

At a **budget workshop meeting** of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors held in the Board Room of the Southampton County Office Center at 26022 Administration Center Drive, Courtland, Virginia on April 13, 2005 at 6:30 PM.

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman (Drewryville)
Walter L. Young, Jr., Vice-Chairman (Franklin)
Walter D. "Walt" Brown, III (Newsoms)
Carl J. Faison (Boykins-Branchville)
Anita T. Felts (Jerusalem)
Ronald M. West (Berlin-Ivor)
Moses Wyche (Capron)

SUPERVISORS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator (Clerk)
Julia G. Williams, Finance Director
Robert L. Barnett, Building Official/Zoning Administrator
Cynthia L. Cave, Community/Economic Development Director
Susan H. Wright, Administrative Secretary

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

Ms. Kathy Bicking of Virginia Legal Aid, filling in for Ms. Randi Blumeson, was the first to speak to their respective budget. She gave several examples of how Legal Aid had helped clients in Southampton County and clients in general. She thanked the Board for the funding they had given them in the past and asked that they grant their budget request for FY 2006.

Mr. Eric Cooke, Southampton County Commonwealth Attorney, spoke to his budget. He stated that what the Board did for his office this past fiscal year allowed him to focus on prosecution instead of administration. He no longer had to worry about copy paper. He advised that his office was now fully staffed. He thanked the Board for their continued support.

Mr. David Taylor of the 5th District Community Corrections Program spoke to his respective budget. He advised that his probation office was located in Suffolk and they provided essential services to the citizens in the 5th District. He, 3 probation officers, and 1 secretary were responsible for the entire 5th District. He stated that 90% of their funding came from the state and that funding had not changed since 1997. For the past 2 years they had not had enough funding to purchase drug testing kits and supplies such as copy paper. If funding were not increased, they would be forced to terminate one of the probation officers, which would have a negative impact on his program. He advised that last year more than 600 people were referred to their program, 53 of which were from Southampton County. He was requesting an 8.6% increase in funding from Southampton County, which equated to an additional \$3,295.

Mr. Grant Knight spoke. He advised that he was a citizen of Courtland and was the County-appointed person on the Board of Directors for the Community Corrections Program. He attended all the meetings and was here to support Mr. David Taylor's budget request.

Mr. Buddy Mountjoy of the Western Tidewater Community Services Board, filling in for Mr. Demetrius Peratsakis, Director, spoke to his respective budget. He thanked the Board for their FY 2005 funding and advised that they were requesting a 1% increase in funding from Southampton County for FY 2006, which equated to an additional \$3,876.

Mr. Gary Cross of the Chowan Basin Soil & Water Conservation District stated that he appreciated the Board's support and then recognized Mrs. Stacy Bradshaw.

Mrs. Stacy Bradshaw of the Chowan Basin Soil & Water Conservation District spoke to their budget. She advised that they would soon celebrate 60 years of service to Southampton, Greensville, and Sussex Counties. They now had increased participation in schools. They were asking that the Board grant the small increase they had requested.

Ms. Pat Ward, Director of the Blackwater Regional Library stated that she appreciated the Board's support of the library and then recognized Ms. Iola Scott.

Ms. Iola Scott, Branch Manager of the Walter Cecil Rawls Library branch of the Blackwater Regional Library spoke to their budget. She informed that last year their library circulated over 60,000 materials. They were very proud of the services they provided. Their outreach efforts included nursing homes and schools. Because of grants, they had been able to reach more disabled people. They were in the process of purchasing software for the visually impaired and had purchased new books and DVDs for sign language. Their summer reading program had 300-400 students, parents, and grandparents. At the end of the program, they liked to give each child a book. They were also concentrating on teens and had a teen corner. She advised that computer usage was also important. People could come in and access information and they also had people come in and use the computers for online classes. So, they liked to provide up-to-date computers. She asked that the Board grant their funding request for FY 2006.

Mrs. Judy English, Director of Southampton County Social Services, spoke to their respective budget. She advised that most of her staff was here to support their budget request. She asked her staff members to stand. She stated that her agency tended to be the agency of last resort for people and included those suffering through disasters. They had 5 vacant positions and their employees' workloads were heavy. They must have sufficient local money to operate efficiently. She was respectfully asking for an additional \$6,142 above what the Board had recommended for their agency.

Mr. Charles Turner, Superintendent of Southampton County Public Schools, spoke to their budget and presented a PowerPoint presentation. He advised that their focus areas for 2004-2005 included student achievement, school safety, transportation, and technology. He informed that 5 of the 6 schools were fully accredited and pointed out that only 5 points in English at Southampton Middle School kept them from having all 6 schools fully accredited. Their school system had one of the lowest dropout rates in the state. Factors influencing their progress included staffing, programs, facilities, parental support, and community support. He advised that they took measures to keep the budget as concise as possible. Those measures were as follows:

- Eliminated most new personnel requests
- Reduced all non-personnel expenditure requests except regulation tuition, which was a state increase, and required maintenance contracts for expenses, which they had no control over
- Reduced the school budget request (cut in half)
- Introduced no new initiatives

He advised that their budget request was based on the following:

- Essential salary increase of 5%
- Increase in hospitalization rates
- State-required instructional technology position(s)
- Transfer of Community Service Program to regular budget

Regarding the salary increase, he stated that we must stay competitive. He showed bar graphs illustrating that Southampton County was way behind other localities in teacher salaries. He noted that some of those other localities did not have the accreditation ratings that we did, but yet had higher salaries. He also noted that whenever we increased teacher salaries, other localities increased theirs, so we were really not catching up.

Mr. Turner advised that the bottom line was that they were requesting an increase of local funds in the amount of \$465,176.

Mr. Bobby Cumby spoke in favor of the school budget request. He stated that his daughter was a sophomore at Southampton High School and his son graduated last year. A 5% salary increase for teachers was not nearly enough – it was just keeping the gap from getting bigger. They were losing good teachers.

Supervisor Brown asked Mr. Turner what percent salary increase would be needed to bring our teacher salaries up to above average? Mr. Tuner replied a minimum of 10% - 15%.

Chairman Jones announced that it was necessary for the Board to conduct a closed meeting in accordance with the provisions set out in the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, for the following purpose:

Section 2.2-3711 (A) (3) Discussion of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

Vice-Chairman Young moved, seconded by Supervisor Wyche, to conduct a closed meeting for the purposes previously read.

Upon returning to open session, **Vice-Chairman Young moved, seconded by Supervisors Felts and Wyche, to adopt the following resolution:**

RESOLUTION OF CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Southampton County Board of Supervisors had convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 (D) of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Board that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Southampton County Board of Supervisors hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed and considered by the Southampton County Board of Supervisors.

**Supervisors Voting Aye: Dallas O. Jones
Walter L. Young, Jr.
Walter D. "Walt" Brown, III
Carl J. Faison
Anita T. Felts
Ronald M. West
Moses Wyche**

The motion passed unanimously.

The Board then began budget deliberations. Supervisor West stated that the proposed budget was a bitter pill to swallow but nit-picking \$500 here and there would not accomplish anything. Vice-Chairman Young agreed and noted that it was indeed a bitter pill, as there would be less peanuts planted in the County this year as well.

Supervisor Brown stated, if they were going to raise the real estates tax by 5¢, why not raise it 7¢? Was 5¢ going to be enough to counter the cries from citizens in FY 2007 when the assessment comes? He thought they should raise the taxes 2¢ more for a total of 7¢ because it was needed. A 5¢ increase was just paying the bills and they also needed some parity towards trying to keep the tax rate revenue-neutral when the assessment comes.

After some discussion, the Supervisors ultimately agreed that since 5¢ was just the minimum to get by and they were not making any headway, to raise the taxes 2¢ more for a total of 7¢.

Mr. Johnson advised that a 2¢ increase equated to \$196,000 in round numbers. He asked what they wanted to do with the 2¢? He clarified for some of the Supervisors that full funding had been included in the proposed budget for all the organizations that had representatives speak tonight except Social Services, Western Tidewater Community Services Board, and Southampton County Schools. After some discussion, the Supervisors ultimately decided to allocate an additional \$98,000, in round numbers, to economic development, which would account for 1¢ of the 2¢

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additional tax increase. Of the approximately \$98,000 that remained, they decided to allocate an additional \$6,142 to Social Services, an additional \$3,876 to the Western Tidewater Community Services Board, and the remainder to Schools. Mr. Johnson noted that the school budget still fell short about \$202,000 of what they had requested.

Supervisor Faison moved, seconded by Supervisor Brown, to advertise the proposed FY 2006 budget and associated tax levies, as amended, for public comment on May 16, 2005 at 7:00 PM. All were in favor.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 9:10 PM.

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

Michael W. Johnson, Clerk