

At a budget workshop meeting of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors held at Southampton High School, 23350 Southampton Parkway, Courtland, Virginia on May 20, 2013 at 7:00 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 had a sign-up sheet tonight for those wishing to speak. If you did not sign up and would like to speak you will be able to speak at the end. He asked Mr. Michael Johnson to call the first speaker.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that the first speaker is Mr. Kilby Hodges.

Mr. Kilby Hodges addressed the Board. Good Evening. He stated that he had his lovely wife Edna with him and that they were from Capron. He said he was informed today that they were meeting tonight and that they might be discussing the library. He said he came to put in a few good words for the library and the staff and the mission they have here in the community and all of the wonderful work that they are doing. I intended to be speaking longer than I will be because I have been informed that the budget request that the library made will be granted. I would like to thank each and every one of you for that. That is a valuable resource as you all know for this community and throughout Isle of Wight, and Surry. So I am just thrilled that their request has been granted. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that the next speaker is Mrs. Alice Schaffer.

Mrs. Alice Schaffer addressed the Board. Good evening Chairman Jones, Board of Supervisors, and Mr. Michael Johnson. My name is Alice Schaffer and I have come tonight to speak on the schools. I have two children attending Southampton County Public Schools. I currently serve as Vice-President of the PTA of Riverdale Elementary. I am also a business owner in Southampton County so the economy has affected me as well as you especially over the last few years. I completely sympathize with the difficult decisions that this Board has to make. You have issues to consider that most people probably don't realize. You may feel like your hands are tied and that you have no choice when it comes to budget, but I came tonight to emphasize the importance of educational issues for Southampton County and the impact of having economic development. If you feel that economic development is crucial to the financial stability and growth of Southampton County then you must make schools and education a top priority. As you know that most company's, when planning where to establish their business, the quality of the school system is of great consideration. When their employees are young couples choosing where to live, again the school system is an important deciding factor. A strong school system is a critical building block

for economic growth. If we maintain a strong school system businesses will come and Southampton County will ultimately prosper. No one here is expecting the Board of Supervisors to hand a blank check to the School Board, but we want you to understand what is at stake because the school system does not currently have enough people and resources to properly educate and prepare our children for the work world. We are asking you to be responsible for our tax dollars, but to also think about the needs of our children and their role in our community. These children are our future employees, home owners, business owners, government officials, caregivers, and decision makers. We have to make sure our school system has enough resources to challenge the individual and provide extra attention and instruction to those who are struggling. But, they can't do that with overcrowded classrooms due to lack of teachers and aids. We have a good school system, but there is always room for improvement. We should always strive to be better and do more. You have the opportunity to show the children and their parents how much you value education and how important it is to the future and economic growth of Southampton County. You can support the school system not only by supporting them financially, but also by the encouraging community involvement. We are all responsible and accountable for the education and future of this county. I want to close by saying that I respect and appreciate what you are doing and hope that you make the best decisions regarding the education of the children of Southampton County.

Mrs. Randi Winn of Sedley addressed the Board. Good evening. She stated that she has three children at Nottoway Elementary. She stated that her husband is in the Navy. She stated that he had been stationed here at Norfolk some years back and in 2007 he was given the chance to be stationed in several states, California, and even Hawaii. They fought to come back here to Southampton County because they love Southampton County and they love the school. When compared to other schools her children had attended the other schools couldn't hold a candle to what Southampton County has to meet. She stated that unless the budget for the schools is properly funded the schools will suffer due to loss of teachers, aids, librarians, and other staff. She stated that they love Southampton County. They attend a local church here. They participate in the PTA at their children's school and they want their children to continue to receive the quality education that Southampton has come to be known for. So if this budget is not approved our future, our schools, and our children will suffer. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that the next speaker was Mr. Emory Gillette.

Mr. Emory Gillette addressed the Board. Good evening. I'm here tonight for your full support on the budget for the School Board. I realize that you are faced with some very difficult decisions on how to spend our county money to operate just as I too am faced with the operation of my household without any cost of living raise and the increased rising costs that we face. In these rough times we must set our priorities based on the principles that will productively prepare us for the future. I am requesting that you not only fund the salary increases for the teachers, but also the additional positions that Dr. Alvera Parrish has requested. I assure you that for the growth and future development of Southampton County that this funding is necessary. In this world of e-books, my computer internet at home cannot keep up with as far as technology is not up to standard enough. Our teachers are in need of this salary increase and you heard the gentlemen say how bad the positions need to be filled. He stated that Mrs. Hicks and her staff at the elementary school did an exceptional job. He just asked and prayed that something be put in place to fund this school budget that Dr. Alvera Parrish has put in place. We need to do what we can to make sure our children are able to follow through and live successful lives.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that the next speaker is Iola Lamison.

Mrs. Iola Lamison addressed the Board. Good evening Mr. Michael Johnson, Board of Supervisors and everyone present. She stated that her name is Iola Lamison and she is the Manager of the Walter Cecil Rawls branch of the Blackwater Regional Library. She thanked them for the opportunity to express her appreciation for the funding they had received in the past and consideration for this year's funding. She said she wanted to briefly share some of the happenings at the library. She stated that we have Hardee's coming and that Hardee's had used their board room to interview for sixty positions at their new location next to Food Lion. She stated that they also have a Medicare Representative who used their Board Room to meet with Medicare patients to explain the Medicare program because it can be a little confusing with Medicare part A, part B, and part D. She said she didn't know what happened to Part C. She stated that they have several

applicants come in to use the library to apply for jobs since most job announcements are on the computer now because due to the economic times people may have had to have their internet service cut off. She said they offer library week which includes a SNAPSHOT where we choose a theme for the week. Children are able to play educational games on the computer, check out books. The library provides free books and e-books for our families. People use the libraries for all the free information that it provides. Here are some of the statements from our patrons:

Patron 1 – For kids to play educational games on the computer and check out books. The library provides free books and research material for our family. We use the library for all our research and the activities that they provide.

Patron 2 – Both libraries, meaning Franklin and Southampton, are very helpful because I am enrolled in college and they are helping me more than you know.

Patron 3 – I come to the library about every three weeks loaded with return books and check out more. I love to browse the pages and isles and turn the pages of the books. I like being able to go on line and renew my books and put items on hold.

Patron 4 – I like to rent movies. On Tuesday I bring the kids for story time. They meet their friends. It is a great time for me and my little ones to be together.

Patron 5 – There is a lady who comes in every two weeks with bags of books. She drops them off and fills the bags with new ones. She said he library has been a blessing to her since she moved from Richmond to Capron to live with her daughter. She likes living here. She doesn't have to shovel snow every day.

She stated that the summer reading program kicks off on June 26 at 6:00 PM. There will be tween and teen programs and something for everyone. We would love for you to visit our library and attend our programs. Thank you again for your time.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that our next speaker is Mr. Jack Claud.

Mr. Jack Claud addressed the Board. He stated that he lived at 59 Ivor Road, Ivor, VA. He stated that out of all the districts in Virginia Southampton has the highest real estate value. He stated that we did not need to cut any single item from the budget. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that our next speaker is Mr. Chris Smith.

Mr. Chris Smith addressed the Board. Good evening Chairman Jones, Distinguished Board Members, Mr. Michael Johnson, and all assembled here. My name is Chris Smith and I reside at 25495 Woodlawn Drive, Courtland, VA. I stand before you tonight as the Southampton County School Board Chairman and as a taxpaying citizen of this county. For the last fifteen or sixteen years the School Board has taken care of the money that you have given us. We have had a surplus of funds from saving and being good stewards of that money. For fifteen or sixteen years that money has generally come back over to us. Last year however, only half of it was returned to us. We saved something like \$1.1 million and you all retained \$530,000. The situation that we are living in is one in which we created a bad situations by not building the pie and bringing in industry that we needed to offset the budget which caused the need for an increase in taxes. So we all have a lot of work to do. After one of the work sessions that you had earlier this year I was confronted out front by one of the land owners who thought that the land use plan was good for him. He wanted to know why everyone wants him to pay more on his 1,000 acres of forest land. He confronted me that the land didn't call for a rescue squad, police service, and all of that. But, to him and the community leaders I say "To those that much is given; much is required". So, search you hearts and see what you can do for the School Board budget. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that Carl Garner was the next speaker.

Mr. Carl Garner addressed the Board. He stated that he is the President of the Southampton County Fire & Rescue Association. He said he was going to be short and brief. He thanked the Board for their support in past years. He said he looked forward to working with them in the future. He said if there was anything that he could do for the county to please feel free to contact

him. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated the next speaker is John Burchett.

Mr. John Burchett addressed the Board. Good evening everybody. He said first off he apologized for not being as articulate as some of the other people who have been here. He said he and his wife discussed him coming here tonight. She said if you think they have already made up their minds, why are you going? I said we have been married 47 years and you have got to ask me that question. I believe in our system. I believe that we have messed up terrible in our decisions over prior administrations that have cost us a lot of money. So, I think we need to share in the pain equally. We are failing our children. I want to ask you, do you think that God is going to shine upon us knowing what we are doing to our children? Our teachers and our employees, how long can they go with no money. I understand Supervisors Phillips and Updike. I know where you are coming from. In fact Supervisor Edwards, Supervisor West, Chairman Jones, and Supervisor Faison I appreciate your supporting the schools. Everybody here is riding on some decision they made in the past. Now it is the time to step up to the future. I know that we have got to pay our bills, but once again I say we need to share the pain. The schools cannot continue to carry the burden of the load. Like I said I'm not as articulate and I'm not as nice as some people who come up here. I am going to say one more time what I said the first night that I stood out in the hall for two hours waiting to speak at the first budget hearing. And, that is shame on you if you don't support our schools. I am going to ask you to vote to support the schools. Chairman Jones and Supervisor Faison I asked you to approve the budget for the schools even if the rest voted against it. Don't give them the satisfaction of 100% against the schools. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated the next speaker is Dr. Alvera Parrish.

Dr. Alvera Parrish addressed the Board. She said Chairman Jones, other members of the Board of Supervisors, other members of the Southampton county family, and the Southampton County School Board Members - Good evening. I am Dr. Alvera Parrish the Superintendent of Southampton County Public Schools. Excuse my voice as I am a little hoarse. I wanted to have one more opportunity Supervisor Phillips, Supervisor Edwards, Supervisor West, Supervisor Porter, Supervisor Updike, and Supervisor Faison, and Chairman Jones to have you hear our request for our school system again. I stand before you this evening on behalf of our School Board, on behalf of our teachers, on behalf of our staff, and on behalf of the 2,846 students who attend Southampton County Public Schools and their families who are also citizens and taxpayers. The people that have come to speak before have come because they want what is best for our children. That is the only thing that they are all asking for. First of all I would like to say that we do appreciate your intention to support the school system according to the comments that you made last week. With the level funding that was proposed last week. And we appreciate the support for the buses that you have put in the proposed budget. We understand and I can appreciate the tough decisions that you are faced with at this time as you look at the budget that is before you and the funding that you have to work with. In addition to that, I want you to know that I heard your stance yesterday when you said hold the line. I know that you are not able to give everybody everything that they requested, but I am asking you tonight to reconsider. I urge you to reconsider. We must press upon you tonight the importance of funding the two percent salary increase going forward. Our salary scale is already not competitive with the counties around us. If we don't have quality people and if we aren't able to attract and maintain those people who can go less than ten miles away and get more pay for doing the same job we are going to lose them. In this economy people have to protect their families and their investments in their families. I know that funding and you know that funding is much needed that we requested. We are asking you to really look at the salary increase above the level funding and to review the five positions to enable us to continue to provide a high quality education service program and personal programs for our students. We have been prudent, quite prudent in fact and we have been quite reasonable in our request, asking for nothing that we didn't truly need. I could have put so much more in this budget that we need, But we were very, very careful as I talked to our finance and budget director and we worked with the School Board budget committee to say that we are going to ask for only what we need because we truly understand the situation that you are faced with. However, I must stress upon you as the instructional leader of this school division that without sufficient funding we will not be able to continue the high quality of service that we have been able to provide in the past. You have high quality schools that are functioning at a high level every single day. You have heard people come before you one after another talking about how the

people have sacrificed and they sacrifice every day. You all have been in our schools, the most of you, and worked with our children you understand the struggles that we face. Even though some of you have worked with one child you multiply that times all of our schools that have many more than one that you have people reading or working with and the teachers have to deal with on a day to day basis. We don't pick and choose, we accept the children where they are. And, our focus is to grow them and help them to go as far as they can go; to let them know that the sky is the limit and that education in Southampton County Public Schools will help them to be competitive no matter where they go in this great Commonwealth as well as beyond. I believe that. I chose to come to Southampton County. I could have worked anywhere else I wanted to work, but I chose to come here because as I read your history and I looked at your legacy I saw a county, a school board, and a community that was supportive of children and learning. And that is my mission in life to do all that I can do to help a child to be all that they can be. So I ask you and I urge you again tonight gentlemen to look at the ripple effect of not supporting the school board budget. It will be a hurting on the county; I can tell you that. It will be an inconvenience for the students; I can tell you that. The services will have to be adjusted and limited; I can tell you that because no matter how much we want to do it in our heart without the appropriate resources and the funding source of the resources we won't be able to it. So, I thank you again as we do appreciate what you have already done and what you said that you will do. You do remember you said that we are looking forward to next year; because you said next year will be better, right? Right? Well, we are looking forward to next year, but what can you do for us this year. You may not be able to give us everything, but the 2% increase and the positions, we would appreciate if you would look at that again. We want you to fully fund the budget as proposed. Please consider it gentlemen. I respect all eight of you and I am looking forward to working with you for many years to come if it's God will. Do the right thing and do the very best that you can. You think about the lives of those 2,800 students that are waiting and whose lives depend on your decision. I came from a family where my mother and father worked hard for a living. They were not educated; they were not professional people, but they believed that if their five children had an education then our lives would be richer. I've worked in tobacco. I've worked in department stores. I worked my way through college. I worked my way to get my doctorate. I worked the whole time, but the education was the door opener for me. That is why I am committed to try to open the door for other children, and other people's children and families who have come through hard times. Because if they don't have a formal education; they won't make it. Right now all five of us children are in education. My brother was just appointed school superintendent in Sussex County. Two of my sisters are principals and my other sister is an administrator and a reading specialist in Brunswick County. That would not have happened if someone hadn't invested in us. I thank you for your time. I hope I wasn't too long. I appreciate what I know that your heart will allow you to do. Thank you.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated the next speaker is Antoinette Anderson.

Mrs. Antoinette Anderson stated that she and her family are transplants to Southampton County. When we were looking for a home two things were of major importance, safety and education. She stated that her colleagues came to Southampton County for the same reason. She said she was a product of public education and that is the only reason her children take pride in the public education system. After much investigation in the school system her three children are in Nottoway Elementary and they are very pleased with that decision. There are several issues she is aware of though. There is a shortage of bus drivers and she is also aware of some of the buses being inoperable on several occasions. As parents who work very long hours, the school buses must run on according to schedule. If school buses are old and broken down they must be replaced so that students can be at school on time and ready to learn. Additionally, at the end of the 2011-2012 school year several positions were eliminated. At Nottoway specifically there was a large impact as three positions were cut as a budget result. These assistants worked with testing, the SOL Study, and the before and after school program. These have placed more pressure on the teachers and caused problems for the working parents and students. Working parents who are paying taxes depend on these programs for the safe, instructional care of their children. I understand the economy is stretched very tight in the economic decline which has caused all of us to have to do more with less. The education of our children, our future should not be on the back burner. I am asking that the proposed 2013-2014 School Board and Dr. Alvera Parrish's budget be approved in full to maintain a high academic representation for the citizens of Southampton County. Thank you.

Chairman Jones stated that was all of the people who had signed up to speak. He asked if there was anyone else who would like to speak. This is your chance. He asked the Board members if they had anything to say.

Supervisor Updike said he would like to take a few minutes to give you something to think about. He stated he wanted them to think real hard about this tonight when they go to bed. He stated that 26% of our citizens are on SNAP, 8% are receiving food from food banks. Our average income is \$33,000 which means that over 50% is just above the poverty level and most of them are below the poverty level. A lot of these people are getting paid at an hourly rate and they are not receiving any fringe benefits. They don't get retirement, insurance and so forth. Benefits usually run 20% to 50% over the cost of the salaries. This is quite disturbing to him. These people are having a hard time making money to put food on the table and the last couple of years their tax has increased \$500.00. This includes the \$200.00 trash fee and then technically the gas tax by having been put in the Hampton Road Planning District is \$200.00 per family and you can't take that and buy anything. Now, this year the biggest thing is this year we are borrowing \$650,000 and you are going to pay it now or pay it later and that is 4 ½ cents. This is kicking the can down the road for somebody has got to pay for it. How can these poor people afford all these tax increases? Our debt service next year is going up. How much? Well I hope we keep it under a million dollars and 8%. It is going up. We have payments to make on our debt service and we still have a long list of projects to be done and we already have this much debt. How can we expect people under these circumstances to pay the bills? It is a big hardship on them. Every year we expect them to pay more and more. I don't buy it. We need to cut our operating costs. For people to say we are going to cut this and this, well we need to look real hard at how we are spending the money. When these people are asked about coming to the meetings to speak they probably aren't going to come because they say they probably won't listen to us anyway. We cannot continue to place these taxes and fees on low income people. So I ask you again that when you go to bed tonight you think about that for a few minutes.

Chairman Jones asked if anyone else had anything.

Mrs. Florence Reynolds, of the audience, asked if she could come up for a minute and say something.

Chairman Jones stated that she could come on up, but don't start throwing stones at us.

Mrs. Florence Reynolds stated that she wasn't going to throw any stones; she was going to be very humble.

Chairman Jones asked if this was a question or what.

Mrs. Florence Reynolds stated that she had a question. The only comment that she wants to make is that you and the Board knows the position we are in and the taxes that are saved from the land use program are \$2.5 million. So I am here again to talk about that other 50% that Supervisor Updike didn't talk about. He talked about the 50% that didn't have any money and can't pay their tax and may go hungry tonight. Nobody said anything about the others who are getting back \$2.5 million dollars out of the county pool. We cannot say we have done everything we can do until you look at every stone uncovered, every stone, not just those that Supervisor Updike talked about. What about the ones on the other end of the totem pole, the ones with the thousands of acres in land use. You have to look at that. Everybody has to pitch in to make this thing work. I agree with Supervisor Updike; you can't go after the little man who doesn't have it; you have to go after the money. I said this thirteen years ago and I'm saying it over and over again. Are you afraid to do this to make the county in line with the money when we know the money belongs to this county? Until you get the backbone to stand up and do what is right... It is right my fellow citizens, it is right. It is right that everybody carries this load. I think Mr. Michael Johnson told me one time there were about 800 in the land use program. I am one of those. I'm in land use, but I'll freely give it up. Why shouldn't I be glad to give up my little sixteen acres when the man over there has 1,000 acres? You have to look at where you can get the money and you can't get it from the 50% that Supervisor Updike is talking about. No. I'm telling you that you must go after land use. I'm not advocating that we do away with the entire program, but we must take a look at it for the sake of our schools. Thank you for your time.

A guy from the audience, who did not identify himself asked if he could speak for just a minute.

Chairman Jones told him to come on up.

The guy from the audience, who did not identify himself, stated that he was new to the community. He said he had to pay the \$200.00 trash disposal fee. He said that he and his wife could afford it, but he was wondering if people were at a certain low income level if they had to pay the \$200.00 tax. He said if not they needed to make some kind of provision for them. Another thing I want to mention is the 2% increase for the teachers. My wife doesn't need it, but there are so many people who do. If the teachers get that 2% increase where do you think they are going to spend it? Now what I know about teachers, and that's because my wife is a teacher and she is here with me tonight, is that they don't spend their money friverously. You don't see teachers driving BMW's. In fact his wife spends her money buying things that her students need. A lot of the teachers don't have a husband with a good job like he has so most of the teachers would probably be spending that 2% on children's clothing, food, or school supplies. He stated that he didn't think the board had a thorough understanding of what was required. When they have a way to get the money the money should be going in the teacher's pockets. Thank you.

Mrs. Allene Atkinson asked Chairman Jones if she could speak. She stated that she didn't come prepared with a talk tonight, but there was something she would like to say.

Chairman Jones told her to come on up.

Mrs. Allene Atkinson stated that as principal of Southampton High School she wanted to bring their attention back to the children. There is in our audience a young man who has earned his Associates Degree. He is one of two best students we probably have. The other one is Kristen Cook who was here last time and spoke to you. Sitting in the back with the Boy Scouts is one of our graduates, Jordan Hewett. We have the best of the best right here. Each year for three years and this is the fourth, I have come to you to try to convince you to please fund the school budget. And every year the Board politely listens, but I feel like your mind is made up even before we come. What I am charged with and have been working on, in fact today, is the schedule for next year. Twenty one of our teachers have been lost at Southampton high School is the previous year. I struggle to provide the quality of education that these young people deserve. Today I looked at one of the programs, and because it is required by the state of Virginia, I needed to fill 934 slots with one teacher. I looked at foreign language and I did not have enough teachers. And, I'm trying to figure out can I do something with virtual education. Can I plug them in front of a computer? Is that fair? In social studies, and English, and math, and science there are two less teachers in each of those departments. Every single teacher teaching those subjects next year will have to teach an extra course. Now when you are charged teaching 32 to 34 students in an SOL class for four straight periods quite frankly I am in awe of what they are able to accomplish. And every year you figure okay they will make it work, but I am standing here before you tonight to tell you that the numbers will not allow me to make it to work another year. Last week a family came to visit Southampton High School and they had heard such good things and we were talking about different programs. And one of the programs that their daughter was interested in we no longer have; it's gone. It's gone. It's gone due to the cuts. If you walk through the career and technical education department four classrooms are empty. These are vital to this county to train our kids. We need to be developing programs not wondering how in the world we are going to be able to keep the students we have. The Colby's, the Kristen's, the Jordan's, they are out here. They are dependent on you and you ask how we are going to deal with poverty. Education is how we are going to deal with poverty. Please approve the budget that has been prepared by Dr. Alvera Parrish. Thank you.

Chairman Jones asked if there was anyone else who wanted to speak before I close.

Mrs. Shelly McHenry addressed the Board. She stated that she is a parent and also an employee of Southampton Middle School. She said she didn't sign up to speak tonight because she knew she would start crying because she is so passionate about the kids. She stated that before they moved to Southampton County her kids went to private school. When they moved here and saw what we had to offer her kids went to public schools. She said her oldest son graduated in 2011 and her youngest will start kindergarten in 2015. So, she will have been a parent of Southampton County Public Schools for 23 years. She stated that as Allene Atkinson stated she is an advisor to the key

club. She stated that her favorite TV show is "Project Runway" with Tim Gund. She stated that Tim Gun says "make it work". She said that she gets up every morning to face a 14 hour day. She said that is a long day but you do it for the Colby's and the Jordan's, but our teachers are stretched thin. You are at the school for 14 hours a day; we teach them, we coach them, and then you go home and grade papers, and you come back the next day and do it again. We wouldn't be doing it if we didn't love it. She stated that her husband is a disabled, retired veteran and he is in his fourth year at Chowan and his soul dream is to become a teacher at Southampton High School and I want to see him reach that dream. I want to see him fulfill that dream. Come spend a day with me I would love to have you guys shadow me. Walking the halls is just a small snapshot of everything that the teachers are doing and maybe you will be much more supportive. Thank you.

Chairman Jones asked if there was anyone else.

Mrs. Karen Butts stated that she works with the career services program at Southampton High School. She stated that she was a little nervous, but something that Supervisor Updike brought up was pressing her to stand up and say something about. Unfortunately what you are saying is true as far as the 50% that are below the poverty line and on welfare and receiving food stamps and all the assistance, but I know that if there was a parent that could stand here and be a representative there would probably be a long line and they would probably all say the same thing. If I had a choice I would want that money back in education so that my child would not be the next generation below the poverty level. Thank you.

Chairman Jones asked if there was anyone else. There being no one he asked the Board members if they had anything.

Supervisor Porter thanked everyone for their comments. He said he knew they were all heart felt. He said he had a lot of discussions with a lot of you about this topic. This is the most gut wrenching thing that we as Supervisors go through. I know I have a very different perspective from most of the supervisors. I agree with a lot of facts and figures and people think there is simple a solution, but the bottom line is there is not. Yes, Mrs. Florence Reynolds we know you are leaning along land use. I think there is a misunderstanding as to what land use is. And, also it is not a solution because it takes six months to a year to change the land use taxes so it is not an option for us this year. If you want to propose a change in land use for next year, you will have to start the process now. He stated that education is near and dear to his heart. He said he grew up in a situation very similar to Dr. Alvera Parrish. He grew up in a family where his parents did not make a lot of money and they stressed education for all of us. I got where I was because of the values they placed in me and the opportunities I had in education. It is the key out of poverty. It is the key to success. It is the key to wealth. That is why it hurts me that we don't have more money to give to the schools. I want to make it better so that these children of the future will have a better education. Last year it hurt me to have to impose that \$200.00 waste fee on the people in the county. Because of that I gave my salary back to the county to try to mitigate some of the other expenses. This year it hurts me not to have more money to give to the school system. This year I am asking Mr. Michael Johnson to give my salary back to the school system to be used to support the classroom in some way. I'm issuing a challenge to give, to you, Mrs. Reynolds, you said you wanted to give something. Write a check to the school system. Write a check for the school system; you can do that. I'm writing a check for \$5,500.00. You don't have to write that much. But write a \$50.00 check, write a \$100.00 check. If enough people will write a \$100 check Dr. Alvera Parrish will be able to hire a teacher or at least a teacher's aide. If you aren't willing to stand up and contribute, please don't throw rocks. I don't want to throw rocks; I want to make things better. I think the way to make things better is to do what we can so we don't shoot ourselves in the foot by making rash decisions which causes problems in the future. It is our future that I am concerned about more than just one year. Yes, please take what you have, do the best that you can with it and it will make things better. I am working harder at this job, you can ask Mr. Michael Johnson, than I have worked at any job in my life to try to make life better for all of the county citizens. I am asking you to do what you can. You can write a check to the school system.

Chairman Jones called on Supervisor West.

Supervisor West said he didn't really have anything tonight. He stated that he was glad to hear from every person. He said it was important to do that and now they could go back to the Board

room and make a final decision.

Chairman Jones called on Supervisor Faison.

Supervisor Faison said he had heard everything that was said tonight. He stated that we go all year and don't hear anything from you. He stated that when we have our monthly meetings you are welcome to come. He stated that they are welcome to come. He asked them to come early so they can hear these things all during the year not just at budget time. He said he would love to see the school system come to the Board meetings. Hopefully things will be getting better in the future based on the decisions we have made in the past. Hopefully we will have entities come in that will make it easier on our taxes, but right now we are in a very difficult situation. Regardless of what we do we have to work through this together. No one has the perfect solution. I want to do as much as we can to support the school. I know we don't all feel the same way. I had five children to go through the school system and I was very pleased with it. We just don't have the revenue; and the revenue has to come from somewhere. If we approved this, the revenue would have to come from somewhere and the only other place to get it is taxes. And, as long as the majority of the Board doesn't want to raise taxes there is nothing else that we can do. But, I promise you we will do the best that we can for the schools.

Chairman Jones called on Supervisor Edwards.

Supervisor Edwards stated that since 2009 the State of Virginia has decreased the amount they give to the schools by 20% and Washington, D.C. has gone down 25% and it is awfully hard for us hold the line. You have got to realize that we are not the enemy. We are doing our best. The state has gone down 20% since 2009. They had given the schools 20 million and they are down to just a little over 15 this year. The Feds have gone down 25%. That is where you need to do your screaming and hollering, to the people in Richmond and the people in Washington. We are doing the best that we can for the public schools. We are giving you everything we have got.

Chairman Jones called on Supervisor Phillips.

Supervisor Phillips said he too would like to thank everybody for coming tonight. Rest assured that we do hear you, but we are tasked with presenting a balanced budget. We are trying to bring industry into this county. That was not our priority task when we had the paper mill. I believe now that we have opened that door. We have set a new tone and hopefully as Dr. Alvera Parrish mentioned we will see a brighter day. But, we have to have a balanced budget so we have to weight our opinions. The trash fee we had last year was difficult. People thought it didn't make sense or that we were nuts. We cannot continue to raise taxes; either the people who are moving to the county will not come here or the businesses that we want to come and to help carry this load and schools will not come either. He stated that he has a teacher in his immediate family and he has a grandson and I love this county. My family has been here for over 100 years. Everybody so appreciates what we have. If we tax too much we will lose it. It's just plain and simple. We have added school buses to the budget. We have plans for the future. Just like Supervisor Porter said this is a process that is difficult and I understand that. But, what we are doing is working and planning for the future. We just ask you to be understanding. When the teachers are sitting in their break room they are talking about the same thing as other county offices that we have had to cut. We have six vacancies and we have thirty some employees. The math just doesn't work. We have cut the county and not just the schools. We have maintained level funding. Just as Supervisor Edwards said we have I would say also that I gave my salary last year. I pay taxes just like everyone else. I pay taxes on my house just like everyone else does. I put a lot of time in this job, but I love the county. Again, I'm telling you all to do something on behalf of the county. Last year I put my salary in the general fund, but this year I'll put my salary towards the school budget. Therefore my time is donated plus the money that I would have made this year. And, I challenge you all to think what you can do for the county. You don't have to volunteer, but do something for the county. Just do something for the county and we will all be better off. Thank you.

Chairman Jones thanked everyone for coming. You have to think how well off we are. He said we could be like our neighbors. Look down the road. Southampton County is not the worst county in the State of Virginia. We have come a long, long way. So please help us out. Mrs. Reynolds don't throw rocks at us. Give us a chance. We have businesses coming in and we are

going to get some revenue from those businesses and when we do I guarantee you we will put it in the schools. If there is nothing else, we will have our next budget workshop Wednesday night.

Supervisor Updike said he wanted to say one more thing. He stated that Southampton County could send out a challenge letter to all the taxpayers asking for a contribution to any department that they want to make the contribution to. He stated that way every citizen could participate. I also gave my salary back and will put out the challenge to the School Board to do the same thing. So anybody who wants to make a contribution, I'm sure the county and the School Board will appreciate it.

Chairman Jones said if there is nothing else, we will meet again Wednesday night.

Supervisor West asked what time Wednesday night.

Chairman Jones stated Wednesday night at 6:30 PM.

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

Michael W. Johnson, Clerk

