

At a budget workshop meeting of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors held at Southampton High School at 23350 Southampton Parkway, Courtland, Virginia on April 24, 2013 at 6:30 PM.

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

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

SUPERVISORS ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator (Clerk)  
Beth Lewis, Director of Community Development  
Lynette C. Lowe, Finance Director  
Richard E. Railey, Jr., County Attorney  
Cynthia J. Edwards, Administrative Secretary

OTHERS ABSENT

Julien W. Johnson, Jr. Public Utilities Director

Chairman Jones called the budget workshop meeting to order. He stated that we did not have a sign-up sheet. He asked that when they come up to speak that they give our secretary their name for the record.

Mr. Joe Vick of the Capron District addressed the Board. He stated that he was here tonight to speak on behalf of the Citizens for Responsible Government. He said I'm not here to beat up on you tonight, Mr. Chairman; I'm here to help. I'm here to point out an ongoing imbalance that we have found in our budget and give you some tips to help you correct it. When comparing the current draft budget with the fiscal year 2009 budget we found that the county has in the five year recession lost \$6.8 million dollars in revenue. That is due to the loss of state and federal funds. To try to mitigate this loss we have used a combination of tax and fee increases and budget cuts to equal \$6.8 million dollars. In five years we have raised \$4.5 million dollars in new taxes and fees and we have cut \$2.25 million dollars from the county budget. It is in the \$2.25 million in cuts to the county budget that we have found the imbalance. We found that since the recession began all the county cut \$2.25 million dollars from the overall budget from 2009 to today, you have cut \$3 million dollars from the schools budget. That means that during the recession the school has sustained 133% of the cuts to the county budget. Now you think about that. This recession, since it began the county has increased the budget for general administration, judicial administration, public safety, public works, and public welfare by a total of over \$1 million dollars. So the tax payers and the schools are clearly doing their part in the recession. Before you raise the taxes another \$0.02 as proposed, or reduced the school's budget by another \$600,000 as proposed we ask you to take another look at the expenditures of each of the county departments. This is not being asked out of malice; but simply as a matter of fairness. Our economy is going to be back up and working in a few years and it is your responsibility when we come through this on the other side of this and let everyone in the community know they did their part in this. I hope you take this seriously.

Mrs. Allene Atkinson, Principal of Southampton High School addressed the Board. She said good evening and a very sincere thank you to the gentleman who just spoke. I appreciate the feeling of all of us working together. She said she is here tonight to talk to us about commitment. For 38 years she has served the citizens of Southampton County, as a classroom teacher, as an assistant principal, and now as principal of this building, your building, the place that you are now sitting. During that entire time I have been able to witness the commitment of the school system to the

futures of the children of this county. Our commitment, our resolve has been steadfast throughout this entire time. When Dr. Alvera Parrish first came to Southampton County she asked me what maybe she thought was a very complex question. It was what makes Southampton High School so special. In case you haven't understood, I am passionate about Southampton High School. So the answer I was able to give was so simple. It is our people. It is the people who come through the doors of our school system. It is their parents, families, grandparents, aunts, and uncles. The people of this family are simply amazing. It is for our people that I come to you tonight and ask for your commitment; a commitment to the future of our children, the future of this entire county. What we are able to accomplish in this building is truly your investment in Southampton County. At the high school we do go way beyond state testing and federal mandates. We have a higher calling. We are dedicated to making sure each and every student excels. This high school is your final opportunity in the county to do everything that we can to ensure that our students leave this system and go on to good paying jobs. They go on to the military. They go on to technical schools. They go on to colleges and they want to come back. Why – because we have provided for them. We go beyond academics in this building to develop young people with pride in themselves and a desire to do for their community. At the public hearing when Dr. Alvera Parrish presented her budget on the 17<sup>th</sup>, she gave great information to you about the successes that we are able to accomplish and work for each and every day. Of course at this high school we have had eleven strong years; this was not by accident this was by dedication; this was by commitment – 55 years of SACS. Our graduation rates are where they need to be and in June we will have 63 honor graduates come before you. Our scholarship offers last year were over \$2,600,000; again, not by accident, but by developing quality young people that the colleges are asking for. And, we think we are going to top that this year; that is what we are working for. Our school works to benefit the community through volunteerism. We raised over \$23,000 last year. CTE's – she gave you some data last week. One thing that I would like to add to that are our industry certifications and point that out to you. These are state and national tests that career and technical education students take. We have 175 graduates this year. In 2010, 65 obtained industry certification. That means they were ready to go to the job force. In 2012 it was 123 and this year we are anticipating 137 of our 175 who have already passed certification to enter the workforce; never mind all the different educational arenas that they will be heading to. Our student recognitions are numerous. Over 230 of the students in this school maintain a 3.0 or higher. We were recently able to celebrate 654 students who thus far this year have made honor roll, perfect attendance, no discipline incidents, and passed those SOLs. These are great numbers for your high school. We are so excited that in June, we have two students who will receive their Associates Degree and I will be honored to have Dr. Paul Conco of Paul D. Camp Community College on our stage to present those two young people their Associates Degree at the same time that myself, Dr. Alvera Parrish, and Mr. Christopher Smith present those diplomas. We have numerous competitions. The Rawls Art Show is tomorrow. We invite you to go. There will be art from our school and other schools in the area, both public and private. Please go. Our band and our chorus regularly compete. Our career and technical education students are constantly competing. Last weekend one of those went on to the state competition in Roanoke in masonry and came back with 5<sup>th</sup> in the entire state. And yes, I would want them at my house if they are 5<sup>th</sup> in the entire state of Virginia doing masonry. He will walk out of here with a career in hand, but that young man is going to VMI because at Southampton High School we combine all the academics and all the career and technical education as we come out with well-rounded students. We compete in so many things. Mrs. Yearey is here. Her students are going Monday to compete in a state cosmetology event against adult schools. Last year they won eleven of the twelve events. This year we are expecting twelve of twelve. Our culinary art students regularly compete. You may have enjoyed their meals before. They have recently severed the Franklin/Southampton Chamber of Commerce. Everything that we do has a purpose. In our academics there are numerous opportunities that we make available. As things have been cut back we have had to work to extend to make it available. If we don't have it here we are going to find it whether it is work for the Virginia Governor's School for the Arts or Regional Appomattox Governor's School. There are numerous summer opportunities that are made available for our students. We have a career services program and we have 25 students already working an internship with over fifteen different businesses in our area. We are mentoring our young people. Athletic opportunities are there. Clubs and civic organizations are there; 27 strong. One of the strongest programs at Southampton High School happens to be community service. We promote it. We celebrated last year over \$23,000 raised through countless volunteer hours. Southampton High School serves this community just as a place to be. We hold the Southampton County Community Concerts each year. The Living with Diabetes group meets here once a week servicing community members who need that education.

We are a regional SAT and ACT Testing site. We teach GED classes here and when they can't come to us we make sure they get it at the community centers such as in Boykins, and Courtland, or wherever these people are in need. We do try to reach out and help. We have the 4-H program that meets in our career technical education building and we are so extremely excited and honored that this year the Relay for Life will be held on the grounds of the Southampton County football field. We are excited. In fact the Chairman is Ms. Shelley McHenry who teaches English here at this school. Our kids volunteer throughout. My theory on teenagers is if you give them a cause and they are going to rise to the occasion and that is what they do; whether it is in their local fire departments, local churches, they volunteer at CHKD, Special Olympics, The Village at the Woods Edge. You name the need and these teenagers are going to find a way to make it happen. The Senior Achievers work at the elementary schools two days a week helping those teachers. They also work at the middle school helping those. We have a group of seniors who help teach children in this building. We have blood drives twice a year. We support all community organizations from Trooper Hill to Relay for Life and the American Heart Association to whom we have already given \$2,000.00 this year. Indeed it is an excellent school system. I stand before you and say it with pride. I also stand here and say it is at risk. It is at major risk. All that we have worked to develop in this community could go at the blink of an eye. The loss of 21 teachers at Southampton High School in the last three years has jeopardized the quality of education that we are able to give our children at a time when we have fewer teachers, greater workloads, greater state requirements our teachers remain committed. This past year for example we used to have two Spanish teachers now we are down to one – six classes only. We used to have three business teachers now we are down to one – twelve classes yet though out all of this our teachers have remained dedicated to the children of Southampton County. We have fewer teachers in Math, English, Social Studies, Science, Special Education, Foreign Language, and Career Technical Education to the point where we have nineteen teachers who teach over what the state says is the recommended number of classes for a high school educator; yet they remain committed. I stand here tonight and I ask you to show us the same commitment that is shown each and every day by our teachers, our students, and our families. Our teachers have shown this commitment. Our students have this commitment to the school and the community. And, I ask you to show it by fully funding our budget. If we teach today's students as we taught yesterday's, we rob them of their futures. We cannot afford to do that if we expect to grow and attract industry. If we fail to provide for our students now indeed they will fail to provide for our future in this community. At this time there are many others wishing to speak, but I would like to recognize our teacher of the year Mrs. Melissa Edwards. She happens to be the Chairperson of the SGA. She has with her the President of our SGA and she has three of the best students Southampton High has academically. One is getting her Associates Degree.

Ms. Melissa Edwards addressed the Board. She said she has attended the Southampton County Board of Supervisors meetings as it relates to the funding of Southampton County Public Schools for two years now. I have seen the impact both as a parent and as a teacher of the declining budgeted funds for our school and how this has directly affected our students and I feel the need to be specific in two areas supporting our budget request. Let me address my concern for the overcrowding as a parent. My daughter is in kindergarten at Riverdale and I am 100% sure that she is in a warm, loving school with excellent teachers, however, due to the previous year's cuts she is in a classroom at maximum capacity without an aide. The same issue is present here at the high school level. Classes are overloaded and this directly affects our students no matter what type of instruction is being presented. At every level teachers need to be able to pinpoint those areas of weakness and build on the areas of strength for the individual student. This is how young minds like her daughter will develop and with maturing minds like her students will blossom with creativity. This issue is directly related to the budgets cuts throughout the past year which has not allowed the system to replace or retrieve the teachers necessary to operate at full staff. Our school system is working though; we are making changes and stepping up in every single area. I am not only a teacher in the area of fine arts and graphic design, but journalism and freshmen success but I also co-sponsor the Student Government Association with Ms. Renee Markavich. This is a year-long commitment trying to give our students opportunities and experiences and working with the most amazing students like Ms. Kristen Andrews right next to me. But, at the school we have been in survival mode. Our students and community deserve more than survival mode. These are the most amazing students and we need to move forward. This year she met with a wonderful freshman who ran for class officer. This young man went with her to the Virginia High School League Conference and he is now pushing for an ecofriendly environmental class or at least a club that he learned about at Garfield High School. His enthusiasm is contagious; I want him to reach

that goal. Then a group of students started a thumb ban promise against texting and driving and they need our support too. These are the wonderful ideas that they have and this is all after being at this conference. Unfortunately, only a few students were able to have this experience. So this puts our other students at a disadvantage when we really need to be moving forward. Students need even more opportunities. They need even more programs, I feel, to get them goal oriented. I teach them freshmen success. And I would really want at the end of that is to have a goal to get through high school with something bigger in mind. We do a whole lesson on just getting their goals together and they need something to work for and something that really has a positive effect on them. Our Student Government Association had ten representatives that went to VHLS Leadership Conference were noted that even in a big group of 62 schools they headed a face book page which is a really big deal with high school students. It brings tons of spirit and tons of pride which is extended well because Southampton students represent themselves extremely well everywhere they go and they give all that they can and we need to do the same for them. And, after talking and observing other schools at this conference in Virginia I feel stronger than ever that budget issues are what are keeping us from getting our kids to the next level. On a personal note, and I want to make it clear that I am not complaining and I don't think you will think I am, because I love my job, but I truly love teaching at Southampton High School. I am so honored to be chosen teacher of the year at Southampton County Public Schools. And, I not only wanted to speak as a parent and a teacher, but I wanted to bring this very talented young lady that is standing next to me, Ms. Kerstin Andrews. She has so many ideas and I wanted her to voice these issues. She is a senior at Southampton High School and the Student Government Association President and she was elected by the student body so here is Ms. Kerstin Andrews.

Ms. Kerstin Andrews addressed the Board. As SGA President my goal and the goal of the whole student body is moving forward. She stated that she had an amazing, eye opening experience this month at the Virginia High School League Conference in Woodbridge, Virginia at Garfield High School. We learned so much from the other schools by experiencing learning and leadership in a different setting. We were able to learn about programs offered to the students such as internships, multifunctional opportunities, and even athletics at their schools. I have been a dedicated runner of track for five years. I have competed year after year by going to regionals; however, I feel that I am at a disadvantage because I don't have a home track. I know that a track is not being considered and not being discussed tonight so there are larger issues which are not even being discussed when we are in desperate need of math teachers and many other teaching positions. Our school is amazing and I am so enthusiastic about the programs that we have to offer. I have truly enjoyed serving the student body at SHS as we have so much to offer and I am asking for your support. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Kristen Cooke a senior here at Southampton High School addressed the Board. She said she would like to take a moment to share with you the experience she had here at Southampton High School. She stated that throughout the past four years I've gotten to realize that the SHS community is built of teachers, staff members, and students, who have come together to create a learning environment that not only educates you, but encourages intellectual, social, and community development. The opportunities for learning at SHS are endless. For those of us who wish to challenge ourselves academically foreign language, dual credit, and advance placement classes make it possible for learning at a higher level. We are working with incredibly compassionate teachers and become ideal candidates on college applications. For those of us who want to grow socially there are clubs, school dances, and sporting events for students to participate in. These activities do not only facilitate our social growth, but encourage students collaboratively toward the goal of friendliness; a skill that will be critical in the real world. For those of us looking to become involved in the community there could be no better place than Southampton High School. The emphasis put on giving back and serving this school and community allows each and every student to serve this community. Through clubs such as KEY Club, National Honor Society, and Student Government Association, students have the opportunity to participate in fund raisers for various organizations. Activities such as sending cards to our troops overseas, attend leadership activities, and celebrate in the Southampton community. My personal experience here at SHS has been absolutely wonderful. Although I am counting down the days before I will be head to the University of Virginia this fall, I know that my time at SHS has prepared me for the best college education that I can get. I have been given this opportunity to attend this university because of the dedication, the teaching, learning, and servicing at SHS every day. This last year I have had a front row seat at everything this high school has an opportunity to accomplish; however this was only possible with the help from all of our teachers and staff.

Thank you for your time and attention and continue to support the School Board.

Ms. Taylor Felts addressed the Board. She stated that she was also a senior here at Southampton High School. It is an extraordinary privilege to stand here before you tonight. She wanted to state what a great part this school budget played in enhancing her experience here as well. When asked to speak tonight, she was quite nervous. Although public speaking is my forte I was more or less worried how I was going to come up with the greatest asset of this school because there are quite a few. She said she had participated in numerous community involvement activities through key club, Christian Club, National Honor Society, Prom Committee, and the Student Government Association, as she is currently the Vice-President of the student body. It is through these clubs that I have gained lifelong friendships, leadership, patience, and responsibility. I feel that they have played a major role in making me the person that I am today. Through the last four years of attending this high school I have received much more than an excellent education and for that I am grateful. Though all of my life changing experiences there is one particularly that I would like to share with you today, this semester I had the privilege of assisting Coach Mann with the adeptive PE Class where five other seniors and myself work with the special needs students. This class has the most open minded and easy going students I have ever met and has perhaps encouraged me more than I have them. In fact, last week they showed me just how blessed I am to be working with them. On April 17<sup>th</sup> I turned a year older and went to school just like any other day. To my surprise I walked into my adoptive PE class and was greeted with a birthday party with kids with open arms just waiting to give me a hug. What amazing students we have here at the school. However, throughout all of these things perhaps the most note-worthy opportunity that the school has provided me with is the dual enrollment program. This program allows high school students to complete both their high school curriculum as well as their first two years of college while here at SHS. Thanks to Paul D. Camp Community College in their partnership with Southampton High School I have been able to complete my degree in General Studies and I will graduate in a few short weeks on May 5<sup>th</sup>. So, School Board Members, Staff of SHS, and Parents, and other members of the community I would like to say thank you for supporting our school. Although you know just how wonderful our school here at SHS is it is an honor to express to you what Southampton High School has done for me. I would like to express to you that Southampton High School does more than just educate a student. Southampton is a second home for many. A place to develop friendships, experience what it is like to belong somewhere, to lead, etc. It is because of you all and because of this school that my best as well as many others has been developed.

Mrs. Connie Burgess of Courtland addressed the Board. Just as Walter Cronkite once said “I propose that whatever the cost of our educational system the price is cheap compared to an ignorant county.” Just as we would not ignore a soldier needing protective armor we cannot ignore what the newest generation of children need as far as protection, success, and genuine hope. Let us not continue to ask every year why the school system needs funding, but what we can do to make sure the school system is fully funded. As G. K. Chesterson once said in 1874, “Education is simply the soul of society as it is passes from one generation to another.” My generation is the 1971 graduating class of Southampton High School. I was so pleased to see our students speak before you because it takes a lot of courage for our young people to do that. I am from a family of farmers. My husband and I raised two successful daughters who are also products of Southampton High School class of 1995 and 2000. I am a local tax payer as well as are my daughters and I am proud of my grandsons who attend Riverdale Elementary. I’ve been working a second job for twelve years at Paul D. Camp Community College as an adjunct instructor for future educators. Most important of all to me is that I am an educator for Southampton County. For 34 years now I have witnessed the ebb and flow of students, teachers, and parents of the community pulling together. At budget time for the last few years especially last year I have witnessed the worry on the faces of colleagues, administrators, and parents. I have also unfortunately witnessed first-hand what stress can do to you. If you will just indulge me for just a moment I will ask for a show of hands in the room of all educators in this room. Now I’m not going to turn around and I’m not going to look because in reality every hand should be up in this room including yours. Why - Because we are all educators in our own way, holding a child’s future in the palm of our hand. The child who knows, the child who doesn’t know, the child who wants to know, and the child that we know we once were. The child who is going through the system that we are striving to teach regardless of budget, environment, and other concerns that come to us. Statistically, evidence points to while many factors are outside of our control in educating children there exist a positive correlation between quality of funding for local public education and long term benefits. Positive impacts on home values and resale, future earnings or likelihood of both reduce

alienation, greater trust, greater involvement, and most important and you will probably hear that a lot tonight and that is a skilled workforce with major reductions in crimes, reductions in incarceration rates, and reductions in wide spread poverty. One of the worst things that we could do for our county in dealing with a fiscal crisis is to focus on cuts and not children - cuts and not kids. Investments in the high chair and not the electric chair, is the ultimate answer. Anything less will spill over to all areas of our life causing a total decline in the whole state's long term economic vitality. This administration has prepared for you a fair and well developed budget that encompasses the basic needs of our school system. We urge you to approve this budget and adopt the slogan of the National Education Association which is "Kids not cuts". Thank you for your time and attention.

Mrs. Lindsay Barnes addressed the Board. She stated that she wanted to borrow a quote from John F. Kennedy, but I want to change it just a little bit. "Ask not what your county can do for you, but what you can do for your county." Without knowledge, without education, progress is limited. It is as if we are cutting a plant down before it ever has the chance to grow. We talk a lot about just getting back to the basics, if we could just get back to a simpler time. What is more simple or more basic than education. I remember a time when not everyone was entitled to an education; it was a privilege. We thirsted for more knowledge because it wasn't always available and here we are in a technological age where information is right at our finger tips and yet it is the least, most important thing on our minds. A few years ago my husband was injured during his time in Iraq and when it was time for us to get out the Army asked us where do you want to go – anywhere in the world we will move you one last time. My husband and I met here at Southampton County High School when I was thirteen and we are still together to this day so the answer to the question when the Army asked us was Southampton County, please. And why is that – because Southampton County is the best and we wanted to best for our girls. I want to leave you with this thought – Our schools are doing their best and they deserve your best. I think it is time you rise to the occasion.

Mr. Matt Kidd addressed the Board. Good Evening Supervisors and Mr. Michael Johnson. I am a resident of Southampton County residing in the Franklin District and his representative is Supervisor Porter. Tonight he is here to address one word and that is investment. Investment defined means money invested or capital. It works to gain a profitable return such as interest income or appreciation in value. I want to talk about two fronts for a moment. First of all I want to say to the Board thank you for working with the industries that have come in recently and I hope that it is just the beginning because tonight we are talking about the possibility of raising taxes, or not raising taxes, or not wanting to raise taxes, or not wanting to pay taxes. I believe the answer is to continue to have growth in the economy. One of the things that is a main attractor to the economy is the education system that is provided by the locality. If we do not invest in the education system then we can give up thinking that any manufacturer or investor will be moving here. I'm not a native of Southampton, but Southampton is home. I have invested in this community and it matters to me what we do, what you do, because it is in your hands. Industry depends upon some God given things – water, power, and natural gas, but they also depend upon man given things and one in particular is education. That is something that you have a great say and a great voice in. Investment in our schools is most important. I truly understand that is not the only piece of the puzzle; however, I know that Southampton County Public Schools has cut as far it can be cut. We are talking about basic needs. I believe that we are at a place that an increase would be required to get back basic needs. In the high school alone over the past three years, it has already been said that 21 positions have been eliminated. The impact of these positions has been proven to be detrimental to the quality of education that our students deserve, that our community deserves, and that our tax payers deserve. For example, last semester one teacher in the math department had three classes in Algebra II of thirty plus students. These classes are at more than capacity. As mentioned already, 19 teachers this year alone, have taught over the state recommendation; many of them having to prepare for three or four different subjects. This work load works tremendously on those teachers as they barely have enough time to eat lunch or go to the restroom. The papers that need to be graded, the lesson plans written, and the list goes on, they affect things at home because pressure is high, expectations are high, and responsibility is high. There are many immeasurable sacrifices that go unaccounted for. I know for a fact that every cut and every bit of added work has been taken in stride by the faculty and staff. The faculty has done everything that has been asked of them and more – why – it is not because of the money; it is because of the kids. Some of these teachers have worked after hours on their own time in tutoring or remediation. Some teachers are working now in the math department which is understaffed are

working two days extra a week in a math lab. The reason being is to help the students be successful. It is not always what they want to do, but it is to give every student in the school the opportunity to be successful. He said he was very close to one of those situations because he is one of those teachers. At the present time I am teaching 4 SOL courses teaching with three different preps, after school tutoring, math academy twice a week. I have taught above the state recommendation for the past six years. On a personal note, the strain on me this year has made me reevaluate if I want to continue this career of 18 years, 10 of which have been here at Southampton High School. It is not a strain that has been pushed upon me by my Principal or Superintendent, but by the dictates of the state board of education and the fact that our math department is understaffed and has been for the past four years minimum. As a matter of fact Mrs. Atkinson has gone and given us every resource that is available to make us successful - to make the students successful. I am hoping to ask you as the board to fully fund the submitted school board budget that included the funding for deserved raises, and extra Math teacher, an extra Spanish teacher, and also other positions. I am asking you Supervisor Porter for your vote. I am asking you to be a voice for me as an educator and as a tax payer. May each of you be a voice for the children of Southampton County. A friend of his often quotes that each child deserves joy. Providing an education to them that will allow them to become successful productive citizens will bring that joy in their lives. I want to speak to you in another area on another hat and that is as a parent. It concerns me that no fault of the teachers or school administration that we are in this place where we are willing to continue to sacrifice the education of our children because a pledge was made. Sometimes we get into it and see the reality that it can't always be the way we had hoped it would be; but we cannot be cut any further. As a parent I want my children to grow up to be educated, to have the experiences that their peers beyond Southampton County will have. My greatest assets are my children. My greatest investment has been my children. The most important thing to me is my children and I am asking you to do what you can do and what you must do tonight to make sure you fully fund this budget for the schools. I am going to close with this – investment is an act of faith. Scripture says this “Faith is a substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen.” Anyone who makes an investment knows that there is going to be an absolute on the outcome; however if you will have the faith of investing in the future of our children they will show you that evidence of the faith to invest when they are tax paying productive citizens of Southampton County. May God bless Southampton County Schools. May God bless Southampton County and may God bless you gentlemen. Thank you for your time.

Ms. Annie Marie Sample addressed the Board. She stated that she was here this evening to speak on behalf of the SEA – Southampton Education Association which is part of the BEA and the NEA as well as an employee of Southampton County Public Schools, specifically a teacher at Southampton Middle School where I have been employed for eleven years now. I came to Southampton County after college because of the surrounding community with good quality schools and that was very important to me as I began my career as an educator. We always want more for our teachers and students. At our schools more is a relative term. As an employee, I have specifically done what my peers have done. We have made more and made do with less. We want what is best for the children in this county. As a teacher and a member of the SEA I ask you to continue to consider what you would do if you had children sitting in the classroom. If any of you have been through the system and have children or grandchildren who have been sitting in these very classrooms and I ask you to continue to support us by considering fully accepting the budget that our school board and Dr. Alvera Parrish has proposed to you. I ask you to consider where you would be without the love, support, and nurturing of a teacher such as those we have in the county. As a teacher I can say that we teachers are not afraid of hard work. We will continue to do more with less, but as my colleges have already said tonight we are asking for basic needs; we are not asking for frills. We need to get our children to school and we would like to educate them. We continue to work hard day after day including long hours and again I feel the specifics have already been stated. We often work through lunch periods, and before and after school volunteering our time. I am asking you to please fund the teachers that we need to educate our children. Again I came to Southampton County because of the great community with quality schools and I ask you to please continue to support us for our students in Southampton County are truly worthy of this. Thank you.

Mrs. Angela Deskins of Courtland, Virginia addressed the Board. My family and I have been in Southampton County all of our lives. Four generations were born and raised here so we have been here for quite a while. I attended Southampton Public Schools as a child and now I work in one of them as a teacher. I loved it so much that I came back. I have worked as a Southampton County

Public School teacher for fifteen years. I am currently one of the reading specialist at Nottoway Elementary School. I would like to say Good Evening to Mr. Michael Johnson and Mr. Ronnie West. Thank you for all that you do for us. I am also the PTA President for Nottoway Elementary on top of everything else the teachers have been asked to do I do that as well because I love children. I want them to have the best. My daughter started at Nottoway two years ago and is now in the first grade. I am so proud that she is in Southampton County Schools. My youngest daughter will begin school in two years. As a parent I feel very blessed that my children will attend school in Southampton. I am confident that they will get a quality education from excellent, hard-working, highly qualified teachers and have the best opportunity to be responsible and productive adults in our society. I want my children to have the best and the education that they will receive in Southampton County is the best. Great school, excellent programs, and caring and qualified teachers is what makes Southampton County Public Schools a great place to work and a great place for my children to get the education that they deserve, just as I did. What we do now for our children affects the future for everyone. I am asking you today to strongly consider the proposed operating budget for Southampton County Public Schools as prepared by the School Board and the Division Superintendent, Dr. Alvera Parrish. As a tax payer, I will gladly invest my taxes for my future as well as the future of my children and someday my grandchildren. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Jason Fowler of Courtland addressed the Board. He stated that tonight he would like to express his support for the School Board budget. The children are our future of our county. As I sat at the Board meeting Monday night I watched \$12,000 get approved without questioning to buy a generator that maybe we can't afford. I believe that an ultimatum should be given to the departments to reduce their budgets by 5%. He asked why should there be a \$0.02 tax increase. He asked why not look at the farm machinery tax. He asked why shouldn't they be taxed at the same rate as any other vehicle. The farmers are already receiving a huge break in real estate tax. The citizens have already expressed their concerns over the trash fee. Please consider all suggestions before imposing the trash fee again this year.

Mr. Leroy Holloway addressed the Board. He stated that he is a bus driver for Southampton County Public Schools. He stated that he was here to ask them to pass the School Board's budget. He stated at the meeting last month and he heard it said that they were going to have to do more with less as both the federal and state have made cuts to the School Board's budget. However, cost cuts must stop. Our school system is our greatest asset. When people are deciding where to live at they are looking at the county school system and want to be wherever the best education is provided. Southampton County is blessed to have many dedicated administrators and teachers. These are teachers who inspire the students to do their very best. They do this without asking for any resources. We need to make sure that we support our kids so they can compete with kids all over the state. I see their pride and confidence. I see their encouragement in the extra work the teachers give them to make sure they are prepared to compete with schools anywhere. I don't have any children in the Southampton County School system, but my youngest son completed eleventh and twelfth grade here. He went on to graduate from UVA Medical School and now is a foot doctor in Nashville, Tennessee. Even though he was always a good student it was the inspiration and motivation that the teachers at Southampton High School gave him that gave him the self-confidence to achieve this. As I said last month you get what you pay for. A top notch education for our children should be our number one priority. As a Board member I know your job is tough, but to make the right decision. I urge you not to balance the budget at the expense of the school system. We the citizens of this county will remember your actions when election time comes around. Thank you.

Mr. Jack Randall said Mr. Michael Johnson, Chairman Jones, and Board it is a privilege and honor to speak before you. Since becoming a resident of Southampton County this is my 10<sup>th</sup> budget meeting and I have never spoken at one. In listening to Mr. Kidd what is most concerning about his statements is that teachers are having to teach above what the state says is allowable. Tonight I am going to speak on the county budget. Today we must show responsible leadership and we all must start feeling uncomfortable when making very, very tough decisions. As the debt crisis deepens in America and Southampton County time is drawing short. Many of you up there know this. We must demand of our lawmakers federal, state, and local to speak truthfully about the budgets and come up with solutions. Currently our county debt is \$65.6 million and everyone in business including me knows that the key to solving our problems is in the private sector of growing our tax base. In growing our tax base any company is going to look at two things – low

taxes and good schools. So it is clear that we are all in this together. We need to come up with a real solution. The biggest threat right now in our county and nation today is the growing debt. Many progressors ignore this problem; they label any group that challenges spending as extremist when all people like the of Citizens for Responsible Government in Southampton County, and groups nationally also have other names such as Tea Party and things of that nature; but across the board what they are all calling for is responsible government that controls the spending and that is primarily what I am asking for from this Board is responsible government that controls the state. In looking at the historical society we look at the concert series this budget is filled with over \$100,000 dollars which funds teachers, supplies, etc. In our budget the county government is paying the non-profits and what I would ask this Board is for that government function to do those things. We have got to start today because we have got to find some cost cutting measures. You are the Board that makes the decisions; I'm just offering suggestions. We have to start thinking of these things and start thinking outside the box. In looking at our federal government spending it is up 108% of where it was ten years ago. The congressional budget office estimates that the deficit for this fiscal year at \$1.6 trillion – the largest in peace times. The federal government borrows \$0.40 for every dollar we spend. As the deficit reaches 10% of our annual GDP the debt is not equal to it. Abraham Lincoln said at Independence Hall on February 22, 1861 “I never had a feeling politically that did not spring from the sentiments involving the Declaration of Independence. One of these declaration sentiments is the right to enjoy the right of political self-government then must be capable of personal self-government, the virtue of self-control. A people without decency cannot be secure in its liberty.” I think it is important to remember government self-control. Of my ten years of watching the budgetary process I see more political grand stands than I do of people with common sense so I think that is the key of this Board to come up with common sense solutions. Now getting locally away from the national level this has got to start at a grass roots level. The tax payers of Southampton County have reached tax payments of more than \$4.5 million in five years. The local tax revenues have increased 23% since 2009. The five biggest departments in the county have increased their budget collectively around \$1 million since the recession of year 2009. In contrast we have already mentioned that the school budget has decreased. In looking at these five areas of general administration, judicial administration, public safety, public works, and public welfare the Citizens for Responsible Government are asking for a 5% decrease. We have no doubt that it is going to be difficult, but where we do start, when do we start. If we don't start now, I don't think we are ever going to start. We have got significant problems with this county. We have long term planning for a new school in Capron. We have a dog pound where we are almost going to be fined by the state. We have got real problems and people need to start talking about them and addressing the situations. Now is the time; the responsible time is now, not kicking the can down the road. The Citizens for Responsible Government is obviously a grass roots movement and let me explain what these groups do. The Citizens for Responsible Government wants policy to change. We want to wake the Board up and tell them we want to reduce debt, and we want to reduce the budget. We believe this debt is too significant and it is going to hamstring our schools. It is going to hamstring our prison system. And, we cannot keep increasing taxes. We have pushed all the industry and business leaders away from the county. What this means to grass roots is an attitude, an attitude of freedom, a free activity of unrestrained political enthusiasm. It is a willingness to ban together with ordinary citizens for a common purpose which regular decent people do politically alongside others of like minds, rich, poor, black, white, who are trying to change the way things were. The grass roots effort is the very essence of politics. It can be dumping tea in a harbor, standing up and testifying to local government at county Board meetings like I am doing today, or taking a political candidate aside and speaking to them even though they already have their minds made up. They will still respect that person and listen to their side. The behavior of this group – the People for Responsible Government are anxious to do something. We are especially anxious to do something meaningful at least to our group. It may not always be right, but we want to reduce the debt; that is the bottom line. We do these things because of our beliefs in the ideals of the pride that needs to be in America. We deal with all of these grass roots organizations throughout our nation. Unlike the establishing authorities who control the political process most people are fundamentally at heart. There are believers in the sanctity of America founded by who support the causes of economic liberty, national law, and moral responsibility. They are rock solid Americans and we have many of those rock solid Americans here in Southampton County. We are asking you to take a significant look at our county budget and reduce this budget by 5%. If you don't do it now, our group doesn't believe there is ever going to be action on these financial jargons. Thank you.

Mr. Albert Evans, Jr. addressed the Board. He said good evening Mr. Michael Johnson,

Chairman, and Board, School Board, Superintendent, Principals, and well as citizens in attendance. He said he was a product of Southampton County and the public school system. I count it an honor to be able to address our Board of Supervisors tonight concerning the school budget of 2013-2014. After serving 25 years of faithful service in our United States Air Force and serving 6 years in the Newport News Public School System my family and I decided to relocate to my hometown of Capron. I returned for many reasons, but the underlying reason is this. I wanted to put something back into the community that had invested so much in me, especially the public school system. The dedicated staff who guided me, mentored me, and pointed me in the right direction to fulfill my destiny and to achieve my goals in life. So tonight, I have a dream. After I returned I became fully aware of some of the issues that have presented a challenge to our county especially those involving the budget. However, I always had confidence in our elected officials to have enough foresight to meet the challenges head on and to develop strategies and plans to secure the economic future of our county, especially in the economic and academic future of our schools. A Superintendent of Schools was recently hired to lead, oversee, and direct our public school system. To this end I believe she and her staff have formulated a very reasonable budget which is both feasible and attainable. It is a budget not filled with luxuries or extravagant request. But it is a budget filled with necessities and the bare minimums to keep us in the race for excellence and for full accreditation. To be met with resistance, rejection, at the onset of her tenure is in fact ludicrous. No one is trying to be in an adversary position because we are all supposed to be on the same page. This issue is not about persuasion. It is not about race or gender. It is not about sexual orientation or sexual purpose. It is not about the position of pro-life or pro-choice. This issue is totally about the future of our children, our schools, and our county in general. I encourage you and I urge you to not only look within your selves, but to look outside of yourselves to find solutions, to find businesses, to find companies, find agencies, faith based organizations, and even individuals who will gladly partner with our county as you diligently pursue the financial and economic security of our schools and our county. Last week I recall the Southampton County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution designating our county as a child friendly community. This was reported in the Tidewater News and there was also a resolution signed by Isle of Wight County and Franklin public schools, as well as Southampton County. I'm not sure that you all really understand what you signed, but it was a resolution to be a child friendly community. In a nut shell you all agreed to work together with parents, teachers, and community stake holders to make a positive difference in the lives of young children throughout the region. This envision is not only a partnership, but it should also include policies and decisions that directly impact the future and well-being of all of our children. As a member of the Western Tidewater Smart Beginnings Colloberation Committee I know the impact of being a child friendly community where policies, directors directly and positively impact the future and lives of our children. If the Board does not approve the proposed budget for our students it could be viewed as not being child friendly. If you do not approve the proposed budget for our schools we will continue to lose teachers and other key positions critical to the success of our students. If the Board does not approve the proposed budget for our schools not only will our children be left behind but our schools and our county will be left behind. On behalf of our children, parents, and our entire public school staff I urge you to approve the proposed budget for the Southampton County Public Schools. By approving the budget you will help to secure a promising and meaningful future to all of our students and assure that they will be successful learners and productive citizens in our ever changing society. In closing I would like to modify the words of the late Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. I say to you tonight my friends that so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream. I have a dream that one day this Board of Supervisors and this entire county will rise up and live out the true meaning of the Child Friendly Resolution that they signed. I have a dream tonight. I have a dream that this Board will be very considerate of all the citizens who have stood before you tonight to make their case before you. I have a dream tonight. Thank you and may God continue to bless Southampton County Public Schools.

Mr. Ash Cutchin addressed the Board. He said that is a tough act to follow. I don't even know if I'm worthy to try. I have a prepared talk but before I want to start off with a couple of other things that I thought of as other people were speaking. I would like to raise my hand and ask everyone in the room who agrees with me to raise their hand that the teachers need a pay raise. I would like to ask those same people who raised their hands if they are in favor of water and tax increases to do it. It's about the same number. I would also like to say that I didn't write Mr. Jack Randall's talk and he didn't write mine, but I going to hit on some of the same points that he had. I reside in the Jerusalem District and Dr. Alan Edwards is my Supervisor. If you have watched the TV news or

read the paper lately then you have heard or read the term “train wreck”. It has more often been referred to as the impending disaster we face with Obama Care. Both republican and democrat citizens have been using the term “train wreck”. Well I submit to you that we will soon have an additional train wreck right here in Southampton County regarding the budget as we continue to operate under the classic scheme of “passing the buck” or as Mr. Jack Randall said also “kicking the can down the road”. We are still spending money that we do not have and we are still passing the burden on to our children and grandchildren.

Mrs. Florence Reynolds, from the audience said what is your name sir, you didn't identify yourself.

Mr. Ash Cutchin said my name is Mr. Ash Cutchin. I'm sorry. And I reside in the Jerusalem District.

Mrs. Florence Reynolds said she couldn't hear him.

Mr. Ash Cutchin said Ash Cutchin is the name mam.

He stated that a proposed draft budget is a classic example of “kicking the can down the road” and I have singled out only two items to support my statement although I could refer to many others. First, I refer to the page entitled charge for services which is listed as line item 016180 0001 which is the solid waste management fee which was \$1.34 million in the 2013 budget, but now only \$1.19 million for next year. It is my understanding that this line item follows the infamous \$200.00 waste disposal fee. It was reported two nights ago that only 63% of this has been collected even after 1 deadline extension. Even a shortfall of 37% or \$497,000 this year I think it is reasonable to assume that this fee shamefully covered as a one-time fee when you initiated it last year will also go 37% uncollected next year and add an additional short fall of \$440,000 which somebody will report to us next April and combined those two unpaid fees add up to \$937,000 which is almost a million dollars of additional red ink in only two years. If we consider that \$937,000 in relation to the tax of \$146,000 per penny of taxes that is equivalent to 6.4 cents just to collect two years- worth of unpaid solid waste management fees. That is 6.4 cents for those of us who have actually paid our taxes and paid our waste collection fees and we know that 37% don't. Now if you don't add this 6.4 cents in the next couple of years, how do you expect to collect for this uncollected waste disposal fee? You will raise taxes or once again pass it along to the next generation. Dr. Edwards said a few months ago, we must fund money by not spending it. And, I think we should heed those words. Next I will refer you to page 93 – building fund expenditures, line item number 094000 8291 school buses and the figure \$70,000. I assume that his \$70,000 is the amount you plan to spend in this coming budget to purchase five new school buses. And yet, the bus rotation plan from the February retreat said that the principal borrowing in 2014 is \$450,000, not \$70,000 as shown in the budget. The debt service is \$55,481; and I can't understand that. I find these not only confusing, but misleading to the average taxpayer. Supervisor Porter tried really hard Monday night to explain it to me, and I've tried really hard to understand it and I'm just as confused now as I was then. It appears that the long range plan is to buy 50 new school buses over the next ten years outside of the school budget. I think that is ridiculous because I think the school purchases should be part of the school budget in the transportation section and not our building fund. But nevertheless, if you borrow \$450,000 and get five buses would that not make the cost of each bus \$90,000 instead of \$70,000? We have some math teachers here. It looks to me like \$5,450,000 divided by 7 is \$90,000, but if not, where is my math error. Then again according to the newspaper it looks like the long range plan is to borrow \$5.16 million dollars over the next ten years and pay back accumulative in the right hand column debt service of only \$3.3 million. To borrow \$5.16 and only pay back \$3.3 I calculate to be a shortfall of \$1.8 million and \$1.85 million unpaid by 2023 just for school buses. Now I probably will not be able to stand up here before you in 2023 a fact for many here in the audience tonight. Those high school seniors who spoke so eloquently earlier, they will be able to stand up here and address this. They will be about age 28 or 29 and hopefully they too will be concerned citizens themselves like Mr. Jack Randall and I are. Perhaps some of them will be school teachers sitting over here in ten years. Are you willing to sit up there and tell me that in ten years you will be unable to give them a pay raise because you and they are still paying for buses you bought while they were still seniors in high school. Will you just simply add another 2, 3, 4, 4 or 5 cents or maybe even another 25 cents to their tax rate and another \$200, \$300, or \$400 to their solid waste disposal fee which I am convinced will still be in effect ten years from now. Where does

this stop, gentlemen? Where does it stop? Just like the federal budget, we are on an unsustainable path because our debt will continue to grow much faster than the economy will grow over the long run under any qualifiable scenario. It will cause substantial harm to both this county and the national economy. We already have \$65 million dollars in unpaid county debt and it looks like you are about to add \$5 million more to buy school buses. Soon we will need even more new stuff. The judges will demand that courthouse generator and the architect will demand his \$12,000 in equity. The Sheriff will demand more deputies. Roofs will need replacing, probably even this one. We will have to replace another school or another bridge or maybe even both. It simply cannot happen, gentlemen. We cannot continue to fund everyone's wish list. We taxpayers are forced to live within our means. There is one other thing I want to say. A minute ago when it was mentioned about the farmers getting a break on their real estate taxes I heard someone over here applaud from this section over here in the room. But, I would like to remind you, I have a farm which is not in Southampton County and last week his farmer planted corn, and next week he is going to plant cotton. I have 40 acres of pine trees about as tall as I am and I have another 40 acres that are about ready to harvest. In my lifetime which is 71 years not a single pine tree, not a single stalk of corn, not a single stalk of cotton has ever demanded a school teacher, a school bus, a principal, a Superintendent, a deputy Sheriff, a Sheriff's car, an ambulance, so I don't think the farmers are getting a break even though I don't participate in the Southampton County Land Use Program. I say once again if we don't get our budget under control and taxation is the only way to pay for it then I am afraid we are facing another taxpayer revolt the like of which you haven't seen since the Boston Tea Party. When does it end, gentlemen? When does it end? I ask you, if you will indulge me for a moment, and close your eyes and listen. Can you hear that train whistle blowing in the distance? Now open your eyes and look can't you see the train wreck you are creating with these kinds of budgets. Thank you.

Mrs. Virginia Cutchin of Darden Mill Estates addressed the Board. She stated that she was pleased tonight to hear these young people who have come and spoken. I want to thank all of the teachers who are here this evening because I think it is their dedication and their hard work that has accomplished such wonderful children. They are our future. One of my main concerns is the buses that we need and the cost of these buses. Dr. Alvera Parrish stated that they have found the money for the 2% raises for the teachers. In fact I was there and heard her partition in front of you all earlier. She stated that she was very pleased because she didn't think the School Board budget was extravagant at all. My request here though this evening, is a request to Dr. Alvera Parrish and to the School Board that perhaps they would pass on their 2% raise this year and let that money go towards buses. Even at that the county is going to have to raise taxes to pay for buses this year. And, their raise money going to help pay for buses would be a great help. This would be a great support and help to the county and the students. Thank you.

Mr. John Burchett addressed the Board. He said hello and stated that we was from Sebrell. He thanked Mr. Joe Vick for his remarks because he said he thought for a while he was the only one in the county that felt that way. He said he stands up here tonight representing the bottom half as these young people who came up here and spoke represent the top and I stand up here and give you an example of the bottom. He said he was raised in Pulaski, VA. His mother has an 8<sup>th</sup> grade education and his daddy has a 6<sup>th</sup> grade education. He said when he went to school and he thanked God for the teachers that drug him through kicking and screaming. He thought anything above a "D" was a waste. The only thing he made "A's" in was Math. When he got back from Vietnam he went to Newport News Shipbuilding and thankfully he was a Veteran so they took him in Apprentice School because his grades were definitely not up to par. That woke him up and made him realize that he needed more than just a basic education. He said he wanted to comment on the raises. If we give up the raise money for the teachers, and correct me if I'm wrong Mr. Michael Johnson, we will lose \$200,000. If we spend \$60,000, we get \$200,000. These people need it. Nobody needs to work without getting a raise. When he worked at Northrup Grumman the raises were passed down every year and they might get 2 or 3%, but he could use it and he appreciated it. He said it was a little bit of money, but he needed it. As far as our county employees and school teachers what we have done to ourselves as a county it is not their fault and we have no right to ask them to bear all the burden. They did not bury us in this mess that we are in. The \$670,601 dollar cut in the schools I believe is the difference in what is being asked for and what Mr. Michael Johnson put out as the county budget. Then what I heard from the Board of Supervisors meeting the other night is that even what Mr. Michael Johnson had in the proposed budget is not going to be funded. It will even be less based on comments from the Board. He said he called Mr. Jim Pope Sunday night. He said he has known him for years. He said he met him

when he came to this county. He stated that he knew his mom and dad, Pete and Kay. I believe Mr. Jim Pope was the last School Board member appointed. He said he had confidence in Mr. Jim Pope. He said he asked Mr. Jim Pope do we need a Spanish teacher, a Math Teacher, and the three other positions that Dr. Alvera Parrish is asking for. He said we desperately need those teachers and he also commented that the seven teachers that were cut last year was devastating. No longer could the main line teachers take care of all the problems have somebody take care of the problems. Now they have to take care of the discipline and everything. The really advanced students are getting bored because they are having to wait on the teachers who are having to take care of some other needs. This is not good. He stated that he was talking to Mrs. Linda Vick this evening and they were talking about the conflict in Isle of Wight County. She commented that all you have to do is take the name and change it and you have got what is going on in Southampton County. We are not quite there yet, but it is heading that way. And, that is the fight between the School Board and the Board of Supervisors. It's in the public eye that we are headed that way. What are we going to do? Be honest. We are buried in debt and we are going to have to pay that debt. Mr. Michael Johnson mentioned tonight that we had cut 29 or 30 percent and that is good, but we have got to have more revenue. Where are we going to get it? There are other ways and other places. We have got to step outside the line. He stated that he had talked with Supervisor Jones about it. He stated that he was concerned. He said we have got to look for other ways to raise revenue. If we want to get serious, we have got to do it. We have got to raise revenue because we have got to find another million dollars for the courthouse security. We cannot do it on what is coming in; we have got to have more. It is time to step up and ask the citizens how would you vote for us to pay for it. Would it be to increase real estate, personal property, farm tools, land use, or whichever way you would have us pay for them. Supervisor Phillips asked them what they want to do. When you take more money out of the citizens' pocket they are going to raise cane. I hope that we can live up to the responsibility that belongs to us. We need to make sure that they get a good education. Thank you.

Mr. Bill Worsham addressed the Board. He stated that before he began he wanted to say that there is no struggle between the School Board and the Board of Supervisors, or anyone sitting on that side of the room or this side of the room. The struggle is one thing and that is indebtedness. We will have that struggle until someone steps up the plate and does something about it. At the April 10<sup>th</sup> meeting he personally took it as a challenge from what he heard Chairman Jones say. He stated that Chairman Jones said instead of complaining to bring them something. So he is bringing us something. He stated that he was bringing something and a passionate plea. He said he wanted to suggest the following. He stated that he had twelve items to suggest. He said he wasn't going to put a lot of emotion into it. It is going to be very, very practical. I have twelve items. Those twelve items suggest that 1) a moratorium be instituted on the future borrowing until the county's \$65.8 million deficit is reduced by a reasonable amount by the county 2) that a moratorium be placed on new spending with the exception to approve a sound budget request with appropriations for courthouse security 3) that no new taxes or fees be imposed on the tax paying citizens of Southampton County. 4) that a 2 cents sales tax be placed on alcoholic beverages, tobacco products, and energy drinks. All of these have proven to be hazardous to one's health. That would replace the idea of having a 2 cents increase on real estate 5) travel conferences and in service training be limited and that if travel is required somebody from technology find a way to utilize a way to bring such conference or in service information or use the train the trainer method 6) the remaining departments follow the lead of the School Board in engaging a feasibility study in transportation cost – that study will be out pretty soon 7) let the county implement a system of shared services for all county departments which includes maintenance, repairs of motorized transportation, HVAC systems, and buildings and grounds 8) the purchase of paper products by all departments be pooled so as to take full advantage of buying in bulk 9) that the request of the county to buy five buses be reduced to three 10) that any surplus monies left over after the fiscal year ends be turned over to the county and put in the reserve fund 11) that the request for the courthouse rehabilitation be phased in as revenues permit and that the initial phase include parking and entrance security for judges and court officials 12) that the used property at the Turner Tract be sold and the revenues from the sale be used to draw down the county's indebtedness. I hope you will give some serious consideration to these twelve suggestions. Please keep in mind that in 2011- 2012 we rated sixth highest of the ninety five counties in Virginia in property tax and seventeenth highest in the ninety five counties in Virginia in real estate. Just last year you added a \$200 trash fee was imposed on tax payers. This was in addition to our property taxes and real estate taxes that you are taking in. Please understand that we as taxpayers cannot sustain the present ways in the time of economic turmoil. I thank you for your time and for your

listening.

Mr. Carl Gardner addressed the Board. He stated that he was the Chief of Ivor Fire Department and the President of the Southampton Fire and Rescue Association. He said he didn't have anything prepared to speak tonight, but had a few facts he wanted to share with you. Based off the census of 2010 Southampton County has a population of 18,507. Money that is spent on fire and rescue from the Board in Southampton County amounts to about \$67.00 per individual in the county. If you look at the counties surrounding us, Dinwiddie, Sussex, Surry, Isle of Wight, and even the City of Franklin the closest county compared to ours with the land mass size we have and the population we have is Dinwiddie County. Dinwiddie County spends about \$74.00 per person on fire and rescue services. Sussex County spends \$79.00 per person for fire and rescue services. Surry County which has about half the population we do spends \$86.00 per person for fire and rescue services. Isle of Wight County which last year fully funded the fire and rescue operation spent about \$89.00 per person on fire and rescue services. The City of Franklin which is has full patient services spends approximately \$157.00 per person on fire and rescue services. Our fire and rescue doesn't ask for a lot, but we need everything we can get from the Board of Supervisors for the citizens to be able to operate. It is a shame when you look at the same numbers and the county spends about \$1.8 million on trash collection and disposal. That is \$101.00 per person. We are spending more time, more effort, and more money for trash than we do on taking care of the citizens of this county. The math just doesn't add up. There has been some demands tonight to reduce the budget by 5%. We get \$28,000 a year per fire department from the county to operate off of and it costs between \$65,000 and \$85,000 to operate the local fire and rescue departments. That is just general operating expenses that does not include the capital expenditures, buying ambulances which costs about \$160,000 and engines are anywhere from \$350,000 on up. We perform fundraisers, and solicit donations from citizens and businesses. We spend a lot of time looking for grant money to help reduce the burden on the citizens. As far as donations, there are only a handful of people donating to help pay for a service that is available for all the people. We really can't afford a cut. Our funds to operate on now are less than they were in 2009. All I can ask is that you do not cut the funding to the fire and rescue. We are going to be here for you when times are bad – when hurricanes hit or whatever. We are going to do everything we can for you and we are going to do everything we can for you to protect what you have invested in. All of this is from the heart. We just hope that you don't cut the funding to the fire and rescue.

Mrs. Syretha Wright addressed the Board. Good Evening Board. She stated that she lives in the Capron District and that Chairman Jones is her representative on the board. She said first off she would like to thank them for the opportunity to speak tonight. I sat there and listened to everyone speak; and what I would like to say is that I am not a native here, but I have been here over 38 years. So, I feel like since I raised by two children, two daughters, in the school system here that I'm a part of the county. They are grown now. One is working in Washington, D.C. and my oldest daughter graduated from here in 2003 and has come back to work here in our school system. She is working in therapeutic interventions as a behavior specialist, and she loves her job. She lives outside the county, but she still comes back here every day down the road to work here. So to sit here and listen to some of you say the schools need more money and some say they need to be cut; well they deserve to have a good education. I hear all of the things you are saying about we need to cut here and we need to cut there, we are headed for a train wreck, and all of those things that are being said. Well, we are going to be in debt until we die. That is the truth no matter what; we are going to be in debt until we die. It is what we do with what we have that matters. I think that our children deserve what we can give to them. We cannot put a price on the future of our children. We talk about not leaving our children in debt. Our children deserve what we can give them now. What we can give them now is a good education. If we give them a good education, who is to say that if they are sitting up there where you are now, they may be able to give solutions for the problems that you are talking about now. Who is able to say that they won't have the solutions to say that we can get out of this debt? They will have the education backing them to be able to do so. So what I am saying to you all is think about our children because they deserve it. We talk about people in the county who are poor. We talk about people in the county who have money. We are all on the same team. We are all working to support this county. All of us are taxpayers in this county. Let's take our resources and use them the best we can and that is investing them in our children because our children are our future. She said she appreciated everything what everybody had to say and she really appreciated the Board listening to all the things that were said tonight. She said we talked about the school buses. What people don't realize are the mandates that come down now about the safety of our children. I have a

granddaughter that rides the bus every day and I want her to be safe. I have a fleet of buses at my school and some of them are very old. There are children riding these buses every day and they should be set somewhere else and not riding children. So, we talk about buses and things like that, we have to have them. If we have a car that is not working or a car that won't get us there safely what do we do? We go out and buy another car. It might not be the car we want, but we have to get a car because we have to get a car and we have to pay for it ourselves. And, we have to pay for what these kids need, so I say to you do what you need to do for the citizens of this county. Thank you very much.

Mr. Jason Brittle addressed the Board. Good evening. He said he was here to tell you his story. He said he is a teacher for Southampton County and his wife is a teacher for Southampton County. Every dime that comes into his house comes from Southampton County. I wasn't always a teacher for Southampton County; two years ago I left. He left because he was told "no" because of this very thing, budget. I tried to do things; I tried to make things better for the kids that I had. I couldn't get the things that I needed and I got frustrated. I left. Where I ended up, I went up the road to Deerfield Correctional Center and started a program teaching murderers, rapist, and child molesters. But, I left here and went there the state said I was worth \$55,000 a year to teach those people I just spoke of. I had everything I needed. I had a program. I was given a facility. I was given basically a blank check for everything I wanted for that program. So you probably say well this guy got what he wanted. No I didn't because I was not making a difference. I was not teaching children and that is what I love to do. I came back here. The opportunity opened up. I was one of the twenty one that Mrs. Wright spoke of earlier. When I left, that position was not replaced. That position is gone today. When I came back, I replaced another teacher. I want you guys to realize that we are not positions. When you look at this budget that is your job, you say okay we have these positions. We are not positions; we are people. If you want to look at me today as a position, I am through. I teach agriculture. I teach earth science; and I drive a bus every single day so I am three positions if you guys want to look at us as positions. We are not positions; we are blood, sweat, and tears. We come and do our job every day. I saw this train wreck that he spoke of; it was coming. I asked for things; I didn't get them and I got frustrated and I left. It is happening. If you go on the employment website of Southampton County Public Schools today, it is the longest I have seen it in a long time because there are people who have gotten frustrated. There are people who have gotten overworked because these budget constraints. We are doing so much with so less. You guys need to realize that we need some help. Yet, you have to be responsible to the county. I understand that. That is your job; my job is to teach. Give me what I need to do to teach. That money that I speak of comes in my household. I paid my taxes. I'm willing to pay more taxes. I'm not delinquent on my taxes. I have paid my trash fee. The money is just going around and around. We need to use it where it needs to be used. You guys need to get responsible. Yes, we need to make some cuts, but find the right places. Go after these delinquent taxes. Go after the 30% that haven't paid and make them pay. If I go out here and get a speeding ticket and don't pay it what happens to me? I'm going to end up in jail so what is the difference in somebody not paying those fees or those fines? Find a way to get that money. I just want you guys to realize that we are not numbers. We work hard. We make the best out of what we have. If we don't get some help there are going to be people that are leaving. With that you guys are going to have to burden some of the blame that you have ruined a wonderful school system. It is going to happen. The reason I'm so passionate about that is that I have got two young children. One is in first grade and one is going to be going to school soon. This is the county that I want to live in. This is where I want to raise my children.

Mrs. Wanda Rodreguiz, Spanish teacher at Southampton High School, addressed the Board. She recited the Pledge of Allegiance of the United States Flag in Spanish. "Yo prometo lealtad a la bandera de los estados Unidos de America, y a la Republica que representa, una Nacion bajo Dios, entera, con libertad y justicia para todos." She stated that she starts off her class every day with the Pledge of Allegiance. She stated that her complaint is that there is not enough space in the computer lab. Thank you.

Chairman Jones thanked the people who came out and spoke. He said they would try to digest it all and the Board would discuss it. Chairman Jones stated the meeting was adjourned.

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Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

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Michael W. Johnson, Clerk