

***Minutes of the Regular Meeting of the School Board of the City of Richmond
February 5, 2007***

Regular Meeting A regular meeting of the School Board of the City of Richmond was held on Monday, February 5, 2007, at 6:00 p.m. in the City Council Chambers on 2nd floor of City Hall. The Chairman called the meeting to order. The Clerk called the roll. The following were present:

Members: Mr. George P. Braxton, Chairman
Mrs. A. Lisa Dawson, Vice Chairman
Mrs. Kimberly M. Bridges
Ms. Betsy B. Carr
Mrs. Joan T. Mimms
Mrs. Chandra H. Smith
Mr. B. Keith West
Mrs. Evette L. Wilson
Mrs. Carol A. O. Wolf

Officers: Dr. Deborah Jewell-Sherman, Superintendent
Mrs. Angela C. Lewis, Clerk
Mrs. Debora R. Johns, Chief, Internal Audit/Deputy Clerk
Mr. Thomas E. Sheeran, Assistant Superintendent of
Finance and Operations/Agent
Mr. Keith W. Brown, Director of Finance/Deputy Agent

Others Present: Dr. Yvonne Brandon, Associate Superintendent for
Instruction & Accountability
Dr. Ronald Carey, Executive Director for Elementary Education
Dr. Harold Fitrer, Assistant Superintendent for
Administrative & Support Services
Mr. Douglas Green, Manager, Department of Information
& Technology
Dr. Irving Jones, Executive Director for Secondary Education

Attorney: Mr. Bradford King

The record reflected that a quorum was present.

Pledge of Allegiance Mrs. Chandra Smith led the Pledge of Allegiance. It was followed by a moment of silence in remembrance of Geraldine Taylor, a teacher at Armstrong High School.

Adoption of Agenda On a motion by Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mrs. Mimms, the School Board adopted the agenda as presented.

Recognitions Jasmine Estep, a student at John Marshall High School, received a certificate in recognition for serving as the Student Representative to the School Board for the month of January 2007.

A certificate was presented to the students from Fisher Elementary and Binford Middle Schools who participated in the 2006 First LEGO Robotics Regional Tournament that was held on November 18, 2006 at the Maggie L. Walker Governor's School. The Fisher Elementary School High Speed Robotics #713 LEGO Team placed first overall in Research Project Presentation on innovative Nanotechnology in the development of Liquid Armor, placed second overall in Robot Performance, and qualified to participate in the 2006 Virginia First LEGO Robotics Tournament held in Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, Virginia.

Yolanda Sumner, a student at Franklin Military, received a certificate of achievement for being the central regional winner of Dominion's Annual Writing Contest and being honored at Dominion's Strong Men and Women: Excellence in Leadership Celebration on January 18, 2007.

Kevin Harris, a student at Thomas Boushall Middle School, received a certificate in recognition for being named the Youth Sports and Fine Arts Academy Youth of the Year in a program sponsored by the Richmond Redevelopment and Housing Authority and for being spotlighted in the Personality Section of the December 28-20, 2006 edition of the Richmond Free Press.

A certificate of recognition for the \$1,500 Ram Slam Scholarships given by Dr. Domenic Sica, a medical professor and doctor at Virginia Commonwealth University Hospital, was presented to Jasmine Alston, Jessica Frazier, Kiara Brroughs, Sierra Kelly, Martine Jackson, and Barbaratta Whitaker.

**Recognitions
Continued**

The 2006-2007 Students of Richmond Community High School received a certificate of appreciation in recognition of their efforts to raise nearly \$600 for the Central Virginia Foodbank.

The George Wythe High School Citizens Advisory Group which included community volunteers and agency participants along with parents and staff, and the support of Communities in Schools received a certificate of appreciation for their dedicated work in improving the culture of the school and restoring Bull Dog pride.

A certificate of achievement was awarded to several students that attend Thomas Jefferson High School, Huguenot High School, Maggie Walker Governor's School, George Wythe High School, Lucille Brown Middle School, Open High School, Richmond Community High School, Franklin Military, John Marshal High School for their hard work, dedication, and commitment to their academic success which led to receiving a perfect score on their SOLs taken during the 2005 2006 academic year.

In recognition of their valuable contributions, dedication, and time in assisting in the re-zoning efforts of Richmond City Public Schools a certificate was presented to members that served on the Re-zoning Task Force Committee.

Mrs. Vivian Mason, a teacher at Oak Grove Elementary School, was presented with a certificate of achievement for her dedication and commitment to the students of Richmond Public Schools which led to a nomination to have her biography printed in the 2005-2006 Edition of the National Honor Roll's Outstanding American Teachers.

The School Board received recognition for School Board Appreciation Week. The Clerk read the certificate into the record

CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION

Whereas, it is crucial to the future of our Commonwealth that all young people in Virginia are afforded the opportunity to receive a quality education in our public schools; and

Whereas, teachers, administrators, families and local school board members are entrusted with creating a safe and nurturing environment conducive to learning in Virginia's public schools; and

Whereas, local school boards throughout Virginia promote basic, yet diverse and resourceful curricula which ensure students a well-rounded education that will be useful in student's daily life and future academic and professional pursuits; and

Whereas, our local school boards work together through the Virginia School Boards Association to encourage local control of Virginia's public schools and to share teaching and administrative techniques, and suggestions with one another in a focused effort to raise the overall quality of education in our Commonwealth; and

Whereas, this year's theme; Rising to Meet the Challenge is a testament to commitment and leadership of our local school board members throughout the Commonwealth;

Now, Therefore, the Richmond Public Schools joins Governor Timothy M. Kaine in recognizing February 2007 as **School Board Appreciation Month** in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and calls this observance to the attention of all citizens of the Commonwealth, residents of Richmond, and members of the Richmond Public Schools family.

In recognition of Virginia School Board Appreciation Month a certificate was presented to the School Board members honoring them for their commitment and service to the children of the Commonwealth from the Virginia School Boards Association.

**Recognitions
Continued**

The Clerk read the following resolution in to the record for National School Counselors week.

RESOLUTION

Whereas, school counselors are employed in public and private schools to help students reach their full potential; and

Whereas, school counselors help parents focus on ways to further the educational, personal and social growth of their children; and

Whereas, school counselors are actively committed to helping students explore their abilities, strengths, interests, and talents as these traits relate to career awareness and development; and

Whereas, school counselors work with teachers and other educators to help students explore their potential and set realistic goals for themselves; and

Whereas, school counselors seek to identify and utilize community resources that can enhance and complement comprehensive school counseling programs and help students become productive members of society; and

Whereas, comprehensive development school counseling programs are considered an integral part of the educational process that enables all students to achieve success in school;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the School Board of the City of Richmond does join with the Virginia Department of Education in recognizing February 5-9, 2007 as *National School Counselor Week*.

Be it further resolved that the School Board of the City of Richmond does request that the members of the Richmond Public Schools' family and residents of the City of Richmond participate in this observance.

The Clerk read the following certification of recognition into the record:

**CERTIFICATE OF RECOGNITION
CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION MONTH**

Whereas, profound economic and technological changes in our society are rapidly reflected in the structure and nature of work thereby placing new and additional responsibilities on our educational system; and

Whereas, Career and Technical Education provides students with a career pathway for post secondary education and workplace readiness and is the foundations of a strong, well-educated workforce, which fosters productivity in business and industry and contributes to Virginia's leadership in the international marketplace; and

Whereas, Career and Technical Education gives students experience impractical, meaningful applications of basic skills such as reading, writing and mathematics, thus improving the quality of their education, motivating high achievement for all students, and giving all students leadership opportunities in their fields and in their communities; and

Whereas, the ever-increasing cooperative effort between career and technical educators, career and technical education administrators and business and industry representatives stimulate the growth and vitality of our economy and that of the entire nation by preparing graduates for career fields forecast to experience the largest and fastest growth in the next decade;

Now, therefore, Richmond Public Schools joins Governor Timothy M. Kaine in recognizing February 2007 as **Career and Technical Education Month** in the Commonwealth of Virginia, and calls this observance to the attention of all citizens of the Commonwealth, residents of Richmond, and members of the Richmond Public Schools family.

Public Information **Mr. John Reid**, a citizen, desired to speak on Richmond Public Schools budgetary process. Mr. Reid stated that construction and facilities maintenance of plant services were made up of many divisions which provided a safe and healthy environment to children for learning, which included school buildings, transportation, security, construction trades, mail services, and grounds maintenance. Mr. Reid suggested rather than cut the budget from plant services and lay people off the, Board should consider them when preparing the budget because they kept the buildings from falling to the ground.

Public Hearing on the Proposed 2008 General Fund Budget On a motion by Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Ms. Carr, the Board voted to adjourn the regular meeting to go into Public Hearing on the Proposed 2008 General Fund Budget.

Mr. Braxton stated the School Board was operating under an ordinance that had been passed in 2006 by City Council. The School Board had put together a budget, with an addendum based on the needs of the system. He stated that the school system had received a letter from the City Administration stating that the school system should not expect to receive any funds in excess of what was received in prior years.

Ms. Lynn Bragga shared a brief Powerpoint presentation on the 2007-2008 School Board's Proposed Budget.

Mr. Wade Ellegood, President of the REA, stated that the REA believed that the language in the budget ordinance adopted by City Council was illegal. He stated that the REA also believed that it was of the School Boards obligation to meet the level of appropriations and to present a budget that reflected the needs of the school district. The REA was asking the School Board to include the supplemental expenditures requested in its proposed general fund budget and to reconsider eliminating custodians, counselors, and transportation positions. Mr. Ellegood also recommended that School Board close 13 Acres and Real School and house those programs in Henderson Middle and Linwood Holton Elementary Schools. He suggested that the School Board begin the process of merging Maymont and Clark Springs Elementary Schools.

Mr. David Ballard, a citizen, stated that the position City Council and the Administration had taken with regard to funding to the school system was very disturbing. The budget ordinance adopted by the City for the current allocation contained language that placed restrictions on the School Board that were in direct opposition of what the State statute demanded for School Boards to carry out their duties. The City Council ordinance stated that the School Board should not submit a budget that exceeded the target figure set by Council and the City Administration. State statute required that the Superintendent and School Board submit a need based budget to the governing bodies of the locality. The School Board found itself in the position of either having to violate a local ordinance or violate State law. Mr. Ballard asked the School Board to challenge the City Ordinance and submit a budget that reflected the needs of the students in Richmond. He further stated that the citizens should demand their elected council members to provide the funding necessary to continue the academic improvements that had been seen in past five years.

Mr. Charles Nance, a citizen, suggested not laying off custodians and grounds keepers but rather consider moving those employees and that function, as well as purchasing, payroll and finance to the City Administration. He stated there were many other jurisdictions that had expenses not imposed on the school system because they were covered by the local government. By not laying off principals, assistant principals, and guidance counselors the School Board had the opportunity to close additional schools such as Maymont, Bellevue and Southampton Elementary Schools. He suggested that one criterion to use to determine if a school's expenses were essential was whether it had advanced in academic achievement. The first rule to the budget was to protect the classroom because improvements would drive the enrollments up.

***Public Hearing on
the Proposed 2008
General Fund
Budget Continued***

Ms. Tichi Pinkney-Epps, President of Richmond Council of PTAs stated that she had much appreciation for the task the School Board faced and the one the Board must accomplish. She stated that as the Board moved through this process, the parents needed to be kept informed and to know who, what, when, where, how, and why. Ms. Pinkney-Epps indicated the parents wanted to be a part of the final decision and they only asked that this be done in support of the students. Most importantly, the children were the top and bottom line of any budget that the Board developed. Ms. Pinkney-Epps asked that the Board not allow anyone or any of them to play politics with their children's education. She asked that everyone work together and move the schools from good to great and beyond. She stated that ultimately, the children's future depended on it.

Mr. Matt Musclerat, a parent, stated that Maymont should be closed, but not now. He stated that voting to close Maymont in June 2007 as opposed to June 2008 showed poor judgment and lack of understanding and irresponsibility to the community. Closing Maymont without sufficient time for parents and staff to explore their options was reprehensive and short sided. He noted that generally the discussion to close Maymont had been about how much would be saved but what about how much would be lost. He stated the people in this City expected better representation.

Ms. Julie Garrett, a custodian, stated that the custodians not only cleaned the toilets and dumped trash, they also checked the buildings for maintenance issues, trespassers, wiped children noses and tied shoes and helped find reports. She stated that the children depended on them and their presence in the building made a better working and learning environment. Ms. Garrett commented that the custodians were the health keepers of the school environment. She also stated that custodians had dedicated their lives, careers and health to take care of RPS. Now they asked that the school system take care of them. She commented that getting a job done for less money did not mean that you got a better job done.

Mr. Wayne Ellis, a parent and teacher of RPS, stated that as he looked over the budget, there was only one area that did not have any cuts and that was Central Administration. He stated that a savings of \$1 – 2 million could be recognized in that area, which would help with the budget crunch. This would allow principals to get leaders in the building and allow teachers to teach the students and not to the test. He noted that there was money in the budget for the CCP program and stated that students placed in that program were sent back to the building as unruly as they were when they left. Mr. Ellis stated that it was time to let the educators educate and the administrators administrate.

Ms. Joyce Patron, a custodian, stated that she had worked for RPS for the past twenty-four years. She stated that the school system was currently understaffed with regard to custodians, and it was harder to work with a limited number. Ms. Patron stated that they all pulled together to get the job done and they took pride in their work. She reiterated what an earlier speaker stated, which was that the custodians were not just the clean up crew of the school. They assisted in the cafeteria, acted as chaperons at school activities and sometimes were mentors to the students. She asked that the Board keep the current number of custodians and that if a change had to be made that they increase the number.

Mr. Charles Willis, a parent, spoke in support of the budget that had been presented. Mr. Willis stated that he was a former student and custodian. He shared that he had twenty-three years of experience with RPS as paraprofessional, teacher's aid, and the first and only Parent Ombudsman that RPS had. Mr. Willis asked the Board members to stand firm for the budget. He stated that it was their money and he wanted it back in the children's education.

Mr. Daniel Zipperer, a teacher and parent, stated he was sick and tired of his employers and bosses being slandered on a weekly basis as to the job they were doing in the City of Richmond. He stated that he personally had not known a better Superintendent or better School Board. He stated that the Board needed to stay focused on what they had been elected to do. Mr. Zipperer commented that when the Board made cuts to make sure those cut could be afforded. He stated that the Mayor was wrong when he suggested that the amount of per pupil cost was due to waste. He asked that the Board not give legitimacy to illegitimate policy.

*Public Hearing on
the Proposed 2008
General Fund
Budget Continued*

Mr. Larry T. Anderson, a custodian, stated that the custodians were the first ones in the schools everyday. He stated that custodians sometimes did things that the teachers, security guards, or principals would not do. He shared that he was one of the forty-five custodians being cut and he had fought hard to get this job. He stated that it was a shame that the Board was cutting the most effective people in the building.

Mr. Phillip Ricks, a custodian, stated that if forty-five custodian positions were cut, it would affect the way the buildings were being maintained. He also shared some of the duties that custodians assisted with outside of their normal responsibilities.

Ms. Patricia King, a custodian, expressed concerns about what would happen on July 1, 2007 if the custodians did not have job.

Mr. William Jefferson, a custodian, desired to know if the Board would reconsider budget cuts to the custodial staff. He stated that they were the first and last to leave the building, they helped take care of the children and sometimes the adults. Mr. Jefferson commented that they kept the building clean and it was a job well done. He asked that they be allowed to keep their jobs.

Mr. Ronald Horton, a custodial manager, stated that he had been employed by the school system for twenty-nine years. He stated that student achievement was not only accomplished by the principals and teachers, but the custodians played a great part in that achievement. He stated that the custodial staff was underestimated, and their value marginalized. Mr. Horton stated that they believed they were the backbone and foundation of RPS. They not only did the assigned tasks placed before them, but they served as guidance counselors, parents, social workers, teachers, and big brothers or sisters to a lot of the students. He noted that the custodians were certified to provide quality service and had knowledge of the operation of the programs that were provided in the schools. They volunteered their services before and after school to monitor the cafeteria and school bus transportation. Mr. Horton commented that the custodians provided encouragement, guidance and inspiration to some students who needed that to stay in school and excel. He stated that the custodians had earned the trust and respect of the students and staff. They volunteered their services to substitute as teachers and they were willing to work overtime for activities that were scheduled after hours and on weekends. He stated that the custodians were the ones that provided a safe and health environment for RPS.

Ms. Angela Dews, a teacher, stated that the Board had been elected to stand up for the children of Richmond and had taken an Oath to do what was in the best interest of the children in the school system. She stated that to vote for a dictated budget rather than the budget that was needed for the schools was a violation of the School Board's Oath of Office. Ms. Dews stated the guidance counselors were needed in the school system if it was going to go from good to great. She stated that the custodians were dedicated and they cared about their job because they were the first ones to arrive at work and the last ones to leave. Ms. Dews further commented that if the School Board allowed the budget to be dictated to them this year they could expect the same next year. In conclusion, Ms. Dews stated that she believed it was illegal for the Mayor to dictate to the School Board its responsibility to prepare a budget that was needed, otherwise when it fell apart the Mayor and City Council could simply say that they were given what they asked for.

Mr. Clarence Johnson, a supervisor, stated that he had been an RPS employee for thirty-two years. He shared that in 1977 the school system had attempted to out source maintenance by hiring Service Master to cover George Wythe High School and it did not work. He indicated that there were three night crews, one for the east end, north side, and the far west end. Mr. Johnson stated that the custodians were certified and they really needed their jobs. He commented that he was eligible to retire, but asked the Board members to consider those who were not and those who had children. He further stated that the custodians did other functions in the schools such as bus duty and security. Mr. Johnson reiterated that they needed their jobs.

Ms. Toni Harris, a teacher, expressed her concerns about the closing of Maymont. She desired to know what was going to happen to her colleagues and the students who were in self-contained classrooms. Ms. Harris stated that Maymont was a good school, the teachers did a good job, the administrators were

***Public Hearing on
the Proposed 2008
General Fund
Budget Continued***

great and the custodians were great. She shared that everyone at the school was wonderful.

Ms. Angie Meccia, a Guidance Counselor, stated that the Guidance Counselors were needed and the School Board knew that.

Ms. Charlotte Haegar, a teacher and Vice-President of the REA, stated that she had stood before the School Board and reprimanded them on several occasions for not doing what it was supposed to do with regard to the budget for the students and employees of Richmond Public Schools. She noted that custodians and other guidance counselors had stood before the Board and stated how important they were to the school system.

Mr. Braxton thanked everyone for their comments. On motion by Ms. Carr, seconded Mrs. Mimms, the Board voted to return to the regular scheduled meeting.

***Approval of the
Minutes***

The minutes of the budget work session of December 13, 2006 were tabled until next meeting.

***Discuss the
Relocation of
Central
Administrative
Offices***

Mr. Sheeran reported on the relocation of Central Administrative Offices. He stated that three options had been recommended by the Facilities Committees. They were; examining leasing space, using a School Board facility, or to continue discussions with city about relocating to city space.

Mr. Sheeran stated earlier in the day the Administration had received a letter from city officials about meeting with the Administration to further refine relocating offices into the Main Street Station Shed area. That meeting was scheduled for Tuesday, February 6, 2007 and the information received would be incorporated into a report for the Facilities Committee at its next meeting. Mr. Sheeran stated that the three options he was presenting to the Board would be a part of the discussion with the City Administration.

Mr. Braxton stated the information for relocating could come forth to the full Board to see what the options were at the February 20, 2007 Board meeting.

***Receive an
Agreement to
Establish a
Greenhouse and
Organic Garden at
Amelia Street***

Mr. King presented the Agreement to establish a Greenhouse and Organic Garden at Amelia Street. He stated that it had been submitted to the Facilities Committee. Mr. King stated that revisions to the agreement were added as specifically requested by Board members and copy had been provided to the representative.

***Receive the Revised
ADA Policy***

Dr. Aisha Shamburger, ADA Coordinator, shared the previously revised policy and grievance agreement procedures for persons with disabilities along with the Accommodation Request Form.

***Receive the
Recommended
Human Resources
Action***

Dr. Waide Robinson brought forth the Human Resources actions for approval by the School Board. Later in the meeting on a motion by Mrs. Mimms, seconded by Ms. Wilson, the following Human Resources actions were approved.

- The resignation of seven employees.
- The termination of two employees.
- The retirement of three employees.
- The disability retirement of two employees.
- The rescission of employment of two employees.
- The nomination of twenty-five employees.
- The change of contract of eleven employees.
- The transfer of one employee.
- The change of name of three employees.
- The authorization to pay of one employee.
- The furlough of four employees.

***Receive Budget
Transfer***

Ms. Lynn Bragga brought forth budget transfers for informational purposes.

***Receive the
Financial
Statement for the
Period Ended
November 30, 2006***

Ms. Lynn Bragga brought forth the Financial Statement and stated RPS had spent 34 percent of its budget for period ended November 30, 2006. She briefly went through the report for Board members.

***Consider Approval
of the Resolution
on National
Counseling Week,
February 6-10,
2006***

On a motion by Mrs. Wolf, seconded by Ms. Carr, the School Board voted to suspend the rules to consider approval of the resolution recognizing National Counseling Week, February 6-10, 2006.

On a motion by Mrs. Wolf, seconded by Mrs. Smith, the School Board approved the resolution recognizing National Counseling Week.

***Consider Approval
of the Certificate
recognizing Career
and Technical
Education Month***

On a motion by Ms. Carr, seconded by Mrs. Wolf, the School Board voted to suspend the rules to consider approval of the certificate recognizing Career and Technical Education Month.

On a motion by Mrs. Wolf, seconded by Ms. Carr, the School Board approved the certificate recognizing Career and Technical Education Month.

***Consider Approval
of Agreement to
Establish a
Greenhouse and
Organic Garden at
Amelia Street***

On a motion by Ms. Carr, seconded by Mrs. Mimms, the School Board voted to suspend the rules to consider approval of the Agreement to Establish a Greenhouse and Organic Garden at Amelia Street.

On a motion by Ms. Carr, seconded by Ms. Wolf, the School Board approved the Agreement to Establish a Greenhouse and Organic Garden at Amelia Street and chair to sign on behalf of the School Board.

***Employee Matter
#0607-05***

On a motion by Mrs. Dawson, seconded by Mrs. Wilson, on employee matter #0607-05 the School Board approved to uphold the recommendation of the Administration. (*Mesdames Dawson, Bridges, Carr, Smith, Wilson, Messers Braxton, and West voted "aye", Mrs. Mimms "abstained", and Mrs. Wolf recused herself from the vote.*)

There being no further business, on a motion by Ms. Carr, seconded by Mrs. Smith the meeting adjourned at 9:00 p.m.

Clerk

Chairman