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Manassas City School Board Meeting - September 22, 2026

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[00:00:06] time is 6 p.m. could you please join me for a moment of silence followed by the Pledge of Allegiance

[00:00:34] madam clerk could you please call the roll yes ma'am chair Spall a president vice-chair dr. Jones here mrs. Seabourk here mrs. Steven present miss Brescia? Present. Ms. Brown? Ms. Miles? Present. Ms. Emile? Ms. Albuquerque? Madam Chair, we have a quorum. Thank you. Dr. Newman, are there any additions or deletions to the agenda?

[00:01:12] Yes, ma'am. We will be deleting under the action agenda O-Business 2026-2027 school calendar, and it will be moved to the next work session. Thank you. Could I get a motion for this public meeting agenda? Chair, I move that the school board of the city of Manassas approved the public meeting agenda as modified i have a motion made by miss stevens vice uh seconded by vice chair jones that the school board of the city of manassas approve the public meeting agenda as

[00:01:45] modified is there any discussion all in favor aye any opposed um that motion follows six though miss garza are there any announcements or spotlights none tonight we will now move to board committee reports no reports okay at this time we welcome members of the public who wish to speak about services policies and affairs of the city of Anastas public schools because we have an agenda to complete we ask the comments

[00:02:24] be limited to three minutes we appreciate the time you have taken to be here we treat public comments as a public hearing and do not engage in conversation with speakers but the lack of an

immediate response to your comments should not be taken as a lack of interest or concern anyone signed up okay the next item is our consent agenda these items are considered routine and may be approved by a single motion unless a board member requests an item be removed for separate discussion can I get a motion chair I move the school board of the city of Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented I have a

[00:03:03] motion by Miss Stevens seconded by Miss Seberg that the school board of city Manassas approve the consent agenda as presented is there any discussion all in favor any opposed that motion carries 6-0 we will now move to the discussion agenda first up mr. Taft Kelly director of finance will provide a proposed update to the capital improvement plan that will allow Manassas City public schools to purchase school buses during the 26 27 school year no additional funds are requested rather the timeline for purchases is being shifted the proposal and next steps will be discussed so school board can take action at the October 13th business meeting welcome mr. Kelly good evening

[00:03:42] chair Spall vice chair Jones members of the board and dr. Newman just this a a little bit. So tonight I'm presenting the proposed revision to our 2027 capital improvement plan specifically related to our bus replacement schedule. This revision is solely on the timing and funding of the bus replacements and does not impact any other projects on the CIP or the capital improvement plan. The goal is to better align the CIP with the current condition and operating costs of our current bus fleet. We'll briefly tonight, tonight we'll briefly review the current bus replacement schedule compared to the proposed schedule and discuss the rationale for

[00:04:22] making this change. And again, I just want to point out that there are no other projects that are being impacted by this. Again, it's specific to that bus replacement schedule. So currently, our plan assumes a relatively level replacement schedule of approximately \$330,000 per year over the next five years. That approach spreads the cost evenly across the five-year period. However, after reviewing the condition of our current fleet and discussing our needs with our new transportation leadership, we believe that schedule, while helpful, could help us isn't adequately addressing our immediate needs.

[00:05:00] The revised schedule with the proposed plan significantly accelerates our bus purchases into fiscal year 2027, increasing net years funding from \$330,000 to 1.65 million. And so essentially just to give you an explanation for that, if you look at the last schedule, we were slated over the five year period to spend \$1.65 million.

[00:05:20] We are essentially escalating that purchase, moving it up and doing all of those bus replacement, all those purchases in fiscal year 2027. If you remember in the 27 budget proposal, we had planned to make this purchase with use of fund balance. We will continue that plan as well.

[00:05:38] And so as you can continue looking on, we decided instead of just moving those purchases up and then no longer including buses on the out years, we don't wanna put ourselves back in a situation where we didn't have to make mass purchases in the future as we're proposing right now. So we decided to go ahead and include future year purchases on the revised schedule, albeit at a revised pace.

[00:06:01] And so what that would do is, in fiscal year '28, it would be one bus, then two bus, then one bus, then two bus, as you see on the schedule. The additional net investment over the five-year CIP is \$890,000. Now, I wanna be clear, that additional amount will be incorporated into future CIP approvals.

[00:06:20] So this is not something that we're asking for funding today by any means. We also intend to fund those increases with future year reserves. So we plan to include a reserve amount in our future budgets to plan for and purchase future year buses, textbooks, and things of that nature.

[00:06:41] So why change the schedule? The recommendation was developed through discussions, as I mentioned earlier, with our leadership in transportation, as well as the city's director of public works. As you may or may not know, the public works department services all of our buses and most of our vehicles, and we work very closely with them on our maintenance costs and our aging fleet.

[00:07:03] One of the concerns that came up this year is we currently have several buses that are approaching their expected useful lives. And just like any vehicle that's on the road, as our buses age, the cost to keep them on the road increases annually. And while the fleet age is a concern, the primary driver behind this recommendation is the maintenance costs associated with keeping our oldest buses on the road.

[00:07:25] By accelerating the replacement costs, or accelerating the replacement, we can begin removing some of those older vehicles from the fleet sooner, rather than continuing to incur escalating costs and putting dollars into buses that we will replace in the next few years anyway. With that being said, staff is recommending that the school board approve the revised bus replacement schedule, specifically increased funding in fiscal year 2027 in the amount of \$1,320,000.

[00:07:50] Oh, sorry, it's not working. There we go, there we go. Sorry guys, went the other way. - He doesn't want to show that one. - There we go. So again, we're proposing an increased funding fiscal year 2027 for 1.32 million.

[00:08:13] Again, overall, in the five-year plan, we were suggesting a \$1.65 million investment with fund balance. We are keeping that total amount. We just want to move that funding up into fiscal year 2027 to purchase a larger fleet of buses. And with that being said, I will take any questions that you may have.

[00:08:33] Questions to my right. Just a couple quick questions for my own information. How many buses do we have overall? 64 buses currently in rotation. And how many are we replacing between now and fiscal year 2031?

[00:08:51] So that would be about, we have three buses currently on order. The additional increase or the accelerated purchase would be seven buses. So it'll be 10 buses since last year. Okay. And then the buses that they're replacing, what do we do with those buses that are being replaced?

[00:09:09] Some of those buses may end up staying on our fleet as replacement buses down the road buses that we need in case there's issues with some with some of the other fleet although most of the buses will likely get surplus okay thank you questions to my left special uh i didn't catch it at the top of the presentation can you briefly discuss how this relates to student academic success well sure well obviously uh we want our students to to to come to school and and arrive and and and be in the best condition possible i want to add that these buses will include a c and so

[00:09:48] That's something that's been a process and something that's been asked from this board and will certainly increase our attention on a culture of caring and inclusive and collaborative learning environment. Very good. So the air conditioning, because we've learned, as we've discussed, air conditioned buses, you can do one that's just the driver.

[00:10:06] You can do the full. So which one is it? Is it? We're going for the full, but I want to make sure. Yes, that is correct. I'm getting a head nod back here. All right. Full air conditioning. So the students will benefit from that. Absolutely. And the ones that are being surplused and replaced out, I assume those are the older ones. Absolutely. The ones that don't have air conditioning now are going to be the ones we get rid of.

[00:10:24] That is correct. Right, okay. And just to be clear, these are diesel buses that we are talking about? These are diesel buses that we are talking about, absolutely. Okay, thank you. No problem. Ms. Miles? Will this also increase the routes that we can have for our students?

[00:10:43] or because i know you said 10 but does that increase like you would have maybe less stops or more stops or can you give us an example of that the intention was more just to replace the older buses um i i won't speak to route changes i can't imagine that would be the case but that's something that the transportation director would be okay so it's just to replace the buses not to increase or decrease routes okay thank you and once again this is due to maintenance costs being the main driver and just to make sure.

[00:11:16] Maintenance cost, so just to give you an idea, once buses hit the 10 to 15 year mark, it costs about \$1.20 per mile to maintain a bus. Newer buses are about half that. So it could reduce our costs tremendously over the next several years.

[00:11:33] These can be planned expenditures instead of otherwise. Absolutely. Okay. This will move to action agenda or do we need to? It will move to action. Okay. Okay. Thank you very much.

[00:11:48] Thank you. So this is almost an unheard of amount of time here, guys. But with no action agenda, we'll move to board member comments. Mr. Imun, are you ready for that?

[00:12:05] Sorry, that was really fast. Good evening, everyone. Thank you for coming today. Just had a few things. We had a great football game last Friday. We won. More games are coming, so please be on the lookout for those to support our Eagles.

[00:12:23] homecoming is coming up so any parents or adults please encourage your high schoolers to buy their tickets i'm pretty sure they're on sale this week i'm not 100 certain i saw on the poster it said the week of september 21st so we'll see but it is a great opportunity for all of our students to get a well-deserved break um from their school work with their friends and to end off i just want you all to remember that you also deserve a break so please make sure that you get those uh they're They're very important, just as important as work.

[00:12:54] And, yeah, thank you. Thank you so much. Ms. Stevens. Thank you, Chair. I'm not usually speaking this early, so it's a little surprising. Okay, at any rate, last Wednesday night I had the opportunity to attend the SEAC meeting. The SEAC is a Special Education Advisory Committee meeting as liaison.

[00:13:13] The meetings are hybrid. You can either participate in person or virtually. The next SEAC meeting will be the 21st of October at 7 p.m. in Central Office. uh translation services will be available it's a great opportunity for parents who have children who receive special education services to come and learn more about the program in the city and what else we can do and to have an opportunity to connect with other parents who may have similar experiences um at the meeting the bylaws were reviewed the comprehensive review that was presented earlier this year was again presented to the sea act as a one-pager we're finding strengths

[00:13:53] areas for improvement progress to this point and moving forward pieces of the review were shared there are a few points of interest in the progress to date they were reorganization and naming of the special education department into the department of special services and if you give me just a minute um the three offices within the department of special services are the office of prevention and intervention the office of specialized instruction and the office of procedural support and compliance which is actually quite similar to other school divisions then after that explicit

[00:14:33] focus was placed through the comprehensive evaluation explicit focus has been placed on specially designed instruction and progress monitoring targeted and refined professional development and develop a development of a division-wide fba functional behavior assessment and bip behavior intervention plan team next steps include strengthening structures and ensuring consistency across schools um sib shot steps which was a program from last year for parents of students with special needs uh steps was discussed and moving forward having another

[00:15:08] session of steps and sib shops were discussed as well sib shops is a program for siblings of students who have special needs not necessarily um iep's but different kinds of special needs i did have to leave the meeting early but miss breger was able to participate in the whole meeting as a parent so i asked if she could share some of the highlights as she was able to stay the whole time um and then i did want to talk about hispanic heritage month again this is your reminder that Hispanic Heritage Month is a time to celebrate the rich contributions. Sorry, I have too many

[00:15:44] jobs open. Contributions, cultures, and traditions of Hispanic Americans. Spanish is the official language of 21 sovereign countries in one territory. And forgive me if I butcher pronunciation because I'm pronouncing as a person who doesn't speak Spanish. And so these are Argentina, Bolivia, chile colombia costa rica cuba dominican republic ecuador el salvador equatorial guinea guatemala honduras mexico nicaragua panama paraguay peru spain uruguay venezuela and puerto rica which is a territory here in virginia people of salvadorian descent make up the largest hispanic origin group

[00:16:22] reflecting the strong ties between our region and the vibrant culture of el salvador and hispanic americans are also an important part of our nation's future approximately 27 percent of all children under the age of 18 in the united states are hispanic or latino making them one of the fastest growing segments of our population so as we continue to celebrate hispanic heritage month let us remember to honor achievements resilience languages traditions and diverse cultures that strengthen our schools communities and nation so i'd like to encourage

[00:16:57] everyone to take pride in their heritage preserve their language cultural traditions and share them with future generations thank you thank you miss seaberg may i just we have a new person yes who joined us i'm just gonna ask her if she has okay miss applecourt we had something strange happen tonight which is that our meeting is almost over um and it is time for um comments did you have any prepared comments for tonight because i would hate for you to miss your opportunity okay i and you You don't have to, I mean, I can put you in after Miss Seaberg if you want.

[00:17:37] If you're ready, that's great. But I didn't mean to have you sit down and just demand that you speak. But if you're ready. No, I understand. I just wanted to briefly mention Osborne's football team. We won against Potomac, and that was very great to see.

[00:17:53] The spirit was very high. Lots of cheering. It was very great. And I'm glad to say that's all I have for now. Hopefully, I'll have more of that in the future. Thank you. Thank you so much. I apologize for

that, Ms. Seabird.

[00:18:09] That's your turn. Thank you, Chair. A couple things. The Osborne Alumni Association is hosting its annual reverse raffle. The event is October 17th at the Manassas Community Center, and the proceeds support scholarships. For \$100 per ticket, it includes dinner, drinks, and fun for two people.

[00:18:33] Reach out to an Osborne Alumni Association member or me, a representative by proxy. Thank you. I'd like to take a moment now to honor an educator that recently passed away. Mrs. Mary Lucille Stuckey worked for Manassas City Public Schools from November 1995 to May 2022.

[00:18:56] That's 26 years and six months. She taught at Dean for 15 years. She taught at Round for 10 years and at Baldwin for one year. May she rest in peace, and may the lives of her students and fellow educators carry on her beautiful spirit, the belief that every child deserves to be loved, believed in, encouraged, and reminded of just how special they are.

[00:19:21] I hope her kindness, joy, and love continue through all who are fortunate to know her. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Siebert. Ms. Miles. Yes, so I want to mention his National Hispanic Heritage Month as well, just like Ms. Stevens and just want to remind us that it's a beautiful time to honor the vibrant history, rich cultures, and incredible contributions that our Hispanic and Latino students and families and staff bring to our district every single day. And when I think about the spirit of this month, which centers so heavily on community, family, and deep mutual respect, it makes me reflect on our role up here

[00:19:59] on the dais. We are often faced with complex decisions, and it can be a delicate balance to hold our values close. And I found a quote that I thought resonated with me by author Anne Lamott once shared this wisdom with all of us, which is you don't always have to chop with the sword of truth. You can point with it too. And I love that image because it reminds us that truth doesn't need to be used as a weapon to divide us. It could be used gently as a light to guide us forward together. And we can look honestly at our challenges, make firm decisions while still

[00:20:37] wrapping everything we do in genuine care and respect. And the way we speak to one another, listen to our families, navigate our differences matters deeply. Our children are watching us. And this room is our opportunity to model the empathy, the patience, the grace that we want them to practice in their own classrooms. And as we honor the diverse fabric of our district this month. I hope that we can continue to lead both with clarity and a gentle spirit, but seeking truth, but also doing it with kindness, because that's what our community deserves. And that's all I have. Thank you. Thank you, Ms. Miles. Ms. Brescia. Thank you. Happy fall, everybody.

[00:21:17] Yesterday it was summer, but not today. Today it is fall, so happy fall, everyone. So I'm just going to briefly mention two things tonight, which I offer as part of our family and community partnerships pillar of our strategic plan in which we all pursue student academic success. So the first, I'm going to expand a little bit on Member Stevens' summary of SEAC, and she got the high points there. I didn't hear, I was listening very carefully, so you might have, but I might repeat myself. I do apologize if that happens. So she's correct that one of the things that we spent a good amount of time on was the STEPS program, and I just want to shout out Mr.

[00:21:56] Macyak, who's in the audience tonight, you launched that program during your time as the department head there. And everybody agreed that that was a huge success worth sustaining. And we were just kind of trying to work out the details. It was eight, the correct amount of sessions and all that

kind of stuff. And more development is going to be ongoing there. The STEPS program is an opportunity. It's kind of designed around how our PEP program is for families who are new to special ed or feel like they need to deepen their understanding of special ed to come in learned through multiple sessions where dinner and child care is provided and we did get some participants in the SEAC meeting saying that you know since they

[00:22:35] do have kids with support needs yeah hence their participation in SEAC it is actually you know it was a huge asset to have that child care available because otherwise yeah they find themselves generally having a hard time accessing those kinds of after-school programs or so very high praise for steps looking forward to continuing that um and then sib shops the only thing i'll add to that is that the goal is to launch those in the spring and that is for the siblings of uh families siblings who have high needs siblings so that they can get support as um typical siblings those are so those were the

[00:23:12] two main things i also wanted to highlight just on my own some of the progress to date you know miss stephens was correct that we got um an overview of the comprehensive special education review that was completed last year and much of it has already gone into effect the cetosis the special education teachers on special assignment those are new positions this year and some of the things that they are doing is that they are doing leadership meetings at our schools and they are improving communication and points of contact and i just want to share publicly that i have actually

[00:23:46] had two families offer me on completely separate occasions very effusive praise for their interactions with the uh satorias so which is a great which is a great sign and people feeling these parents expressed to me both of them i said on separate occasions these two folks don't know each other that they felt more as a part of their child's team than ever before and you just love to hear that move forward. So very happy to highlight that. I also want to highlight that tonight on our consent agenda, we approved our official SEAC roster for this school year. So I want to thank

[00:24:26] our members who were listed out on that consent agenda for stepping up to serve in that role. It really is a very exciting and supportive committee. And so if you're watching and you're on the fence as to whether you should join the SEAC, you should join the SEAC. You should check it out because a lot of great things are happening there.

[00:24:43] And my second thing I wanted to mention is that it is back-to-school night season. A lot of our schools have already had their back-to-school nights, but we do still have a few coming up. And I want to encourage people to get there if you can. A lot of people come to the open house and then they don't come to back-to-school night, but you really do miss out on a lot of really great information about your attendance protocols and who your administrators are and what your kids at the elementary school level anyway.

[00:25:10] because at the secondary level, I know you get your schedules differently, but you know, what time is there, you know, that social studies and science rotate, for example, a lot of really great information comes through on back to school night. So I really want to encourage if you think you went to the open house and you check the box, no, no, you should come to back to school night too.

[00:25:28] There's a lot of really great information. So we've got a few more coming up, so you should get there if you can. And those were my only items. Thank you. Thank you. Vice chair, Dr. Zella Jones. As many have already stated, we are observing National Hispanic Heritage Month from September 15th through October 15th. This special month gives us an opportunity to recognize and celebrate the many

contributions and accomplishments of Hispanics that have enriched and influenced our culture and society. It's also wonderful. It's also time to take the

[00:26:02] opportunity to learn more about diverse cultures, traditions, histories, and cuisines within the Hispanic community Chavez Cesar Chavez wrote the presentation of one's own culture does not require contempt or disrespect for other cultures as we celebrate Hispanic Courage this month let us embrace the opportunity to learn from and appreciate the cultures that make our community stronger also the opportunity to attend a Virginia School Board Association workshop last Thursday these workshops always provide excellent information and updates about what's happening throughout the commonwealth topics included virginia's broadband access danville's

[00:26:41] one percent sales tax and its impact on school construction the freedom of information act collaboration between roanoke city and the state on a mentorship program and a legislative recap on friday mrs brown and i attended the public school leaders network meeting at george mason university the arlington campus our neighboring school division shared information about their current approaches to artificial intelligent policies including community support and areas of concern or pushback some divisions do not have an ai policy while others have incorporated

[00:27:16] guidelines into existing policies or their conduct school conduct code the discussion was rich and informative and monastic city will continue to chart an ai path that works best for our division at the end of the day at the football game where our team won and the band delivered an outstanding halftime performance i encourage you all to attend a game soon and to support our students and finally i encourage parents and community members to participate in school events check the school calendars regularly to find events to attend support our students and stay

[00:27:51] connected to what is happening in our schools and parents please remember to monitor your students grades and academic progress together we educate thank you dr jones um once again uh i think that we have an amazing board and they have covered a lot of topics that i had already written down so i'm going to ask for a motion to enter into our closed session chair i move that the school board of the city of manassas entered into a closed session pursuant to 2.2-3711 part a paragraph one of the code of virginia 1950 is amended for the following purpose discussion of personnel

[00:28:31] matters p ers 2627-148 i have a motion made by miss stevens seconded by miss seberg that the school board of the city of manassas will enter into a closed session pursuant to 2.2-3711 part a paragraph one of the code of virginia 1950 as amended for the following purpose discussion of of Personnel Matters PERS 2627-148 do I have any discussion all in favor any

[00:29:05] opposed that's 6-0 Miss Garza thank you everyone I have a motion made by Miss

[00:29:42] Stevens second of a Miss Brescia that the school board returned to open session is there any discussion all in favor any opposed that's a 6-0 motion chair I move that the school board yet that the school board certifies that the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard discussed

[00:30:17] or considered. Second. I have a motion by Ms. Stevens, seconded by Ms. Seberg that the school board certifies that the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed and only such public business matters as

were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard discussed or considered is there any discussion all in favor any opposed a motion carries 6-0 chair I move that the school board of the city of Manassas uphold the superintendent's

[00:30:52] recommendation to terminate PERS 2627-148 I think I got it can I get a

[00:31:01] I'll read it too I have a motion by Ms. Stevens seconded by Ms. Brescia that the school board of the city of Manassas uphold the superintendent's recommendation to terminate PERS 2627-148 is there any discussion all in favor aye any opposed that motion carries 6-0 chair I move that the school board meeting adjourn second I have a motion by Ms. Stevens seconded by Vice Chair Jones that the school board meeting adjourn all in favor aye any opposed

[00:31:41] Thank you, everyone.



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