

At a budget public hearing held at the Southampton High School, 23350 Southampton Parkway, Courtland, Virginia on May 21, 2012 at 7:00 PM.

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman (Drewryville)
Dr. Alan W. Edwards, Vice-Chairman (Jerusalem)
Glenn H. Updike (Newsoms)
Carl J. Faison (Boykins-Branchville)
Barry T. Porter (Franklin)
Ronald M. West (Berlin-Ivor)
S. Bruce Phillips (Capron)

SUPERVISORS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator (Clerk)
Jon Mendenhall, Assistant County Administrator
Lynette C. Lowe, Finance Director
Cynthia J. Edwards, Administrative Secretary

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

Chairman Jones opened the public hearing.

Mr. Michael Johnson called the names for the speakers to approach the podium.

The first speaker was Walt Brown of 33334 Sandy Ridge Road, Newsoms, VA. He stated he lived on a family farm that was a century old from 1903. He thanked Supervisor Phillips for telling him how to go about getting the farm registered. He said he could appreciate the trying time this Board is going through. He stated he is not in favor of the \$200.00 trash fee. He asked the Board to consider land use as a source of revenue to balance the budget as there is 2.7 million in deferred revenue with 1.5 in deferred taxes for timber land. These huge timberland companies are from out of state with owners in Mississippi, Florida, Virginia, Tennessee, South Carolina, and North Carolina. Some of the owners include FIAT, LLC, Sustainable Timberlands, Godwin VA, LLC, Westvaco, J. E. Kerr Timber, etc. He felt that these large out of state timberland owners should not be getting a tax break at the burden of the citizens of Southampton County. He said even if they dropped the timberland tax break for at least one year until we could get through this trying time that would be a help. He stated it is not fair to the 18,000 citizens in this county to give a tax break to those large timberland owners at the expense of county employees losing their jobs and having to pay a \$200.00 trash fee. He stated that we can create 1.5 million if we stop giving this tax break on timberland to those companies in the twelve or thirteen states that own the majority of it.

Lindsay Brown addressed the Board. She said she appreciated the opportunity to speak. She told the Shaw story of inside of me there are 2 dogs and 1 man and you. He said he had two dogs and the dogs fought every day. He said he could tell you every day which dog was going to win. You asked him how he knows which dog is going to win. Mr. Shaw said that is easy. The one dog you feed every day and the other you only feed on certain days. The dog that you feed every day is going to win. What I'm trying to tell you is that what we do matters. Cutting teacher positions is cutting a resource that is needed to feed our children. If we do not properly educate our children we are setting them up for failure. We can either spend the money on the education of our children or we will be spending it on incarceration. Investing in educating our children is a form of crime prevention. She stated that her four children went to Southampton County and made straight A's and were on the honor roll. They moved to Brunswick County and her children's grades dropped dramatically. At Christmas time she asked them to write what they wanted on a slip of paper for Christmas and they wrote to move back to Southampton County. She said she and her husband made that possible and when her children got back into Southampton County schools they went back to being on the honor roll and back to making straight A's. She said they know the value of education. Everyone has been impacted in their life by at least one teacher.

Rachel Doyle addressed the Board. She stated that both she and her husband work for Southampton County. She is a teacher and her husband is with the Sheriff's Department. She thanked the Board for doing a difficult job. She said she was not envious but appreciative. She appreciated the fact that some of the Board members were willing to offer up their salaries to help try to balance the budget. She said if both of their jobs were cut they could not pay their taxes. She said she didn't even think they could make ends meet if one of them lost their job. There may be even less money next year and the budget even harder to balance. She said that Mr. Charles Turner and the teachers had done all they could do. The schools were fully accredited and they had saved 1.6 million dollars. Not one other department saved money and gave money back. The school system has not been rewarded for doing so. The employees at the Sheriff's Office and the school system are under paid. The Sheriff's office works 24/7 to provide safety to ensure the safety of our future.

Mr. Spier Edwards of 32387 South Main Street, Boykins, Virginia addressed the Board. He stated that he had resigned his position as Chairman of Citizens for Responsible Government because he needed more time to concentrate on the responsibilities of his position as Mayor of the Town of Boykins. He stated that he is here to speak on behalf of the Towns of Branchville, Capron, Boykins, and Newsoms. They are opposing the garbage fee. In 1984 or 85 they passed a resolution for the utility tax. In 1987 they had a \$3.00 dollar charge on the electric bills and all the towns were depending on this. Now, a tipping fee to pay for some who had already paid \$493,584.17 in the last 25 years. He stated that Mr. Michael Johnson said there must have been a policy change but he was not employed by the county at that time. With the \$200.00 trash fee the young people are not going to be able to pay this fee. There will be trash all up and down the roads and the fee will be a nightmare to collect. The tipping fee to SPSA has already been reduced so he doesn't know why we need to charge the citizens a garbage fee. He stated that this budget is a wake-up call for all of us.

Ms. Roxanne Jester addressed the Board. She stated she wanted to speak on two issues tonight. One of those items is the garbage fee. She said with the garbage fee the ditch banks are going to be lined up with trash and look awful. People who cannot pay are going to put their trash somewhere and it's going to be on the ditch banks. The other item she wants to talk about is the library. She said she home schools and she uses the library every week. Her kids love the library. They go to the Wednesday night programs for youth. The library offers programs on eating healthy and they do a fifteen to twenty minute crazy workout. The kids that are home schooled like the library because it gives them a place to meet and socialize with other children their age. They have an area set up in the library on a certain day where home school mothers can go and exchange material for teaching other grade students. In the library her daughter learned to use real hands on references such as the card catalogs and look things up that way instead of relying on the computer to find everything. The library also offers computers for people that are job searching; it offers entertainment, tax forms and help. The staff at the library is very helpful in assisting people with whatever they need. There is nothing else to fill these needs in this community. Even when the library terminated the girl who was in charge of the youth program, the children kept showing up. When the library received the money and started having the children's program again the number of kids increased. She doesn't want to see programs that are up and running cut out.

Ms. Brooke Jester addressed the Board. She stated that she volunteers at the library at the Courtland Youth Program. The library provided a safe, fun, learning environment. She stated that she reads at least one book a week. She hates to read a book online. She likes to have the book in her hand, smell the print and touch the pages. She feels that she has accomplished something as she turns the pages and finishes a book. She likes the writing contests that the library offers. She stated that she wants to be a writer and the contests are very important to her. She stated that her Mom was the lady that spoke prior to her. She said she is home schooled and so she met her first friends at the library. She emphasized how important the youth program is and asked that they don't stop supporting the library.

Mr. John Burchett of Sebrell, Virginia addressed the Board. He stated that Supervisor Phillips is his representative. He stated that the four new board members went in on a platform to not raise taxes and Supervisor Updike was the only one who had done what he said he was going to do. The Board is putting a burden on the taxpayers with the \$200.00 trash fee. He said don't cut the schools any more the schools have already been cut enough. He said he wasn't going to say there shouldn't be any cuts, but the schools had been cut enough. He thanked Mr. Charles Turner for a job well done. He said we should be doing something to celebrate the schools, but instead we are slashing the school budget. He said what would Franklin Schools give to have what we have got.

He stated he worked at Newport News Shipbuilding for 39 years and 15 of those he was a supervisor and he had to make some cuts. He stated the county had not made any cuts yet. He said they had to make a good faith effort. He stated that he and his wife can afford to pay the garbage fee, but to many it is a big burden because so many homeowners can't afford to pay it. Tax breaks are being given to people who are already getting a break. They need to make cuts fairly. He said he's not stupid. He said they were going to have to raise taxes to pay for the mistakes of the former administration. He said the Board members had taken a job now they needed to stand up and do it. He emphasized again they need to protect our schools.

Ms. Nacelle Price addressed the Board. She stated the Walter Cecil Rawls Library had already lost some of their staff to cuts. They are closed on Mondays and will have to close two additional days if the library funding is cut and they may have to stop the bookmobile program. The library is currently offering a job skills program. They have programs set up for children of all age groups. She stated that she has eight children and they utilize the library to socialize and get the newest books. She stated that the library is a safe place and it is a positive place. She stated the Board needed to support the budget that the library and schools had requested. She stated that if the school budget were cut there would be 32 positions and the schools had already lost teaching positions last year. She stated that her children attend Capron Elementary and was pleased with the schooling her children were receiving. She stated that two of her children have disabilities and the school had been very helpful. She said it is very important that they support the school with the 2012 budget as requested.

Mr. Richard Harris of 27161 Trinity Church Road addressed the Board. He stated that the Board has a deep inability to balance the budget without a tax or fee increase. He said Supervisor Updike is the only one on the Board who understands that the fee is a tax. He stated that 540 of 4,502 families in 2000 were under the poverty level. Now 785 are under the poverty level out of a population of 18,570 plus 14.5% of those age 65 or older are on social security are even below the poverty line. Then we had tax rate increases last year. He stated that Wingate and Associates came in and raised taxes. He said he didn't know how he came up with the assessments whether he used a crystal ball, a Wigi Board, or what to come up with those figures. He stated there was nothing fair and equitable about them. He said there was \$411.00 paid in taxes on Beale's Meat Packing Plant in 2011. He stated the taxes on the bricks and mortar on his home was more than that. Now here you go again putting a \$200.00 trash fee on the citizens. He said you have ten more days to come up with a balanced budget without any tax or fee increases. He said it's like George Jones song "If you can't see the picture read the writing on the wall". He stated that he has read seven different newspapers online. He said there had been a decline in home sales. Home sales were down 9.4% from January 2011 and lower than they had been since 1963. The Virginia Pilot showed home sales down 11% in Chesapeake, Portsmouth down 2.2%, Norfolk down 4.5% and Suffolk 2.2%. The average for Virginia was reported to be 5.7%. When housing sales are down and assessments are down everywhere else in Virginia what makes you think Southampton County is oblivious to it. There is no uranium, no gold, and no oil in Southampton County. Over 200 years ago our forefathers set up the plan to not have taxation without representation. We are fast approaching that point. Four out of seven of the Board members were replaced and we have to wait 3 ½ years before we can replace them. Maybe we need to change the term limits when a Board member only serves a two year term so that no one is entitled to be elected and occupy the seat forever.

Mr. Silvano Periffi of Sedley addressed the Board. He stated that he has lived in Sedley for a little over two years and has a job where he works from home. His wireless internet service is not very good in Sedley so he uses the Courtland library where they have provided him a place where he has WiFi access. He said this has been a blessing to him because otherwise it would have been difficult for him to work from home. There is a proposed decrease in the 2012-2013 budget by 2.4 percent. A decrease in the budget would mean further layoffs and possibly closing the library more days. The library is a useful asset to many people. The seniors spend time at the library. The library provides a good healthy environment to read newspapers and magazines. It provides computer internet access for people applying for jobs who don't have computers at home. The library provides tax forms and so many other things free of charge. The library is a real benefit to our society. We couldn't do without it. Please keep funding the library.

Ms. Annetta Moore of 24275 Moore Drive, Courtland, Virginia addressed the Board. She stated she has worked in the Southampton County School System for 29 years. She stated she is proud to be a part of the Southampton County school system and she is not here to ask for money. She stated there are several misconceptions that she would like to clear up. She said there is a

misconception that there is a 12 to 1 student teacher ratio. She teaches seven classes and has 185 students. Out of her seven classes the smallest class has 24 students and the largest class has 29. Keep in mind the free benefits of health insurance because she doesn't take the policy because she can't afford it. The VRS contribution was made in lieu of a pay raise. Some people tend to think teachers only work a six hour day. She has been keeping track of her work hours. She had worked 45 hours a week during the summer in making plans for the upcoming school year. She stated she has worked a total of 118 hours some weeks and she has received no overtime and no time and a half pay. She has done it voluntarily. She has heard it said that teachers work 10 months out of the year and are paid for 12 months. She stated that she spends summer months preparing for the upcoming year and taking classes to keep her certification up to date. The pay she received in July and August is pay that she has already earned. The School Board divided the teacher's pay into 12 month pay periods which allows them to pay their bills easier. She has spent 29 years teaching and has as yet to make \$50,000.00 a year. She has been told that what she does for a living is babysitting. The going rate for child care for a week is \$120.00 per child. \$120.00 per child x 185 children is \$22,200 a week. If you have four teachers teaching 185 students for \$99,000.00 per year that is quite a bargain to "babysit" 185 students. She thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. She stated that the Board members would be in her thought and prayers for wisdom as they go through this budget process.

Ms. Allene Atkinson, Principal of Southampton High School, addressed the Board. She stated that the staff invests in the future of the students. People move into the county to go to Southampton County Schools. The teachers and staff at Southampton County schools are passionate about the children that is what makes us special. They go beyond the state mandates because they are passionate and want the children to become educated young adults. At Southampton High School they have the chance to make a final mark on the children as they prepare for work, military, and some of the finest colleges around the country. They take pride in the schools. She said she knew that some of the Supervisors had visited some of the schools and she invited them to come visit. The students do well they aren't just getting by. They have provided 55 years of highest quality education in Southampton County. They have a 95% attendance rate. She was sure there were employers in the area who would love to have a 95% attendance rate of their people coming to work. The graduates of Southampton High School received scholarships over \$3,800,000 million last year. On June 16th she said they anticipate 206 students graduating with honors. Several students participated in the Rawls Art Show and some of the students attended the Governor's School for the arts. The school also has students who graduate trained in carpentry and masonry ready for the workforce. She stated that the schools are very competitive with other school students and have won many awards. She stated they have 27 clubs and activities available for the students to participate in. The school has been set up for use by several organizations in the community at no charge including community concerts, regional SAT testing, 4-H programs, CHKD, Bear Path Acres, Habitat for Humanity, Unicef, Village at Woods Edge, and Rotary Operation 1. The Key Club has volunteered over 3,000 hours in volunteer work. They had a blood drive which raised 172 pints of blood. She elaborated on all the different organizations that the school clubs had raised money for. She stated in the past two years the teachers and staff have worked to help fill the gaps created by the 11 positions that were left vacant through attrition and retirement. At the end of this school year they have six people retiring and three people moving without the possibility of these positions being filled. They have to meet the needs of all their students including those with special needs and those with at risk needs on a daily basis. They provide the best education possible for the kids. The employees of Southampton County Public Schools are passionate, dedicated, and committed and hope that you share that passion.

Ms. Seretha Wright of Angelico Road addressed the Board. She stated that Chairman Jones is her Supervisor. She thanked the Board for their support. She said there is one mentor for every child taught. She said they have the privilege of preparing elementary children for making the step to Principal Atkinson at the secondary level. She stated she is where it all starts; where they get their foundation. She said the staff at Nottoway Elementary is passionate about teaching children. She stated that once you are a teacher you are always a teacher. She asked the Board to think about the budget before making any cuts because the children are our future. The children that go through Southampton County Public Schools will one day sit where you are. The parents are supportive of the children and schools. The children in Southampton County Schools can stand up to any other schools in the country. Please consider the children of Southampton County.

Mr. Dan Holley, a seventeen year resident of the Berlin/Ivor, area addressed the Board. He said we had to come up with ways to generate revenue. The tax payers can't pay for all the perks in the county. That's just the way it is. There are a total of 678 employees in Southampton County with

505 of those being in the school system, 145 in local government, and 28 in social services. Personnel are 98% of the county operating cost. There are 11% of persons unemployed in Southampton County. Thirty percent of the citizens in Southampton County are only working part time and a large portion is on the SNAP program which was formerly called food stamps. A large portion of the residents are only making minimum wage and they have to pay their taxes and their own insurance. On minimum wage they can't stand to have a \$200.00 trash fee added to their responsibilities. He stated he didn't understand this fee especially when the tipping fees to SPSA being reduced. He does not think the county is business friendly. He asked how you fix the problem. He said a lot of funds were going to the school board and he didn't understand what the funds were being spent for. He thought it was time that they have an elected school board and actually see where the school funds were being spent. He said we don't have years to fix this problem because things are only getting worse. He said he was a man of his word. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Andy Johnson addressed the Board. He stated that he started a Facebook page for people to have the opportunity to sign a petition opposing the garbage fee. He said he had 600 members to sign it. He submitted the list for the record. He also stated that the residents were disappointed in the reassessment. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Ron Johnson of 25508 Dickens Lane, Capron, Virginia addressed the Board. He stated he had looked at the budget and had seen the reductions. He thought some cuts could be made and not hurt the schools and library. He said we can't always have everything we want all the time. He stated he opposes the trash fee.

Mr. Jordan Hewett of Sedley addressed the Board. He stated that he was a newly registered voter who voted in the past election. He was also a 2011 Southampton County High School graduate. He is currently President of the Local Student Government at Paul D. Camp Community College. He stated that the teachers at Southampton put in a large amount of time in addition to teaching which they do not get paid for. For example, his mother is a school teacher and she was up until 11:00 working on lesson plans and grading papers. He stated he was inspired to speak by Ms. Hattie Francis who said the young generation must take action. He stated the decisions the Board makes will have an impact on the future of the children of Southampton County. He stated that the federal and state governments had to make cuts and they were passing it on down to the local governments so they weren't alone in having to make cuts. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Leland Beale of Joyner's Bridge Road addressed the Board. He stated that he had not prepared a speech. He said he was a former president of the Citizens for Responsible Government. He said people get misty eyed when you start talking about education. He stated he went to a three room schoolhouse that his grandfather built. He also attended three major universities. He said they simply had to cut the budget and he had experience with that. He said people tend to start out overstaffing and then it grows and festers because you are spending more than you are taking in. He stated the Board needed to sit tight and do their job. He stated the \$200.00 trash fee was going to be a misery tax. He said if you have a man and he is a mean man he's going to put that trash on your property. He said he had heard several people get up and make good speeches. He has confidence in the Board to do the right thing.

Mr. Jay O'Berry addressed the Board. With land use tax you can't cherry pick who you are going to tax. The problem is we plan to spend more than we have. We have to cut spending. You don't have the money to meet the budget with what you plan to spend so you are going to raise taxes by adding a fee. What you need to do is get the budget under control and that means cuts.

Mr. Larry Brown addressed the Board. He stated he had been to all of the budget meetings and seen the different choices to come up with a balanced budget. As Supervisor Updike has stated you are only kicking the can down the road if you don't make some cuts. He said they are going to have to come up with some other remedy to pay the county expenses. He stated he is taxed to death and doesn't see where he is getting anything for his tax money. He pays \$9,000.00 in taxes and he has no child in school, he has his own well and septic systems and that money goes to pay salaries of people working for the county, but live in other localities. The people living in other areas are taking money from Southampton County and spending it in other areas. He feels that they need to come up with ways to have some shared services with the City of Franklin and streamline some items.

Mr. Felix Hancock of Capron, Virginia addressed the Board. He stated that he feels for the newly elected Board as they have some big decisions to face with the budget. He thanked Supervisor Updike for asking those questions he asked. With all the money going to the school board he doesn't understand why the teacher's salaries are so low and why they have buses that are twenty years old. He understands it is a complex budget, but they need to be looking for ways to balance the budget without laying off deputies. The School Board needs to look at the annual pay perks such as fully paid health insurance. He wanted to know how much other fat was in the school system. They just gave the school employees a 3% raise increase last year. He stated they only have ten days left to produce a balanced budget without raising taxes.

Mr. Bill Hancock of Capron, Virginia addressed the board. He stated the county could not take on any more tax increases. The \$200.00 dump permit fee is a tax increase to everybody. You can call it a fee, but it's a tax. He stated the farmers and the small land owners are caught up in this. They can't afford any more. He stated they need to leave land use as it is. They need to go back to the drawing board and hold the line.

Mr. William H. Gillette of Capron, Virginia addressed the Board. He stated he had a couple of comments. One comment was in regard to the gentlemen from Ivor on his proposals regarding timber and land use. He stated they might want to check into that because if they did away with timber land use they may be cutting their own throats. With Enviva coming on line and the mill starting back up they will need timber to run those mills. He stated he loved baseball and gave an analogy comparing how if you don't plan for the future you have to keep going elsewhere. He stated Mr. Michael Johnson is like the CEO and the Board has to hold the department heads accountable.

Mr. William Worsham of 12685 Appleton Road, Ivor, Virginia addressed the Board. He is from the Berlin/Ivor District and Supervisor West is his representative. He stated that even before they began tonight there was much talking about the teachers being cut. People have got to realize that this county is 69.8 million dollars in debt. This week he went to Highland County to see his daughter and grandchildren. He started thinking about the fact that Southampton County has \$800,000 in debt service fees which will not be paid off before his grandchildren graduate. He stated that the schools had done an excellent job, but there are some things that can be cut. They don't have to pay hospitalization for teachers or mileage. Also he knew the new Superintendent was hired in at the same rate of pay as the old Superintendent who had been in the position for several years. He couldn't see any reasoning for that. He also didn't see the need for the bus drivers to drive the buses home every day they should be able to leave them at a stop and take their personal vehicle. You could save \$100,000 just by doing these simple things. Supposedly you did the best you could without laying anyone off. There have got to be other items that could be cut that could be made. Land use tax doesn't affect everyone equally. He stated the Board has ten days to get a budget balanced that doesn't involve a tax increase or fee. He stated we have built a box around ourselves. He told the Board to keep in mind that they are working for the entire county. He thanked them for the opportunity to speak.

Mr. Homer Goodrich addressed the Board. He thanked them for the opportunity to speak. He stated that every time he turns on the TV they are raising taxes. The United States owes China over 20 billion and it has trickled down into the local government spending more than they are taking in. We have gotten ourselves in a mess.

Mr. Raymond Drake addressed the Board. He thanked them for being allowed to speak. He said what we are facing are difficult times. We are going to have to bite the bullet and do what we can. It is hard. He doesn't want to see people lose their job. He stated that the people at the dump sites aren't doing their jobs because when he goes there he sees dead carcasses and tree limbs. These items result in more tipping fees. He said he never intended to speak, but he has seen so many things when riding through the county. He said he had been to Riverdale Elementary, Nottoway Elementary, and even Meherrin. He stated there were so many lights on at Meherrin that he could read the Bible in the parking lot. He said there were 53 lights burning at Meherrin and he hardly thought we needed all those lights burning. He said he had heard it said that the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors had made a decision a long time ago that there was not going to be any more building in Southampton County. He stated that if someone put a pie factory on Main Street in Courtland today there are some people who don't have jobs that wouldn't even apply there. He stated he was ready for bed one night and his phone was ringing about 12:00 or 12:30 AM. It was his seventy year old woman neighbor calling to say that someone was knocking on her back door. When he called the sheriff's office he was told it would be hours because the

closest deputy on duty was so far away. He stated that the Board members needed to get out and visit the schools. He said he had actually taken his grandkids up to Southampton High School and shown them his trophy from track and he said that would make you stand about 8 foot tall. He did say the schools needed to make some cuts. He stated he was not a fan of raising taxes and even if you did away with land use tax you were still not going to have enough funds to balance the budget without making some cuts. He stated he was not in favor of the \$200.00 trash fee. He felt the department heads needed to go back and shake the bushes. If they had to turn out the lights then that was what they would have to do.

Mr. Don Bridgers signed up to address the Board, but left before his turn to speak.

Mr. Charles Say addressed the Board. He was not in favor of doing away with land use. He said he had a strong belief in a balanced budget and he thought they needed to get back to the basics and look at what is most important. He stated he retired here in Southampton County from the military after 26 years because of what the county had to offer. He stated that he worked on a budget in the military and he thought if they got back to the basic they could balance the budget.

Mr. Charles Turner, Superintendent of Southampton County Schools, of 25427 Woodland Park Circle addressed the Board. He thanked the people for coming out and speaking. He stated that he read something today that was significant where a locality realizes and expressly shares their sentiment and quality education for those of Southampton County. Teachers are going to Wal-Mart before school in the morning and purchasing supplies that they need for their classrooms. He stated this is the tenth time that we have gotten together to work on the budget this year. He said do not take issue when he contacts perspective workers with the budget. He said he knows what is in there. In the past when they did not have the funds, they school employees said don't worry Mr. Charles Turner will make it work. In the past he has had stimulus funds to work with and they saved money that is why they have old school buses and why teachers are going to Wal-Mart to buy supplies before school starts. He stated that when positions had been cut in the past that the ones left had shared in the pain. They had done what they could to get through. He said people just don't understand. He says to you tonight that Southampton County Public Schools have dedicated teachers and administrative support and is for strong academic education which hopefully you are proud of. It has taken years to build the strong responsible quality education system they have today. It took a lot of work to get to where they are. When they don't have the funds to keep the school system up don't complain that is the way it is. He said he had heard some misconceptions tonight and he was going to make some calls because the schools had saved money. He said he came to the Board in January with a 1.6 million carryover. They had saved that money because they knew what could take place this year. He said he had told them they would have to cut 43 positions if they did not receive the requested budget funds. He said they had kept people working even when the Board kept \$530,709. He said the Board stated if the school needed that money they could come back and address the Board at that time. He stated he thought the Board members were gentlemen of integrity. He said they needed that money back. He said they had a need and that was a fact. They have made many adjustments and the need is real. If they don't get those funds back they are going to have to lay people off. The fact is they have to educate the children. If they have to make more cuts these people are going to be on the streets. He said they have nowhere else to go; they need the Board's help. Currently they can compete with anyone and stand tall. This is support that is required. The schools need 100% support. They can't sustain the cuts. If they could he wouldn't be standing here.

Ms. Betty Beale addressed the Board. She stated that she is an employee of the middle school. She stated that she owns some land that she has in timber land use. She doesn't know how she will be able to pay the taxes on it if they drop land use. Also if she loses her job due to school cuts she would be even harder pressed to pay the taxes. She is willing to do what she has been doing through Mr. Charles Turner. She stated she was proud to be a resident. She hopes the Board will consider what is best for all the people.

Mr. Ash Cutchin addressed the Board. First off he wanted to thank the Board for the efforts they had shown towards the fiscal concerns of the county. He stated he is against the \$200.00 trash fee. He said it would be hard to collect. This is going to cost the citizens \$16.67 per month. He feels that some more aggressive action needs to be taken to collect unpaid taxes. He asked why the school system doesn't charge more for out of county and out of state students attending Southampton County Public Schools. It costs more to educate these students than the tuition they are paying. Southampton County can't afford to pay to educate out of county and out of state students. There are many who benefit from county water and sewer and street lights which is paid

for by taxpayers money who do not receive the benefits from these items. He stated he was neither for nor against land use to subsidize contributions to teachers. He does maintain that crops don't require teachers. He said he had a couple of comments about our fabulous school system. He said he loves and respects the teachers but they are underpaid. In his daughter's Algebra 1 class which has 36 students in it, the teacher was asking the students directly how they were going to feel about their friends who haven't tried and weren't going to pass. One girl said well at least they will get a welfare check. As you can see young people are already looking to the government to take care of them. He stated he would like to share this with Mr. Charles Turner. He said a good friend of his told him that all the students were going to pass because the teachers were told that for every single 0 given the teachers had to change that to a 50 to affect their final grade. He wanted to know if this was a problem only in Southampton County. He asked if they didn't have any concept of responsibility. The teachers in the audience stated that this was not true. Mr. Ash Cutchin stated he was glad to hear that it's not so. He stated he knew the Board of Supervisors can't control the School Board but we could appoint new citizens to the school board.

Ms. Teresa Preston of 10457 Zuni Road, Ivor, Virginia addressed the Board. She stated she is a widow and she is retired. She owns a farm that she has in land use. She stated that she doesn't approve of the \$200.00 garbage fee. She told the Board she thought they needed to revisit their tax rate and put some of the burden on those who own property which was a fairer way rather than a \$200.00 tax burden per household.

Ms. Florence Reynolds of Tucker Swamp Road addressed the Board. She stated she had a passion for the children in Southampton County. She asked the Board not to throw the children under the bus. She stated she had land in the land use program also. She stated that she was a product of Southampton County Public Schools and the schools had come a long way from where they used to be. She stated that Southampton County has the best and finest school system. She stated she was proud of her children who graduated from Southampton High School as one was a patent attorney and entrepreneur. She stated we have to meet the challenge. We must do what we have to do. If we have to pay more taxes, we have to pay more taxes. We have to prepare our children for the future. There are very few jobs now days which do not require technology and they have computers in the first grade classrooms in Southampton County. The children have to be able to compete with other students around the world. Our schools are the one shining star that we have to offer. If we say we can't educate the children we are throwing them under the bus. We can't build houses and industry where is the money coming from

Mr. M. L. Everett, Jr. addressed the Board. He stated he appreciated the board listening to as many of the people as possible. He said everyone has a passion of some kind for something in the community He said he didn't want to see any positions cut because his wife worked for the county and that was a passion of his. He stated he did go to the library and looked around and enjoyed what he saw. He said he wished they could balance the budget where everybody was happy. He stated how great that would be. He stated with the \$200.00 trash fee you know this is a good fee that all citizens will pay. He looks at the Board with the greatest deal of respect. It is very important that the county make a turn-around from this burden and get back in the black because as of now the county has a huge debt. We need to be able to keep the passions we enjoy. One of those passions is land and one is forestry. We need to protect those. The trash disposal fee is a way for citizens to step up to and help out just like Mrs. Florence Reynolds stated that parents pull together at the schools. He thought it was a great idea to have the \$200.00 fee because it was something all citizens would share in together. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak.

Chairman Jones thanked those who came out to speak at the public hearing. He asked the Board members if they wanted to meet Wednesday night.

Supervisor Updike stated he wanted them to meet Wednesday night.

Chairman Jones stated the Board would meet Wednesday night at 7:00 in the board room of the Southampton County Administration Office.

The meeting was adjourned.

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

Michael W. Johnson, Clerk