

LUNENBURG COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
LUNENBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL
583 TOMLINSON ROAD
VICTORIA, VIRGINIA

Minutes of March 30, 2017 Budget Worksession and Joint School Board Meeting

The continued meeting of the Lunenburg County Board of Supervisors was held Thursday, March 30, 2016 at 5:00 pm at the Lunenburg County Middle School, Victoria, VA. The following Board of Supervisors members were present: Supervisors T. Wayne Hoover, Alvester Edmonds, Robert Zava, Charles R. Slayton, Frank Bacon, Edward Pennington, Mike Hankins, County Administrator Tracy M. Gee and Deputy County Administrator Nicole Clark.

Chairman Slayton called the budget worksession to order at 5:00pm.

Ms. Justine Young, of Piedmont Senior Resources, approached the Board. She provided an update of the services. She is requesting an increase in the appropriation this year for a total of \$4,735. She advised that this region decided at the time of the agency's inception to make it a private non-profit agency. Other regions incorporate this type of agency with the local government. Mrs. Young added that PSR must generate a 10% match of local funds to obtain Federal and State funding. The increased budget request would bring her local appropriation closer to 10%. Mrs. Young added that PSR is the lowest funded agency on aging in the state. She then continued to discuss several of the services they have provided to citizens within the county over the past year and thanked the Board for their consideration.

Mrs. Pam Fortune, of VA Legal Aid Society, stated that her agency has four offices throughout Virginia. Her office, located in Farmville, serves 9 counties including Lunenburg. In the past year, they assisted approximately 95 Lunenburg residents and were involved in about 50 cases. She reviewed a few of the cases from Lunenburg and asked the Board to consider continuing their request. This year the request is \$4,902, slightly increased from the previous year.

Ms. Sharon Harrup of STEPS, Inc., thanked the Board for their support over the years. She noted that 3 years ago she informed the Board that the facility in Victoria would be shutting down. Ms. Harrup proudly reported that the facility was back up and running. The location employs about 35 employees and is running 5 commercial manufacturing lines. She is requesting \$6,000 for the workforce development project in the Victoria facility. Ms. Harrup noted that about 6 months after reopening the Victoria facility, STEPS Inc. began operating the Head Start program in Lunenburg. Shortly after, STEPS Inc. was approved as the Community Action Plan Agency. Through this agency, they are able to assist needy families with energy share programs and housing programs. Mrs. Harrup thanked the Board for their support and consideration of her request.

Mrs. Mary Jane Elkins presented the budget request from Southside Virginia Community College. SVCC is requesting a 10% increase and asked the Board to consider fully funding them. She noted that 6% of their student body consists of Lunenburg County students. These funds help support their marketing and outreach efforts, as well as staff and faculty training. Mrs. Elkins advised that 37 of their employees are from Lunenburg and last year 320 student attended classes. SVCC also sponsors adult training within the local libraries.

Supervisor Edmonds arrived at 5:30 p.m.

Mr. Kevin Rudnick requested funding for Feedmore. He noted that the organization is located in Richmond; however, they serve Lunenburg residents as well. He stated that Feedmore merged with the familiar organization Meals on Wheels. They target the food insecure or those that don't qualify for other assistance programs, such as SNAP. Feedmore works through local food pantries and partners; there is a fee to be a partner. In Lunenburg, they primarily work with the People's Community Center and the Salvation Army. Mr. Rudnick explained that Feedmore assisted with approximately 230,000 meal equivalents in the previous year for the County. He is requesting a \$2,000 appropriation.

Supervisor Pennington arrived at 5:40 p.m.

Mrs. Karen Scales requested flat funding for the Lunenburg County Public Library System. She shared their projected budget for FY17-18. Mrs. Scales noted that their largest cost is personnel, adding that all of their employees are Lunenburg residents. She advised they are updating both libraries to ADA standards with savings from the previous year. She thanked the Board for their support.

Ms. Abby Barnes of Madeline's House thanked the Board for their support in the past. She stated that they served 14 Lunenburg residents in the previous year. They are also looking to purchase a larger facility in Farmville, as it is more centrally located for all of the counties they serve.

Administrator Gee advised that Kenbridge Fire Department requests a 10% increase in funding. Victoria Fire and Rescue and Kenbridge Emergency Squad, which are merging, request flat funding. Administrator Gee discussed the outside lighting at the Courthouse Complex, noting that multiple bulbs and ballasts are not working. She noted that the cost to fix them all is a little over \$4,800; however, changing over to LED bulbs will save the County over \$1,000 per year.

Supervisor Zava suggested not repairing all of the lights, as some citizens have complained about there being too much lighting at the complex. Supervisor Edmonds suggested burning every other light to ensure visibility but reduce cost. Supervisor Hankins agreed; however, stating that in a previous work environment, the parking areas were deemed a "hostile work environment" due to poor visibility and safety concerns. He suggested the Board consider making high traffic areas well-lit.

Mrs. Hawthorne advised of additional organization budget requests and noted the majority requested flat funding.

Administrator Gee commented that the health insurance renewal came in with a 39% increase; therefore, the County is out for bid to carriers. She advised that she has been working on the budget. She estimates use of about \$209,000 from surplus to maintain the increased cost of current line items, prior to the added burden of a \$92,000 health insurance increase.

The Board of Supervisors took a brief break to share dinner with the School Board. The meeting reconvened at 7:08 with the School Board for a joint budget work session.

School Superintendent Charles Berkley gave a presentation on the proposed budget. He outlined the following 5 goals for the 2017-18 school year: high quality instruction, high quality professionals, safe and orderly learning environment, innovative and cutting edge technology, and family and community engagement. Mr. Berkley outlined the below projected revenue summary.

FY2018 Projected Revenue Summary

| | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------|
| • STATE SALES TAX | \$ 1,776,198 |
| • OTHER STATE FUNDS | \$ 9,397,339 |
| • COUNTY FUNDS @ FY17 | \$ 3,250,233 |
| • LOCAL FEES | <u>\$ 185,640</u> |
| • TOTAL GENERAL FUND | \$14,609,410 |
| • GRANT FUND | \$ 1,222,464 |
| • SCHOOL TEXTBOOK FUND | \$ 161,804 |
| • SCHOOL FOOD FUND | \$ 915,531 |
| • TOTAL SCHOOL FUNDS | \$16,909,209 |

Mr. Berkley continued to outline key elements that would affect the school's expenses for the year. Staff needs include the addition of 9 new full-time positions. Additional expenditure influences include the replacement of a school bus, replacing 10 HVAC units, instructional materials at all 4 schools, drain field repair at the School Board Office, and implementation of lead teacher and custodian stipends. Mr. Berkley continued to explain that salary and benefit

increases were also expected, including VRS rate increases and Health Insurance premiums. He emphasized that staff salaries were some of the lowest in the state. He noted that this makes it very difficult to hire and maintain quality teachers to instruct students. He hopes to give all staff a 2% raise in FY2018. Mr. Berkley outlined the below projected expenditures summary.

FY2018 Projected Revenue Summary

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Instruction | \$ 10,765,484 |
| • Administration/Attend & Health | \$ 843,715 |
| • Transportation | \$ 1,042,931 |
| • Operation & Maintenance | \$ 1,524,525 |
| • School Nutrition Services | \$ 55,274 |
| • Facilities | \$ 100,000 |
| • Debt/Transfers | \$ 380,000 |
| • Technology | \$ 692,267 |
| • Total General Fund | \$ 15,404,196 |
| • Special Revenue Fund | \$ 1,222,464 |
| • Textbook Fund | \$ 161,804 |
| • School Nutrition Fund | \$ 915,531 |

TOTAL SCHOOL FUNDS \$ 17,703,995

Mr. Berkley explained there is a \$794,785 gap of funding in the school's General Fund. He continued to discuss capital improvements that were needed within the school system. Improvements included paving & sealing of all parking lots, HVAC units at both elementary schools, painting of VES roof & gutters, sidewalk replacements, improvements and repairs to the high school football field and track, and vehicle replacements. Mr. Berkley stated that the school system was in need of \$200,000 additional funding to provide technology needs and support. He noted that they are in need of 4 buses and 1 van for transporting students due to the age/condition of current vehicles. He explained the possibility of both Boards creating a Capital Improvement Plan that would focus on building renovations, equipment replacement, transportation, and other capital projections required to support the school system. Mr. Berkley invited the Board to review the proposed FY2018 budget and consider the value added to the community by a quality public educational system. He and the School Board requested the Board of Supervisors' consideration in expanding local funding.

Mr. James Abernathy, Finance Director and Assistant School Superintendent, reiterated Mr. Berkley's request to consider additional funding. He noted that this is his first full year as Finance Director and he has learned a great deal. They have worked diligently to conserve where they can, but the basic needs of the school system are growing without any additional funding to support those costs.

Reverend Ray Watson, Financial Advisor, spoke stating a perfect storm of expenses has been brewing for some time. They have now reached a point that they are desperate for additional funding. He respectfully asked to Board to help find additional local funding for the schools.

Lunenburg resident, Mrs. Kim Ball, spoke before both Boards in support of a salary increase. She noted that there had been no raises over the past several years. She added that teachers are also role models, coaches and much more to students. She noted that appreciating teachers will help improve the school system and in return encourage others to want to move here.

Lunenburg educator, Mrs. Willette Hazelwood, spoke stating that it has been several years since raises were given. However, many dedicated, loyal employees are still employed with the school system. She added that numerous teachers buy much of their own supplies and materials because they are committed to their students and his/her

education. She advised that she has been with the Lunenburg School system for 28 years and she would like to finish her career here. She requested the Board consider investing in the teachers.

Mrs. Yvette Wilson, with the Virginia Educator's Association, spoke in support of the Board fully funding the school system. She stated that the school employee's have been loyal and opened their pocket books to guarantee the success of the students. She hoped the Board would match their commitment with a 2% raise. Mrs. Wilson asked the Board to also consider the capital improvement requests.

Local attorney, Mr. Cal Spencer, asked the Board to consider the staffs requests. He stated that many of them wear multiple hats and deserve to be compensated for it. He is concerned about cuts to programs through SVCC as they are a valuable asset to students. The school system has made efforts to realize savings by bidding out insurance coverage.

Lunenburg educator, Ms. Brenda Wade, spoke noting she has been with the school system for over 20 years. For the past several years she has watched younger, less experienced teachers get hired with greater salaries than her own. She added that Lunenburg salaries are considerably lower than surrounding counties. She is taking home less pay now than she did 5 years ago in the same position. She asked the Board to support the local professionals in the county.

Supervisor Hoover stated that the School Board outlined several goals. He then asked if the School Board concurred that the 2% raise for staff was the priority. School Board Chairman Barry Carnes replied yes; in order to provide our students with the best education, we need to start with our staff. Supervisor Hoover explained that the Board of Supervisors face the same financial challenges as the School Board.

There being no further discussion on the School Board budget proposal, the School Board adjourned.

Supervisor Hoover advised the Board of Supervisors that the law firm of Hawthorne and Hawthorne, PC is working on the merger of the Kenbridge Emergency Squad and Victoria Fire and Rescue. Chief Newton would like to combine the debt of both entities into one. They have asked if the County would be willing to co-sign on the bank note in order to get the municipal rate at Benchmark Community Bank, in the same fashion as Kenbridge Emergency Squad did in the past.

Supervisor Zava made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Bacon and unanimously approved, to co-sign on the bank note in order for Victoria Fire and Rescue to get the municipal rate at Benchmark Community Bank for the combined debt with Kenbridge Emergency Squad.

Supervisor Edmonds made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Bacon and unanimously approved, to adjourn.

Tracy M. Gee, Clerk
County Administrator

Charles R. Slayton, Chairman
Board of Supervisors