

Currituck County Schools**Meeting Minutes****Printed : 8/11/2020 10:27 AM EST****(Closed Session 5:30 p.m.) Board of Education Meeting****06/25/2020 06:00 PM**

Historic Currituck County Courthouse

[Stream Live Meeting Here](#) or Mediacom Channel 18 on the mainland.

Attendees

Voting Members

Karen Etheridge, Chairman
Dwan Craft, Vice Chairman
Dr. Bill Dobney, Board Member
Will Crodick, Board Member
Janet Rose, Board Member

Non-Voting Members

Dr. Matt Lutz, Interim Superintendent

A. Call to Order

1. Invocation
2. Pledge of Allegiance

B. Approval of Agenda (Action)

The agenda was amended to table Item H. In addition, Janet Rose asked for a report on grading ramifications due to COVID-19 (motion by Janet Rose, seconded by Dwan Craft). The agenda was amended.

Motion made by: Will Crodick

Motion seconded by: Dr. Bill Dobney

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

C. Approval to Extend Public Comment Period (Action)

A motion was made to extend the public comment session from 30 minutes to 90 minutes. Will Crodick said he was curious as to why the Board could not exercise Policy 2450 to suspend the policy instead. Attorney Neal Ramee, who joined the meeting remotely, said public policy allows a majority vote to extend the time whereas suspending policy would require $\frac{2}{3}$ vote and there was currently a motion on the floor to triple the time.

Mr. Crodick and Mrs. Rose were in favor of not restricting the public comment session and instead would like to suspend the policy.

The motion continued forward to extend the public comment session to 90 minutes for this meeting only.

Motion made by: Dwan Craft

Motion seconded by: Janet Rose

Voting:

Karen Etheridge - Yes

Dwan Craft - Yes

Dr. Bill Dobney - Yes

Will Crodick - No

Janet Rose - No

D. Public Comment Session

Karen Etheridge briefed the public on guidelines for the Public Comment Session which included a 3 minute time limit for each person speaking. She was aware that the majority of the speaker were regarding the nonrenewal of Dr. Brian Matney, CCHS Principal. Chairman Etheridge caution the speakers who were employees to be careful not to include any information considered to be personnel information. She went on to say the Board will follow personnel laws and be respectful of privacy regarding public questions: however, the Board reached their decision following an 5-hour hearing. Both sides were represented by attorneys and each presented witness. Following a lengthy deliberation, the Board made the decision to uphold the Superintendent's decision for nonrenewal.

The following student, staff member and parents spoke during the Public Comment Session:

Sidney MacDonald, Senior, spoke about Dr. Matney's positive attitude towards students and the success she had while attending CCHS while under his direction.

Anita Rubino, representing the districts art teachers, asked the Board to considered naming the CCMS auditorium after Buddy White, CCHS Drama Teacher. Tiffany Arbogast explained how Mr. White was an inspiration to her, the staff and students. She provided information on Mr. White's 28 year career at Currituck County Schools. Mary Elyesse Santa said Mr. White directed 43 shows during his time with the district and impacted so many lives. The Board will take action on the request at the August 6 meeting.

Dana Parker, CCS Behavior Liaison, said the former superintendent's personnel investigation on Dr. Matney was narrowly conducted while the focus should had been on the pandemic. She said the Board had an opportunity to renew Dr. Matney and offer a one-year contract. This would allow him time to address any issues.

Mark Wootton, CCHS automotive teacher for 24 years, supported the Board's decision not renew Dr. Matney. He said he believes that all students deserve an opportunity no matter of their grade point average. Dr. Matney never observed his class. Mr. Wootton assumed it was because the class did not have AP students enrolled.

Kimberly Mawhiney, CCHS AP chemistry teacher for 15 years, said Dr. Matney visited her class not just during AP classed but during regular science classes. She added that teachers will complain no matter what, but she appreciated Dr. Matney's humility and integrity. She said she respected the Board but does not agree with their decision for nonrenewal.

Kilani Richardson, CCHS student, spoke about fear and not speaking up. Dr. Matney brought a community together and sought accreditation. She spoke on the benefits of accreditation. She said the county only cares about money.

Jessica Richardson who has served in the schools. Ms. Richardson said she represents the staff who fear retaliation if they speak out. In the past two years Dr. Matney increased staff satisfaction. She added that the turnover rate in the district is appalling, CCHS is not accredited and Board members will be voted out.

Jessie Reardon, former CCHS student, spoke on Dr. Matney's support of the band program, athletics and academics at all levels. She said Dr. Matney routinely calls individual students to congratulate them on their successes. His door is always open. Dr. Matney's calmness during a family illness was gratefully appreciated and she asked that the revolving door be closed.

Zachary Dearman, CCHS teacher, said he has not been a teacher very long and has other jobs. He came to Currituck running but in the past few years he started questioning his career. Then he started to feel like home under Dr. Matney's leadership. Now again he has started to question if he can continue to work in a system that has treated a man like Dr. Matney.

Mary Susman, CCHS parent, said the Board was failed by the superintendent for making a significant personnel fail and then announced his resignation from the district. Under Dr. Matney leadership CCHS has improved test scores. He has high expectations and knows what students are capable of. She added that now is not the time to disrupt the leadership at CCHS. She asked for fairness and consistency. Ms. Susman respectfully asked the BOE to reconsider their decision of nonrenewal.

Jamison Martine, CCHS student, expressed his support for Dr. Matney. He said he has had multiple principals over the past few years. Dr. Matney is always visible and greets everyone at the door in the mornings. He personally congratulates students individually and provides a safe environment. Dr. Matney worked to improve the advancement at CCHS, pursued accreditation and provided scholarship assistance to students.

Robert Griffin, Chair of CCHS Math Dept., said Dr. Matney sees great potential at CCHS. He supports students and provides the resources. Also as part of the SIP team, Mr. Griffin said Dr. Matney encourages leadership which will continue to make the SIP team strong. As a parent, he is never been worried about the safety of his child at CCHS. He even offered that over 23 years and 9 principals, Dr. Matney is as strong as of a principal as ever.

Anita Rubion, teacher and parent, said she felt she needed to make a stand for being right. She is a 19 year veteran and knows Dr. Matney is right for CCHS. She has the best interest for all students and has a diverse population which Dr. Matney supports. He took the helm and took the lead to increase the education of the students. He is a supporter of the AP Capstone program and values teachers and students. They are encouraged to bring input to the table. As a parent she wants her daughters and son to benefit from this event and while seeking the truth. She asked for the Board to give Dr. Matney a one year extension.

Kobe Cisneros, 2020 CCHS graduate, thanked the Board for allowing the graduation ceremony during the pandemic. As a student he believes the nonrenewal of Dr. Matney should be reconsidered. He added that never did he feel unsafe at the school and Dr. Matney greeted the students at the door.

Destiny Moyers, CCHS student, said that Dr. Matney greeted the students at the door each morning. During switching classes Dr. Matney speaks to the students throughout the day. He is visible and makes students feel at home. He attends athletic events. Dr. Matney truly cares and teaches each student the same. She asked the Board to reconsider.

Rebecca Benton has served at CCHS for one year. She heard that Dr. Matney focused only on AP students, as an EC teacher she stated this was not true. Dr. Matney is a hands on leader. He asked for input and trust his employees. He also conducts his own thorough work as required. Dr. Matney is an excellent leader.

Mia Baker-Spruill, CCHS student, said Dr. Matney is the only principal that gets her name correct, She was contemplating dropping out of school but Dr. Matney made a difference. She faced racial issues in the past but Dr. Matney faced the issues too. She spoke about the AP Capstone program and the benefits. Dr. Matney also brought an English program to help students achieve scholarships. She asked the Board for their reconsideration.

Will Crodick spoke as a parent. He said since 2010 and 2012 when a few Board members were elected, the district has seen four superintendents, six CCHS principals, 14 CCHS assistant principals and 31 principals turnover all the while student performance went down. Almost 10 years later CCHS district is still no accredited. He said the HR Director, employed in the district for 34 years and served as Director for 18 years, said that no one has ever appealed during her tenure. He wondered if that only meant that everyone just succumbs to the tactics. He said the district is in the top ten in the state for turnover. Mr. Crodick said Mr. Robert Griffin obtain 39 signatures supporting Dr. Matney in one day. He then moved to read an excerpt from the confidentiality agreement and how it limited staff who are being investigated from discussion their personal situation. He asked the Board to stop the hurting and keep the king of the castle. Chairman Etheridge asked Mr. Crodick how long he had been on the Board. Mr. Crodick replied - four years.

Carley Martinette said as a student she was being bullied but Dr. Matney went out of his way to address the problem. She said the Board has made the wrong decision in the nonrenewal of Dr. Matney.

Amy Morgan, life resident, teacher and parent, told the Board she had a long history in Currituck as her parents have also been teachers. She contributed her education to many of the Board members currently serving. She asked the Board to offer Dr. Matney a one year contract because these unprecedented times require strong leadership. She would understand Dr. Matney's nonrenewal if it were due to unethical behavior or not performing his duties. She asked the Board to correct the wrong of the former superintendent.

Mike Hall said he understands the Board has a tough job because he served as a Commissioner and on the executive board and board of trustees at COA. The college has also gone through leadership changes with three presidents in six years. Mr. Hall said at a previous County meeting, a new school site was given a grade E for traffic concerns on Survey Road. He said this was appalling and one step away from failure because over 8,000 travel the road. DOT may put up no left turn signs and they will not put a light at the north end which is dangerous. Based on his past law enforcement and traffic analyst experience, he would not approve the site. He also mentioned combining elementary and middle school students. The traffic situation would mirror the situation at Moyock Elementary before the road pattern was changed. Mr. Hall went on to speak about the over crowding at MES, he said portable classrooms were not the answer because of support services are still over. He asked that the Board find another school site and confirm the exact capacity of MES. When sitting as a Commissioner he heard several reports on various school capacities and asked the Board to quit changing the numbers.

Mr. Crodick asked about the information of the traffic pattern of the proposed school site. Chairman Etheridge said it was presented during the previous commissioner's meeting.

Kathy Jo Harris, parent, spoke about the numerous principals she had as a student at CCHS. She does not want the same unstableness at CCHS for her children. She read the names of 53 CCHS staff members in support of keeping Dr. Matney as principal.

Paul Beaumont, Commissioner, parent and coach, said he was probably the most visible commissioner at CCHS. He has had the opportunity to speak with teachers, parents and students and never encountered anyone who said a negative statement about Dr. Matney. Mr. Beaumont said he was impressed with the way Dr. Matney interacted with students including his own daughter. He understands the difficulty of serving on the Board. He had six children attend CCHS and takes a personal interest in the school. Mr. Beaumont said his past practice has been to sit down and have discussions with principals - which he enjoyed. The past meeting included Superintendent Stefanik and the conversation was zero because Mr. Stefanik wanted to control the interaction. As a Commissioner, Mr. Beaumont said he was very unimpressed with the level of investment of the past superintendent. Mr. Stefanik's inability to answer followup questions was significant. He has zero faith in the adequate analysis of the investigation or the fairness that was provided to Dr. Matney. He added that in the role of leader of a team and wanting someone to do better, Dr. Matney should have been notified before April there were issues with his performance. He asked the Board to provide Dr. Matney with another year because he was worth it.

Will Crodick made a motion to renew Dr. Matney's contract. Attorney Ramee said the item was not on the agenda for action and the agenda would need to be amended. Mr. Crodick made a motion to amend the agenda to make a motion to renew Dr. Matney's contract. Attorney Ramee said that a motion to amend the agenda would be needed before action on the Dr. Matney's contract. Janet Rose seconded the motion. Mr. Crodick asked for discussion prior to the vote. Chairman Etheridge said that she has listened to all of the concerns and to please know the decision was not taken lightly. Her decision was based on the facts at the hearing - which she could not share. Anyone who knows her personally knows that she can be trusted. She felt threatened earlier regarding her reelection. The remarks are hurtful and the position is a public service position. She warned that only one

side was being heard. She then read an anonymous letter from a 2006 graduate who works around the staff members and found them to be a difficult situation at CCHS. As the number of concerns about Dr. Matney's leadership grew the writer thought it was important to share them with the Board.

Mr. Crodick said he too would like to read a letter the Board received. Chairman Etheridge said that all Board members had already received the letter. Mr. Crodick ask again to address the Board. Mr. Codick said he wanted to talk about the 53 support letter and the anonymous letter that sparked the investigation. He said the letter was public information. Attorney Ramee cautioned Mr. Crodick on reading the letter because of it being as evidence. Mr. Crodick said the letter was not presented at the hearing and its public information. Both Chairman Etheridge and Attorney Ramee said the letter related to the hearing. Mr. Crodick said the anonymous letter with subjective accusations was uncorroborated. Chairman Etheridge and Attorney Ramee again said the letter was related and advised against reading it. Mr. Crodick said to charge him with the class 3 misdemeanor because he would not be muzzled. Chairman Etheridge called Mr. Cordick out of order. Mr. Crodick said instead he would talk about selective enforcement and gave various examples. He said nothing was done when the former superintendent violated state and local policy when he used staff to move his personal belongings, lived outside of the district, did not conduct the required annual evaluations on time. In addition nothing had been done when the policy on nepotism was violated. Now teachers were submitting anonymous reports on each other. Dr. Matney career and life had been ruined and the whole county is in turmoil. Chairman Etheridge called Mr. Crodick out of order. Attorney Ramee said there was a motion on floor.

Mr. Crodick asked to continue discussion. He said nepotism, friendship and corruption is real and he wished he could tell everything adding the statement to beat him with a rubber hose. Chairman Etheridge called for order and said that Mr. Crodick was grandstanding. Mr. Crodick replied that he was telling the truth and also asked what the Board was going to do about the perjury that had occurred during the hearing. Chairman Etheridge again called Mr. Crodick out of order and asked Attorney Ramee about censoring Mr. Crodick. Attorney Ramee said the Board should focus on the issue at hand and the current motion.

The motion went to vote. The motion did not carry.

Dana Parker tried to explained that she tried to protest and bring concerns respectful. She felt disrespected. A gentleman asked about Chairman Etheridge posting to Facebook. Chairman Etheridge replied that she had not posted anything.

Motion made by: Will Crodick

Motion seconded by: Janet Rose

Voting:

Karen Etheridge - No

Dwan Craft - No

Dr. Bill Dobney - No

Will Crodick - Yes

Janet Rose - Yes

E. Field Trip Request:

Everyone is aware the trip may not occur due to COVID restrictions.

1. CCHS - Wrestling Camp, St. Paris, Ohio - July 12-16, 2020

Dr. Lutz added that the trip may not take place due to COVID-19 restrictions. The situation will be monitored.

F. Revised 2020-2021 School Calendars (Action)

Renee Dowdy, Assistant Superintendent, announced the 2020-2021 school calendar start date was currently August 17. The earlier state date was mandated by the State. The revision does include five remote learning days also mandated by the state. She warned that restrictions could again effect the calendar and cause more revisions. The calendars have the district finishing the semester before the holiday break.

Motion made by: Will Crodick

Motion seconded by: Dwan Craft

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

G. Budget Amendments June 25, 2020 (Action)

Larissa York, Finance Officer, cautioned that the budget amendment listed on the agenda may not be the final one for this fiscal year because the district is continually receiving funds-including CARES Act funds. The district is currently ending with a budget of \$47,726,777.

Janet Rose asked about the current status of the Fund Balance. Mrs. York said that when she interviewed for the Finance Officer position, she had asked why the Fund Balance was so low. She thought perhaps the district might be in financial trouble. She was told that the County Commissioners required a low Fund Balance. Mrs. York said the Fund Balance was between \$700,000 to \$750,000 but should be \$1.5 million to provide 3 months of operated expenses which is common practice and recommended. It was mentioned that the auditor also felt the balance was low. At this time Mrs. York believes the Fund Balance will increase slightly at the end of the fiscal year. Not all of the funds appropriated were used.

Mrs. Rose said at some point a meeting with Commissioners is need to address the district's Fund Balance.

Motion made by: Dwan Craft

Motion seconded by: Dr. Bill Dobney

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

H. COVID-19 & Student Grading

Janet Rose asked about grading practices due to COVID-19 and the impact of forcing schools to close early. Mrs. Rose was disappointed that seniors were not given a choice and were given the PC 19 as a grade. She was perplexed to learn that College of The Albemarle recorded A but when the grade reached the high school it was recorded as a PC 19. Even though the State Board of Education said grades could not drop, GPA's did go down for some students. Renee Dowdy, Assistant Superintendent, said she too was concerned that first semester courses and AP year long courses were treated differently. She explained that the state said the year long AP courses would be split. Normally the grade is only recorded at the end of the year. She went on to explained the student only received 2.5 quality points because it was half course for half the year. Mrs. Dowdy explained that all transcript grades for seniors were PC 19 or WC 19 but will be recorded as A on the college side. Mrs. Rose said she also received concerns from middle school parents who's children had got straight A's but also received PC 19. Mrs. Rose expressed her concern with mandates be handled down form the state and just accepted.

Mrs. Rose went on to asked for a motion to address the PC 19 issue. Attorney Ramee intervened and said the agenda had not been amended to take action on the issue. It is best for the Board to place action items on the agenda before the meetings or amend the agenda to ask for action at the start of the meetings. Therefore, instead Mrs. Rose asked that Administration contact the State to have the grading issue changed in the event this type of thing should occur again. Other Boards have contacted their elected officials to change things are not right for students. Mrs. Dowdy said the issue had gone before the State BOE but decided against acting on the issue. Mrs. Dowdy said that some students received a WC19 if there were concerns with their performance. Mr. Crodick agreed and expressed his concerns with the PC 19 grade and it was disappointing for kids who were high achievers but also gave a fake sense of accomplishment for the non-achievers.

I. Include Mobile Units in School Capacity (Action)

This item was tabled.

J. Consent Agenda (Action)

Item #5 Capital Outlay Budget was pulled out from the Consent Agenda for discussion.

Will Crodick asked to have the \$32,000 middle school wrestling mats added back into the Capital Outlay Budget. Dwan Craft said that issue was brought up at recent meeting and possible it could be revisited later in the year. Dr. Dobney asked Mrs. York, Finance Officer, for the balance of the Capital Outlay. Mrs. York replied the balance was approximately

\$644,000. Dr. Dobney asked that the funds be taken from the Capital Outlay to purchase the mats.

Mr. Crodick asked that within the \$50,000 purchase of playground equipment at CES, some equipment is also purchased to service handicap students.

Dr. Dobney asked that Administration also look into federal grants available to purchase special needs playground equipment.

Motion made by: Dwan Craft

Motion seconded by: Karen Etheridge

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

1. Personnel Report Dated June 25, 2020
 - a. Leave Report - Confidential
2. Banking Reconciliation
3. Contracts:
 - a. Trinity 3 Technology - Chromebook Purchases with HB1043 & Federal CARES Act Funding
 - b. Exceptional Children Service Contracts
 - i. Faison Center
 - ii. Plan Bee
 - iii. Outer Banks Therapy
 - iv. Invision Services
 - c. 2020-2021 Property Renewal Insurance
 - d. Liability & Workers' Compensation Insurance Policy
4. School Nutrition Food Bids for 2020-2021
5. Revised Capital Outlay Budget 20-21
6. Payroll Calendars for 2020-2021
7. May 7, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes
8. May 7, 2020 Closed Session Minutes
9. May 29, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes
10. May 29, 2020 Closed Session Minutes
11. June 5, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes
12. June 5, 2020 Closed Session Minutes
13. June 10, 2020 Board Meeting Minutes
14. June 10, 2020 Closed Session Minutes

K. Information Items

1. Superintendent Search

Chairman Etheridge reported that the district had received numerous superintendent applications. The timeline for selection and hiring has been updated and will be sent out to Board Members.

L. Board Member and Superintendent Comments

Mr. Crodick said he was sad how Dr. Matney and others have been treated and questioned the practice of initiating an investigation based on an anonymous complaint.

Mrs. Rose she was proud of the class of 2020 and glad they had a graduation ceremony. She thanked School Nutrition workers for providing food during the school closure. She asked about the new green house construction. Mr. Mullins said demolition of the old greenhouse will be completed soon and new one will be ready. She announced the CCHS FFA Parliamentary Procedure team would be advancing and thanked all of those that spoke during the public comment session.

Dr. Dobney thanked School Nutrition and Transportation staff.

Mrs. Craft went to school sites thanking the staff members who were working and complimented the return to school work groups for their amazing work.

Dr. Lutz said he never expected to be in the current seat. This had been a tough meeting and the district now needed to start healing and moving forward. He appreciates the Board's confidence.

Motion made by: Karen Etheridge

Voting:

Karen Etheridge - Vote Not Recorded

Dwan Craft - Vote Not Recorded

Dr. Bill Dobney - Vote Not Recorded

Will Crodick - Vote Not Recorded

Janet Rose - Vote Not Recorded

M. Adjourn Meeting (Action)

Motion made by: Karen Etheridge

Motion seconded by: Will Crodick

Voting:

Unanimously Approved

Chairperson

Secretary