

**Wicomico County Council
Open Work Session
September 16, 2014 Part 2**

Work sessions require written minutes that reflect each item that the public body considered, the action that the public body took on each item and each vote that was recorded. **It should be noted that at work sessions, the Wicomico County Council does not take formal action, nor is a vote taken on any item discussed.**

In attendance: Matt Holloway, President; John B. Hall, Vice President; Bob Culver, Sheree Sample-Hughes, Stevie Prettyman, Gail M. Bartkovich and Joe Holloway.

Present: Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator; Edgar A. Baker, Jr., County Attorney; Maureen Howarth, Deputy County Attorney; Dr. John Fredericksen, Dr. Margo Handy, Dr. Cathy Townsend, Brian Foret, Director of Facility Services; Ron Willey, President of Board of Education; Don Fitzgerald, Board Member; Carolyn Elmore, Board Member and Melissa Holland, Recording Secretary.

Board of Education :

Update on water/plumbing at Beaver Run :

Mr. Foret said the Board of Education is still working with County Public Works and the City of Salisbury for the water/sewer issue. He said they have obtained the pre-annexation agreement from the City of Salisbury. He said they have been making progress with the business center at Beaver Run to obtain the necessary easements. Mr. Foret said they will finalize the engineering to see what the next steps will be for the construction timeline. He said they had an original design and ran into a few issues with property owners for easements and they went back and re-designed and the process is going smoothly. Mr. Willey said that at no time during the failure of the pump was there concern about safe drinking water at the schools. Mr. Matt Holloway said he heard there were back ups in lines for the children. Mr. Foret said on the 25th service was lost at Beaver Run and said they placed port-a-potties at the school and had bottled water. He said the problem was found to be pressure issues with one of the four bladder tanks and the problem was resolved. He said over the summer extensive work was done at Beaver Run including a well inspection to see what work needs to be done and how many more years the well will be in working order. Mr. Hall said the Board of Education has done a great job of keeping the parents and citizens involved in the process.

Mr. Willey said that if the Council has an opportunity to visit Pittsville Elementary School he recommends they visit to see the renovations including HVAC. He said the project is not complete but it is absolutely a wonderful project. He said when the final phase is complete he feels the community as a whole can be proud of this project. Dr. Fredericksen said after this renovation and once Bennett Middle School is online there will only be two schools without air conditioning.

Facilities Task Force :

Dr. Fredericksen presented a synopsis of the task force goals. He said that the Board of Education will be seeking funding from the county and state for West Salisbury

Elementary. Dr. Fredericksen said the team is working very well in terms of making a progress report. He said that one of the key pieces is that the Board of Education is looking at units and in an elementary school with 300 students it has the same administrative and special staff as the larger schools with 600 students. He said if he can reduce the units the dollars will go directly into the classrooms. He said they are looking at West Salisbury Elementary being a larger school site and reducing the number of elementary schools that are in operation. He said they are planning to do the same with the middle schools as well. Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked when the appropriate time to discuss West Salisbury Elementary School as Wesley Temple has been inquiring. Dr. Fredericksen said he would be willing to speak to any groups regarding the school, as they can attend the planning meetings or he will attend a meeting at the church.

Dr. Fredericksen said the Board of Education is going to be looking at attendance numbers. He said they plan to have this study complete by January in order to allow families to know if any changes have to be made. Mr. Willey said as soon as the information is available and the decisions have been made as far as school districts, they want to let the families know by the beginning of spring of 2015. Dr. Fredericksen said the 3rd graders that would have gone to Pittsville Elementary School were kept in Willards for another year and 3rd grade was removed from Pittsville Elementary School. He said this was a small change as the students just spent another year at Willards Elementary School. He also said that this year the Board of Education is acknowledging that children have cell phones and they can be used in the cafeteria and in the classroom for educational purposes. Dr. Fredericksen said children in 2nd grade and until 12th grade can have a cell phone in school. He said that an estimate has been done that between 10-25% of children do not have a cell phone but a study has not been done. Dr. Fredericksen said that he sees chargers as a potential problem due to trying to have an outlet for each child to charge their phone. He said they will look more into that issue in the future. He also believes that another problem will be a family problem as they are not allowing the children in school to use the school Wi-Fi. He said the Wi-Fi has been locked down tightly because the schools don't have the capacity for the children at this time. Dr. Fredericksen said they will have to look into this in the near future. He does feel that the using of the phones in class will be limited. He said that by spring they plan to have the Wi-Fi for testing completed and then it will be determined when the children can use the Wi-Fi. Dr. Fredericksen said a parent contacted him concerned about pictures and videos that the children could possibly take with their cell phones to which he said this has been an ongoing concern since the mid 80's. He said however, they have not had a lot of problems with this in the past years. He said that law enforcement has been a good teammate with this as well as the cell phone carriers.

Dr. Fredericksen said that the school meals are healthier now. He said that more children are taking advanced placement classes than ever before. He said that a test run was done at Mardela Middle and High School three years ago and they had the 9th graders take AP Government and they excelled and beat the international scores. He said that three schools are doing this now. Dr. Fredericksen said they have a cell phone tower near Bennett Middle at this time and they can place their own equipment on the

tower.

Dr. Fredericksen said they are excited to piggy back off the contract with SolarCity and begin the savings.

Dr. Fredericksen said they had several bus contractors contracts turned back in and they marketed them to the other contractors and due to the low hours and low miles and the Board of Education is currently operating seven of its own buses and are hiring bus contractors.

Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked for clarification for Wi-Middle. Dr. Fredericksen said in the future the Board of Education will be looking to have Wi-Middle as a swing school. He said if they can move all of the kids out of a site, the building renovations can be completed faster and at a lower cost. He said they are working with the State Department of Planning, Sheriff's Office, Salisbury Police and the faith based community. He said that Goose Creek just opened on Truitt Street and they know there will be more traffic and pedestrians at that location and the Board hoping to hire another crossing guard and are trying to come up with a mechanism to make sure the children are crossing in the appropriate place. Dr. Fredericksen said the population is smaller at Wi-Middle and other children could be placed in the school while their school was being renovated. Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked about the portables at Mardela Middle and High School and asked if they were looking to expand the school to eliminate the portables. Mr. Foret said the Task Force looked at the schools and the portable to see what condition they were in and they are trying to identify all systemic problems in the schools.

Mr. Matt Holloway asked if it would be beneficial to bring Dr. Fredericksen and Mr. Foret in to another meeting to discuss the Task Facilities report and the future plans.

Open Work Session adjourned.