BOARD OF VISITORS

THE VIRGINIA SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF AND THE BLIND
P.O. BOX 2069
STAUNTON, VA 24402-2069

Senator Emmett W. Hanger, Jr.
Board Chairman

March 24, 2015

Minutes of Meeting

Call to Order: Senator Hanger called the meeting to order at 10:48 a.m.

Roll Call of Members: Members present: Senator Emmett Hanger, Senator Barbara Favola, Delegate Dickie Bell, Delegate Tony Wilt, Virgil Cook, John Pleasants, Alice Frick, Mike Asip, Judy Sorrell, and Paula Johnson

Members absent: Ann Latham-Anderson

Advisors to BOV: Wanda Council, VDOE; Wendell Roberts, AAG; Mona Siddiqui, AAG; Pat Trice, Interim Superintendent

Roll call of members was conducted by introductions. Senator Hanger declared a quorum.

Reading and approval of December 10, 2014 meeting minutes: John Pleasants moved to adopt the December 2014 minutes with no corrections to minutes. The motion passed.

Reports

Superintendent's Report: Pat Trice, Interim Superintendent, shared information on the Yates-Shinpaugh Education Building, which flooded in early February because of a broken connecter piece in the fire-protection system. This break resulted in approximately 20,000 gallons of water flooding all three floors of the building, resulting in $300,000 damage to the front half of the building. Employees immediately responded to help deal with flooding, and professional crews came in to vacuum up water. When students are off campus crews are coming in to take down and replace damaged drywall. This work should be completed in the next few weeks, and repainting will take place in the summer. Reserved project funds have been approved to cover expenses, and bills will carry over to next school year. VSDB has been working with the Attorney General's office on this matter, and the state adjuster has met with Marvin.

Some interest is being shown in Healy and Strader Halls. VSDB is checking into where funding can be obtained to do some renovations on these spaces. The RAW Learning Program in Battle Hall currently has 60 students. RAW may be interested in renting the entire building next fall.

Money has been reallocated for the Price Hall project to redo floors and turn ten single rooms into five two-room apartments, which will be used for independent- living-skills training. Selected VSDB staff members, Judy Sorrell and Mike Asip from the Board of Visitors, and Wanda Council from DOE continue to meet monthly to discuss the development of new programs. The school needs to offer transition and workforce skills for non-academic students. We need to develop creative ways of addressing these needs. We will continue to serve the academic students, but we want to increase training in workforce skills.

Pat recently met with John Eisenberg from DOE. Both John Eisenberg and Wanda Council indicated that they support new proposed programs.

Pat continues to work with Secretary Holton's staff to schedule a campus visit for Secretary Holton. Governor McAuliffe was scheduled to visit the campus in March, but the visit had to be canceled.

The outreach program is doing well. The staff is working towards getting more services on campus, along with some potential services that may move to the VSDB campus in the fall.

The TEMP program is going well. Several of the TEMP students and parents have expressed interest in going through the admissions process. The staff is busy planning for the next school year. Snow dates were built into the current school calendar with several missed days because of snow.

Pat continues to work with the Foundation Board. Grants supporting the education garden are starting to come in, with pending grant money coming in May. The more grant money coming in to the Foundation, the more it can assist the school. The first fund-raiser with the Foundation Board and the Alleghany Mountain Institute is a farm-to-table fundraiser scheduled for August 22 with a rain date of August 29.

Budget and Grants: Janice Rankin, Director of Operations, presented information on the budget. The Annual Plan is due in to Richmond with DOE taking $150,000 from the Annual Plan. The Annual Plan includes these positions: blind department teacher, social worker, recreational therapist, interpreter, several wage interpreters, curriculum coach, bus assistants, teacher assistants, testing and assessment materials, and Valley Career and Technical Center/student work programs. We expect that two students will attend VCTC. In addition, $20,000 has been allocated for the preschool program with part of this money to go towards the preschool teacher salary.

A motion was made to approve the $393,140 Annual Plan and allocation to the grant. The motion passed unanimously.

As of the end of February, VSDB was 1% under budget; however, the current electric bill has not been received. Gas rates skyrocket if we use more than expected. Therefore, propane heat was used during some cold days because propane is more cost efficient. We are working on

personnel-budget issues. We are analyzing bus routes with the intention of eliminating one charter bus next school year. A report will be presented at the next board meeting.

Human Resources: Nate McLamb, Director of Human Resources, reported that there are 19 current staffing vacancies left open from the 2014 budget, which will total 30 vacant positions for the 2015-2016 school budget. The recent Director of Educational Support Services vacancy will not be filled but the Assistant Principal position probably will be filled. VSDB is actively recruiting. A list of positions for recruitment was provided to the board. As of today, March 24, there will be seven faculty resignations at the end of the school year, which reflect a 27% faculty change-over. Reasons for resignations include four retirements, relocation, concerns about possible changes at VSDB, salary concerns--salaries are the lowest in the area ($1,500 lower than other local divisions)--and heavy impact concerns on administration. The issues and concerns impacting teacher vacancies were addressed. For example, math and science vacancies at the high school level result in courses not being offered; however, one possible option would be to partner with another LEA so that our students could take courses at another local high school.

Senator Favola suggested that effects on programs and impacts on students be documented, including identifying impact from budget cuts. It was also suggested that details of what teachers do in addition to teaching be provided to the board at the June meeting.

School Report: Keith VanFossen, Interim Principal, informed the board that enrollment is currently at 100, including 64 residential and 36 day students. The deaf department enrollment is at 60, 20 in the blind department, and 20 MD students. Since the December BOV meeting, five students have left, including two seniors who met graduation requirements and three students who left for other reasons. Two deaf students and one blind student have recently enrolled.

The goalball team attended the Baltimore Eastern Athletics for the Blind tournament and placed second in the tournament with the girls' team earning the sportsmanship award.

We are planning for the 2015-16 school year with both deaf and blind schools changing to block scheduling. Most prospective high school students come to VSDB from a block schedule; with the change, students would not be impacted when they transfer from their home school. In addition, the schedule will help partnerships with other LEAs. The school day will be increased by 15 minutes. The change will accommodate the impact of weather and help make up time for snow days and students going home early on Fridays.

Continuing Business

Out-of-State Tuition: Senator Favola reported that an out-of-state tuition model could be developed to pattern after a "standard package" with adding needs and developing a rate per student using the Tuition Reimbursement Rate setting procedures that are currently used. More information on the out-of-state tuition model will be reported at future meetings.

New Business

Regarding the recent water damage in the Yates-Shinpaugh Education building, Wendell Roberts is working out the liability with construction litigators. Wendell will give updates, since this will be an on-going process.

Real estate property located in Wise County was willed to the school from a VSDB alumnus. The sales transaction funds from this property will transfer to the VSDB Foundation Board which will use the money to benefit VSDB. A budget amendment was put into the budget proposals and sat undisposed without being touched. (Page 2/part B describes property) and went through General Assembly undisturbed, which can start mechanics to get this process completed. A buyer continues to be interested in purchasing the property. The property title will be transferred in Wise County. When the Governor signs the budget then the sale can go forward.

Public Comment

A Virginia Education Association rally (Kids First) is scheduled for April 18 in Richmond.

Wayne Frick, VSDB alumnus, has spent ten years writing a follow-up book of the history of the deaf department from 1949 to the present. His book continues a previous book detailing the deaf history of VSDB from 1839 to 1948. Wayne's book includes articles from Fred Yates, Rachel Bavister, and others plus two chapters by Mr. Frick. The book was printed by RR Donnelly in Harrisonburg and sells for $60 per book. John Pleasants thanked Alice and Wayne, who sent him text copies of this book.

Future Main Hall planning for renovations was discussed. Money for planning has been appropriated.

Senator Favola asked if it would be feasible to undergo a study of students who graduate from VSDB to help determine the value of our program versus what a student would receive in his/her public school system. This study could help VSDB's marketing strategies. Wanda Council stated that it would be difficult to make comparisons because there are so many variables that would affect the outcome for a student and because national programs are changing. Wanda may be able to report on this in the future. Alice Frick asked whether VSDB could use strategies from other state deaf/blind schools that are doing well. Outreach Coordinator, Debbie Pfeiffer, is working on this issue. Surveys have gone out to deaf/blind schools in other states.

Senator Hanger told the board that the Executive Committee will be ready to move forward before the nest board meeting with a recommendation for filling the Superintendent position.

No further business was discussed.

Next meeting date is scheduled for June 11, 2015 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Senator Hanger moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed.

Virgil A. Cook, Board Secretary

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