



Minutes  
School Board Special Called Meeting  
Greene County Schools  
WMHS Performing Arts Center  
January 21, 2022

Members Present: Mr. Todd Sansom, Chair; Mr. Jason Collier, Vice Chair; Ms. Sharon Mack, Member; Mr. Brooks Taylor, Member; Jason Tooley, Member; Dr. Andrea Whitmarsh, Superintendent; Ms. Rhonda Houchens, Clerk; Ms. Jennifer Walker, Deputy Clerk.

Member(s) of The Greene County Board of Supervisors Present: Mr. Steve Bowman, Liaison

Mr. Sansom called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. in the William Monroe High School Digital Media Classroom.

Ms. Mack made a motion to move into closed session in accordance with Virginia Code sections 2.2-3711(A)(8) to receive legal advice regarding COVID Mitigation Strategies and Procedures. Mr. Tooley seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Ms. Mack made a motion to reconvene in an open session in the WMHS Performing Arts Center. Mr. Taylor seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Sansom called the meeting to order at 6:12 p.m.

Mr. Todd Sansom stated: The Board will certify by roll call vote that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and identified in the motion to convene the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered. Mr. Collier, Ms. Mack, Mr. Taylor, Mr. Tooley and Mr. Sansom all certified.

Mr. Sansom requested a motion to approve the agenda. Mr. Tooley made a motion to approve the agenda as presented. Ms. Mack seconded. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Sansom invited everyone to join in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Sansom stated it was time for public comment on information items listed on the agenda. Mr. Sansom opened the floor for public comment.

Steve Kruskamp, a citizen of Greene County, spoke about maintaining a safe and healthy school environment. He spoke about Governor Youngkin's Second Executive Order regarding mask in schools.

Andrew Thomas, a parent of two students at GCPS, spoke in support of students continuing to wear mask in schools.

Georgean Welichko, a parent of three students at GCPS, shared concerns about keeping students in school and maintaining the mask requirement.

Tina Andrews, a parent of students that attend GCPS, spoke about how decisions are made regarding mask, procedures are needed, a way for parents to review procedures and an implementation plan.

Jean Marie Devory, a parent of students that attend GCPS, spoke about the importance of keeping schools open and good mitigation strategies. She asked why would we make a change if we are not having problems.

Chelsey Mapanoo stated she is in favor of mask being optional. She asked the board to vote to uphold the current executive order and let parents decide which CDC recommendations they want to follow.

Christi Dojack, a parent and an educator, shared concerns regarding the difficult year she has had as an educator. She asked the board to keep doors open and let educators keep teaching.

Sue Traber, a parent of two students at GCPS, supports the strategies in place and that are currently working and keeping doors open at GCPS.

Sydney Devory, a senior at WMHS, shared her concerns with making masks optional.

Casey Costanzo shared support for Executive Order Two. She shared concerns with SB313 and contact tracing.

Alexandria Watson, a resident of Greene County and parent of two students at GCPS, spoke regarding parent's rights. She requested the board follow Governor Youngkin's Executive Order Two and let parents decide what's best for their children.

Ashley Morris, a parent of students that attend GCPS, shared concerns with students not wearing a mask. She asked the board to consider updated filtration systems, a plan on keeping staff safe, a plan if numbers sore and school has to close, and she requested that if you decide to remove the mask mandate to wait until the numbers go down.

Megan Ice asked the board to consider the current spike in cases, how much planning to implement changes making mask optional and time is need to evaluate and plan.

Stephanie Grice Renshaw, a resident of Greene County and a pediatrician in Charlottesville, shared masks protect the person wearing it, she spoke about different types of masks and said that it should be one's choice.

Stephanie Hammer, a citizen and teacher in the community, requested to keep masks on. She shared the impacts of having masks optional. She asked about air filtration system, will the system provide N95 mask for staff and will there be weekly testing. She stated now is not the time to make changes.

Steve Kortepeter shared concerns about how people feel about each other and he stated we need to learn to live with one another.

Mallory Lamb, a resident of Greene County, spoke about email from school division, SB1303, CDC Guidelines and the Governor's Executive Order. She spoke in support of mask being optional.

Joelle Clark, a parent of student's that attend GCPS, shared concerns of students wearing mask and mental health problems. She supports freedom of choice and allowing mask be optional.

Gigi Taft, a parent of a 12 grader at WMHS, shared concerns of mask wearing. She asked the board to stop making kids wear masks.

Michael Gantt, a parent of students that attend GCPS, spoke regarding making his kids wear a mask due to the law and now the law has change and it needs to be followed. He asked about mistreatment of kids if they do not wear a mask or those wearing a mask.

Carly Kilby, a parent of four children that attend GCPS, thanked the board for everything and keeping schools open and for keeping students and staff in school. She requested that mask would continued to be required.

Sandra Barber stated education should be provided for all students. She shared concerns with students having to wear mask. She supports Governor Youngkins' Executive Order.

Buddy Barre, a parent of two children attend GCPS, spoke regarding SB1303, local infections, effectiveness of masks and contact tracing. He stated we should not put masks on kids to protect us.

Natalya Welichko shared her support for mask wearing.

Brittany Bornstein stated her child was her responsibility and your child is yours. She supports masks being optional.

Craig Shifflett, a grandparent of students that attend GCPS, shared his thoughts regarding COVID and mask wearing. He supports parents and students deciding if they would like to wear a mask.

Cherish Alberts is a resident of Greene County, parent of students that attend GCPS, and a teacher. She supports mask wearing. She thanked the administration and for helping keeping everyone safe. She requested that if mask become optional give staff time to make change.

Colter Foster shared concerns with making students that are 18 years old to wear a mask. He supports students being able to choose.

Mr. Sansom closed public comments.

Dr. Whitmarsh presented information/action item #11-1180, COVID Mitigation Strategies and Procedures. Dr. Whitmarsh shared Executive Order Two, SB1303, Virginia Department of Labor and Industry Standards, and Transportation Safety Authority Order. She shared GCPS COVID Mitigation Strategies, absence rates, isolation/quarantine rates and Blue Ridge Health District case numbers. She reviewed the close contact definition, Federal Transportation Mandate and PVCC mask requirement.

Mr. Tooley made a motion that the Board rescind its current policy and directive regarding the requirement that students, employees, and visitors wear an appropriate face covering at all times while inside any Greene County Public Schools building and I further move that the Board adopt the following policy and directive effective 12:01 a.m. on Monday, January 24, 2022: (1) The Board continues to encourage all students, employees, and visitors to wear an appropriate face covering at all times while inside any Greene County Public Schools building as a measure to help mitigate the risk of COVID-19 transmission and infection; however, consistent with the Governor's Executive Order Number Two, issued on January 15, 2022, no student shall be required to wear a face covering while inside a Greene County Public Schools building if that child's parent has elected not have the student subjected to a requirement that he or she wear a face covering while inside any Greene County Public Schools building; and (2) no employee shall be required to wear a face covering while inside a Greene County Public Schools building if the employee elects not to do so; and (3) all students and employees shall be required to wear masks over the mouth and nose when traveling in any school-provided transportation, as required by federal law, and inside school buildings in compliance with any isolation and quarantine prevention strategy provided by the CDC.

Mr. Taylor seconded the motion.

Mr. Sansom asked for board member discussion.

Mr. Taylor thanked everyone for coming out. He stated regardless of the decision tonight we need to move forward, lots of great comments tonight, staff has done a great job, he stated he is not against mask or vaccines, he stated it's everyone's choice and he thanked everyone for coming out.

Ms. Mack thanked everyone who spoke and for being respectful. She shared how extraordinary difficult this has been for staff and she thanked everyone. She suggested there needed to be a plan before removing mask. She proposed making mask optional but not until the numbers improve. She said the

motion is good but we need more time to update quarantine guidelines. She stated she is not in support of the motion as it is written but with an effective date of sometime in February.

Mr. Collier thanked everyone that attended meeting and those who spoke. He thanked teachers for the time they were putting in. He spoke about the executive order and senate bill. He stated that we need time to have a plan and it's not smart decision making to make changes now. He stated what's in place has worked and our schools have remained open through the pandemic. Mr. Collier stated he is not in favor of changing masks at this time, we need more guidance from the state, we need more guidance from the Attorney General's Office and Department of Health and little more from the Department of Education and to come up with a plan. He stated we need to revisit this at the next regularly scheduled meeting February 9<sup>th</sup> at the earliest and if numbers are still high maybe end of February.

Mr. Tooley thanked teachers and staff. He shared a quote from Attorney General's Office. He stated we need to look out for the kids. He stated he stands behind his motion and thanked everyone for coming out.

Mr. Sansom shared remarks regarding reopening schools and masks. He spoke regarding Governor Youngkin's Executive Order and stated we will not be following it if we change the date. He spoke about conflicts between the Executive Order and SB1303. Mr. Sansom stated if the executive order gave more time he stated he would be open to it. He stated he cannot ignore it.

Ms. Mack gave her opinion on the previous executive order, mask mandates and SB1303. She stated there is no clear answer. She stated the previous executive order was not opposing SB1303.

Mr. Sansom spoke regarding the previous administrator's directives.

Mr. Taylor stated he wants everyone to know there has been a lot of time spent in making this decision. He stated it was a lot of prayer. Mr. Taylor shared what do we have now we didn't have last August or July: herd immunity, vaccine for children, and children can still wear mask.

Mr. Sansom stated there has been a lot of communication between board member and superintendent.

Mr. Sansom stated the Board will certify by roll call vote:

Mr. Collier - No

Ms. Mack - No

Mr. Taylor - Aye

Mr. Tooley - Aye

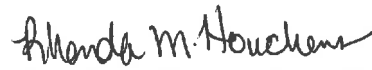
Mr. Sansom - Aye

Mr. Collier requested motion to adjourn meeting. Ms. Mack seconded. No discussion. All Ayes, motion carried.

Mr. Sansom adjourned the meeting at 8:08 p.m.



Chair



Clerk