



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

December 9, 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, Mike Asip, Alice Frick, Judy Sorrel, and Paula Johnson

Members absent: John Pleasants and Ann Latham-Anderson

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

The roll call of members was conducted by way of introductions. A quorum was declared by the Chair, Senator Hanger.

Reading and approval of September 22, 2015 meeting minutes - Motion was made, seconded and so carried to dispense with the reading of the minutes and to accept as presented.

Motion to Enter Closed Session

Delegate Bell moved that the Board of Visitors of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind convene in closed session pursuant to Section §2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia to discuss matters related to the evaluation of the Superintendent and the investigation of a human resources complaint involving a specific individual. Motion was seconded and so carried.

Motion to adopt a Resolution Certifying the Closed Session:

Immediately upon adjournment of Closed Session, Delegate Bell moved that the Board of Visitors of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind adopt a resolution certifying the Closed Session.

WHEREAS, the Board of Visitors of the Virginia School for the Deaf and the Blind has this day adjourned into Closed Session in Accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act: and WHEREAS, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act provides for certification that such Closed Session was conducted in conformity with the law.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, THAT THE Board of Visitors hereby certify that to the best of each member's knowledge:

- (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting in which this certification resolution applies, and
- (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the Closed Session were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board of Visitors.

The Board of Visitors, being polled, the vote was as follows:

- 1) Senator Hanger: AYE
- 2) Delegate Bell: AYE
- 3) Delegate Wilt: AYE
- 4) Alice Frick: AYE
- 5) Mike Asip: AYE
- 6) Judy Sorrell: AYE
- 7) Paula Johnson: AYE
- 8) Virgil Cook: AYE
- 9) Senator Favola: AYE

Motion by Judy Sorrell, seconded and so carried to accept the Performance Plan for the Superintendent, Pat Trice, with the added verbiage agreed upon.

Reports

Superintendent's Report: Pat Trice, Superintendent, presented updates on the school, outreach services, and the VSDB Foundation Board. The review by the Department of Education was held in November. The visit proved to be very helpful, giving VSDB a point of reference to move forward. The accreditation review by SACS and CEAS will be conducted in March 2016.

The quality of work completed by the renovation/design team for Main Hall puts the project in a position to move forward if the funding for the project is approved by the General Assembly. If funding is approved during this session, a move out of the building is expected at the end of next year, with renovation to start in 2017. Frank Strassler, Executive Director of the Historic Staunton Foundation, has been supportive throughout this entire process and will request his Board to create a formal written position of support for the renovation. As only three offices are currently being utilized in Main Hall, to ensure safety, the building is locked and visitors are being routed through Security.

In moving VSDB forward, increasing awareness of the services offered is a priority. Virginia's First Lady Mrs. McAuliffe visited VSDB on August 27th. She had a very positive tour and is interested in attending the next Foundation Farm to Table fund raiser in August 2016. In addition VSDB was fortunate to have Secretary of Education, Anne Holton, visit on October 12th. The Superintendent attended an Agency Heads meeting recently and spoke to the Governor

regarding scheduling a visit to VSDB. The VIP visits provide important press for VSDB. This information needs to be added to the website to highlight VSDB as an important educational opportunity.

The Foundation has funded a Welcome Video which will be professionally produced by the same company used by VDDHH for their website. The purpose of the video is to provide a “face” for VSDB and to invite those visiting the website to explore information and services. The Foundation is also working on developing its own Website. They plan to host another Farm to Table fundraiser, tentatively scheduled for August 27, 2016. Hopefully, the Secretary of Education, Virginia’s First Lady, and/or the Governor will attend. The Foundation will work with their schedules to adjust the August date if needed.

VSDB students participated in the local Holiday Parade, after no participation for several years. This was a good opportunity to highlight VSDB as a community partner.

On a recent visit to Richmond, the Superintendent spoke with VSDB’s liaison at DPB, Aimie Mitchell as well as Michael Maul. Funding for VSDB to support the change in calendar for the 2016-17 school year as well as other funding issues were discussed. The visit was valuable in providing greater insight into the needs of the agency.

Debbie Pfeiffer is doing a great job in outreach and is being very creative in establishing partnerships across the state. She is expanding Outreach services through expanded resources on the VSDB website including resource links, webinars, instructional and educational videos, etc. In addition, she has been effective in showcasing VSDB at conferences and regional meetings.

The VSDB Administrative team along with DOE will meet with the Attorney General’s office after the first of the year, to clarify the latitude for revision of programs per the Code of Virginia.

The Administrative team continues to explore options for instruction including virtual coursework and partnerships with local school divisions in order to maximize the resources that VSDB has in order to develop programs to meet the needs of all students.

Rental interest has increased related to Strader Hall. One business anticipates moving on campus by the end of year, renting two classrooms. The business would also serve as an on-site work study experience for students. In addition, an education organization is interested in renting a larger amount of space in Strader. This is an exciting possibility since the mission of the organization aligns with the educational mission of VSDB. In addition, the organization would provide future partnership opportunities. The support of the Board and the Attorney General’s office is requested to move things forward in a timely manner.

Budget and Grants: Janice Rankin, Director of Operations, reported that the budget is on target at 42%. With the “carry over” funds available, funding security is a priority which includes the addition of more card swipes. Consideration will also be given to VITA requirements to enhance security (approximately \$50,000).

Human Resources: Nate McLamb, Director of Human Resources, provided a Turnover Statistics Report. Turnover percentages from 2012-2015 were: 2012 – 7.01%; 2013 – 11.32%; 2014 – 9;70% and 2015 – 7.55%. The turnover rate is comparable to other schools for the deaf and the blind. He will check with DOE to see if there is data for Special Education turnover for comparison.

In reviewing turnover, salaries were discussed. In many areas, VSDB is not able to offer competitive salaries. Adjusting the interpreter pay scale is a priority. Judy Sorrell reported that many divisions are now aligning fully qualified interpreter pay with that of teachers. In addition, VDDHH will be increasing the rate of pay for interpreters. The VDDHH interpreter pay scale establishes a standard utilized by those employing interpreters. Superintendent Trice will contact Augusta County to obtain their interpreter pay scale.

Education: Keith Van Fossen, Principal, reported that as of November 30, 2015, 98 students are enrolled: 56 in deaf education, 23 in blind and VI, and 19 in the MD program. Visitors continue coming through Admissions and several applications for the TEMP program have been received. Converting to a block schedule has gone smoothly. The Blind Department Winter Concert is tomorrow night and Homecoming is next week. In January the girls' basketball team will participate in the Mason Dixon Tournament in Tennessee, and the boys' team will participate in North Carolina. VSDB will be hosting the 2017-2018 Volleyball Tournament.

A handout for the proposed calendar change for next year was dispersed. Staff will return to work July 25, with students beginning school August 8, 2016. The first semester will finish before the winter break and the last day of school for students will be May 19, 2016, with staff finishing before Memorial Day. This information will go out to public schools as soon as possible as this may impact their ESY programs as well as their budget.

Continuing/Old Business: Wendell Roberts explained that the Board is in a continuing process to update policies. At each session a group of policies will be given for review and will be voted on at the next meeting. The policies given to members at the September 22, 2015 meeting will be voted upon today. A new packet of policies was provided to Board members for review and vote at the next quarterly meeting. A motion was made by Delegate Bell, seconded and so carried by unanimous AYE vote, to approve policies introduced at the September 22nd meeting. This included the three policies which were given provision approval at that time. Approved policies will be published on the VSDB website.

Policies given out today to be reviewed and voted on during the next meeting were:

HR001 - *Office of Human Resources Functions and Policies*

HR002 - *Employment Practices*

S055 - *Search and Seizure*

HR003 - *Equal Employment Opportunity*

HR004 - *Standards of Conduct*

HR006 - *Return to Work Program*

G034 - *Hearing Conservation Plan* (Senator Favola suggested that the policy title states this is for employees only)

Senator Favola suggested that if there is a federal regulation that VSDB must conform to in the above policies, it should be referenced in the first paragraph, even if it is being referred to later in the policy.

Regarding safety measures on the *Hearing Conservation Plan*, Pat Trice reported that all employees at risk are given yearly audiological tests, and are required to wear hearing protection. All policies will eventually be organized on the VSDB website and will be listed in a Table of Contents. The Augusta County manual will be reviewed for a possible template or framework, as uniformity with other divisions may make it more readily accessible for web site users.

Mr. Roberts also reported that we are nearing the end in the transfer of the Grizzell property to the VSDB Foundation. The property is a one acre lot in Wise County that was willed to VSDB. Motion was made by Delegate Bell to accept the Resolution approving the property transfer and conveyance to the VSDB Foundation, and to authorize Senator Hanger and Pat Trice as the officers designated to execute the Deed. Motion was seconded and carried by unanimous AYE vote.

New Business

There was no new business.

Public Comment

There were no public comments.

Judy Sorrell, however, asked to make a comment as a volunteer. She noted that the energy level and leadership of Pat Trice are to be commended. Kudos to Pat Trice, Keith Van Fossen, and Becky Watson for all their work. She stated that, under their leadership, the future at VSDB looks promising.

Alice Frick also noted that the attendance of Superintendent Trice at the October Gallaudet Homecoming was appreciated.

Pat Trice, Superintendent, is in the process of scheduling the dedication of the newest book about the history of VSDB. More information regarding the dedication will follow at a later date.

The next Board of Visitors meeting is scheduled for April 6, 2016 from 10:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Adjournment

Senator Hanger moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed and the meeting was adjourned at 2:03 p.m..

Virgil A. Cook, Board Secretary

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