

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Alleghany County, Virginia held on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Alleghany County Governmental Complex, Covington, Virginia, thereof:

PRESENT: G. Matt Garten, Chairman
James M. Griffith, Vice-Chairman
Stephen A. Bennett
Shannon P. Cox
Gregory A. Dodd
Ronald S. Goings
Cletus W. Nicely

and Peter M. Huber, Interim County Administrator
Suzanne Adcock-Nicely, Director of Finance
Jim Guynn, County Attorney
Melissa A. Munsey, Deputy Clerk to the Board

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chairman called the regular meeting to order. Mrs. Cox gave the invocation and the audience remained standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Garten stated that Item 9C under New Business (pay plan amendment) is being removed from the agenda and a Closed Meeting is being added for consultation with legal counsel.

MINUTES:

Hearing no corrections or deletions, the Chairman declared the following minutes approved as submitted: (1) a regular meeting held on April 5, 2022.

MS. SUSAN HAMMOND, VDOT RESIDENT ENGINEER - VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Ms. Susan Hammond, VDOT Resident Engineer, gave an update on the following VDOT activities:

Maintenance

- Boom axed brush on secondary routes (including White Rock Gap).
- Tree and debris removal on various routes throughout the County due to high winds over the last month.
- Sweeping intersections, primary bridges, and concrete medians.
- Spreading stone on gravel roads.
- Spot leveled Intervale, Clearwater, and Clearview in preparation for plant mix this summer.
- Collected trash bags from volunteer pickups.
- Route 60 west - bank cut back to allow for guardrail to be offset.
- Bridge approaches at middle school should be done later this week.

Construction

- Natural Well Rural Rustic Project - installed pipes and base stone. Surface will be shot later this month.

Mrs. Cox stated that there are concerns on Dunlap regarding truck traffic and asked if a reduction in the speed limit can be looked at. She commented that trucks going 55 mph are scary and there are curves. She mentioned that she will also speak with Sheriff Hall to possibly see if law enforcement could check speeds. Ms. Hammond replied that they looked at the Rt. 311 section and the traffic volume is relatively low and not a lot of crash history. She commented that they have to look into those factors before there can be a speed limit reduction; however, the truck speed may be able to be reduced if eligible.

Mr. Bennett asked what the possibility would be of having the Low Moor interchange lit like the mall exit. He commented that truck drivers do not know the radius is short and at night can only see with their headlights so the guardrails are getting hit regularly. Ms. Hammond replied that she will check on options.

Mr. Garten asked for a little more detail on the surface treatments being done. Ms. Hammond replied that the surface treatment is a preventative and to expand the life of the surface. She commented that they reinforce shoulders and do spot leveling and skin patching in advance of a paving schedule.

Mr. Garten mentioned the Rt. 220 highwall and that material/debris is coming down.

JOINT PUBLIC HEARING WITH VDOT AND APPROVAL - PROPOSED SIX YEAR PLAN AND SECONDARY CONSTRUCTION BUDGET:

Public Hearing was held with the Virginia Department of Transportation to consider the proposed Six Year Plan for

FY 2023 through 2028.

The Chairman announced that this public hearing was advertised in the Virginian Review on Saturday, April 23, 2022 and Saturday, April 30, 2022 in accordance with the Code of Virginia. He then called the public hearing to order.

Ms. Susan Hammond, VDOT Resident Engineer, stated that the Board has a copy of the draft budget and plan in its agenda packet. She commented that the VDOT Secondary Improvement Budget allocation through 2028 is \$382,119 and for FY 2023 the total is \$78,937 for improvements on secondary highway systems (route number 600 and above) in the County from two funding sources (TeleFee and District Grant funds). She mentioned that there are a number of Rural Rustic Roads in the plan which can be done at a lower cost. She commented that due to the increased cost of stone, pipe, and other materials that no new projects have been added to the plan. She then gave a brief overview of projects contained in the draft Secondary Six Year Improvements Program:

Route 638 (Natural Well Road) replacement of 1913 truss bridge and approaches over the Jackson River at Rt. 687. The project has been completed, but the program has not removed it yet due to a glitch in the system. It was funded from District bridge funds.

Route 638 (Natural Well Road) Rural Rustic Road Project. This project is currently under construction.

Route 637 (Sycamore Bend Road) Rural Rustic Road Project. Funding in FY23.

F-208 (Turner Road) Rural Rustic Road Project. Funding in FY23.

Route 600 (Rumsey Road) Rural Rustic Road Project. Funding in FY24.

She stated that the rest of the items listed are for County-wide traffic services, engineering, and fertilization/seeding. She commented that the other document contains the budget information on each road with each funding source listed in more detail.

There being no one else who wished to speak, the Chairman declared the public hearing closed.

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Dr. Goings, that the Board waive its policy of not acting on a public hearing on the same night.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

On motion of Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Griffith, that the following resolution be adopted:

WHEREAS, the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on Tuesday, May 3, 2022 regarding the Virginia Department of Transportation Secondary Improvement Budget for 2023 and revisions to the Secondary Improvement Program for FY 2023 through 2028 and comments were received;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors approve the Virginia Department of Transportation Secondary Improvement Budget for FY2023 in the amount of \$78,937;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board accept the Secondary Improvement Plan for FY 2023 through 2028 as presented.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

PUBLIC HEARING - APPOINTMENTS TO THE ALLEGHANY HIGHLANDS SCHOOL BOARD:

Public Hearing was held to consider four appointments to the Alleghany Highlands School Board. The four appointments would be at-large for staggered one, two, three, and four year terms beginning July 1, 2022. By State law, the Board must wait at least seven days from the public hearing before making appointments.

The Chairman announced that this public hearing was advertised in the Virginian Review on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 and Tuesday, April 12, 2022 in accordance with the Code of Virginia. He then called the public hearing to order.

Mr. Garten stated that ten letters/resumes were received for the four appointments. They were from Mr. John Butler, Mr. Michael Duff, Mr. Gerald Franson, Ms. Patrice Jefferson, Mr. John Littleton, Ms. Danielle Morgan, Mr. Richard Shull, Mr. Robert Tucker, Mr. Robert Umstead, and Mr. Jacob Wright. He asked that all candidates wait in the Conference Room until called and he will go through the list alphabetically.

Presentation by candidates:

Mr. John Butler, 800 King Street, stated that the Board has his resume. He reviewed his opening statement of the resume which is as follows:

I am writing this letter to express my interest in being considered for one of the at-large appointments to the Alleghany Highlands School Board.

I believe education is the keystone to building successful and contributing members of society. We have stressed a good education while raising our children. I will bring to the board a wide variety of experience in the many aspects of the public education system. We have 12 children. 10 of which have finished high school and continued their education. Three have obtained a masters degree and 1 is pursuing a doctorate. Our last 2 attend Mountain View Elementary. Thank you for consideration.

He told a story of one of his children that got a teacher that no one wanted. They met with her and thanked her for helping to educate children and she turned out to be one of the best teachers. He mentioned that he has previously served on the Buena Vista School Board and the Rockbridge County Social Services Board.

Mr. Michael Duff, 408 Alleghany Street, stated that he was born in 1954 in Clifton Forge, attended Clifton Forge public schools, and graduated in 1972. He commented that he attended DSLCC for a while, then went to work for Hercules and the railroad. He mentioned that he moved back to the area when he retired and wants to pay back the community. He stated that consolidation will help bond all children to be a stronger force with more academics and programs. He commented that he foresees greater things with consolidation. He feels that School Board meetings have become political side shows.

Mr. Gerald Franson, 9001 Dunlap Creek Road, reviewed his cover letter included in the agenda packet which is as follows:

I would like to be considered for the new Alleghany Highlands Public School Board for the July 1, 2022 term.

Over the last six years of service, I have learned a lot about school board governance. It takes a year or two to get acclimated to the system. During my time on the board, I have served on the JRTC Board for 6 years, the budget committee for 6 years, and the joint school board committee since its inception. I am so proud to say we made history. We now have a joint school board. During this 6 years, we have gone through a superintendent change and we hired a winner with Kim Halterman. We worked together to survive the pandemic.

I have used my 40+ years of business experience to ask questions and try to be frugal with the taxpayers money. During my tenure, I have put the students interest above all other things.

Regardless of the decision on my appointment, it has been a pleasure working with a great administration, fellow board members, and all the staff. They have worked so hard. I consider them all to be above and beyond the call of duty winners.

He added that his goal is to see consolidation through.

Ms. Patrice Jefferson, 1005 Tremont Street, stated that she is a resident of Clifton Forge and graduated from Clifton Forge High School. She commented that she has one daughter who graduated from Alleghany High School. She mentioned that she has been employed by the Local Office on Aging (LOA) for 26 years.

Mr. John Littleton, 300 Edgehill Road, stated that he was born and raised in Falling Spring and is proud of the education he received at Falling Spring Elementary School, Clifton Middle School, Alleghany High School, JRTC, and DSLCC. He commented that he comes from a family of educators and knows the importance of providing our children with the best

possible education. He mentioned that his family has been involved in education for almost 100 years as his great-grandmother, Lilian Clingan, started a private day school for Covington residents in 1932; his grandmother, Betty Littleton, taught English at Covington High School for 40 years; his mother, Joy Littleton, taught elementary school for 23 years at Edgemont Elementary and Falling Spring Elementary; and his brother, Robert Michael Littleton, started his career as a middle school English teacher and is currently a middle school assistant principal with Williamsburg James City County Public Schools. He stated that after he graduated from West Virginia Tech in 2005 with a Bachelor's degree in Civil Engineering, he never questioned moving anywhere but back home to Alleghany County. He commented that as a student in ACPS, he was always encouraged by his teachers to dream big and never give up. He stated that as a parent, he knows everyone in our community wants the same for their kids: to have every opportunity to succeed in life. He commented that he feels that he is a valuable asset for the school board with his management experience, work experience with municipalities, and ability to work well with others.

Ms. Danielle Morgan, 1314 Forester Road, read the following prepared statement which is a part of the records of this meeting:

Good evening Board Members!

First and foremost, I would like to recognize all of our amazing teachers that we are blessed to have working in the Alleghany Highlands, as today is National Teacher Appreciation Day! I'm sure if we all took a moment to self-reflect, we could easily trace back our successes today to that one teacher (and in some cases many teachers), who inspired us to be the best versions of ourselves and reach for the stars. Teachers spend countless hours not only educating, but nurturing and enriching the lives of our children. Whether it's ensuring they have clothes on their back, school supplies they need, or even food in their belly, our teachers go above and beyond the call of duty every day.

With that being said, I come before you this evening seeking appointment to the Alleghany Highlands School Board. I have had the privilege and honor of being a member of the Alleghany County School Board since 2017.

If you would have told me the many challenges that lay ahead when I was first appointed in 2017, I simply would not have believed you. A worldwide pandemic that has changed everyday life as we know it, a long awaited school merger and consolidation coming to fruition, and the recruitment and appointment of a new superintendent in the middle of it all...just to name a few of those challenges. But with every challenge came a new opportunity to learn, change, grow and improve. That is what I believe to be one of the most important tasks of the newly appointed school board members as well...to take every challenge and turn it into an opportunity to learn, change, grow and improve.

As a lifelong resident of Clifton Forge, an Alleghany High School alumni, and a proud parent of two daughters who will very soon be elementary educators in our community, I have a vested interest in ensuring that all students in Alleghany County receive a quality education.

Working over 20 years in healthcare, demonstrating progressive leadership and years of experience in quality management, I am well-equipped to interpret both state and federal regulations and to effectively assist in implementing them. In addition, there are many benefits to having a school board representative with previous board experience and it is imperative, now more than ever, that we have school board members with tenure. With nearly 5 years of school board experience, I believe I would be an asset to a newly formed board.

You all have a challenging decision before you with selecting only 4 representatives out of a large pool of qualified applicants. I cannot stand here this evening and promise that all seven of you will agree with every vote I cast or every opinion I share; however, I hope we all can agree that I approach each decision prayerfully, informed, and in the best interest of all those we serve. We are not only appointed and entrusted to make the easy decisions, but the difficult ones as well. There are times the decisions we make as a board often result in personal judgment and ridicule. Serving on this board is not for the faint of heart but for those with a heart to serve. To serve our students, our staff and entire community. To use our personal and professional experience to make the hard decisions, in an objective and fair manner.

Each member brings different experiences, expertise, and opinions to the table. It is my job as a public official to be accessible, open-minded and objective, to consider my peer's opinions and recommendations and by doing so, we are able to accomplish the impossible –That is the best part of serving on a community board. I realize that some board actions are not favorable and aren't without criticism, which will continue to be the case on this new board, but it chosen for this position, I will listen to the comments and ideas of the people in our school district.

I urge you all to select a board with a wide and diverse background, members who display integrity and are capable of being fair, creative, willing to learn new ideas, and think outside of the box. If chosen I'll always remember that the primary purpose of any school board member should be to tirelessly strive to provide an inclusive and non-discriminatory environment conducive to learning and academic growth. What's most important here tonight is not whether I'm selected as one of those members, but rather that we have representation that will move us forward and support a school system that we are all proud of.

In closing, if I am not selected as an Alleghany Highlands School Board Member because you feel you would be better served by one of my peers, I will support your decision. If I am chosen, please know that I will continue to represent you well, make the tough decisions and although all of you may not always agree with my vote or recommendation, you will have comfort in knowing that every vote I cast, every opinion I make and every conversation I have, is done so objectively, with an open mind and with the best interest of our school system moving forward.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Mr. Richard Shull, 612 Heatherton Drive, stated that he lives in Valley Ridge, is married to Tiffany who works at WestRock, and has 10-year old twins (Jack and Faith) that attend Mountain View Elementary School. He commented that Jack has been on the YMCA swim team since 2018 and Faith enjoys dancing at Garlynda's Fancy Feet. He stated that they are members of Fincastle Baptist Church-Highlands Campus and he is a member of the Kiwanis Club, Virginia School Board Association, Virginia Sheriff's Association, Virginia Forensic Science Academy Alumni Association, Jackson River Technical Center Board, and the Title 1 Advisory Council. He mentioned that he graduated from Alleghany High School, the Central Shenandoah Criminal Justice Academy, and the Virginia Forensic Science Academy. He commented that he has been employed by the Alleghany County Sheriff's Office for 19 years and is currently Lieutenant in the investigation division. He stated that he has near future goals for the school system that include getting back kids into the new school system that they lost to home schooling or alternative education during the pandemic, improve SOL scores, etc. He commented that he would also like to see an increase in the number of students in the system by at least 10% over the next five years, but we need economic development and new jobs to do that. He mentioned that people look at the area, economy, housing market, and schools before deciding to move here.

Mr. Robert Tucker, 6603 Bens Run Road, reviewed his cover letter included in the agenda packet which is as follows:

The purpose of this letter is to indicate my desire to be considered for appointment to the Alleghany Highlands School Board. I retired on April 1, 2022 from Alleghany High School where I taught for 41 years. I was a teacher at ACHS when we consolidated with Clifton Forge in 1983. I feel this gives me a unique perspective that will be needed on the school board at this time. I understand the concerns and fears that many staff, parents, and members of the community have regarding consolidation because I have been in their position. I know what worked well, what did not, what unforeseen problems arose and how we dealt with them. More importantly is the fact that I can state from my own experience with consolidation that it can work well, as the benefits of the 1983 consolidation for our students and community far outweighed any problems encountered.

During my 41 years working for the school system, I wore many hats. I was a Spanish teacher and head of the foreign language department, but I also coached for several years, ran the Saturday School program, taught English, Russian and German, and worked with students with special needs who were not ready for in person learning.

Outside of school, I was a special education advocate for 12 years. Because of this, I feel that I have an in-depth understanding of requirements placed upon the school system by law regarding students with special needs. I have been a cancer coach for 28 years and the five-year survival rate for those I have worked with is a source of great pride for me. I often have had to reach out to other organizations in order to get help for some of my patients. This has taken the form for some of finding them help paying bills, buying medicine and supplies needed because of their cancer and food, getting rides to their doctors and to the hospital for treatments, and finding people willing to foster their pets. My services were always pro bono. My years as a cancer coach have given me insights into the importance and advantages of different organizations working together for a common goal and I believe that this could benefit the school system as well.

In closing, I will say that I am retired now and have plenty of time on my hands. Education was a big part of my life for 41 years and never have I regretted my decision to stay in Alleghany County or stay in teaching as long as I did. I would like to continue working in an area that I know well and being on the school board would allow me to do that. I thank you for your consideration.

Mr. Robert Umstead, 345 Roxbury Street, stated that he is 76 years old and moved here in 1983 from Michigan. He commented that he has 51 years of experience in public education. He reviewed his educational background from his resume (graduated from Pinckney High School, Eastern Michigan, University of Michigan, Michigan State University, and Virginia Tech University). He commented that most all he does involves kids and reviewed various items from his resume (Boy Scouts Scoutmaster, Alleghany Education Association, work with handicapped people, etc.). He mentioned that he was on the School Board in Michigan for four years and during that time they built a new school. He stated that his concern is for the kids and when he goes to school board meetings he hears rhetoric of things they are going to do, but no emphasis on the child. He commented that public education is geared to two people - the teachers that teach and the kids that receive their education. He stated that education is communication and there needs to be more emphasis on that. He commented that it is not the ability to talk, but the ability to listen and if you listen then you can solve 90% of problems. He stated that public education can be easy, fun, and enjoyable, but it is not. He stated that he cares about kids and that they leave school with a skill trade to get a job. He mentioned that, if appointed, he would have to resign from Clifton Forge Council. He stated that if he gets appointed he wants to get kids back to the area and he wants the area to grow. He mentioned that at the next school board meeting he will address them on the track as he has a simple solution. He commented he is here for the kids and parents and that he gets a lot of calls from parents and teachers asking about what they should do about certain things. He stated that he is legally blind and listens better. He mentioned that he loves working with kids and will continue to come back to be on the School Board if he is not appointed.

Mr. Jacob Wright, 3730 Llama Drive, read the following prepared statement which is a part of the records of this

meeting:

Good evening. Thank you all for having me. As most of you know, I am Jacob Wright, nine-year member and current Chairman of the Allegheny County School Board.

I am excited to be here on the eve of this historic event that I know will be beneficial to many future generations of the Allegheny Highlands. As you all know, this has been a goal of mine since I came before this Board for my initial appointment nine years ago. Through the hard work and most importantly cooperation of countless individuals, including Mr. Garten and Mr. Griffith who are both members of the Committee on Joint School Services.

Our regionalism and recent cooperation between localities is almost becoming a common place to us, but it is amazing the rest of the State. President Gecker of the Virginia Board of Education said this could never happen in his community during one of our hearings. At a recent Virginia School Board meeting a member of the Martinsville/Henry County merger said "I'm sick of hearing how well you all work together in Covington/Allegheny County". People throughout the State are taking notice. I have no doubt that it has created hope and optimism and helped make our school system more intriguing for employment. I feel that our consolidation and cooperation has certainly played a large part in the return of Superintendent Halterman and our most recent hire and Clifton Forge native, Bryan Stinespring.

With the help of the General Assembly as a result of the merger we have brought 3.4 million extra dollars into the Allegheny Highlands. It has been our plan all along to make sure no one loses a job. Employees will all be paid and receive equal benefits based on the best options from each system. It will be a much deserved raise for many folks and certainly the largest raises in my time. Although we promised there will be no loss of jobs, unfortunately there will be three seats lost as our Board moves from seven to four.

We have an amazing Board right now that is going to make your job extremely hard. The past two years have been the toughest times in my lifetime to be a member of a School Board. As if the pandemic wasn't tough enough - masking, national politics, and the consolidation has added a whole other layer. The fact that six of our seven Board members are willing to volunteer should be testament to our commitment to the future generations of the Allegheny Highlands. And it would be seven if Mr. Helms did not have a newborn. While I appreciate the willingness of the others to serve, I would like to make a case for our current members who have been battle tested and are 100% committed to putting students first. They are advocates for our students, allies for our staff, and great stewards of the taxpayer's dollar.

- *Gerald Franson first came to the Board July 1, 2016 and is a kind-hearted soul whose expertise in insurance and business only rivals his love for the kids.*
- *Danielle Morgan is the Vice-Chairwoman of the Board and came to the board on August 1, 2017. She has been a tremendous help to the Board between her training and her professional career in health care and human resources. She has been invaluable as we wade through this pandemic and all things employee related.*
- *John Littleton came to the Board in September of 2020 right after the consolidation vote and his construction expertise is a huge asset in helping the Board understand bidding/capital improvements, etc.*
- *Richard Shull joined the Board shortly after John and has been very eager to learn all of the ins and outs of being a School Board member. I had the pleasure of attending two VSBA events with Richard and he is a great advocate for our kids and community. His knowledge of law enforcement is beneficial with not only the SRO's but also with our discipline hearings.*
- *Patrice Jefferson was sent from the heavens in the fall of last year after two years without a complete Board. She filled our final vacancy. Patrice is such a pleasant person to be around and while generally quiet, she is not one to beat around the bush when stating her opinion. Patrice is a great ambassador for Clifton Forge and her knowledge of the community and the people she knows from her time working for the City of Covington and with the LOA is unmatched on our Board.*

We have an excellent Board and you could not pick a bad representative from our Board. I appreciate my time served and I hope my actions on the Allegheny County School Board have proved my worth as a member of the new Board. I certainly don't envy the decisions you all have to make.

Questions from Board members:

1. What are your thoughts on closing Clifton Middle School or why did you vote to close Clifton Middle School? Why do you want to run for the School Board position?

Mr. Butler replied that consolidation is a good thing as children get more opportunities with a bigger school system. He commented that he has no problem with Clifton Middle School closing. He stated that he wants to run as he has an 8 and 9 year old who are foster children. He commented that there is a problem with the lack of education and drugs/alcohol.

Mr. Duff replied that he has not done a lot of research or know if it is a done deal. You have to look at dollars and cents. He commented that if there is a new building that works, he does not understand breathing life in a building that is past its prime, then it would not sound like a good idea.

Mr. Franson replied that when the Joint School Committee was in discussions with Covington there was no chance they would close Covington High School so the committee compromised. He commented that there were discussions of DSLCC using Clifton Middle School and one time moving kids in the middle school to the elementary school due to the lack of kids. He stated that he wants to run again to finish what we started with consolidation and see it through. He commented that with consolidation classes will be able to be offered that students could not previously have taken due to the lack of

students for classes. He mentioned that there is also JRTC as not all kids are made for college and participation by Covington students was not what it should be due to the drive time to the school.

Ms. Jefferson replied that from looking at all paperwork given to her and finances that she would have voted to close Clifton Middle School. She commented that she was put on the School Board in the middle of everything and wants to see things through. She stated that she wants things to stay on track the way they were voted for and be there for the students and parents through the transition.

Mr. Littleton replied that he was brought on the School Board the night they voted and not appointed until after they voted. He stated that he decided to run for the School Board again after conversations with his family and he told them he would apply as education is important in his family. He commented that he wants to continue on with the school system with his dealings with upcoming capital improvements (i.e., track, HVAC, etc.) to see them stay on track.

Ms. Morgan replied that closing any school would not be her first choice as a board member, but having said that and as all are aware, she was a board member and present for the August and September 2020 board meetings where the consolidations of the high schools and middle schools was discussed. She commented that since that time they have openly discussed the plans, including the closure of Clifton Middle School, many times in many forums including town halls where the public were welcomed to express concerns and/or thoughts. She stated that the Joint Board for School Consolidation has worked tirelessly to develop a plan that would be in the best interest for all parties involved. She commented that she did vote to accept the plan as presented by the Joint Board and continue to support that plan today. She mentioned that she realized that there are some board members this evening that may not agree with this decision and she does hear, value and understand their concerns; however, she believes that the impacts of not moving forward with consolidation as we all have voted upon and approved would be detrimental not only to our students, but to our teachers and our entire community as well. She commented that there is no perfect plan and if she is appointed we will have many challenges and difficult decisions ahead, but at this time she supports moving forward with consolidation as preserved and approved upon by all necessary parties.

Mr. Shull replied that he was not a member of the School Board until November 2020 and they had already voted. He commented that he is empathetic to keeping the school open as it is a new building and he does not want to see it empty, but he does not want to throw the baby out with the bath water as consolidation is a good thing for our community and the school system will benefit.

Mr. Tucker replied that he does not like to second guess anyone when you are not a part of the board. He commented that an idea for Clifton Middle School would be to utilize it in some way (i.e. STEM academy) that would be a benefit to our community. He mentioned that he graduated in 1975 from Covington High School (CHS) as a Cougar and he is a big fan of holding onto part of the past and CHS needs to remain a part of the community, but at the same time Clifton Middle School is also a vital need for the community. He commented that in 1985 we had a major flood and our backup plan is if AHS floods again they we would utilize Clifton Middle School and Mountain View Elementary as a high school and he is not sure if anyone has looked at what would occur if we would remove ownership of CMS and are flooded again. He stated that he decided to run after the last meeting when CMS teachers expressed concerns and it brought back feelings he had in 1983 as change is scary, but a necessity. He commented that he has been through it and knows the pitfalls that could occur. He mentioned that he has been retired a month and misses it as it is hard to step aside. He commented that he would love to continue the relationship with the school system to see it prosper and be the best it can be.

Mr. Umstead replied that he would not have voted to close Clifton Middle School. He stated that he would have had the teachers involved in the decision making process to discuss why it was taking place. He commented that if you give people the opportunity to explain what they want then the water is always smoother. He stated that he wanted to run for the School Board before but he could not when he was teaching. He commented that he likes to help and will do all he can to help kids. He stated that he sees this is a golden opportunity. He commented that we need to have the support of teachers and not dictate what happens.

Mr. Wright replied that consolidation discussions had give and take on both sides and there had to be compromise. He commented that if it had not happened then CMS probably would have been the first school to close anyway with the Clifton

Forge local composite index ending and losing students. He mentioned that when he got on the School Board it was because Boiling Spring Elementary and Falling Spring Elementary closed. He stated that he wants to keep community elementary schools. He mentioned that he knows it is hard when a school closes (Boiling Spring Elementary) and kids had to be bussed to Callaghan Elementary. He stated that if the middle school had to close at that time, then they were looking at putting 6th and 7th grade students in with Mountain View Elementary students and sending the 8th grade students to the high school. He commented that consolidation would not have occurred without Covington High School being utilized or serving a purpose. He stated that the geographical center of the County is near CHS. He mentioned that because CMS is a new school with metal studs it is a flexible building where walls can be moved versus a brick and mortar building. He stated that a lot of things can not be put into old school buildings and there are many that are not utilized as they are hard to set up architecturally. He mentioned the potential of partnering with DSLCC to be able to offer new programs.

2. What attributes and behaviors do you feel are essential for a School Board member?

Mr. Butler replied that a School Board member should have a good knowledge of the system. He commented that he has been involved in education as a coach of youth soccer, softball, and basketball teams, is currently a school bus driver, etc. He stated that you have to have a thick skin to be in public service and you need to be able to listen to comments and opinions of others.

Mr. Duff replied that a School Board member should have pride in the community and honesty, realize things need to be deliberated, and all get a chance to air their view. He commented that he is worried people are concerned with individual identities; however, he lost his school (Clifton Forge High School). He mentioned that this is Alleghany County and there is no other place like it.

Mr. Franson replied that a School Board member should be a team player. He commented that they should voice concerns, but be respectful.

Ms. Jefferson replied that a School Board member should be a person that you are able to talk to at any time, communicate with the public, maintain confidentiality, and express themselves in a professional way.

Mr. Littleton replied that a School Board member has to be very open, be able to listen to all, try the best at everything you do, and be a good role model.

Ms. Morgan replied that a School Board member should be fair, objective, open-minded, a lifelong learner, and consider the thoughts and opinions of peers.

Mr. Shull replied that a School Board member needs to be a team player as nothing is done individually, but collectively as a group. He mentioned that there have been times when he has been in the minority vote on an issue, but you need to be willing to work together as a team and understand that. He commented that you also need to be available, especially during the pandemic and issues that arose (sports, masking, etc.) where he had constant emails coming in and trying to respond.

Mr. Tucker replied that a School Board member needs to realize that teachers, parents, and students do not work for us, but us for them. He commented that you should be able to adapt and let go of your own ego, know that there is no way all members of a committee will agree, be willing to accept if you are wrong on something, laugh at yourself, and be a good listener.

Mr. Umstead replied that a School Board member should have the ability to listen, not formulate opinions, not judge the person talking to you, read between the lines to what people are telling you, and respect what others say.

Mr. Wright replied that a School Board member should look out for the students, staff, and taxpayer and equal all three out. He commented that it is not easy and is a balancing act.

3. What is the best way to address differences of opinion with the Board or between the Board and administration?

Mr. Butler replied that he has been on various boards and there needs to be Freedom of Speech in Closed Meetings. He comments that supervisors are individuals and you work to build relationships.

Mr. Duff replied that you have to listen, turn lose of personal prejudices, be considerate of others, and come to a consensus.

Mr. Franson replied that he has not had a lot of problems with fights with administration and our School Board is cohesive. He commented that they may not all be of the same opinion, but support each other.

Ms. Jefferson replied that you should sit down, hash things out, and talk it through. She commented that all may not have the same opinion, but can work things out to have a meeting of the minds.

Mr. Littleton replied that the key is communication and to weigh pros and cons to find even ground. He commented that you do not want to do anything to put the County or school system in jeopardy.

Ms. Morgan replied that having been on the School Board for five years there have been differences of opinion many times, but you need to address those differences respectfully, with reasoning behind it, and with open and honest communication. She commented that you need to be non-confrontational in a respectful manner. She mentioned that someone may not agree with her, but show her respect and allow her to share her opinion. She commented that administration should be given the opportunity to hear concerns and we should trust administration to do their job.

Mr. Shull replied that you need to agree to disagree. He commented that you can not have it "my way or no way" and you need to be willing to go into meetings and deal with issues that may go your way, but not every time will it go your way.

Mr. Tucker replied that you need to let all have a say; examine it with no preconceived ideas; express your opinion, but realize your opinion is not always correct; and find common ground to meet in the middle so that all feel they got something when they leave the meeting.

Mr. Umstead replied that all parties have a right to be listened to. He commented that you need to convince them that you do care and that their opinion is very important.

Mr. Wright replied that you have to talk things out in person and listen. He stated that we have an amazing School Board that works together for the common good and keep focused on the kids as a common goal.

4. Could you support a decision that you did not vote in favor of? Why or why not?

Mr. Butler replied that he has supported decisions that he has not been in favor of. He commented that you live by the majority, follow and support the decision, and not undermine it.

Mr. Duff replied that it is hard to say without knowing what the decision is. He commented that sometimes if it is something too egregious, he could not do that. He mentioned that he is not sure that the School Board would having anything like that or be as frequent.

Mr. Franson replied that if there is a position that he feels is wrong then he would not support it. For example if there is a discussion in Closed Meeting regarding two kids then they should get the same punishment.

Ms. Jefferson replied that she would support a decision that she was not in favor of and have a meeting of the minds. She commented that you can support it and express how you feel in a professional way.

Mr. Littleton replied that he could support decisions that he was not in favor of as it is a board and you are not the only person on the board. He commented that it takes many to make it work and everybody is different, but you need to respect other people's opinions.

Ms. Morgan replied that she could support decisions she did not agree with if that was the recommendation of the board. She commented that we are a team. She stated that she brings her own personal perspective and if she does not agree and has sufficient evidence to support her stance then she shares it respectfully. She commented that if a vote goes in a different direction, then she would support it moving forward.

Mr. Shull replied that issues come up that you are not in favor of and you may not agree, but if the board has spoken then he would support the decision.

Mr. Tucker replied that there is a responsibility when you are part of a committee. He mentioned that when Dr. Grimesey was there he had a policy that you could go in his office and tell him he had lost his mind and you knew he was going to listen on a topic, but you knew once he listened that you would support his decision even if it went his way. He commented that he also supports decisions patients make as a cancer coach.

Mr. Umstead replied that he could if it was a 6-1 vote and he voted against it as that is part of being a team player as long as all heard why he voted against it. He stated that he does not feel that all have to vote the same as everybody's opinions are different and have got to be heard. He commented that he is not seeing a team approach in a lot of things.

Mr. Wright replied that he would support decisions that he was not in favor of. He commented that you have to figure out a way for all to work together and move forward. He stated that is what compromise is all about.

5. How important do you think it is to expose children to a diverse range of opinions, thoughts, ideas, economic theories, and cultural backgrounds? How would you react if someone suggested that a controversial topic should be banned in schools?

Mr. Butler replied that all children need to be taught those items. He commented that there are lots of opinions and they need to be discussed as to whether or not they are banned.

Mr. Duff replied that you have to be taught how to learn and think for yourself. He commented that there is a broad range of opinions and those have to be encouraged. He stated that if someone brings up something controversial, then in my mind if they can substantiate it with real facts you have to consider it and give it serious consideration. He commented that some that have been brought up at meetings are nothing more than hot button issues to get people riled up. He mentioned that he does not understand how over the last few years all of a sudden a large percentage of books in the library can not be read or seen. He stated that the School Board can listen to public comments, but without proof or a rock solid reason to ban something or not teach something is a pretty high hurdle in his book right now. He commented that we have cut back on what kids can be taught that they do not know civics, government, and history.

Mr. Franson replied if you are talking about the critical race theory then he could not support it as it pushes racism. He commented that his desire is that all kids be treated fairly and equally. He stated that as far as books are concerned he would struggle to support one that is anti-Christian, but that is why we leave those decisions to administration as that is what they are trained to do such as giving them leeway on hiring.

Ms. Jefferson replied that kids know more than what we do and can tell you things that you do not even know. She commented that different subjects will come up. She stated that kids are not going to live here forever and will venture out to different places for college, work, etc. She mentioned that some things you have to leave with the parents and some for the school to decide. She commented that she believes in getting with parents and the PTO on topics. She commented that she feels it is up to the School Board and PTO on whether a topic is banned or not.

Mr. Littleton replied that you need to be educated in controversy as when you get out of school you will be dealing with controversy and need to learn how to deal with it. He commented that banning a topic depends on the subject matter. He stated if something is being banned for safety reasons then that is understandable, but if it is to improve an agenda of somebody then he would not approve. He commented that you need to do research and make an educated decision.

Ms. Morgan replied that we have a responsibility to our children as the school board and educators not to impose our own personal belief systems, but to equip them with the knowledge and facts they need to form their own personal beliefs.

She commented that there are some topics that could be controversial, but if it is approached in a manner that is not opinionated they could be presented. She stated that parents have a voice in their children's education and they should share their thoughts. She commented that the board should listen and take all facts into account. She commented that the ban of a topic would depend upon the situation and facts presented where you do research and be fair and objective.

Mr. Shull replied that we need to keep to the basics in teaching reading, writing, math, social studies, and history. He commented that specific cultural or politically on fire issues he does not think those are something the school system should get involved in as they do not have a place in the school system.

Mr. Tucker replied that as a foreign language teacher he taught Russian and German and some thought he was pushing Communism or Naziism. He stated that there needs to be an open and honest discussion of events. He commented that we have a long history and attempting to erase history is wrong; however, a community has the right to set certain boundaries on certain topics, but no right to tell me my child can not learn something, but allow parent to opt out. He mentioned that 41 years ago when he started teaching, the County was sheltered. He stated that social media has opened up the world and if something is banned in schools then kids will find it on-line. He commented that some books get banned and then a few years later they are required reading so things change.

Mr. Umstead replied that when he was in school the book Catch 22 was banned in his school and when he found out he got it and read it anyway. He commented that diversity makes this a greater country and the kids better. He mentioned that he has six kids and they are all different and learned different, but they learned to respect what they were told and then sit down and weed out where they wanted to go. He stated that we do not all have to be college educated, but can be a plumber. He commented that we need to support diversity of a child. He stated that if appointed he would want to push for vocational training so kids can use their hands which is sometimes greater than getting an "A" on a test. He stated that a child is the most important thing in the world and we all need to look at how something will affect a child.

Mr. Wright replied that he would like to bring Boys' Home students back into the school system. He commented that when he was in school he had friends from Boys' Home and they were from different parts of the world and backgrounds with different opinions and ideas. He mentioned a former German exchange student that he saw recently and how it was a great experience to be around them and learn. He stated we need to be able to have different ideas and thoughts and be exposed to those things. He commented that it depends on what is being banned.

6. Do you see an advantage to technology and trade schools? How do you feel about parents' rights in what is taught in school?

Mr. Butler replied that there is too much focus on college education and there is a need for plumbers, electricians, etc. He comment that parents have a right to voice their opinion on what is taught in school, but that does not necessarily make it right.

Mr. Duff replied that he absolutely sees an advantage of technology and trade schools and mentioned that three of his sons attended them. He commented that some kids are not meant to go to college and trade schools are necessary. He mentioned that you need qualified people to work. He stated that as far as parents' rights that it is a parents obligation. He commented that schools have a curriculum set up and if the parents counter what is taught then they need show an argument as to why or look at other options than public schools.

Mr. Franson replied that he supports trade schools 200%. He commented that he made a list during the first merger committee meeting and that is one of his top 3 items. He mentioned that we need to support JRTC and get kids into a trade to teach them carpentry, mechanics, electrical, computer technology, etc. and it is a key to get them to stay here or be trained for a job. He commented that parents have a right to be proactive with the schools and if there is something they do not agree with then they need to go to administration to discuss it. He stated that parents have a right to see the curriculum.

Ms. Jefferson replied that she is 100% behind trade schools. She commented that it gives children an outlet when they are in school. She mentioned that some come out with cosmetology, welding, culinary degrees and are ready to go to work. She stated that it is up to every household on what should be taught and that is why there is a PTO and School Board. She mentioned that there are some subjects that she feels parents should have a say in.

Mr. Littleton replied that technology and trade schools are a big part of the future in our country. He commented that there is a lack of people with trade skills and there are a lot of good paying jobs out there. He stated that he would like to expand classes at JRTC. He commented that parents have rights over their children and their voice should be heard. He stated that he supports what some parents think, but you need to draw a consensus on everything and make an educated decision on what is best for all children.

Ms. Morgan replied that technology and trade schools are critical and imperative. She commented that we need to promote them more as not all desire going to a four-year college. She stated that they give students other options and different paths to success to choose from. She mentioned that students need to be given the tools they need to be successful. She stated that parents do have a voice and should share and advocate for what they want for their children with appropriate channels.

Mr. Shull replied that we could do more for JRTC. He commented that trade jobs (i.e., plumbers, mechanics, etc.) are in high demand as you just can not find them anymore and those students that get a trade certificate can make a lot of money. He stated that every parent has a voice on what is taught and we want to hear their opinions.

Mr. Tucker replied that he would love to see CMS turned into a STEM academy and we need advanced classes to prepare students for the world they enter. He commented that technology and advanced classes are needed so when they move on they can be successful. He stated that he told his own children that he wanted them educated not so that they could leave the County, but if they leave or stay he wants it to be because they love the area and not because they do not have the training to do anything else. He commented that parents should have a major voice in what is taught as it is their children. He mentioned that most parents want the best for their children, but some do not and those you sometimes have to overrule. He stated that parents should have a lot of say so in the scheduling of classes a child takes. He commented that there are misconceptions of how kids do in high school is how they will do the rest of their life; however, children go through changes and mature at different rates. He mentioned that parents need to have a certain amount of say so, but when it comes to content it should be more up to the experts. He stated that they have to be receptive, but at the same time they have to draw the line and do the best for the majority of students.

Mr. Umstead replied that trade schools are very important to him. He commented that his son went to JRTC to learn automotive skills. He stated that vocational skills are highly important and we need plumbers, carpenters, electricians, etc. He commented that we also need to advance as far as we can technology wise. He mentioned that all kids should have to take at least one class at JRTC to use their hands. He stated that parents do not have the rights they should have. He commented that parents should help us help their kids and get them to school.

Mr. Wright replied that he is a very big supporter of career/technical schools and wants kids to have a purpose if they choose not to go to college. He commented that he would like kids in middle school to have a wheel program to introduce them to a taste of everything (i.e., changing a tire, etc.). He mentioned that he worked with the welding program and he would like to see classes on block laying, plumbing, etc. He commented that the community needs skilled tradesmen. He stated that parents should have input on what is taught in schools. He mentioned that every community is different and there needs to be a focus on what we need as a community.

7. Other questions posed individually to applicants:

- Mr. Dodd asked Mr. Butler how long he was on the Buena Vista School Board. Mr. Butler replied that he was on that board for 10 months and resigned when he came here.
- Mr. Nicely asked Mr. Franson why consolidation was not taken to the public for a referendum. Mr. Franson replied that there was nothing to hide and public meetings were held. He commented that there were representatives from the County School Board, Covington School Board, County Board and Covington Council and they did an independent survey to poll the people randomly and the majority wanted consolidation.

There being no one else who wished to speak, the Chairman declared the public hearing closed.

PUBLIC COMMENT (5 MINUTE TIME LIMIT):

Ms. Audra Hill, 808 N. Augusta Avenue, read the following prepared statement which is a part of the records of this meeting:

"There are so many ways of being despicable it completely makes one's head spin. But the way to be really despicable is to be disrespectful of other people's pain." James Baldwin wrote that quote in 1968 and I stand before you today using his words to express how disrespectful this board has been to the Black community by not demanding that your fellow board member Cletus Nicely to step down from this position as atonement for his racially insensitive comment directed at Vice President Harris.

As I stated in previous board meetings, I question the integrity of every member of this ELECTED Board of Supervisors. Last year I appealed to Cletus Nicely and this board to encourage Cletus Nicely to step down from leadership based on his now deleted social media post about the Vice-President of the United States of America that stated, "Senator Harris should "go to the cornfield". As you know Cletus Nicely has a position that influences many decisions that directly affect Black people in our community, and we know that based on what he has shown us Cletus Nicely is racially insensitive and does not support our community.

Since the communities' cries have gone unheard, I must believe that his views about where Black people belong have not changed. Therefore, my view that Cletus Nicely should not be a member of any governing board has not changed.

I do know that change starts at the top and your action is needed for systemic transformation.

I will leave this board and Cletus Nicely with this last quote from Mr. James Baldwin "Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced." Members of the Elected Board of Supervisors what are you willing to face so that change can happen?

MS. LORRI SAVILLE - DISCUSS CLIFTON MIDDLE SCHOOL AND THE CONSOLIDATION:

Ms. Lorri Saville, 5813 Rich Patch Road and teacher at Clifton Middle School (CMS), handed out and reviewed a list of questions and comments from teachers. The list is as follows and is a part of the records of this meeting:

Questions and Comments From Teachers

- *Has anyone considered the cost and manpower needed to move two schools into one school? CMS has a lot of furniture and fixtures. Will all of these fit in CHS? How do JWIS teachers feel about moving from a newer school to an older high school designed school?*
- *CHS has one room designed as a music room - the band room - and it's inconveniently placed in the cafeteria. There is no choir room. Will a new room be outfitted into a choir room or will choirs be in the auditorium like AHS. If this is the case will the choirs be kicked out whenever anyone needs the auditorium?*
- *Does CHS have the technology infrastructure needed to run promethean boards, laptops, etc. of all students and staff? Are there multiple electrical outlets in the rooms for charging chromebooks?*
- *Where is it showing that CHS must be used and this decision cannot be reversed?*
- *Has CMS always been on the chopping block?*
- *A Lab Safety Checklist from the VDOE based on OSHA regulations has been provided (attached to handout). Based on the checklist, does CHS meet all the safety requirements outlined in their current four classrooms? With CHS having historical building status, will renovations be allowed to meet these requirements? Furthermore, we estimate that there will be between 6-9 science teachers and currently there are only 4 science lab rooms. We also have a concern about storage. At CMS each of the 3 grade level science lab rooms are clustered around a safe and easily accessible storage and prep room that is NOT in the classroom. The main storage at CHS seems to be IN the classroom. The 2009 Alleghany County/Covington City Merger Study by S. John Davis and Associates, Ltd. gave CMS the rating of "excellent" for science classrooms and made the statement "Science labs have a large room with multiple stations for students to circulate, utilizing computer software to learn approximately a dozen various subjects at student's own pace." However, this same study gave CHS a rating of "poor" for science classrooms, and made the comment "Science rooms lack adequate storage and prep areas." During a joint science department meeting a concern of storage areas being cluttered, outdated, and containing expired chemicals was expressed by Covington City faculty members which leads us to ask whose responsibility will it be to clean these areas out in order to provide room for CMS science equipment. We recently purchased a classroom set of chargeable teaching microscopes that were very expensive, and MUST be stored safely away from students. This is just one example of modern equipment that will be expected to be moved safely, and relocated. Also, if renovations are allowed, will science lab rooms be added at each floor so that grade levels are separate as they should be at the middle school level. If we are expected to share labs it takes away from spontaneity, flexibility, and it would be difficult to follow the CIP pacing guide. -KJH & CPD*
- *The issue of Science labs is a serious one. Currently, all Science teachers are able to conduct daily demos and experiments in classrooms equipped with adequate labs, and with each classroom adjoining an adequate lab equipment storage room. This is ESSENTIAL to proper Science education, allowing both teacher-led and student-generated experimentation that matches the SOL - driven subject pacing as well as the expansion of curriculum topics so as to advance Science learning beyond the SOL minimum.*
- *If the (now) middle school is rented out or sold to Dabney then there will be grown college aged students near the elementary school aged children. That provides the opportunity for problems to arise.*
- *After touring CHS I feel that there is no place in that building that would be suitable for the self contained special education room and their handicapped students.*

- *The consideration of Covington High School being in a location near businesses within the City of Covington allowing for after school jobs and internships is ridiculous. The students in the middle school are mostly between the ages of 11 & 15. They are too young for jobs and internships. This would be a consideration better suited for High School students.*
- *Your report compares the two High Schools and their facilities but does not mention Clifton Middle School. They have given zero good reasons why CHS is a better fit for the Middle School. Being a historical building in the center of the community makes it a good place for a community center or housing the Historical Society. Use it for something where the community can appreciate the hardwood and marble floors. I'm sorry but that is not something an 11 year old is interested in.*
- *Our little community is not as safe as it once was, sadly! At CMS we do not have vehicles driving around campus, we do not have people walking on sidewalks right in front of the building - if we see anyone outside, we immediately go on alert. This is not the case at CHS.*
- *With the pandemic and the block scheduling we experienced at CMS there was an occasional need for green space just to take a lap and stretch legs, release squirmies, and just take in fresh air for 5 to 10 minutes. Let me clarify that green space and recess are NOT the same thing and nor am I pushing for recess for middle schoolers, but some green space for walking, even conducting science lessons outdoors is essential. Is there any safe, green space at CHS? That is not utilized by the gym classes? There certainly is at CMS.*
- *If the building is not paid for and it will be subleased to someone (Dabney?) who pays the taxes and takes care of the maintenance?*
- *From the joint committee: "Unsurprisingly, public opinion is a continued driving force in making an ultimate determination. The Subcommittee recognizes that many in the general public view the prospect of consolidation through the lens of which high school might ultimately be chosen". To my knowledge, teachers were not involved in this process. Teachers are the ones that are directly involved with the children and the building. We pride ourselves in knowing what's best for our children or at least we try to advocate what's best for them. Based on what I have read, the public is deciding what's best, educationally, for our children. They are making decisions on their education based on which school they attend or which area they are from. SO this means that because I have cut wood, I should be able to chooses the best timber to harvest. Because I have attended an auction, and have been told I talk fast, I should be able to run an auction company. Neither of those make sense but allowing the public to decide what building is best does????*
- *According to the Final Joint Proposal for Consolidation of the School Systems, a survey from the 20-20 Insight, Consolidation Poll asked the question: "Are residents more likely to support consolidation if the Allegheny and Covington High School buildings would both be used?" Only 38% said yes.*

Overall the results of the poll show that 54% of the community is either very supportive or mostly supportive of consolidation. It only increased to 58% once additional educational opportunities (72%), financial savings (68%), additional opportunities at JRTC (63%), no changes to elementary education (51%). So it seems like we are closing CMS to go to CHS for 38%.
- *Those involved in the survey:
254 Respondents
Only 9% are employed with the schools
39% have school aged children in the house
61% do not*
- *Were contingency plans developed in case the buildings that are Covington High School become structurally unsafe and can no longer be used?*
- *When making the decision to move the location of a combined middle school to Covington High School, it appears that a number of crucial facts were either overlooked or purposely ignored in order to quickly get the state's approval for the consolidation.*
- *Our students, families, and communities count on their government officials to make the best decisions and choices to provide for their safety, health, welfare, and opportunities for education and improving their quality of life.*
- *The mission statement of the Committee on Joint School Services says: "The goal of this effort will be the maintenance of and continued pursuit of excellence in instruction and educational opportunities for the students of the Allegheny Highlands while maintaining the fiscal responsibility the citizens of our community expect and deserve." Have they met this goal?*

She added that they want consolidation and what is best for the children, but do not understand why it would be best for the kids to be moved from a modern school to an older school.

Other items mentioned (and responses if applicable) by Ms. Saville and other teachers in attendance included: CMS would be losing everything (i.e., school building, name, mascot, colors, etc.); how could CMS be used for other things as it is connected to MVE; background checks are done on adults at CMS and MVE and asked if DSLCC leases the building if they would be required to also do them as it is all one building; businesses coming in look at schools and would question why the school is in an old building versus a new one; when school board offices combine they could be put in the County School Board office as it is newly renovated, but what about the children; why teachers were not on a committee and not asked their opinion (teachers were included on subcommittees, but not sure if there were any from CMS); if CHS can be remodeled (it can be

remodeled); if closing CMS is a done deal (the new School Board can do anything, but the closing of the school is in the agreement); CHS was built in 1938 with 89,000 sq. ft. and 32 classrooms and CMS was built in 2000 with 119,000 sq. ft. and 52 classrooms; there are numerous Code violations at CHS that would cost \$4 million to fix with most of them for accessible accommodations; CHS should be a separate STEM school; teachers were not included in the survey done; etc.

There was further discussion on the fiscal cost of running so many schools and maintaining taxes; that Covington gave up CHS and the County lost CMS; public forums were held over the last two years; the joint School Board has a year to plan on utilization; etc.

DISCUSS POTENTIAL RENOVATIONS TO THE ROSEDALE BUILDING:

Ms. Tammy Wilson, Director of Social Services, read a prepared statement which is as follows and is a part of the records of this meeting:

Thank you for taking the time to hear our requests and concerns. I am Tammy Wilson and I am the Director of Allegheny-Covington Dept. of Social Services. This is Tiney Rose and she is the county Registrar. Some of our staff are present, as well.

Both of our agencies, along with the Drug Task Force and Sheriff's Office (storage), occupy space at Rosedale, in the old hospital. The Sheriff's Office and Drug Task Force utilize space for storage. DSS has occupied this location for over 33 years. The Registrar's Office has been in the building almost 20 years. Currently, we face a space shortage within this building. There is about 19,280 square feet and DSS occupies 16,205 of those. Presently there is not enough parking for all staff. Some spaces are rented from the apartment building across the street and some employees park in the front of the building in an area that is designated for clients. We have 40 employees and are growing, not from desire, but from necessity. Just as an example, we took into foster care approximately 20 children between January and February and we serve over 6,000 clients a month. These numbers will guarantee the need for additional staff. Our staffing needs will outpace the available space in this building.

In 2004, a Quality Management Review was conducted. An employee survey was administered at that time, revealing strong concerns that the building was substandard. Workers related stories of constant flooding, snakes in the building, overall unsafe and dirty conditions. A survey conducted in February 2022, revealed many of the same issues. The report noted that the number one concern of agency employees was the building-the overall appearance of the building does not portray the most professional appearance nor provide a pleasant atmosphere for staff to work and does not lend itself to client flow, and may present hazards to clients and staff. As you are aware, the building is a little over 90 years old and has, as you might imagine, some issues. Some have referred to the building as a dump, but I say that it is a building which has seen its better days. Mike Hendrickson and the staff at Public Works have worked hard to maintain the building, but you can only band aid something so many times before the band aid no longer sticks.

All of the above results in an ineffective work space for the agency. This in turn affects our ability to provide efficient and comprehensive services to our community members. The condition of the building and what is perceived as a lack of concern from officials creates low morale and contributes to low productivity, turnover rates and our ability to hire and retain talented workers.

Currently, the Registrar's Office is housed on the 2nd floor. Equipment for the Registrar is also housed on the 2nd floor, but through a locked section of DSS. This creates confidentiality concerns for the agency, as vendors have to go into our Child Protective Services department in order to access that equipment. They could easily overhear conversations about ongoing cases, as well as lay eyes on children who are in foster care or parents who may be the subject of an investigation. That is unacceptable. During the 2020 election, over 2,000 people came through the building. That means that they also could have potential contact with children and clients that we serve, also creating troubling issues with confidentiality. Those same people had to stand in line down the hallway, as there was no room to sit due to the insufficient lobby space in the Registrar's Office. It is a struggle for disabled persons who come into the Registrar's Office as they must go up the elevator and down a hallway over uneven floors, only to stand in line as there is no waiting room.

So, we don't come to you only with a problem, but we offer some solutions, as well. We are requesting that you approve the budget request from Public Works for renovations, which will allow the Registrar to relocate their office and machines to the 1st floor, providing easier access for their clients and allowing all of their equipment and materials to be stored and maintained in one secure location. This funding will also allow DSS to move our employees out of the basement, which has the greatest amount of building maintenance concerns, and move into the areas previously occupied by the Registrar's Office. We have worked very closely with Mike Hendrickson, developing a workable plan. We have both been very flexible in our expectations with the needed renovation and Mike is on board with this plan.

Going forward, understand that this is a needed temporary fix. Long term, we will require additional space and would therefore seek to move to a different, larger location. We offer some suggestions for your consideration. Boiling Springs Elementary (1975) has been empty since 2014. This building has approximately 28,000 square feet and would allow ample room for expansion and provide needed parking spaces, as well. This building also has fiber, while currently DSS only has DSL. This location would require renovations and a satellite office (2 employees) would still have to be maintained at Rosedale, as public transportation is not available in that area. Out of all of the (locality owned) options, this school is the newest facility. Other suggestions include Clifton Forge High School (1928) and Clifton Forge Elementary East (1926/1937/1952). While CFHS would certainly require significant cost and renovations, its sheer size would allow the agency to offer multiple in house services to benefit our clients. This facility offers 53,000 square feet. Developers are currently looking at this location. CF Elem East has 19,717 square feet, but there is no parking without demolishing the buildings on the old playground. Federal and state historical tax credits are available for both of these sites. Kroger in Covington is currently empty and offers 27,412 square feet. It is privately owned.

EZPass in Clifton Forge is currently leased but there has been some mention that the owners (Lumos) are interested in selling the property. It has over 19,000 square feet. The C&O Offices (1906) in Clifton Forge are empty, but it is unknown if the railroad would lease the property. The building is fairly large, and by outward appearances seems in good shape, but there has been some mention of potential foundation issues. There is ample parking. The former Jeter Watson (1939) school has nearly 28,000 square feet, is owned by the city of Covington and the facility is in good condition. However, there are some offices that occupy the ground floor and according to conversations with Covington City Clerk's Office, there are currently no available spaces. The former Edgemont Elementary (1945) school is also soon to be empty and has been closed and underutilized since 2006. It offers ample parking and has about 27,175 square feet. It would require renovations. It also has some interest from a developer.

One has to consider whether it makes more sense to move towards finding a permanent location for DSS and perhaps the Registrar's Office and put monies towards those endeavors or whether we continue to band aid the issues. What is the most cost effective option that best serves our clients, while still providing a safe and healthy workspace that promotes a genuine concern for the well-being of our agency and staff, while ensuring efficiency, loyalty and productivity from that staff?

We appreciate your taking the time to consider our requests and hear our concerns. Do you have any questions?

CFHS: If you house DSS on the top floor, you could offer multiple services on the lower floor, sort of a one stop shopping for our clients. By providing all services in a central location, citizens are more likely to access those needed services. Potential services include mental health counseling and skill building, AA/NA support groups, soup kitchen, senior center, daycare, employment services, immunizations clinic, dental clinic, food pantry, hygiene pantry, clothing closet, teen mentoring service, parenting classes, tutoring program, as well as potential office space for other service related providers. There would also be the ability to rent out the auditorium.

She asked that the Board approve funding for Public Works to make the needed renovations.

There was some discussion on whether a feasibility study has been done on any of the other buildings in regards to costs (need to do); amount of spaced needed (around 20,000 sq. ft.); where the best location would be (somewhere that is RADAR bus accessible); will look into further to see what is out there and discuss at a future meeting; discussion by Ms. Rose on increase in mailings, absentee voters, need for full-time employee, etc.

APPROVE REFUND OF BUSINESS LICENSE TAX TO SCHAEFERROLLS:

Mr. Huber stated that there is a certification from Ms. Valerie Bruffey, Commissioner of Revenue, and consent memo from Mr. Guynn at each seat in relation to a refund of \$13,826.71 in BPOL (business license) taxes to SchaeferRolls since 2019 as they should have been classified as a manufacturing facility which is exempt from BPOL taxes. The memo and certification are a part of the records of this meeting.

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Dr. Goings, that the following resolution be adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors authorize the Treasurer to refund \$13,826.71 to SchaeferRolls for BPOL taxes for 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022. Reason for refund: SchaeferRolls applied for a business license four years ago, but are more correctly categorized as a manufacturing facility and are exempt from BPOL taxes.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

APPOINTMENT OF MR. REID WALTERS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR, TO VARIOUS BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS EFFECTIVE MAY 16, 2022:

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Dr. Goings, that the following resolution be adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors appointed Mr. Reid Walters as County Administrator effective May 16, 2022;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board appoint Mr. Walters to the following boards/commission to replace Mr. Peter Huber, Interim County Administrator:

- Community Policy and Management Team (no set term)
- Chief Locally Elected Officials Consortium (no set term)
- Court-Community Corrections Regional Community Criminal Justice Board (beginning July 1, 2022 and ending June 30, 2025)
- Emergency Services Coordinator (no set term)
- Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (beginning May 16, 2022 and ending June 30, 2023)
- Program Administrator/Grants Compliance Officer/Section 504 Grievance Officer for the Wrightsville Community Development Block Grant and member of its Project Management Team
- Also, any other organizations that are tied to the position (i.e., AHEDC rotating Chair/Vice-Chair position, Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Board of Directors, Co-Executive Director to Covington-Alleghany Industrial Development Authority, Regional Workforce Development Board Executive Committee, Roanoke Regional Partnership Board of Directors and Executive Committee, etc.)

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

APPROVE RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR MR. PETE HUBER, INTERIM COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR:

Mr. Garten read the draft resolution of appreciation and presented Mr. Huber with a framed copy.

On motion of Dr. Goings, seconded by Mrs. Cox, that the following resolution be approved:

**RESOLUTION OF APPRECIATION FOR PETE HUBER
BY THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF ALLEGHANY COUNTY, VIRGINIA**

WHEREAS, in July 2021, Pete Huber began his service to Alleghany County as Interim County Administrator; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Huber has served the County well and faithfully as Interim County Administrator and assisted the County staff and government in continuing their operations during the search for a new County Administrator; and

WHEREAS, the County wishes to express its gratitude and appreciation to Mr. Huber for his service.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that:

The Alleghany County Board of Supervisors recognizes that Mr. Huber provided outstanding service as Interim County Administrator and greatly assisted the County in the process of finding its next County Administrator; and

The Board expresses its appreciation and gratitude to Pete Huber for his service as Interim County Administrator on behalf of the Alleghany County government, staff, and citizens; and

The Board, on behalf of the citizens of Alleghany County, wishes Mr. Huber the best in his future endeavors including a long and happy retirement.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Huber handed out and gave a report on the following items which is a part of the records of this meeting:

Alleghany County Bicentennial Celebration Committee

It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors appoint the following additional participants on the bicentennial

celebration committee: Shelly Mongold, Reid Walters, Pam Warren and Michelle Rucker.

On motion of Dr. Goings, seconded by Mrs. Cox, that the following resolution be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors appoint the following individuals to also serve on the Alleghany County Bicentennial Celebration Committee:

Shelly Mongold
Michelle Rucker
Reid Walters
Pam Warren

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

Broadband Grant for the Lost Colony of Alleghany County

Virginia is currently soliciting comments on another round of broadband funding. As in previous funding efforts, one of the requirements is that the County partner with private sector internet service providers. Indication of the Board's interest in seeking funding for the western portion of the County is recommended.

On motion of Mrs. Cox, seconded by Dr. Goings, that the following resolution be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors expresses its interest in partnering with private sector internet service providers in order to obtain broadband funding for the western portion of the County which is underserved.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

Scheduling of Budget Work Session/Appointment of School Board Members

Not having a State budget makes it difficult to complete County budget recommendations. Attached are three alternative schedules for budget adoption. Scheduling of a budget work session is suggested for next week or Monday and Tuesday the week of May 16th (prior to May 18th). This schedule will allow for a public hearing on the budget to be held on June 7th with adoption to follow at a special meeting on June 14th.

After discussion, the Board agreed by consensus to meet on Monday, May 16th at 6:00 p.m. to hold a budget work session and on Tuesday, May 17th at 6:00 p.m. to appoint School Board members.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Agreement

Attached is a draft agreement for consideration by the Board. I plan to meet with the Executive Director at noon on Wednesday and would appreciate comments, suggestions or concerns from Board members.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS (INQUIRIES/REPORTS):

Miscellaneous

The Board thanked everyone for coming to the meeting.

CLOSED MEETING:

On motion of Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Griffith, that the Board go into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia Sections 2.2-3711(A)(3) and (8) for the purpose of: (1) property acquisition;(2) contractual matters; and (3) consultation with legal counsel. Unanimously adopted.

On motion of Dr. Goings, seconded by Mr. Bennett, that the Board come out of the Closed Meeting with the following certification:

CERTIFICATION
SECTION 2.2-3712

To the best of our knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under this chapter, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the session.

/s/Shannon P. Cox	Yes
/s/Ronald S. Goings	Yes
/s/G. Matt Garten	Yes
/s/James M. Griffith	Yes
/s/Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
/s/Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
/s/Gregory A. Dodd	Yes

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion of Mrs. Cox, seconded by Mr. Griffith, that the meeting be adjourned at 12:35 a.m. to Monday, May 16, 2022 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the County Governmental Complex. Motion carried.

G. Matt Garten
Chairman