SCHOOL LIAISON COMMITTEE MINUTES

October 24, 2013
Roane County Board of Education

Present: Commissioner James Brummett, Chair; Commissioner Ron Berry; Commissioner Carolyn Granger; Board Member Rob Jago; Board Chairman Everett Massengill; Board Member Wade McCullough

Absent: none

Also present: Commissioner Chris Johnson; Director of Schools Gary Aytes; Board Member Sam Cox; Melanie Townsend, County Executive's Office

Call to Order: Brummett called meeting to order at 6:02 p.m.

Brummett stated that the meeting was going to be informal but orderly. He shared with the committee that he had the opportunity to speak with State Senator Ken Yager earlier in the day about a possible meeting with the committee. Possible dates for the meeting were 12/3/13 or 12/4/13. It was decided that 5:30 p.m. is the earliest the committee can meet due to members' work schedules. Mr. Brummett said he would contact Sen. Yager and set up the meeting.

Aytes said he had an email from Sen. Yager; Sen. Yager will introduce a bill to change funding formula in the next legislative session.

Berry asked could it be possible that the Oak Ridge payroll being counted in Roane County's funding formula

Aytes stated that Anderson County has equal/greater than per capita income; Anderson Co. also receives Cost Differential Factor; Roane County's CDF ended in 2008.

Berry suggested that in conjunction with the meeting with Sen. Yager that some of the committee to go to Nashville and sit down with the people that calculate the formula in order to get an explanation of how the formula is calculated.

Aytes said he called and spoke with Mary Anne Durski during the last budget session; she re-ran the numbers and came up with the same numbers.

Motion by Berry, second by McCullough to set meeting with Sen. Yager on 12/4/13 and to have him set up a time for the committee to go to Nashville and meet the BEP people; leave it up to the chairman to determine the make-up of the group to visit Nashville.

Voice Vote: unanimous

Massengill related that Robert Green gave a speech on financing and ability to pay; Chattanooga exempted tax for VolksWagon; are our exempted taxes hurting us? Was informed that Roane County lost \$400,000 because of industrial parks

Berry asked if Chattanooga is not hurt by tax exemption what is different in Roane County?

Aytes related the impact of low income housing and federal workers- we get some federal money for these students(based on student data reports)

Granger remarked on Ron's letter to Sen. Yager, Rep. Calfee and Rep. Travis

Berry stated that the items on the agenda represent information the committee would like to collect.

Brummett stated that yes this is the hope eventually.

Aytes shared that the schools will soon have student:teacher ratio and soon have ADM numbers. Also working on physical capacity of schools.

McCullough discussed the difficulty of tracking the transient population- kids in and out of the system.

Johnson discussed the fact that transient students place a burden on the system.

Cox shared the information that last year Oak Ridge schools lost 200 students and Anderson Co lost 250 students.

Aytes spoke about the fact that ADM's are pulled several times a year on certain dates set by the state.

McCullough spoke about how the BEP is not as simple as it seems; lots of numbers g into it; stated he felt it was a good idea to go to Nashville.

Aytes spoke about some information the schools had collected. The largest drop in students was found in the elementary schools (could be caused by homeschool/private schools); middle school has shown no change and high school numbers have been steady also.

Massengill stated that it is easier to homeschool in elementary school than the later years; once people get kids in middle school and high school it is harder to move kids from school to school.

Berry asked about the existence of homeschool cooperatives in Roane County.

Aytes stated that Roane County is not losing more students to homeschool cooperatives; there is a group in Rockwood and Kingston

Brummett asked about the lady that had attended County Commission meetings

Aytes explained that there are umbrella organizations like Gateway Christian are groups that get together to homeschool. Aytes also stated there is no state regulation on testing.

More discussion of homeschooling and the requirements set by the state. Aytes stated there are about 40-50 legitimate homeschool students.

There was also discussion of the impact of private school students leaving Roane County schools.

Berry asked out of 6900 total students how many has Roane County lost to private school? Aytes stated about 50 students have gone to private schools. There are 3 private schools in Roane County. Berry asked if anyone gets state money for private school students or homeschool students? No.

Jago stated that to their best estimate Roane County has lost money for 150 students to homeschool and private school.

Berry stated that we have based programs and building on these kids and now we don't get money for these kids.

Berry and McCullough briefly discussed virtual schools and voucher system.

Aytes: handed out a packet of information including an Executive Summary.

Massengill: asked about surrounding counties with migrant workforce- how do they track these students? Tracking kids who families move because of law issues; schools have to monitor and keep up where these kids are.

Discussion occurred in regards to the packet of information Mr. Aytes prepared.

Aytes: shared that Roane County had a 92% graduation rate last year.

Cox: discussed how the movement of students to DSES and OSMS caused some unusual numbers.

McCullough: BES increased in students because of closure of WHES.

Aytes: 2009: 482 classroom teachers 2012: 449 classroom teachers; \$1.98 million in savings (33 teaching positions)

McCullough: achieved savings through attrition

Massengill: building project are difficult to forecast; have to be careful about building for kids that don't stay; for example: from 2007 to 2013 RVES lost 100 students

Cox: recession caused people to move out of Roane County for work

McCullough: people moving closer to work

Berry: fewer people trying to rent; probably slowest summer for rentals; REU & HUB net 0-5 customers over the year.

Cox: TVA power demand down consistently from 2008 to current; manufacturing not putting out items therefore not using power.

Berry: growth: if we don't have it we will die

Aytes: working on facility report; student ratio; core capacity

Massengill: school board voted to add Sam Cox and Drake Langley to School Liaison Committee; felt that each community needed representation on the committee

Jago: recommended that the committee prepare a series of questions ahead of time in order to make the best use of Sen. Yager's time. School Board will send questions to Mr. Aytes and he will consolidate the questions. Mr. Aytes will send to County Executive's office to g with questions from commissioners.

The committee will invite Rep. Calfee and Rep. Travis to the 12/4 meeting; the school board will provide refreshment for the meeting; meeting will occur at the courthouse.

McCullough: appreciate attitudes and questions; ultimate goal come together on budget and end result of quality education

Cox: appreciate the letter Ron sent to legislators; he explained clearly; don't think we are the 14th wealthiest county in state; nominate McCullough to go to Nashville if meeting occurs

Johnson: pleasure to be here; concerned about the rate of loss of teachers; lost 5 this year- can't afford to continue to lose 7 teachers every year. Looking at data:

2009 \$8615 per pupil \$8518 state ave \$97 above state ave

2012 \$8883 per pupil \$9123 state ave \$240 below state ave

What does this mean?

Berry: can already feel the mood lightening around the table; no intent that one side is more important than the other. Spoke about going to PTO meetings in order to interact with parents and teachers. Asked if there is any way to invite teachers into the process? Is there a liaison between teachers and board? Next year is big election year and the concern will be taxes

McCullough: within the board: educational council- teachers and principals will meet soon- will add financial issues

Berry: questioned governors' decision to raise teachers' salaries quickly- is this funded?

McCullough: Roane County has paid teachers well- Trausdale County has paid low- state brings low counties up and brings high counties down to meet; penalizes high counties

Johnson: the upcoming election is a valid issue; responsibility to do what is right not necessarily easiest & for the vote

Granger: echo same sentiments of Mr. McCullough- proud to be member of committee

Jago: "It's all about the kids"

Motion by Granger, second by McCullough to dismiss. Voice Vote unanimous Meeting adjourned 7:18 p.m.