



## **AGENDA**

### **Huntersville Educational Options Study Commission May 13, 2019 - 6:30 PM**

**TOWN HALL (101 Huntersville-Concord Road)**

- 1. Welcome and Call to Order**
- 2. Identification of a Quorum**
- 3. Public Input - *Limited to 3 minutes per speaker.***
- 4. Review and Approval of Minutes**
  - 4.A. Consider approving the minutes of the April 29, 2019 Huntersville Educational Options Study Commission Meeting.
- 5. Finalize Report to Town Board**
- 6. Closing Comments**
- 7. Adjourn**

**HUNTERSVILLE EDUCATIONAL OPTIONS STUDY COMMISSION  
MEETING MINTUES**

**April 29, 2019  
6:00 p.m. – Huntersville Town Hall**

The Huntersville Educational Options Study Commission held a meeting at Huntersville Town Hall at 6:00 p.m. on April 29, 2019.

**WELCOME AND CALL TO ORDER**

Chair Karen Bentley called the meeting to order.

**IDENTIFICATION OF A QUORUM**

Chair Bentley noted a quorum was present.

Commission Members Present: Karen Bentley (Chair), Amie Hutchison, Derek Partee, Jim Puckett, Michael Sass, Bobbie Shields and Carrie Warren.

Commission Members Not Present: Al Desciscio, William Farber and Eric Rowell.

**REVIEW AND APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Puckett made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 8, 2019 Huntersville Educational Options Study Commission Meeting. Sass seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

Puckett made a motion to approve the minutes of the April 22, 2019 Huntersville Educational Options Study Commission Meeting. Sass seconded motion. Motion carried unanimously.

**PRESENTATION OF PRELIMINARY REPORT**

Chair Bentley presented the Huntersville Educational Options Study Commission Preliminary Report. *Refer to PowerPoint attached hereto as Exhibit No. 1.*

**PUBLIC INPUT**

Leslie Cosentine, Huntersville Resident, said I'm a 6<sup>th</sup> grade science teacher at J. M. Alexander Middle. I've been at this job for three years. I left the world of IT consulting after many years and worked 7 days a week, 10 to 12 hour days. This job is harder. I had the choice of where I wanted to work and I specifically chose J. M. Alexander for the IB program and for the diversity and for the need. Though it's not a Title 1 school, we're charged with educating every child and we are educating those children that don't have a very good parent advocate and so my point is whatever option that we choose as a community, we need to remember those children who are left out by parent choice. If we create a school that's competing with the schools where the children that have no parent choice go to and we cannibalize that school system, it could have disastrous consequences for our growth long term. I chose this profession because it's the single fastest way I think to even out inequities in our society and I don't want to be a party to it from Huntersville. I was pleasantly surprised by your presentation of Option 5.

As a CMS teacher I found that to be probably the best option. I would just charge you with remembering the many children, especially those that are right at our southern border and remembering that we need to find an option for them. I think many of our children are going to be fine no matter what we do, because there are parents that care. It's those kids that don't.

Pamela Schmitz, Huntersville Resident, said I have a child that's graduated from a CMS school and one graduating in a month. I do recognize that whether I have children in the school or not, children going through school is important to me as a resident of Huntersville, as a resident of Mecklenburg County. I want to build on her comments about the importance of public schools serving the entire community and building for the community and I really want our Town Board to focus on that, because I do feel that the public schools are important for serving everyone. I have concerns about charter schools with people going into their little bubbles wanting to be around people that are like them and however they define that, whereas public schools you have to rub up against other people that aren't just like you and that's important and I see that especially in our country now, something we need to learn. I do want to say there was a little bit of rottenness at the base of the whole set up. When the Town Board first agreed to join in the HB whatever the number is of the town, the charter schools, you know there were things said at the Board meeting that were not factual and I didn't ever hear those pulled back after it was pointed out those weren't factual. There's very much a lean towards Lake Norman Charter represented in your board. I think you would have to acknowledge that. Lake Norman Charter performs very well, partly because of who they serve. They are built to pull a population that is going to perform well no matter where they went to school, they would perform well. I kept hearing how our town couldn't communicate with the CMS board and when I heard that I was like.....whenever I contacted my board member she responded right away. I didn't always like what she said, but she was open about it and we could talk. I had that experience with another board member that responded right away. I know that Ms. Powell, I had an email with her and she said as far as...she's new in the position since Mr. Puckett was retired in November, but so far my understanding is she's fine with the communication in her short-term to be better. I kind of feel like the whole cash cow idea of North Meck has been oversold. My understanding the only money that's really got some lean to it is the county money. The state, the federal has to go to specific places in education. It's only the county money and the overall budget. I don't think that we are the cash cow for the district. Maybe a tiny bit and I'm kind of okay with that because I think it's for the community. I would like to emphasize let's do what's best for the entire community, whether you see that as Huntersville, as Huntersville/Cornelius, as CMS.

Angela Markou, Huntersville resident, said I'm originally from New Jersey but I've been in Huntersville now the last 11 years. I'm a big proponent for education because I see what education did for me. My father was an immigrant. My mother was a single mother with my sister and I was lucky to find companies to help me pay for my Master's Degree. Education helps bring people out of poverty. I tell my daughter all the time this is your No. 1 and No. 2 priority is education. She goes to Barnette Elementary. She's slated to start Bradley in the fall. I think doing nothing is not an option. To me I love this town. I love living here. I'm not willing to give up on the public schools. I don't understand what this charter stuff means. I hear parents oh Bradley stinks, this school stinks, go to a charter. It's still public. And it's what you make of it. I back up the teachers. I support them going to Raleigh on Wednesday and the school closing because and I tell my daughter I don't care what rules the teacher gives you, whether you like it or not you are going to follow them because I'm not teaching her.....she can't go to her boss one day and say well my mom told me I couldn't do it this way. She is going to get fired. I think CMS has gotten too big. I'm a little upset, my stepson goes to Hopewell. Somebody came in with a gun, we never got informed of it. School safety is a big concern and with modular units going up that makes school safety even more of a challenge. Huntersville is a big town but it's got a small town feel to it. I want my daughter to have diversity in school. She's blonde hair, blue eyes. I don't

want everybody looking like her. I want her to see diversity between lower income and higher. It teaches her empathy and it teaches her not everybody is like her. So diversity is a key for me. My stepson is headed to CPCC in the fall. He knew for a long time he wanted to do automotive and nobody's addressed this for him. There's no vo-tech. Not everybody is college bound and we've made these kids think that they are stupid because they are not college bound. I would like to see vo-tech come back into the schools. I'd also like to see debate come back because there are little social warriors now and people can't hear difference of opinions and be respectful. I'm a little upset that there's not more parents here. I want to be involved. I back up the teachers, I back up the town, I want to see what's best because again education for me it was freedom and I see it for other women when you're not as likely to be in an abusive relationship or whatever. You are not likely to commit crime if you have access to a good education and that's whatever decision the people in the town agree to it you know I'm happy to listen to it. I'm leaning to Option 5 because it's still going to be a big district. CMS is too big. They can't control it and the needs are different across all these schools with these different kids and I think that the lack of communication through CMS has been impacted because it's just too big. I'm leaning towards Option 5 because I don't understand what a charter school really is and I'm not giving up on the public schools.

Christy Cowan, Huntersville Resident, said I've been here over 20 years. I have two children that have gone through and are currently going through CMS schools. I have also used the options that CMS has given us in the terms of my child has gone through the IB program. She spent a brief little hot minute at School of the Arts down in Charlotte. I like the options that CMS gives us. I am a huge proponent of public schools. I was not a fan of this bill. One of the reasons being because of the schools that I have chosen to put my children in, I like diversity. And this town and this area is looking very less diverse and I can't stand it because it's not real world and people have got to figure that out. I know you guys are just the messenger so I'm glad that you guys are here to hear people speak because I feel like we are directing emotion at you guys and I know you are just the messenger. I understand this isn't a question and answer session but I have questions so I'm just to lay them out. I'm not looking for answers. It was just things I came up with that I didn't understand. One of the things that you kind of touched on was what happens if we open a municipal charter but the bill gets repealed, will the charter school be grandfathered in. I have no idea what MEAC is (Chair Bentley noted it is the Municipal Education Advisory Committee). I guess this is under the No. 3 option which is the one I have a lot of concern about. I know that there are charter school companies out there and my question would be for the board if you were to open a municipal charter and you were to go through a charter company, I know that those charter companies are only in it for their profit and their gain and there are many charter schools that get opened under these companies that ultimately end up failing because they weren't created with the right purpose. That would be a big concern for me as a resident of this town. You talked about partnering with charters in the area but if you are talking about Huntersville I think there's only one.

Chair Bentley noted the commission will meet again to finalize the presentation, then present it to the Town Board on May 20.

#### **CLOSING COMMENTS**

Commission members expressed appreciation to the public that attended to hear the presentation and encouraged others to contact the commission with any feedback they may have.

There being no further business the meeting was adjourned.

Approved this the \_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2019.