

July 16, 2020

The Board of Education of the County of Kanawha met in Regular Session on Thursday, July 16, 2020 at the Board of Education Building, Charleston, West Virginia. The meeting was called to order by Board President Becky J. Jordon at 6:00 p.m.

**PRESENT**

Becky J. Jordon, President  
Tracy White, President Pro Tem  
Ric Cavender  
Jim J. Crawford, Sr. (via phone)  
Ryan White  
Thomas E. Williams, Jr., Secretary

Debra J. Lewis, Recording Secretary

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**

Paula Potter, Assistant Superintendent, High Schools, Technical & Adult Education  
Carol Hamric, Executive Director, Human Resources  
Lindsey McIntosh, General Counsel  
Melanie Meadows, Treasurer, Budget & Finance  
Briana Warner, Communications Director  
Keith Vititoe, Executive Director, Safety & Security  
Amon Gilliam, Assistant Superintendent, Middle & Alternative Schools  
Mellow Lee, Assistant Superintendent, Elementary  
Leah Sparks, Executive Director, Technology  
Chuck Smith, Executive Director, Facilities, Planning & Management

**PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

The Pledge of Allegiance was led by Board President Becky J. Jordon.

## **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

- A. May 19, 2020 - Special Session
- B. May 19, 2020 - Special Session
- C. June 10, 2020 - Special Session
- D. June, 18, 2020 - Regular Session

## **RENAMING OF STONEWALL JACKSON MIDDLE SCHOOL**

### A. Discussion

Mrs. Jordon-We will take Delegations at this time.

Gregg Ferguson-I want to support the naming of the school after Katherine Johnson. All educators agree that they would capitalize on the momentum that is created when the school is named after her. The examples of black achievers reminds both students and teachers and community members to persevere. Educators affirm the value of a name like Katherine Johnson would be a touchstone for black students. Educators also capitalize on the momentum that is created when a school is named for a person like Katherine Johnson and especially black educators express that cultural knowledge and pride are difficult to maintain and that all students need to recognize the achievements and contributions of black Americans to American greatness. Katherine Johnson is an alumni of WV State University which is a member of WV Space Grant Consortium which has access to NASA Programs enhancing STEM Learning.

Jennifer Phair-Last time I was here I talked about the fundraising efforts that we did. I'm glad we took pledges and not contributions. Many wanted a round table discussion and that hasn't happened and I'm very disappointed in that. If there is an opportunity for the vote to be postponed so members can get together and talk I think that is very important. My first vote would be Katherine Johnson and my second vote would be for Katherine Johnson West Side. There was a petition that went out that had 6,600 signatures that had the name changed to Katherine Johnson Middle School. There was a survey that KCS sent out that was flawed so I don't know how you could consider that. You could vote more than one time. There needs to be more discussion that takes place. This has nothing to do with race it has to do with that she was a genius.

## **RENAMING OF STONEWALL JACKSON MIDDLE SCHOOL (continued)**

Taylor Raab-Thank you for leading by example with your unanimous vote. I'm the author of the Change.org petition therefore I feel it's my responsibility to come to you and state that the signers signed not to only remove the name of Stonewall Jackson Middle School but to specifically rename it in the honor of the late Katherine Johnson. The petition currently has 6,616 signatures. She was from West Virginia and she attended WV State University. She was somebody that anybody could look up to. Please continue to be on right side of history and name the school after Katherine Johnson.

Kitty Dooley-Thank you for your unanimous vote to remove the name of a slave-holding traitor from a school in Charleston West Virginia. It would be logical to name it for a woman who was born in Greenbrier County. Her entire family moved to Kanawha County so that she could pursue her education. She was a genius who put America's first man on the moon. Because Mr. Raab had put the petition out there regarding Mrs. Johnson's name I took the liberty of having a friend contact her daughters and they were extremely excited about this opportunity in her home state. I couldn't and wouldn't make any promises to them but they put me in contact with the Estate Attorney and she wrote me a brief email in response saying they would welcome the honor. I know that is something you all would want to know before you make your decision. We already have a school that's named West Side. I believe it's important that the school be named for an African American because it's important to connect the dots from each generation to the next. I would ask that you all look at this closely and my first choice is Katherine Johnson Middle School and my compromised choice would be Katherine Johnson West Side Middle School.

Jeannie Faegre-You need to respect your survey. Please help us help our kids and community. It is not a secret that like NASA there are other organizations assisting schools throughout the county. Schools that are not named after certain individuals. These programs work for kids not for the name of the school or the person the school was named after. You did your job in voting to remove the name, you did your job in soliciting a survey regarding the renaming of the school yet it is still not enough. We would not be debating your survey if Katherine Johnson Middle had been the number one choice but it wasn't. There are local black American legends that the school could be renamed after and if not named after one of these, then please vote to name it West Side Middle or West Charleston Middle. We all need to move on and concentrate on the students and their families. The children of that school have spoken.

## **RENAMING OF STONEWALL JACKSON MIDDLE SCHOOL (continued)**

Yvonne Lee-Thank you for the vote last week. I am a professor at WV State University. There are a lot of great things that come from the West Side but every time you hear the name West Side it brings about something negative. We have got to ensure that we put some substance in that school. I would love for that name to be after an African American woman who put the first Caucasian male on the moon. I think she will bridge the gap in that community. My first choice would be Katherine Johnson and my second choice is Katherine Johnson West Side Middle School. I don't think there needs to be an area on there. Andrew Jackson and GW doesn't have an area behind it. I've worked with the kids in this school and I will continue to go back no matter what your choice is. Give them some hope by changing the name to another name but definitely not West Side. That just does something to me, something negative comes from that name.

Camdyn Harris-I want to thank everyone for the unanimous vote last week. Do you think that naming it after a person is an inspiration to everyone that attends the school? In my opinion and after speaking to several of my classmates, teachers and other people around the West Side and my community we feel the school should have a name that will include everyone that attends it. Changing the name from Stonewall Jackson to another individual and one of color does not accomplish that. We as students don't want to exclude any race that attends this school both now and in the future. The West Side community is part of a larger community which is Charleston. The West Side has been "the hood" for quite a while. This hood is my community and family. We are made up of people with leadership skills, effective communicators, and people with good work ethics, competitiveness and lifelong friends. Yes there is adversity but that is everywhere. We have our flaws but every time we come together as a community and we fix those flaws. We try our best to keep these kids out of the streets and safe. At the end of the day there is no "i" in team. Teamwork makes the dream work. Thank you for listening.

Michael Beatty-You just heard from a young man who is going to be a future leader from Charleston's West Side. In my opinion the school should be named West Side Middle because it represents not only Blacks, Hispanics, Asians and Whites. I'm hearing a division. People are saying this is our time. I've been a volunteer since 2008 on the West Side. During my time overseas I got to speak with people from different cultures. Based on the vote the kids chose West Side Middle. That's their honest answer. When you take away that be prepared for how they are going to feel in the future. They would say you didn't hear my voice, why should I vote. In their minds you don't take their vote seriously. These people that are pushing for Katherine Johnson I need to see you in that school. Don't do it because the cameras are here and you get a good photo opp. I need you there every single day just like I've been doing.

## **RENAMING OF STONEWALL JACKSON MIDDLE SCHOOL (continued)**

Richard Steel-Thank you for hearing the cry of the community and the passion that stood behind the name change. The first step in changing the perception of our community has been supported however the next step is in the new name West Side Middle School. It places emphasis on the fact that good things happen on this side of town. When I think of West Side Middle School I turn to the rich history and pride once established by the alumni and now carried out by the current students and staff. I think of future doctor, lawyers or even teachers who may come back and serve their community. As a teacher, I'm reminded that I serve the kids of this community and not merely the name of a person. The name West Side Middle School represents kids of all colors, backgrounds and differences. It is the bridge that connects the mission of our school to the ears of our community.

Rev. Watts-I would like to thank you for your vote to take down the name of Stonewall Jackson. There is no way that I can top anything that has been said tonight. I just come here to be a witness. My submission would be that the school be named Paul and Anna Gilmer West Side Elementary. I wanted to go on record in saying that I don't know of any two people who have given more in service to Charleston than Pastor Gilmer and his wife. He was a firefighter by trade. His life partner Anna was a scholar. She raised her children then she taught English. We have a record of African Americans in Kanawha County that we wouldn't have if it wasn't for Anna Gilmer and John Randall. They compiled The Black Past which is the history of African Americans in Kanawha County. I support the name my colleagues have submitted but I want to go on record that you don't have to be rich or famous to be a great servant of your own community. My choice would be Paul and Anna Gilmer West Side Middle School but I will certainly support the name change of Katherine Johnson West Side Middle School.

Carl Chadband-I'm not here to lecture you and tell you don't understand because of the color or your skin but I'm here to today because I want to have a conversation. I'm not qualified to be here because I'm an African American man. I'm qualified to talk to you because I care. There are flaws in everyone's argument today. I want you to consider that we don't consult students when we are doing our active shooter training or when we are establishing bus routes or doing fire drills. Leadership requires tough decisions. Although I'm in favor of Katherine Johnson if we don't flood our schools with resources and give the teachers what they need to help these students all we are doing is looking at Mary C. Snow 2.0.

## **RENAMING OF STONEWALL JACKSON MIDDLE (continued)**

Ryan White-I think all the speakers have shown us that we may not be ready to name at this time. I suggested that we do a committee at the last meeting and I want to push for that again. Naming a name today might not be in the best interests of their community.

Mrs. White-When we left the board meeting last week and we went out front everyone was victorious out there. As soon as the article came out with the five names that momentum changed. There's a lot of social media battle over it. As I set here and listened to people suggest that we do name the school after Katherine Johnson because she was phenomenal we also say at the same time why we shouldn't name it West Side because of the stigma and what's going to happen and we are saying that with a West Side student setting in the room. I feel that if we wait longer that the community will divide more. Both of the surveys was flawed. I went through the petition and it's easy if you want to flaw the petition or the survey to find a way to do it. I'm very proud of Camdyn for stepping out of his comfort zone. He not only self-advocates but he does it for his peers. I am willing to vote this evening and I would like to name it West Side Middle School.

Mr. Cavender-I first want to address something Mrs. White addressed this concept that using the words West Side will somehow incite negativity. I've gotten up every day for the past 12 years of my career working to improve two urban districts in this city and one of them is the West Side. I now am a West Side resident. There is a lot of pride on the West Side. I feel more pride when I hear the potential of Katherine Johnson West Side Middle School. I refuse to subscribe to this notion that we went for ever how many years and we didn't necessarily have a problem with it and now we are going to use this opportunity to say let's go neutral. The 5 names that first came to this Board and the 5 names in the survey the only common name on those lists were Katherine Johnson.

Mr. Crawford-I've listened to everybody tonight and I also listened to the student from Stonewall Jackson and he was very convincing. I've talked to several of my friends who are black Americans in the community I am in favor of taking what the students and teachers recommend and that is West Side Middle School.

Mrs. Jordon-I've been asked why we are rushing into this. I don't feel this is a rush because we don't know when school is going to start. I want the kids on the West Side to know what school they are going into. We did the survey, we listened to the community. I grew up on the West Side and all we ever thought was the West Side is the best side. Camdyn I hope your school continues to say that. I support no other name but West Side Middle. No disrespect to any of these beautiful legends but I want you to be proud of where you live. You live on the best side and I want you to feel like that.

## RENAMING OF STONEWALL JACKSON MIDDLE (continued)

Mrs. White-If we do vote is there a way to honor Mrs. Johnson with a library or science lab or something? Dr. Williams-Yes.

Mrs. Jordon-I would like to say that after we name this school that we should let Mr. Wilkerson and his staff choose their colors and mascot.

Mr. Cavender-Can I make a motion? Mrs. Jordon-Yes.

Mr. Ric Cavender moved: That the Board rename the school formerly known as Stonewall Jackson Middle School to Katherine Johnson West Side Middle School. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ryan White.

Mr. White-Can we have a discussion? Mrs. Jordon-We've already had a discussion. Do you want to have another one? Mr. White-We haven't had a discussion on the motion on the table. I think we are premature in making a name. I think that we did not go through the due diligence that we should have gone through. I think the survey we put forth was very flawed. Basing a decision on that I don't agree with. It seems like the majority of the Board wants to make a vote so I seconded Mr. Cavender's motion. I think that is the compromise and it embodies both names that are being considered so I am going to vote in favor of this motion. Mr. Cavender-It feels like that this may not pass. If it doesn't I want to make it clear that me voting this way doesn't mean I'm not in favor of just West Side Middle School. This is a vote for Katherine Johnson West Side Middle School not a vote against West Side Middle School.

Mrs. White-My hope is regardless of what we believe here tonight, I hope the community can bind back together and support this school and the students inside of it. With that said, I will be voting no. I believe it needs to represent the community and I always said I would listen to the students I'm going to lean with what the students say and that's going to be solely West Side Middle School.

Mr. Crawford-I'm in agreement with Mrs. White. I think that what I've heard here tonight was enough to convince me that we name it the West Side Middle School so therefore I am going to vote no on the motion.

The above motion failed 3-2 with Mr. Crawford, Mrs. Jordon and Mrs. White voting No.

## **RENAMING STONEWALL JACKSON MIDDLE (continued)**

Mrs. Tracy White moved: That the Board select West Side Middle School and only West Side Middle School as the new name for the former Stonewall Jackson Middle School. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford Motion and carried 3-2. with Mr. White and Mr. Cavender voting No.

Mr. Cavender-Dr. Williams I want to let you know that my organization is working with the City Public Arts Department and we want to get with Kanawha County Schools to discuss a collaboration with painting a new mural where the former mascot was. He wants to do something to involve all of the students.

## **REPORTS**

- A. Kanawha County Travel Reimbursement for June, 2020 (Enclosure 2)
- B. Monthly Financial Report (Enclosure 3)
- C. Update on Bridge/Clendenin

Chuck Smith-The documents for the construction project as far as drawings, plans and specifications have been submitted to the SBA for their review. That process takes approximately 2 weeks. Funding was approved by FEMA a few weeks ago in the amount of \$26,851,000.00. There is also a 10% match from the State that brings the total to \$29,536,000.00. We anticipate being out for bid for this project in early August. We are obtaining right of entry agreements for the properties. We have submitted offers on all of the properties. We hope to have right of entry on the project by the 1<sup>st</sup> week of September and hope to start construction in October. Mrs. White-Will we have a ground breaking ceremony for the elementary like we did for the high school? Dr. Williams-Yes. Mrs. White-Are target dates still on time? Chuck Smith-Yes, we are looking at a 2022 completion date.

- D. Legal Report

None

- E. Board Reports

Mrs. White-I met with the Head Start committee and I'm excited to work with them.

Mrs. Jordon-I just wanted you to know that Diane Miller said in June 2019 we served 8,439 meals and this summer we served 122,000.



## **PERSONNEL**

- A. Personnel Agenda for July 16, 2020 (Enclosure 4)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the Revised Personnel Agenda as included in Enclosure 4. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ric Cavender and unanimously carried.

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **CONSENT**

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the following CONSENT Items A-B. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ric Cavender and unanimously carried.

- A. Approval of Bills for June, 2020 (Enclosure 5)

Approval of the payment of bills for the month of June, 2020 in the amounts of \$40,494,459.72 for the Current Expense Fund and the Special Revenue Fund; \$62,351.10 for the KCS Public Library Excess Levy Fund; \$670,712.02 for the Permanent Improvement Fund; and \$748,843.72 for the Public Library Fund as reflected in Enclosure 5.

- B. Budget Supplements & Transfers (Enclosure 6)

Approval of budget supplements and transfers as reflected in Enclosure 6.

## **OTHER NEW BUSINESS**

- A. Mountaineer Gas Easement (Enclosure 7)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the easement with Mountaineer Gas for the old DuPont High School site as shown in Enclosure 7. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ric Cavender and unanimously carried.

- B. Revised KCS 2020-21 School Calendar (Enclosure 8)

Mrs. Tracy White moved: The Board approve the Revised KCS 2020-21 School Calendar as shown in Enclosure 8. Motion was seconded by Mr. Jim J. Crawford.

Dr. Williams-As you well know this calendar came about because the Governor changed the start date for all schools in the state.

The above motion unanimously carried.

## **QUESTIONS/ANSWERS**

Mrs. White-As of now the Governor has brought down the number of people that we can have in one area. With the training we are doing during the summer, will we allow some to be online? Dr. Williams-Most of our training this summer will be online and when our teachers come back most of that training will be online also.

## **ESTABLISHMENT OF MEETING DATES**

- A. Thursday, July 16, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- B. Monday, August 3, 2020, 4:00 p.m.-Special Session
- C. Thursday, August 20, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session
- D. Tuesday, September 8, 2020, 4:00 p.m.-Special Session
- E. Thursday, September 17, 2020, 6:00 p.m.-Regular Session

NOTE: The above meetings of the Kanawha County Board of Education, unless otherwise indicated, will be held in the Board of Education Building, 200 Elizabeth Street, Charleston, WV.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

Mrs. Tracy White moved: That the Regular Session of the Board be adjourned. Motion was seconded by Mr. Ric Cavender and unanimously carried. The Regular Session was declared adjourned by Board President Becky J. Jordon at 7:13 p.m.

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President

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Secretary

djl

7/27/2020