

DICKENSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
Regular School Board Meeting
December 19, 2017
10:00 a.m.
Dickenson County Former Courtroom

PRESENT: Susan Mullins, Chairman; Rocky Barton, Vice-Chairman; Shanghai Nickles; Dr. Lurton Lyle; Rick Mullins; Reba McCowan, Clerk; and Haydee Robinson, Superintendent.

ROLL CALL AND MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN, MRS. SUSAN MULLINS:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I would like to call this regular meeting for December to order. I will go ahead and note for the record that all members are present including our Superintendent, Mrs. Haydee Robinson and our Clerk, Mrs. Reba McCowan. We will go ahead and start our meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence. Thank you and please be seated. You have the Agenda before you. Are there any changes, additions or corrections? Are there any other changes, Mrs. Robinson?

Superintendent Robinson: No ma'am.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I would like to make a motion that we move Public Comment down to after our Closed Session because we have one Board Member who may need to leave. Do I have a second?

Dr. Lurton Lyle: I second it.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: All in favor say Aye. (All Ayes) Okay, we will now adopt our Agenda to move Public Comment down to number VIII.

CONSENT AGENDA:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Okay, that brings us to Item III. Consent Agenda which includes the approval of the Minutes, Monthly Bills, School Activity Fund (which is informational) and Field Trips. Are there any questions or concerns about those items? If not, I will entertain a motion to approve the entire Consent Agenda.

Mr. Rick Mullins made the motion to approve the consent agenda. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Approved:

❖ **Minutes:**

November 29, 2017 – Regular Meeting

❖ **Monthly Bills:**

School Operating Fund – December 19, 2017 – Bills

Check Nos. 878094 through 878191 ----- \$ 276,193.64

School Operating Fund – December 19, 2017 – Payroll

Check Nos. 388379 through 388409 ----- \$1,710,333.21

❖ **Field Trips:**

Ridgeview High School

Dec. 6th – The Attic – Clintwood, VA – 9th – PG

Dec. 9th – Southwest VA Community College – Richlands, VA – 7th – 12th

Dec. 13th – Norton Theatre – Norton, VA – 9th – PG

Dec. 14th – Heritage Hall – Clintwood, VA – 10th

Dec. 14th – Velma Crabtree’s House – Clintwood, VA – 9th – PG

Dec. 15th – Mexican Restaurant – Clintwood, VA – 12th

Ervinton Elementary School

Dec. 11th – Norton Cinema – Norton, VA – Pre K – Kindergarten

Sandlick Elementary School

Nov. 13th – Ridgeview Middle School – 3rd – 5th

Dec. 7th – Grundy Community Center – Kindergarten

Dec. 15th – Grundy Theatre – Grundy, VA – 1st

Ridgeview Middle School

Dec. 14th – Norton Cinema – Norton, VA – 6th

Dec. 19th – Clintwood Nursing Home – 6th – 8th

INFORMATION FOR THE BOARD:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Item IV. is Information for the Board. Mrs. Robinson:

Superintendent Robinson: Madam Chair, Information for the Board includes the dates for meetings for 2018, January, February and March. If you are interested in attending any of these meetings or have any questions, please call Mrs. McCowan, and we will be glad to have you registered and get those arrangements done for you.

GOOD NEWS FROM OUR SCHOOLS:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: That brings us to New Business with Item E. Good News from Our Schools and recognition of our retirees. I will turn it over to Mrs. Robinson:

Superintendent Robinson: Thank you, Madam Chair. I would like to ask Mr. Colley to come to the front please. Is Ms. Perry here?

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I don’t think so.

Superintendent Robinson: Ladies and gentlemen I have tried my best to get Mr. Colley to change his mind, and he has not. Mr. Colley has dedicated 39 years and 9 months to the Dickenson County Public Schools. All taught and coached in the Dickenson County Public Schools. I remember very well when we started at Ridgeview, 2 ½ years ago, Mr. Colley and Rick Mullins and I had a discussion about who was going to do what and what positions.

Mr. Colley said Mrs. Robinson give us an opportunity to talk about it, and they did. Since then Mr. Colley has taken the role of Athletic Director at Ridgeview, and you know what a job that has been to get that started. Ladies and gentlemen, I am very humbled and very proud to recognize Mr. James Colley. Will you please stand and help me recognize Mr. Colley for 39 years of service. (Applause!) I would also like to recognize Mrs. Colley who also retired from our school system. You just can't replace a James Colley. (Very true, very true)

Mr. James Colley: Thank you. I have enjoyed it. I was told, and I think I have been misled that for 35 years you get a "bell", and someone told me over 35 you got a Rolex. (Ha, Ha!)

Superintendent Robinson: I must have missed that memo!

Mr. James Colley: I just want to say thanks. There are a lot of people here that I have known all of my life. I started at Ervinton in the 70s. (choked up) I'm sorry. Thank you.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: Thank you coach! (Applause!)

Superintendent Robinson: Thank you, Mr. Colley. Also, Mrs. Perry is not here because she is probably with her husband. We would also like to recognize her for 19 years of service. We also have a bell for her and would like to recognize her. I notice that Mr. Compton is here. He has worked with Mr. Colley for a long time in different positions. All of us have. I think I can speak for all of us at the School Board Office and say that, James it has been an honor working with you. Thank you.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I think we should give Mrs. Perry a round of applause also. (Applause!) Other Good News from our Schools would be attendance, Mrs. Robinson:

Superintendent Robinson: Mr. Setser, would you please come up.

Mr. Mike Setser: Thank you, Mrs. Robinson and Members of the Board. In your packet I have the monthly numbers for the month of November. We ended the month with 2012 students which is the same number of students that we ended October with. So we lost no students during the month of November. Unless it changes at the end of December it looks like we will gain one student. For the year we have lost two students since August which is not too bad compared to other years. Are there any questions? I would just like to take a second and commend the schools on the work that they do on attendance. I would especially like to commend Clintwood Elementary School. This is their 4th month in a row that they have won the attendance banner. Their attendance percentage for November was 94.67%. Thank you.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Is there any more Good News, Mrs. Robinson?

Superintendent Robinson: Thank you, Mr. Setser. We would just like to recognize that our Dickenson County Public Schools recently reinstated (coughing) All Star Reaching Success. The Stars try to see our staff about autism and how to help all of our children succeed. At this time one of our goals for the first part of the year is to encourage all of our staff members to participate in training relating to autism. Staff have been categorized as teachers, admin-

istrators and support staff. Each group is encouraged to achieve an 85% to 100% participation. Schools that achieve their participation will earn a star to display on their Star Banner as well as recognition at the School Board meeting. The first challenge has been issued to teachers and administrators. At this time, I would like to ask Mrs. Edwards to come to the front, please, and recognize our schools and staff members who have won a star.

Mrs. Denechia Edwards: We have several stars to give out today. I know this is an awkward time of the year because our staff are all back in school because we have parties and all kinds of things going on today. So if there is someone representing any of these schools here today, would you please accept it for your school. Take it back and place it on the Banner which is displayed somewhere in the lobby or hallway in each of the schools.

- Our first recipient goes to Clintwood Elementary School who had 85% of their staff professionals complete the training. Is there anyone here from Clintwood Elementary School? If not, I will make sure they get the star for their Banner.
- Ervinton Elementary School had 85% of their professionals complete the training. Is there anyone from Ervinton Elementary School?
- Ridgeview High School had 85% of their paraprofessionals complete the training. Mr. Compton is here.
- Sandlick Elementary School had 100% of their administrators complete the required hours of training for the autism certificates. We have a star for them. Is there anyone here from Sandlick Elementary School?
- Ridgeview Middle School had 100% participation of their administrative staff. They completed the training. Is there anyone here from the middle school?

I will make sure those folks get their stars. Thank you.

Superintendent Robinson: Our last Good News from our Schools is our Robotics Team. You received this email that our Robotics Team competed in the Southwest Community College competition. They finished with a record of 9-1 and ranked 2nd overall in the tournament. They finished 12th in the competition, and this was the first time for many of the students, and they did an excellent job. They will be going to the State in January, and we have invited the team to be recognized by our Board and to wish them luck as they compete at the State level in February.

Madam Chair that concludes all of our Good News.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I have a question. Since that is a non-revenue sport, how do they get up there? Do we need to do something here in order to fund some of those kids?

Superintendent Robinson: I can certainly check with Mr. Owens and find out. I do know that they do some fundraising, and I'm not aware of anything right now. Mr. Owens has not requested any funding. I will check with him and see how many students will be attending and approximately how much funding they need. I will let you know.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: Thank you so much.

UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL SITES: RIDGEVIEW AND HAYSI HIGH SCHOOL:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I believe that brings us to Item F. Update on the Proposed Elementary School Sites: Ridgeview and Haysi High School. Mr. Mullins, are you in charge of that?

Mr. Scott Mullins: Members of the Board at the last meeting I think my marching orders was to go forward and get some information on the title issues on the Upper Backbone site and to basically talk about how we can move forward at that site with the PPEA. Just to briefly recap so that you and the members of the audience will understand where the areas of expertise lie. When you go out for a PPEA, the people who respond are a mixture of architects, builders and educational planners, and they know how to build schools. They do not know how to acquire real estate anymore than we do, and they certainly don't get into the business of evaluating coal. So their expectation before they submit a bid is for us to have them a tract of land to look at. They can talk to us and price moving the earth such as taking off the high spots and filling in the low spots. I think the best information that we had was that we would need an eight-acre pad for the elementary school. The bottom line is that on December 1, I sent out a survey to some of the folks at Haysi who have a good group of contacts of people, and Rocky was involved in that. We started looking at the opportunity to acquire the real property down there, and what it would amount to if we were looking at condemnation to get an overview. The document that I provided was more of a survey than it was an option. For example, there were blanks for the landowner to fill in stating that they believe they own so many acres of land, and "yes" I am willing to sell on the scope of this price or I am not willing to sell. I think I own the minerals, but I am not sure. This was just an overview to start the discussion. The things that I think we have learned is that I am not going to mention individual landowners because I am not sure it is fair to them. Before I start talking about the view from perhaps 20,000 feet of what we learned, there will be a time as we move forward where we are going to need to negotiate. I know that the public has an interest in this, and I know that each of you have an interest in making sure your constituents are informed. But if we are really going to be good stewards of the taxpayers' money, we need to get our negotiating strategy done in Closed Session because every dollar we spend on dirt and earth is a dollar we don't spend on bricks and mortar. We have to be smart and eventually when we actually go to negotiate, I need marching orders, and we need to understand what your parameters are. I really don't want to talk about that today. I just want to talk about the big picture of things I have learned and what we can do. I know that we have talked to some of you and gotten information. We have one landowner that apparently has a 75% interest in selling a five-acre tract that we need. They agreed to sell their property I believe for \$25,000. That is a good thing, and a good place to begin. That landowner believes that they own the minerals, and we hope that to be true. I feel like that is a positive direction. We own a tract of land already that we purchased from Ms. Fuller, and it is a five-acre tract. It is central to anything that we would go to do at Upper Backbone. It is something that we would definitely need. I feel like Ms. Fuller made us a fair price for that, and I feel like it was money well spent. So we own that five-acre surface. Immediately adjacent to her surface is a seventeen-acre tract that has been of some concern. I think the landowner initially believed it was a bigger tract, but it is actually seventeen acres. I think the Haysi members

that we approached, Rocky in particular, reported that the landowner is willing to sell. She is willing to sell at the price that she originally quoted to us. Rocky, if I say anything that is wrong, please let me know.

Mr. Rocky Barton: I think Matt originally talked with her.

Mr. Scott Mullins: The bottom line is that she is willing to sell. Those are all positive directives that we are receiving. The first gentleman I talked to about the five acres believes that they have a 75% interest so there is some heirship there. There are some other properties surrounding this that have heirship. Generally speaking, with the heirship it is actually better to just go ahead, and we use our best efforts to try to find the heirs that we can. Ultimately, there are going to be some that you just can't find. If we go forward at that site, I would be recommending that we just do a condemnation of those properties. In that way we could do a quick-take title to the property so that we wouldn't be held up. Then the question would be how much do we owe and to whom based on a hearing or a trial based upon condemnation law. They would set a fair market value, and that is what we would pay. Those are all generally positive things whether you like everything you hear or not, you still need to know what you are dealing with. I think the two biggest things that we are going to need to know before we spend a lot of time and money dealing with property owners is to get a architect and a civil engineer involved to look at this and say if we were going to create a pad at Upper Backbone for an eight-acre facility, how could we set that on the property so as to disturb or acquire as little property as possible. We want what we need, but we don't want to be condemning peoples' land that we don't really need. We want to reach for the low-hanging fruit to the extent we can. We don't want to get bogged down with heirship if there are people willing to sell. Getting an architect involved would be a good next step.

The other thing that I did was to get another individual involved who has a significant background in title work. I had them do a very limited examination of our tract that we acquired and of the 17-acre tract because I think we see those as sort of the center or heart of what we need to do at Upper Backbone. As I provide to you in more detail, they basically tell us that they do not believe we own the coal beneath the Merrill Fuller tract, and they believe we would own the coal if the current landowner owns the coal under the 17-acre tract. I want to make sure that we are all clear on the coal issue. I do not personally believe that that coal is mineable or merchantable. I don't know that, but based on my view of the land and my understanding of what has happened down there, that coal may not be mineable or merchantable. That is a fancy way of saying that it may not have a value. If it is just laying there in the ground, but you can't realistically get it out and make a profit then there is no value. That is the good news. The bad news is that whenever you put a public building over a coal seam, you have essentially inversely condemned that property. You sterilize that coal whether the coal is worthless or worth millions of dollars because you can't get a mining permit to mine under a public building. That litigation has actually taken place and very well established in Buchanan County with Keen Mountain Prison. We are not making new law, and what I am telling you is not a novel concept. The question really becomes okay the coal could be worthless or the coal could have value, what do we do? What we have to do is approach this with the best information available and to get at a reasonable price. What that would look like to me is that we would start out with people who are knowledgeable in the mining indus-

try about the coal seams in the area. We would see if they give us enough comfort to believe that we should feel good that the coal is not mineable or merchantable. We should feel good that we can build a school on it and not get successfully sued. That would be relatively cheap. The one thing that I should have probably laid out as a foundation is that if there is anything that we are learning about this experience is that good people can disagree, and expert witnesses can disagree. We may be able to find an expert witness who says that coal has no value, and the people who own that coal may be able to find an expert witness who says that coal is worth millions of dollars. This room has served as the rendezvous point of differing ideas for decades. Ultimately, it is worth what a jury says it is worth. The only way that you really know what is under the ground is to do bore testing. That is the gold standard. We did bore testing at Ridgeview. Bore testing will tell you whether you have a three-foot seam or a three-inch seam. But bore testing costs money, and you can't pull a drill-rig upon land that you don't own. It has to be an incremental process. We have to start and try to figure out what is real and what is not real. The one thing that we do know is that if you build a school over a coal seam, and you don't have good information about it, it can come back and be a problem for you as it was for Keen Mountain Prison. That is pretty much what I think I have learned since we last visited. It is a mixed bag. Some good news and bad news. The only thing that I ask of you is that if you are going to send me to negotiate with someone, I want to get the parameters of what I am authorized to do from you in Closed Session because I do not want someone that I am negotiating with to know more than I do about what we are trying to do. It is a negotiation that the taxpayers expect us to get for a fair market value, but we should not pay more than fair market value. I just need to know what those limits are. I am certainly willing to answer any questions, but I think that I would be remiss if I did not while standing here and because it is all part and parcel of the same discussion to say that I learned late last night and saw this morning that the Board of Supervisors had said that they are open to evaluating Clintwood Elementary School and Ervinton Elementary School in the spirit of giving assurances that the three-school model will be supported and sustained. I know that I am perhaps getting a little bit off topic. By looking at our Agenda I know that one thing is going to lead to another. So I think if we are going to talk about this, lets just talk about the entire thing. That is what I have done on the title, but there are other tracts that would appear to be involved in heirship. I have not done any title work on the minerals there. I will be quiet, and if there are any questions, I will try to answer them.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: How do we go about getting a title that is in heirship?

Mr. Scott Mullins: It takes some time, don't get me wrong. In order to get the title, we as a school system, have the authority to do what is called a "quick-take" which means that we can go in and show a need for it, and we can immediately after filing a petition give them notice and have a hearing. We can get title, but ultimately, you have to pay for what you get. Just to understand, when we condemn, we will condemn surface and mineral.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Is it harder to condemn mineral?

Mr. Scott Mullins: It is certainly more uncertain. It is easy to write it down on a piece of paper, but the minerals are worth what the jury says they are worth. I go back and say that incrementally talking to knowledgeable people deciding whether we need bore tests are

things that I recommend this Board do. I think we have come to learn from the Board of Supervisors and the school system are in this together. To the extent that we have Closed Session discussion about those things, we should think about inviting the Board of Supervisors to that. I think that Leman Kendrick has a wealth of knowledge in that regard that should be tapped into. I think we should approach that thoughtfully and get the best information that we have available.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I guess that I am hearing first that we clear up the land.

Mr. Scott Mullins: We are going to have to decide, but yes ma'am, we are going to have to clear up the land. The contractor is not going to get into the business of evaluating coal. They will build you a school and move dirt, but they won't talk about how much it will cost to clear the land and mineral rights.

Mr. Rocky Barton: The talks with the one major property owner, didn't they already make a deal? Has that not already been negotiated?

Mr. Scott Mullins: They made an offer for \$205,000. I think I gave you guys the appraisal. I can look it up, but what was it appraised for? It was appraised for \$43,000 and is on the tax rolls for \$17,000.

Mr. Rocky Barton: We then paid her a \$10,000 option?

Mr. Scott Mullins: The IDA and we did, yes.

Mr. Rocky Barton: So that has basically been negotiated?

Mr. Scott Mullins: I think that if you are still telling me that she is willing to live with that, there is certainly no binding agreement in place right now, but if she says to you that she is still willing to do that, then I will take that as true.

Mr. Rocky Barton: I think she will. So with the PPEA, do they do the engineering work in some cases and the architectural work.

Mr. Scott Mullins: Yes, they will usually have a civil engineer and an architect on board. There will be more than one group. It will be common to have a builder, a local civil engineer and an education planner who will be able to tell us how we should be thinking about laying out a school. That is generally what it looks like, Rocky.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Is there any more discussion?

Mr. Rocky Barton: Given the results of the Board of Supervisors' meeting last night, I have a list here of the issues at Clintwood Elementary School and Ervinton Elementary School. The Board of Supervisors voted last night to form a committee to do whatever it takes to get the issues of these schools taken care of. The main thing at Clintwood Elementary School is the roof which has been a problem for a few years now. I think the Board of Supervisors is

going to put a plan in place to do what needs to be done. From what I understand they are going to see if Skanska will take a look at them to see where the main issues are. So do we need a motion to have a joint meeting between the three boards to discuss the land?

Mr. Scott Mullins: From what I understand, and I haven't see the actual motion and what was said, but I think at a minimum you should direct Mrs. Robinson and me to meet with the county administrator to facilitate the study that they want to do and the study that you all want done. It is a comprehensive review of the Ervinton Elementary School and Clintwood Elementary School to see what it would take to bring them into good repair. We could go into the nuts and bolts, but I think that is what both of them want to do. I think the division superintendent and county administrator should be directed to get together promptly and to get that in place and get that moving forward. We can get that back to both boards as quickly as possible, so yes, Rocky, I think that would be an appropriate motion to direct us to go forward and work with them.

Mr. Rick Mullins: Several weeks ago, I received several phone calls from people in the Willis District that I needed to go down and look at Clintwood Elementary School. I went down there, and Mrs. Newton took me through the school, and we had pictures and the breakdown of where the leaks are. When Mrs. Newton took me into the school, the first place we looked was the library. I was appalled to see four trash cans in the library with several pieces of the ceiling out. I asked how long the ceiling tile had been gone, and the answer was three months. All of our heating and air was going out into the sky. We have pictures here of everything that I took at Clintwood Elementary School if anyone wants to see them. I would just like to hit on a few high spots. The ceiling in the library was exposed. On Election Day water ran over the floor to the concession stand. They had to use a shop vac to suck it up. The tile was changed out three times last year. Water was leaking around the projector and the utilities in the ceiling. There is discolored tile all through the kindergarten rooms and on the first floor. The ceiling tile in Anna Barton's room has been down for two months and had not been put up. Down in the kindergarten room there is a severe crack in the wall of the foundation where water had run in under the foundation and had frozen and broken behind the main office and I have called all three of the previous administrators. I talked to Damon Rasnake, and he said the building had problems when he was there. I also talked to Mrs. Vanover who said there had been ongoing leaks all the time. One of the things, and I don't think the school system has had the money to fix the roof. There is a wall or partition where the secretary sits, and there is a large hose running down through that corner and runs out at the sink. Throughout the building there are cracks, and I by no means am an engineer, but I applaud the supervisors for what they did last night. So I took pictures of all of that so that we could discuss it.

I came back and called Susan, and we talked about going to Ervinton Elementary School. We need to know how viable Clintwood Elementary School and Ervinton Elementary School are. So Susan and I made a trip over and saw Mr. Baker. We had no idea that there were nine dehumidifiers running 24-7 at Ervinton Elementary School. They are run from spring until late fall. Every one of those dehumidifiers fill up every day and have to be emptied. It is the same way on the weekends. The janitorial staff has to come in and empty those dehumidifiers. If they close the doors and there is no ventilation, it creates mold. We have to

make sure that whatever decision we make, we can only get this right one time whether it be the three-school model or a one-school model. We have to make sure that every child in Dickenson County will be represented. There are pictures here for anyone who wants to see them. Another thing at Ervinton Elementary School several years ago all of the drains in all of the bathrooms were poured full of concrete. So there are no drains in any of the bathrooms. If a urinal or commode runs over, it can't drain out. It has to be mopped up or suctioned up. These are things that we all have to consider as taxpayers. I just wanted to bring your attention to that.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: If I am hearing our Board correctly we would like to extend an invitation for the Board of Supervisors to meet with us and offer us a plan to keep the three schools open. I would like to make a motion that we retain the services of a professional contractor or construction manager to provide the cost of bringing both schools up to standard and in an acceptable state of repair and in compliance with the ADA and building codes. Particularly records should be made for any issues relating to the health and safety of students in an environmental study. I would also like to make a motion that the Board of Supervisors provide a specific written plan to the School Board on how it intends to fund the required repairs to Clintwood and Ervinton Elementary School. I would also request that the Board of Supervisors provide written information in its guidance of the long-term plan and availability of the three-school model. I would also like to request that the written information provided by the Board of Supervisors to the school administration as quickly as possible, and the school administration promptly can respond with any questions or concerns regarding this information, and that this exchange be transparent to both the Boards and the public. I will need a second to that motion.

Mr. Rick Mullins: I will second it.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I will do a roll call vote—Dr. Lyle

Dr. Lurton Lyle: Could we discuss it a minute? Would it be appropriate to wait to see what the Board of Supervisors has already set into motion?

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I think it kind of reaffirms what they have decided. It is my understanding that they voted to have this done, is that correct?

Mr. Scott Mullins: I think so, although again I haven't seen the details. I don't think they were as specific as you were Mrs. Mullins. I think that all of us recognize that we don't need two studies. We don't need for them to do a study and then for us to do a study. We need to come together and find the best person that we can to do one study and work together by sharing that information. I would not advocate doing anything that is inconsistent with what the Board of Supervisors wants to fund. I don't know if they gave an amount, and we would need to work with them because you can study things to death. We need to make sure that whatever we are going to do, we have some budget parameters on it and an understanding that we are going to get these three or five things. We don't want to just do an open check-book on it. You have laid out some guidelines, and I hope those guidelines are consistent

with what the Board of Supervisors wants to do. If they put a budgetary amount on it, that is fine. If they haven't, maybe we would need to talk about how we could share it.

Mr. Rocky Barton: Maybe if we do that joint meeting, we could find out what the Board of Supervisors intends to do. We have a member here if he would like to tell us what the vote was.

Mr. Jason Compton: We voted to spend \$15,000 on the study, but we wanted it completely independent of the school systems. If you want to, you can do a study separate from ours.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: So I made a motion, and it was seconded. We are now back to the roll call vote—Dr. Lyle, Yes; Mr. Mullins, Yes; I am Yes; Mr. Barton, No; Mr. Nickles, Yes. So the motion is approved. Is there anything else that we need to discuss about the elementary school site?

Mr. Scott Mullins: Not that I am aware of.

Mr. Rocky Barton: The motion that I was talking about was actually who needs to go forward looking at the land. Is that us or the IDA or all three Boards? This is kind of a different motion that we need to see if we have the property owners shored up which I am pretty sure we are. Isn't that what we said at the last meeting?

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I think Mr. Mullins said that they would have to check on the coal and mineral rights.

Mr. Scott Mullins: It is what I said, and I am not going to get too far in the middle of that discussion. This is what I will say. Whether we are doing studies or whether we are trying to buy real estate, if the Board of Supervisors and the School Board can't find some way to work together then this is not going to be an easy task to get accomplished. My recommendation would be to get together with the Board of Supervisors and talk in a Closed Session to see if they will support what we are about to do. I do not want to go to the landowner and try to work out a deal and have one Board or the other say we are not going to support that. If we are in this together, get one unified set of marching orders before we go making a deal.

Mr. Rocky Barton: That is the motion I was getting ready to make. Why don't we have a joint meeting between all three Boards where we can actually talk face to face to see what study is going forward or what the Board of Supervisors have already done. Then we won't have the "he said, she said" stuff.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Could we have a special called meeting to be had in Closed Session.

Mr. Scott Mullins: We can as long as it is in the parameters of acquisition of real property not where we are contracting our negotiating strength discussed in Public Session where it would be compromised.

Mr. Rocky Barton: We could also talk about the issues at the elementary schools.

Mr. Scott Mullins: I think that could in large part be in Open Session. The FLA is very specific, and we can only talk about those things that are in it. I'm not saying that the discussions about what we are buying at each of those schools couldn't be part of it, but we couldn't talk about just the general condition of the property in Closed Session. The attorneys would have to stop that.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I don't think we know enough now to even have a discussion until we get the study done.

Mr. Scott Mullins: This is the deal. You guys are our boss. We do what you tell us to do, but I really don't think that we need to pay for two studies. The people that the Board of Supervisors would hire and the people that we would hire are competent people. They are not as motivated by anything other than the facts in front of them. I would play by whatever parameters the Board of Supervisors lay out and you lay out, but I will constantly be looking for someone for us to streamline so that we don't have to pay twice for the same service. To answer your question, Rocky, there is a motion that the division superintendent confer with the director of the IDA and county administrator in a Closed Session meeting to deal with those issues associated with the acquisition of real property and negotiations where if held in public would compromise the negotiating strengths. That is certainly a motion that you would want to make, you can make.

Mr. Rocky Barton: Okay, I make that motion because I think it is the next step that we need. We certainly don't want one Board paying for something and us paying for the same thing. I think we need to sit down and everyone talk about it. So I make that motion.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I think what Mr. Mullins is saying that we need to get together to see what study they are doing and make sure we aren't doing the same thing. Right?

Mr. Scott Mullins: Ultimately, everything costs money. I think we should reconcile what the Board of Supervisors want and what we want and get one independent person in to do it and pay one price makes the most sense.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I agree, and I think the Board of Supervisors would agree with that. They wouldn't want to pay for something that we are going to pay for, too.

Mr. Scott Mullins: We can certainly ask them, and if they object to that approach, then we can reject it.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: So Rocky made the motion that we have a special called meeting with the Board of Supervisors to discuss the study that will be done on (I am summarizing your motion, Rocky) the land.

Mr. Rocky Barton: It is to give the superintendent to get with the Board of Supervisors and Ida and do a study on the land, also to discuss with the Board of Supervisors about the study.

Mr. Scott Mullins: I think the motion was to hold a joint special called meeting with the Board of Supervisors and the IDA. The sole purpose of that meeting would be to discuss the acquisition of real property or negotiations that with third parties that would be in Open Session would adversely impact the negotiating strategy.

Mr. Rick Mullins: Would that be all three Boards? Is that what I am hearing?

Mr. Scott Mullins: It would be whatever Rocky wants to make in the motion. I know it needs to be two for sure, but the third would be up to you.

Mr. Rocky Barton: I think it needs to be all three Boards.

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I second the motion

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Okay, all in favor or is anyone opposed? All in favor please say Aye. (All Ayes) Is there any other thing that we need to discuss about the elementary site.

Mr. Scott Mullins: No ma'am.

UPDATE ON THE PROPOSED RIDGEVIEW BATTING CAGE:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Item G. Update on the Proposed Batting Cage.

Mr. Scott Mullins: Members of the Board, I believe that that facility is under roof, and the sides are up on it. The contractor will continue to work on that over the Christmas holidays. The last thing that they will do will be to pour the concrete slab. We are very much appreciative of Appalachian Natural Gas who is the distributor at Ridgeview. The normal price that they would give would be \$8,500 to hook the gas up. They are working with Mr. McGraw and cutting everything back to their cost and agreed to do it for \$1,500. I am very, very appreciative of the Dickenson County PSA. They brought their people up and helped us put the water line in with no charge other than the pipe. It is truly a collaborative effort with the county. I talked with the County Administrator, David Moore yesterday and worked through the details. The coaches and the folks up there are trying to do as much as they can on their own to save money on finishing things out. David and I agreed that we were coming in within the budget that we set originally. The last thing that will happen is the gas company will come up and put in the gas heat, and we will have a very functional batting cage for the student athletes. Overall it has been a very positive success for Ridgeview.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Do they have a completion date?

Mr. Scott Mullins: I think that the building slab will be done soon after the first of the year, and then we will go in and put the actual batting cage facility in at a later date. It should be within the next three of four weeks. It is a two-step process.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I guess the baseball team will have access to it by the time spring sports start.

Mr. Scott Mullins: We hope to be up and running by then. That may be optimistic, but we are trying to shoot for that

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Are there any other questions about the batting cage?

DICKENSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD REORGANIZATIONAL MEETING:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Item H. is the Dickenson County School Board Reorganizational Meeting. We have it scheduled for Wednesday, January 24, 2018. However, if we are going to have the joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors, we will probably need to do that sooner so probably the first week of January. Mrs. Robinson if you will pick another day and notify the Board; is that okay with everyone?

BOARD COMMENT:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: That brings us to Item VI. Board Comment. Mr. Nickles, do you have a Board Comment?

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: I am just really happy with the Robotics Team. It just keeps getting better all of the time. They are a great bunch of kids who have some good leaders. I am very proud of what they do. Not everybody catches touchdown passes or throws the winning pitch or a no-hitter. These kids are sharp. I think Ridgeview will become a standard for this program.

Mr. Rocky Barton: I really want to thank the Board of Supervisors for stepping up to the plate. They voted at the last meeting to continue their support. (Applause) They also voted to look at the elementary school to continue the upgrade and see what needs to be done. I appreciate them stepping up to keep our communities. We are seeing as Scott said a bleeding in our enrollment and it has finally stopped. We are not seeing our kids leave at nearly the way we were back a few months ago and last year. So I think we may have hit bottom and starting back up as far as our local economy. I just really believe in keeping our communities open. I just appreciate everybody coming out and supporting that. (Applause!)

Dr. Lurton Lyle: We seem to be having a slow start in this process, but I think it is necessary to go slow and try to do the best thing that we can. It is a process.

Mr. Rick Mullins: I really appreciate what the Board of Supervisors did last night. I think we kind of got the cart before the horse from the beginning. Now we are going to be able to put some numbers and statistics to it and get a true evaluation.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I guess my comment would be that I am proud that we are all working together to see that every child in the county has the same opportunity to get the same education. (Applause!) If there are no other comments, we will move on to Item VII. which is Closed Session.

CLOSED SESSION:

Chairman Susan Mullins: Pursuant to Section 2.2-3711, Paragraph A of the Code of Virginia, I move that the board convene a closed session for the purpose of discussing:

1. Employment issues relating to salary, benefits, FMLA request, retirements, consideration of Pre K teacher, coach and substitutes pursuant to Virginia Code 2.2-3711 A (1) and
2. to consult with counsel on legal issues pursuant to Virginia Code section 2.2-3711 A (7).

Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

OUT OF CLOSED SESSION:

Chairman Susan Mullins: I now entertain a motion to go out of Closed Session. Mr. Shanghai Nickles made the motion and Mr. Rocky Barton seconded. All votes aye. Chairman Susan Mullins stated; pursuant to Section 2.2-3711(A) of the Code of Virginia, I move to certify that during the closed meeting just concluded the Dickenson County School Board discussed only matters lawfully exempt from the open meeting requirements under Section 2.2-3711 of the Code and identified in the motion convening the closed meeting. Dr. Lurton Lyle, Mr. Rick Mullins, Mr. Rocky Barton, Mr. Shanghai Nickles and Chairman Susan Mullins; all certified true.

BOARD ACTIONS:

Chairman Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve the safety audit recommendations. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Chairman Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve Kent Grant as Athletic Director as recommended. Mr. Shanghai Nickles seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Chairman Mrs. Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve the FMLA request for Deanna Fields as requested. Mr. Rocky Barton seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Chairman Susan Mullins: I make the motion we accept the retirement requests of James Colley, Teacher at Ridgeview High School and Gary Stanley, Bus Driver as requested. Mr. Shanghai Nickles seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Chairman Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve the employment of Emily Cox, Pre K Teacher at Ervinton Elementary, as recommended. Mr. Rocky Barton seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Chairman Susan Mullins: I make the motion we approve the substitute list as presented contingent upon all necessary requirements being met. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Substitutes:

- Bailey, Leann – Teacher/Cook/Janitor

- Edwards, Brittany – Teacher
- Phipps, Eric – Janitor
- Woodleif, Ernest – Teacher

PUBLIC COMMENT:

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: (All Ayes) I guess now that brings us to our Public Comment. Mr. Nickles, I will ask you to please ready the Guidelines. (So read) I am just going to remind everyone of the process. Mr. Setser will let you know when you have one minute left to finish up your thoughts. I am not trying to be rude to anyone, but we have to follow our standards because if I let one person go beyond the allotted time, I will have to let everyone go beyond the five minutes. If everyone will respect that, I will appreciate it. Is there anyone out there who wants to sign up for Public Comment that didn't get a chance? Okay, we will start with Ms. Kathy Musick.

Ms. Kathy Musick: Good morning Chairman Mullins and Members of the Board. It is my pleasure as the Regional Representative of the Virginia Professional Educators to serve the teachers of Dickenson County. I thank you for your leadership. I thank you for this opportunity, and I know that there are many, many tough decisions ahead of you. You are in my thoughts and prayers as you go through those. If I can ever serve you in any capacity, I will do all I can. I also want to take this opportunity to wish everyone a Merry Christmas. My wish is that 2018 brings many good budgets to the Dickenson County School System. Thank you.

Superintendent Robinson: Thank you so much.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Okay, next is Ms. Phyllis Mullins. Is Phyllis in the room?

Superintendent Robinson: No ma'am.

Ms. Allison Mullins O'Quinn: I am not here in that capacity, but I have some students I am taking to the nursing home, and I just wanted to know if I could be moved up a spot. I would be really grateful.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: That would be fine.

Ms. Allison Mullins O'Quinn: Thank you. I am going to be really brief here. I want to thank the Board of Supervisors, as Mr. Barton has said, for supporting the three-school model and committing to repair Ervinton Elementary School and Clintwood Elementary School. The Haysi community believes that all of our younger students need to be close to home. We thank the School Board for looking into the repairs needed. I want to thank Mr. Mullins and Mrs. Mullins for going to visit the schools. We know that there are certainly issues at those schools. We at Haysi, as I said before, are perfectly content to keep our school at Sandlick. We just want our community school even if it is at Sandlick. As you know, the School Board's agreement with the government was to relocate Sandlick Elementary School in exchange for the grant monies. That is the position that we are in. I feel like rather than trying to spend \$21 million on a school into a place where it doesn't fit and having Grades Pre-k-3

is not in the best interest of any of our students in Dickenson County—not at Clintwood, Ervinton or Haysi. I certainly think that the three-school model is best for all. We don't care if we get the new school. If there is a way that could be figured out where we could build a wall around Sandlick, we would be perfectly happy. We just don't want those young kids to be on that bus so long. Also, it would overcrowd schools and classrooms, and I am also concerned about what consolidation would do to our staff in the schools. I think we would certainly have lay-offs, and we need to keep our jobs in Dickenson County. I think having a job in the school system is a great job. We don't need lay-offs, and we don't need to move into Buchanan County, Russell County or Wise County. We need to honestly show unity for keeping all of our students in Dickenson County which is the best county on earth. We do not need a consolidated elementary school. There is not one benefit to it. Ervinton Elementary School deserves a new school as much as anybody, and I agree with that. We would give them that. We just want to keep our school. That is all I want to say. I hope you all have a great Christmas and thank you. (Applause!)

Mr. Shanghai Nickles: You too.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Next is David Malcolm Ratliff:

Mr. David Ratliff: I will make this short. One thing I want to talk about are some comments that were brought up in the meeting. I did some searching on Google a few minutes ago about the minerals and mining. I don't think in the corporate limits there that many coal mines. Haysi High School was built before the town was established. We have two attorneys, and one is a school teacher who can go out here and check on that stuff. Mostly what I want to talk about right now is our school system. We might do renovations right now for the two schools, Ervinton and Clintwood. I think if someone donates money or someone here won the lottery, we could build a new school for Clintwood and Ervinton. That would be good. If I won the lottery it would first go to the fire department, but second, I would build a new school. (Ha, Ha!) That is what we need to look at sometimes. Donations would certainly help. If we combine the schools, I would like to see Haysi and Clinchco together, and Ervinton and Clintwood together. We have people from Dante all the way to St. Paul around Coeburn and also through Pound. We need to put an elementary school closer to that area and we would get more money that way. Putting a school at Haysi is going to bring more revenue. Buchanan County has already made one big mistake, and we are getting the money for it when they closed Russell Prater. They are talking about closing Council now. We could benefit from that. I know I have more minutes, but I am going to close and let somebody else talk so we can get out of here quicker. Bye! (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Next is Jeremy Stapleton:

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: At the last meeting I gave the Board a copy of the VDOT papers. I don't know if the Board has had a chance to review those and see the problem with the school bus site 22618 Dickenson Highway. At the Board of Supervisors Meeting last night, it was stated that Mr. Rocky Barton's brother who was driving the coal truck that allegedly hit the school bus. I want to ask a couple of questions.

Mr. Rocky Barton: Almost hit.

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: Yes, almost hit. I want to ask a couple of questions in case this does happen, and you have to go to court. Why were there no tag numbers taken at this accident?

Mr. Rocky Barton: There was no accident. It wasn't even alleged. It was almost hit.

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: How did they get this information?

Mr. Rocky Barton: They may be talking about a different accident, but there was no accident. It was almost hit.

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: Every single one of the Board of Supervisors stated that they did not tell Robbie Kilgore or Joey Mullins not to conduct my study. They said it had to come from the School Board. I would like to have the School Board meet with me to go over this study. I think a couple of the supervisors may have perjured themselves. I still have to review the facts of that. Why are no other school bus sites being considered safety issues? Why is this one singled out if it is not an issue. I can't understand that. We live on curvy roads. We are not Richmond or Roanoke. We have curvy roads where school buses have to stop. Why is this particular one being singled out? These are important questions that we need answers to. If it is not a personal issue and is actually a safety concern for those children, then Mrs. Robinson's plan of dropping them off at the Park and Ride and allowing the children to walk up that road is unacceptable. The plan to have the students transferred to another school in Clintwood is feasible this year, but what about next year if we have the three-school model. How can the lieutenant of the department drop them off at separate sites and pick them up at separate sites at the same time? It doesn't make sense. This one alleged incident of a coal truck coming around and sliding 60 feet. I'm sure there would be black marks.

Mr. Rocky Barton: I'm sure you must be talking about a different incident. The only one I knew about was when my brother was in a truck and almost hit the guard rail trying to stop. He didn't slide, and there was no accident. You must be talking about a totally different accident.

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: At the 22618 site?

Mr. Rocky Barton: This was no accident. Nobody hit anything. All he did was almost witness coming around the curve and seeing a school bus, and there was someone behind him who almost hit him. I don't know where you got the information that somebody slid 60 feet.

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: It was mentioned last night at the Board of Supervisors meeting.

Mr. Rocky Barton: Well, that must have been a different incident.

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: We really need to find out who told Marty Kilgore and Jeremy Mullins. There has been another study ordered through Salem, but I don't see why there needs to be a road study at this site when it has been a school bus stop since at least 1990. It is not a safety issue, it is a personal problem between the tenant of the apartment and another person. I don't know if he will admit that or not. The tenant actually has perfect attendance from kindergarten through high school. She is still letting her kids checkout on occasion because the school bus won't stop there any more for her. The kids are getting unexcused absences when they are checked out like that. She is putting that in the memo when she checks them out. I am going to Richmond Thursday to the Department of Education and discuss this with the people there. Something needs to be done. Transferring them to a different school would work for this year, but I don't think it will work next year or for the future tenants of that apartment. Thank you.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: I have a question at this time. Mrs. Robinson, did you review the stuff that he gave us last time? Did you get back in touch with him?

Superintendent Robinson: No, I did not. I did not have his number. I have Ms. Deel's number, and she has not returned my call.

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: She can't receive calls during work time because she works at the Day Care here in town. She has had calls from the School Board office, and when she tries to return the call after work, no one knows who has tried to call her. No one has contacted me. My phone number is written on the VDOT case.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Maybe we could arrange an appointment.

Mr. Jeremy Stapleton: I also have a suggestion for your joint meeting with the Board of Supervisors to find out who has told them that this is an unsafe stop. Who has taken the direction to not have the school bus stop there without a VDOT study or survey?

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Next is Melissa Stanley:

Ms. Melissa Stanley: Good morning. First of all, I would like to thank you all. I have a grandson who is a part of the autism program at Sandlick Elementary School, and I can't sing enough praises about that good school and everyone there. I really appreciate what you all are doing for autism awareness at our school. I would like to read this letter that was sent out to some of the Board Members from Ms. Norma Hay:

Hello, I just want to respectfully ask you to please remember the youngest children when you make your decision about the elementary school. I don't normally speak out on these issues, but I feel strongly about this. In my experience, young children do better in smaller class sizes and in smaller schools. I am also concerned about our special needs children. I know you know my son. He had such an amazing school experience because he was in a small school where he was looked out for and everyone knew him. I fear our special needs babies will become lost in a consolidated school. I teach Pre-K, and these babies already have such a long day. I can't imagine a child riding a bus from somewhere like Indian

Creek for example all the way to Ridgeview. If you and the other Board Members are dead set on consolidation, please consider a more neutral site such as Clinchco. It is not fair to these babies of Sandlick or Ervinton to end up on a county bus with them all the way to Clintwood. I have no political agenda, just a love and concern for my students. Thank you for your time.

Again, I can't say enough good things about the program there at Sandlick Elementary School. As a grandmother of a special baby, I would just ask that you all take that into consideration, please. Thank you. (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Next will be Ms. Kathy Harrison:

Ms. Kathy Harrison: I was very pleased and interested to learn more about the Star Program that Ms. Edwards was talking about because I, too, have a special needs grandson. Recently, during the past two or two and a half months became a grandmother of an Ervinton student. So I have family members at Sandlick; I have grandchildren at the high school; I have some in the middle school; now I have one at Ervinton and one at Clintwood. I have a great grandbaby that is going to be going somewhere in this county. We hope they will get to stay in this county. The move to Ervinton, a smaller school, really was amazing for my grandson. He is five years old and is autistic. I was not a fan, and I expressed my concerns, but I have to say that the Central Office personnel listened to everything I had to say, and they tried to reassure me. When I left the meeting, Ms. Edwards asked if I was better satisfied, and I said no I'm not. But I think I have been proven wrong. He still has his times. He can be a runner. Because it is a smaller school, I knew some teachers there, and I let these teachers know that my grandson is up there. I wanted my grandson to know some more faces besides just the face of the teacher he had in the classroom. I wanted the teachers that were at the school to know my grandson because he can be a runner. So having the advantage of a smaller school and living in a community that is very close because I am sort of centrally located. I can be at any school besides Clintwood or Longs Fork within 15 minutes. I am blessed with where I live. So I knew some people up there. I really appreciate the Board of Supervisors and the School Board's willingness to keep these three schools open because I do know that autistic children and every special needs child need special attention. That is why they are special needs children. Everyone is different, so you can't just do a one formula fits all. I really want it to weigh on all of your hearts that you keep all three schools open so that every child, including those special needs kids, has the opportunity for an education just like everybody else. My grandson is very smart. His new teacher at Ervinton was really amazed when he could read color words written in a different color. She wrote down the word "red" with a blue marker, and he said "red". Most five-year-old children say blue because that is the prominent color. He has been doing that since he was about three years old. He needs an environment where his intelligence can be allowed to grow and his social skills also. That is where he is going to be lacking. So I thank you for looking into the schools to see what needs to be upgraded so that hopefully we can keep all three schools open, and that we can still continue to be a three elementary school county with one high school/middle school. (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Next is Mr. Tate.

Mr. Joe Tate: I appreciate you calling me “Mr.” that makes me feel important. (Ha, Ha!) Madam Superintendent, Madam Chairman, Board Members and your attorney. I certainly appreciate this opportunity to appear before you today, and I hope my remarks might prick your conscience and make you think about the decisions you have to make now and in the future especially when it comes to the location of the new school. All politicians and lawyers like to say “let’s look at the record” before they start their comments. I would like to look at the record with you all this morning and say that we have depended entirely upon our elected people. When we put you into office, we trust you to do the very best for us that you could do and in the cheapest manner that you can do it without sacrificing anything that would benefit the taxpayers of the county. Many years ago the Board of Supervisors in their infinite wisdom gave our water to Buchanan County. Was that an ignorant decision? You bet it was! Shortly after that we were fortunate enough to finally start getting a little bit of money from our severance and minerals from coal and or gas. We started getting severance tax. I though man we are coming to the front and making great strides. I knew that Dickenson, Buchanan and Wise County were coal producing counties. Then they came up and built a big fancy headquarters for the Coalfield Economic Development Authority, and where did they put it? They put it in a county that the only natural resources they had was cow manure and chinquapins. It is not right the way they do us. Somebody in our government went to sleep when that happened. Somebody didn’t do what they were supposed to do. Now we come to this decision that you all have to make. I really feel sorry for you to have to do with the amount of money that you have to do it with. When you make the final say, and say what you are going to say about the school you won’t satisfy everybody. I hope you can satisfy your own conscience because I have heard all kinds of talk here today about buying property, minerals and I didn’t hear anything about property that we already own. I might have missed it because I am an 80-year-old man with a hearing aid in each ear, but I don’t recall it being talked about. I think it is unfair. If we have a piece of property with the least amount of work and can be brought to the level that would be suitable to the government that it is out of the flood plain, I don’t even know why we would ask anyone else to sell us property. I can’t figure that out. I study about it every time I read about it in the paper, and I can’t help but to look at the things that have happened to us since we have been a county. We depend so heavily on the people we put into office not only on the local level but when we send them to Richmond. I can’t wrap up, but I will try. We send them up there to look out for our best interests, and what happens. It is a pity what we are getting for our natural resources, and I say that because if you look into it you will see that the citizens of Alaska, every man, woman and child get from the oil company for their minerals will knock your hat off because those people know that sooner or later that well is going to dry up, and we have witnessed the well in Dickenson County also known as the coal resources just about dwindle away to nothing. The gas company is going to do the same. Our people in Richmond say that we can’t get any more severance. I say “why”. They say we can’t build a new road, and I say “why”. Thank you, I appreciate it. (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Next is Matt Owens:

Mr. Matt Owens: Thank you Madam Superintendent, Madam Chair and Members of the Board. I just want to address a couple of things. I know the attorney had to be brief in his

comments, but I just wanted to add a few things. I am personally involved with the properties that you guys are talking about. I just wanted to let you know that coal and mineral rights the judge said that we could do a force claim ourselves and take that last 25%, but we chose not to in order to allow the other landowner to obtain some money if the school property is purchased and they are on board with that. The other coal and mineral rights I believe Contour said that they would work with the School Board on it and not do any kind of fees or anything. Maybe you might want to look into that, Mr. Attorney; because that is the mineral rights you had a question about. The other mineral rights are owned by one of my family members, and there is no question on those. I don't know but some people have said they have seen this map, and I was told that Freddie hadn't done a lot of work on this but this is the map that Mr. Freddie Mullins, the attorney, came to our office one day and presented to us with Mr. Leman Kendrick. He gave his intentions, and we negotiated a deal that day to complete this project years ago. That is also the time that the other property owner that you talked about with the 17 acres signed that agreement, and I spoke with her last night and she indicated that she would resign that agreement because she wanted to enhance the community and go ahead and get this project done. There is no question on her coal rights because I looked at the deeds myself. I just wanted to tell you all that, and I will email all of you these maps so you can look at it. This property that you are looking at on here is very, very clear. This 17-acre tract right here, and you guys already own this tract right here in the middle. The only thing you need from the individual with the 5-acre tract is just this little corner, and the piece you need here is just for the road. I don't know if the mineral rights need to even be addressed about that road. I don't think you need to sterilize that. I'm not clear on that, but it is just a thought of mine. These five acres over here I don't think need to address the mineral rights because once again, it is just a road. The school is all up here. The size of the Sandlick/Clinchco school for 400 children, we could build a 500-children campus. I think we have the money to do that. I don't think there is any issue with any of the property owners. They have allowed me to speak on their behalf today. I think it is a pretty clear indication that things are going good.

The other thing that I want to address is what you said in your meeting earlier that some of the Board Members went and visited some of the school sites and that they were appalled at the condition of the school sites. I just ask that during the reorganization meeting that maybe you guys will look up on Google "Minimum Standard of Performance". It is a philosophy that we use in business that says "I am going to set a standard for me, and this is the lowest I am going to go". One of the Minimum Standards of Performance I would suggest that you write into your own personal plan, and as a group maybe, adopt is that if I take a job before I accept that job, I would ask what I need to do. I think if you are going to be a School Board Member your job is to be responsible for all of these properties. If you have not visited these properties but just this one time, I am really concerned that you don't know what is going on in your school system. I think that you should set a Minimum Standard of Performance that you would visit each one of the properties at least every other month so this won't be a surprise to you that there were trash cans there for three months. (Applause!) Why empty the dehumidifiers when you could attach a hose to it which anyone with common sense could do? I really agree that they shouldn't have to have a dehumidifier in the first place. I think you guys should really look into what you are doing. I know that you all do other stuff, and you meet just once a month, but you should be concerned. I know it is a thankless job be-

cause I have a thankless job myself. People look at things and think they are fine, but there are things down below that you don't see. I would really like for you guys to really think about visiting the properties and be more involved in them so that these things won't surprise you and deal with them earlier. We can all be forgiven of our sins so let's try to fix this. Thanks. (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Mr. Carroll Edwards:

Mr. Carroll Edwards: I don't have very much to say that hasn't already been said. The fact is that if you consolidate the schools here at Ridgeview you are going to have a great falling away of revenue and kids. You are going to have miles and miles of transportation for 5-year-old children. Shanghai was concerned with them having to drive from Ridgeview to Haysi to a batting cage. But I am concerned with the little kids getting an education furnished by the Dickenson County School Board. I know you know this, but it is the obligation of the School Board Members. You are to furnish a good education to all kids. I think the Board of Supervisors passed a resolution to spend up to \$15,000 on a study of the schools. Why don't they put that money in the bank and bricks and mortar instead of on a study? You are getting ready to do the same thing by putting money into a study. Study time is over. (Applause!) We need to move and move in the right direction for the kids and for the taxpayers. We need to move in the way of the kids and put them first. You can then take care of the taxpayers in the meantime. Thank you. (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Next is Jarvis Deel:

Mr. Jarvis Deel: Madam Chair, Mrs. Robinson and Board Members I am here again. Seems like I'm wearing this place out. I have to agree, and I think we all do about the special needs children. The wish of all of us is to give a safe environment in which to educate our children. Why are we trying to spend money on a study when we have a place to put that school? I do applaud you and the Board of Supervisors for checking these other schools. That is a study that really needs to be done. It should have been done long ago before someone is hurt by the ceiling falling in. It is not right, and you know it is not right. There is a lot of power playing going on. The people who are doing these power plays will suffer in the end. I just about guarantee they will. One bus wreck or one incident with these kids will be on their back. But whatever you decide I will be behind it. That's all I got to say. The Clinchco site is sitting down there going to waste. If a school has to be built for consolidation, it should be built there. If it does wind up at Ridgeview, I have had parents from the Haysi area tell me that they would rather consolidate at Ridgeview because it would be easier and safer for them. I don't know. It is on you all. I appreciate your time. (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Mr. Hill:

Mr. Don Hill: My name is Don Hill, and I am here once again advocating for the elementary school students and the relief of the taxpayers of this county. Both of these groups will be affected either positively or negatively by the site selected for the proposed elementary school. The effect will be positive if the selection of the site is based on hard evidence of the student population data along with the tangible cost estimates. My opinion, rhetoric, com-

mercial reasons or something the Corps of Engineers said a long time ago. Your primary responsibility is the safety and welfare of the students entrusted to your care, and you have been given oversight by the parents and the community to do so. As well you have a fiduciary responsibility to be good stewards of the taxpayers' money you will be using to construct this school. From where I sit you now have two sites to consider, and you must consider both when making the final decision of where to locate the school. Those two sites are Backbone Ridge and Clinchco. Over the last five years I have provided to the previous Board and this Board independent and unbiased data in the U.S. Census Bureau showing which of the two sites has the greater relative student density including the proximity to it. The data is unbiased because the statistics are evaluated by the U.S. Census Bureau, and the results were provided directly to me by the Cooper Center at U.V.A Wise. That site is Clinchco. I am a resident of Clinchco, and I have no children or grandchildren that are or will be attending this school unlike some others who have appeared before you who have stated business and personal interests as the reason for locating this school in the Haysi area. I have no personal or business interest in where the school is located. My interest is laser focused on two objectives, the safety and welfare of these kids and the long-term impact on the taxpayers of this county. Make no mistake about it. I am very passionate about these two issues, and you should be also along with all of the citizens of Dickenson County who will significantly affected financially. I have heard over the years and more recently people say "let's do what is best for the kids". Locating the school on Backbone Ridge is not what is best for the kids or the taxpayers. This statement is based on very sound data presented to you. In fact, locating the school on Backbone Ridge will definitely increase the student travel time on buses and in personal vehicles for a greater number of students which in turn leads to much greater increase of the probability of accidents and even death. Furthermore, the cost of that school fifty years in the future would be significantly be greater and would be unnecessary born by the taxpayers of this county. Instead of locating this school at a given site and asking the students to come by bus or personal vehicle, do something novel unlike what was done at Ridgeview and locate this school closest to the site as the greatest relative population density, and then transport kids to it by bus and personal vehicle which will make the transportation significantly safer and less costly. Do not make a decision on either of these sites until you have done an accurate cost estimate from independent sources. If you do so, more than likely you will find that the Clinchco site will be safer and less costly. Cost savings would be realized both from the operation of the school fifty years into the future and the \$21 million will be spent on the school and not on excavation, infrastructure mineral issues and land acquisition. It appears to me there would be minimal excavation at the Clinchco site you would have 11 to 12 acres and more if needed. The excavation material could be used as fill material. Unlike the Board of Supervisors at a recent meeting this Board has the power to do what is best for the kids. You can do what is best for the kids by voting to select Clinchco as a site for this school. It will significantly enhance the welfare of the kids and minimize the financial impact on the taxpayers. That is how this Board can go from job owning and giving lip service to the statement, "let's do what is best for the kids", to actually doing something that would be great for the kids and taxpayers. The time is right now, and it is imperative that you stand up for the children and taxpayers and do it despite all of the flack you are receiving and most certainly will receive if you make this decision to locate the school at Clinchco. Do the right thing for the children based on facts instead of emotion and other factors. Thank you.

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: Next is Jazmine Yates:

Ms. Jazmine Yates: Hi guys. This is Knox. Say hi Knox. I personally know some of you. I do not know Susan and I do not know Dr. Lyle, but I have spoken to the rest of you. I just want you to know that I love all of you. I have to get up very early in the morning before my day starts with these kiddos, and I have been praying for you guys. I wouldn't want to be where you are sitting. I just want you to know that no matter the decision, someone is going to be hurt. Shanghai, specifically, called you out personally because I was disappointed about some of the rumors that I had heard about Ervinton and the population and about how they will be consolidated with us which is not true. We want them to keep their elementary school, and I know you do too. Ervinton Elementary School has received so many awards because of the small classrooms. I just don't understand why you would want to take that school and close the doors in order to consolidate. I just don't understand why you would want to take that away from those kids. I don't know why anyone would want to take that away from the kids. With the issue at Clintwood, I would never stand for my child to sit in classroom with cracks in the foundation and water dripping from the ceiling. That is totally unacceptable. I also know that if my house was doing that, I would patch that part of the roof. I wouldn't tear down my whole house. Just fix it. If there was a part of Sandlick that could just be fixed so that we don't get flooded, we are totally okay with staying where we are. The problem is, we can't. The government says that we can't. Don't take this school away from us just because you personally want it on the Ridge. You guys know that these facts and figures about consolidation of elementary school things have come out, and it said that it is not good for the children, and it is not good for the finances. I just don't really understand why it is still an issue. The contract says to just rebuild it because it was in the flood zone. I really don't understand why it is that difficult. We can argue these bus routes all day long. I know there are people from Ervinton, Clintwood and Haysi that still have to travel where they are to get to school. It has been that way for years so that is not an argument. You do have to take that into consideration for every child. We are for the Wolfpack. We go to all of the games, and I encourage you all to go to the games and root for your school. We love that, and we want him to be a Wolfpack. He is just four so he needs to be close to home while he is little. The next five years is 80% of his brain growth so we don't want him to bus across the county. I wouldn't put him on a bus, so he would be going somewhere else for sure. I appreciate your time. Thank you. (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: The last name I have is Ruby Coleman:

Ms. Ruby Coleman: Hello. I don't really have a prepared speech due to the fact that I am encouraged to be here today by my daughter who wanted me to come here today. First of all I am for the three-school model. I believe it is best for our children. I know there is a situation where you are trying to buy property for Sandlick, and I have moved my children to smaller schools because that was what they needed like Ervinton and Clinchco in the past. Convenience has never played a part in my parenting. (Applause!) There is nothing convenient about making the right decision for my children. I actually put myself out a lot to meet their needs. Convenience does not play a part when trying to decide what my child may or may not need. These are just some of the things that I jotted down that she had mentioned

this morning. I am a parent of two, and I have always instilled in my children the importance of choice. I have told them more times than I will ever be able to count that they are only responsible for their own actions and their own choice. It is never in their favor to follow anyone. Stand for what you think is right. Know what is right and what is wrong. Those are the things that you need to follow and the choices you need to make. Today I had a choice to make. My daughter was in a play at Ervinton and so I could choose to be here or watch her play. Someone would probably think that that is no real choice to make, come here or go to her play. But for me it was a very big decision. You see my daughter has never attempted to be in a play or any kind of a school program since she was a year old. So this was her very first, and it was a really, really big deal for both of us. She is a special needs child, and in choosing the process that was best for my child I actually left my home in Sandlick and moved to Clinchco to be closer to Ervinton so she would be able to get the one-on-one instruction. It took a little bit of time to find something that would work for her, and it appears that we have found it. We all know that Ervinton has the highest test scores in the county. My daughter made a perfect 600. She has the symptoms of optic-neuro-aplasia. To look at her she looks perfect. To look at her you would never know that my daughter is unilaterally blind. You would never know that her condition is a neurological condition. You would never know by looking at her that her body systems are in chaos all the time. They go up and they go down and they change. Nobody knows that by looking at her. In the larger classroom she will not succeed. She can't. That is what we are working for because there is no way she can be in a setting like that. So those are some of my concerns as a parent. I was a little concerned and upset and disappointed that I was put into a position where I had to choose between her today and coming here. Initially I was going to her play. She is my first and primary concern, and I felt that she needed me in the stands. My daughter came to me this morning and sat me down and said that we needed to talk because we had gone back and forth with this. This is what she said, she told me that she would go to school and try her best and she understood that I could not be there that I needed to be here to help other kids. She is a very compassionate, beautiful and amazing child. With that said, these are her concerns. What will happen to my class? She wanted to know what will happen if the kids on the bus need to pee, and she is worried that they may fall asleep. Thank you. (Applause!)

Chairman, Mrs. Susan Mullins: That concludes our Public Comment session. I will entertain a motion to adjourn.

ADJOURNMENT:

Chairman Susan Mullins: I make the motion we adjourn. Dr. Lurton Lyle seconded the motion. All votes aye.

Adjourned: 9:05 p.m.

Susan Mullins

CHAIRMAN

Approved: 1/31/2018

Reba McCowan

CLERK