there putting school supplies in 250 backpacks. People are having fun doing it and that's the kind of stuff we appreciate. We will not have our traditional convocation this year. Convocation was originally scheduled on

Monday the 10th, the day teachers report back. I don't think it is good to have 150 people together in a room. Without making sure we have gone over everything and how to handle it. So we are doing something just as good. I think they may even enjoy it better. We are going to visit each school in the morning. Sherrie, Kelly and myself and we are going to take it to them. Starting at 8:30 at Enderly, 9:30 at the High School, 10:30 at the Middle School and end up at 11:30 at Kling. We are going to deliver a welcome message and talk about what we are doing and what we are going to do and be upbeat about it. We are ready to go back, if today was an indicator with all the trainings Donna has done throughout the month of June and Coach Floyd is working on the English curriculum, together with the rest of the schools, this has been probably the best preparation since I have been here. I am really impressed with it. Dedication, no one said you got to be here, all right but they came. We invite you to sneak in and see us especially this coming week, with the new people. I think we have probably 7 or 8 brand new ones, (Kelly 7) it's always fun to see them interact. Kelly brought in their mentors on both days so they have interaction with them. It's not one of these things, this is your mentor and good luck to you. The mentors are going to be working just like the new teachers are. I think it will be really good.

Chairman Ellison- You said August the 10th?

Dr. Keeler, yes August the 10th is convocation. This is the first year we have not given out t-shirts. This year we are giving out a bag. It's not just for women, it's a unisex bag. Kind of like a brief case, and a water bottle. We went a little cheaper route but one that is going to serve us better. We are starting to get excited about this year. I can't wait to see where we are on Monday. Thank you.

Chairman Ellison -all right. Thank you Dr. Keeler.

Action items

Chairman Ellison-We do have one action item this evening that includes 2 pieces of information. A resolution that includes the Advertisements for Letters of Interest for Vacant Interim School Board Member and a timeline for the Process to Appoint an Interim School Board Member. I fixed a sheet for you guys that has the pieces of information that we need to get out to folks. We do have to appoint someone by the middle of September. And that would include advertising and having a deadline for letters. We will to have a time to discuss and interview candidates. Also need to appoint an Interim Board Member. So that is the primary thing we need to do. I will address the resolution in its entirety. First off is the Advertisement for Letters of Interest. We cannot post it after August the 1st. August the 1st is the effective date of the resignation. So we can advertise beginning August the 3rd. I need to have an idea from the rest of you about how long we want to do that.

John Roberts-It's what usually for 2 weeks right? 14 days' process.

Lisa Kerr- through the 14th

Chairman Ellison- I talked with our board attorney, who has helped through this process. We talked a little bit about that 2 weeks if you go with the 3rd, a little over 2 weeks would be the 19th. Which that seems like, plenty of time to have it advertised?

John Roberts-that would be plenty of time.

Keeler-it's starts the 3rd

Chairman Ellison - it won't go into the paper until the 5th.

Lisa Kerr – okay

Chairman Ellison-We can post it online through our website and also at the courthouse,

John Roberts-This is what I am thinking 3rd through the 17th and posted on the 3rd gets in the paper on the 5th. The public sees it again on the 12th. We take the listing down on the 17th and the deadline of the 19th to get their letters in.

Chairman Ellison-So August the 3rd through the 17th

John Roberts-17th would be the date is it comes down. Deadline for all letters to be in by the 19th, Wednesday.

Chairman Ellison-Rest of you, what do you think?

Lisa Kerr - I think that is very good.

Chairman Ellison-Wayne, what do you think?

Wayne Flint-I cannot understand anything anybody is saying. Can Sherrie put me on face time?

Sherrie Wheeler-I will do that right now.

Chairman Ellison - Okay can you hear me?

Wayne Flint-yes

Chairman Ellison-We said we would start advertising for letters of interest on August the 3rd, through August the 17th. The deadline for letters of interest would be August 19th. Gives 2 extra days to get that in. Advertise in the newspaper, also on our website and usually at the courthouse where we post information. Are you in agreement with that?

Wayne Flint-yes

Chairman Ellison-Okay, when do we meet to discuss and interview candidates? Let me back up, let me talk about the letters of interest and a resume. A statement of interest not more than 300 words and a resume to the clerk or Deputy Clerk.

Chairman Ellison- Deadline will be at 5 pm on August 19th. We talked about doing emails, letting people apply by email. Anybody have an objection to that?

John Roberts-I guess all that information will be in there.

Chairman Ellison-emails, I put Mary Kaye's email address on there and it would go to the School Board Office to her. She would put it in an envelope. She would collect all unopened letters of anyone who applied. So no one on the board or anyone else will know who applied until we opened them when we meet. At that time, we open them, look at them. I will let you guys know who it is and how many we have and that kind of thing.

John Roberts-yes, I agree.

Chairman Ellison-So do you have questions about the process of collecting the letters of interest and resume? We need to decide when we want to discuss or interview candidates. Absolutely, I will need to let you guys know how many we have beforehand.

John Roberts-So when is our SB meeting in August?

Dr. Keeler-School Board meeting is August 27th. The Thursday before that is the 20th. If you wanted to have an opportunity to meet, to look at or interview you could do it on the 20th or you could look at them on the 20th and come back on the 27th and interview if that makes sense.

Chairman Ellison-looking at them on the 20th or even starting to interview on the 20th would be good. Sooner the better.

John Roberts- you will know numbers before the 19th

Chairman Ellison-We will know numbers. Yes, I will keep you all updated with numbers. okay, on the 20th we will discuss or interview candidates.

Wayne Flint-What time?

Chairman Ellison - 6:00 okay? The School Board appoints a new board member than no later than September 14th. When do you want to be ready to do that?

John Roberts-if you have to Sept 14th, we want to really see how the 20th goes.

Lisa Kerr -yes

Chairman Ellison-we could do it on the 27th.

Lisa Kerr-let's set the goal for the 27th.

Chairman Ellison-let's do, you all let me know, make sure we got this right, and everybody agrees. If you don't agree, speak up.

Advertise for letters of interest from August the 3rd through August 17th. Deadline for the letters of interest August 19th at 5:00pm. Discuss and interview candidates on August 20th at 6 here at the Ramsey Center. School Board will appoint the Interim Board Member on August 27, 2020. Pending everything else. Citizens comment –we are not required to have citizen's comments, but we can have citizen's comments if we like, do you all agree with that?

John Roberts - on the 20th is that what you are talking about?

Chairman Ellison -Yes, that would be when we meet next. At every meeting we have time for public comment.

Dr. Keeler- If the 19th is the cutoff, and you are going to gather and look at them on the 20th and maybe even interview on the 20th one thing to consider I would assume you would want to interview in closed session, is that correct?

Chairman Ellison – that was going to be the next thing I bring up. we could have public comments on the 20th.

Dr. Keeler-I assume the 20th is going to be a special called meeting.

Chairman Ellison-yes

Dr. Keeler-the 27th is going to be our regular meeting, so you will have a chance to have public comments at both meetings.

Chairman Ellison-So the other thing Dr. Keeler brought up-we have the option of open or closed session. I think it's typically been done in closed session. Tell me what you all think?

Lisa Kerr-closed

John Roberts-we need to be able to freely discuss or talk about whoever they are.

Chairman Ellison-Dr. Keeler and I talked this afternoon. Closed session would make the board feel more comfortable. Make the person who is interviewing more comfortable. Wayne what are your thoughts?

Wayne Flint-executive session

Chairman Ellison-What about those dates?

Wayne Flint-Fine with me!

Chairman Ellison-What are your thoughts about public comments? Do you agree that the 20th and 27th are okay?

Wayne Flint - yes

Chairman Ellison-The advertisement says this:

The City of Buena Vista has a vacancy created by the August 1st resignation of an at large School Board Member. Qualified voters of Buena Vista City may be interested in seeking appointment for the position are encouraged to apply. They must submit a statement of interest and resume to the Clerk no later than 5 pm on August 19th and that the Board anticipates interviewing applicants in a closed session beginning on August 20th. And will received comments on August 20th and or August 27th.

John Roberts-can you put on there that there is two ways to apply, electronically and paper?

Chairman Ellison-yes thank you! We have the dates; we have advertisement; can you think of anything else we need to address?

Dr. Keeler-sounds like a plan!

Chairman Ellison - So final thing we need to do, and we can do this all in one motion: I will read the resolution that we need to approve.

Whereas the City School Board of Buena Vista, Virginia, here after called the Board is comprised of seven members, all members at large. Whereas John S. Butler was elected to represent Buena Vista City on School Board at the general election on November 5, 2019 assuming office for the term on January 1, 2020 through December 31, 2023, whereas Mr. Butler by letter on July 23, 2020 announced his resignation from his at large seat effective August 1, 2020. Whereas the remaining members of the Board pursuant to code 24.2-228 may appoint an individual to fill the vacancy created by Mr. Butler's resignation within 45 days of the occurrence of the vacancy. Whereas the Board desires to adopt a calendar for the activities required to fill the vacant Board seat and to approve advertisements related to the requirements for filling the vacancy. Now therefore be it resolved here by that the attached calendar is adopted for the activities required by the Board in filling the vacant at large School Board Member seat and it is further resolved that the School Board approves the advertisements of letters of interest in substantively the same form as the advertisement attached hereto.

That is the resolution that we need to approve this evening, and it covers items 1 and 2 under the action items. Do I hear a motion for us to approve the resolution?

Lisa Kerr-I hereby make a motion to approve the resolution as presented.

Chairman Ellison - We have a motion. Do we have a second?

John Rice- Second

Chairman Ellison - Mr. Rice, second, all in favor?

All other members present voted yes.

Chairman Ellison-Any opposed, Motion carried. Dr. Keeler do you have one more item.

Dr. Keeler-I do that, John, we wanted to recognize you, with a Certificate of Appreciation Award to John Butler, for your service to Buena Vista City Schools as a member of the School Board, presented with best wishes and thanks, July 30, 2020. Congratulations. You know John has been here 7 months, and we got a lot done in 7 months. We appreciate you. We going to miss you, and good luck to you in Alleghany.

John Butler-Thank you. I think the School Board has done a lot. I have mentioned this to Teresa and other people. The school system is the head of this City right now. We need to help the City. I still have a lot of friends here in Buena Vista. We will still visit and I have some elderly people I visit every week.

Chairman Ellison-thank you John, we appreciate all of your hard work being on this board.

Lisa Kerr-yes, we do.

Chairman Ellison-thank you, wish you well at Alleghany County. We don't have anything else this evening. Do we have a motion for adjournment?


John Butler – I so move.

Chairman Ellison-Mr. Rice – second. All in favor?

All other members present voted yes.

Meeting adjourned. Thank you guys.


Teresa Ellison, Chairman


Sandra Mohler, Deputy Clerk