

April 17, 2012

At a called meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 17th day of April, 2012; at 7:00 p.m., there were present:

Howard M. Campbell

Pattie Cooper-Jones

William G. Fore, Jr.

Don C. Gantt, Jr.

Robert M. Jones

Charles W. McKay

Howard F. Simpson

Jim R. Wilck

Also present: Sarah Elam Puckett, Assistant County Administrator; Dr. K. David Smith, Superintendent; Cindy Wahrman, Division Director of Finance.

Absent: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator.

Chairman Fore called the Special Meeting to order at 7:00 p.m., stating the purpose of the meeting was to hold a public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2013 County Budget and the Prince Edward County School Budget for 2012-2013.

Reverend Christopher Cunningham, Johns Memorial Episcopal Church, led the invocation.

In Re: Public Hearing – FY 13 County Budget

Chairman Fore announced this was the date and time scheduled for a public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2013 County Budget. Notice of this hearing was advertised according to law in the Friday, April 6, 2012 and the Friday, April 13, 2012 issues of THE FARMVILLE HERALD, a newspaper published in the County of Prince Edward.

Chairman Fore stated:

This is the date and time that has been advertised for the public hearing on the overall Prince Edward County Budget, to include the Prince Edward County Public Schools, for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2012 and ending June 30, 2013.

The Board of Supervisors has taken this opportunity to conduct a combined public hearing on the overall county budget, county tax rates, and the school budget. The Board believes this consolidated public hearing is good for the citizens, so that you, the citizens, can correlate the funding for the schools with the overall county budget and the setting of the tax rates.

The proposed budget, as advertised, includes the following highlights:

- The Board is proposing no increase in county tax rates.*
- The County anticipates an increase over last year in local tax revenues of approximately \$454,000, which is mainly due to an increase in the value and number of motor vehicles in the County.*
- A 3.6% cost of living increase is proposed for County employees, the same as provided to Social Security recipients in January. This is the first salary increase that county employees have received since 2007.*
- Level or decreased funding is proposed in the operational budgets of most County departments, Constitutional Offices, and County Emergency Services Agencies.*
- The proposed budget includes \$8,106,652 of local funds for the Prince Edward County Public Schools. While this is the same dollar amount as the current budget, it represents an increase of \$416,000 in available operating funds, due to a decrease in debt service and the Board of Supervisors agreeing to allow the Schools to keep the funding that was provided for a one-time employee bonus. In order to balance the FY 13 County budget, this \$416,000 increase in operating funds for the schools will have to come from the General Fund Balance in order to balance the budget.*

Therefore, the budget, as advertised, is balanced. If the citizens of Prince Edward County ask the Board to increase expenditures in this proposed budget it will require additional resources, which will mean a tax increase or cuts to other existing programs and services.

Before I open the floor for citizen comments, let me say that this year's budget process has been extremely complicated due to the failure of the Virginia General Assembly to adopt a state budget in a timely fashion. I know many of you are here to talk about funding for the Prince Edward County Public Schools.

As I said earlier, the County of Prince Edward has not and is not cutting funding for our schools. In fact, the County is providing an additional \$416,000 to the schools. Any shortfall that the schools are anticipating is due to the state's, not the county's failure to adequately fund public education.

I urge each of you to contact Senator Garret and Delegate Edmunds to express your concern and, frankly, your outrage.

I will now open the floor for public comment. I will start with the names that are on the sign-in sheet. To give everyone an opportunity to speak, I ask that you limit your comments to three minutes.

If someone speaking before you has voiced your opinion, you may simply state that you agree with the previous speaker. Please come forward and state your name and the district in which you reside.

Chairman Fore opened the public hearing.

Barbara Arieti, Hampden District, expressed her support for a tax increase to support the School Budget in order to make up the funding cuts from the state.

Teri Kidd, Farmville District, and **Diane Gilliam**, Buffalo District, expressed their concern regarding the state cuts in funding and requested the Board of Supervisors take every available means to make up the difference.

Patty Pugh, Farmville District, spoke on the benefits of the Farmville-Prince Edward Library and requested additional support from the Board of Supervisors.

Martha Dorrill expressed her support of higher taxes in order to fund the Prince Edward County Schools.

Mary Reed, Lockett District, voiced her displeasure at the cuts in the School Budget and stated she is willing to pay more taxes to support the schools.

Heather Edwards, Farmville District, expressed her support for a tax increase in support of the schools to keep programs from being cut from the curriculum.

Christopher T. Cunningham, Farmville District, urged the Supervisors to look at increasing taxes to cover the \$1.8 million in eliminated Tier I cuts the Board is proposing.

Lowell T. Frye, Farmville District, requested the Board of Supervisors increase the funding to the schools and the library; he stated once the General Assembly does re-fund the schools, taxes could be rolled back.

Carolyn DeWolfe, Hampden District, stated the schools need to be funded adequately and asked the Board to do what needs to be done, even if that means increasing taxes.

Liz Magill, Farmville District, stated she supports a tax increase and the students deserve whatever it takes to keep the schools running and keep the programs going.

Samuel Trent expressed his concern for funding the road at the school complex but cutting funding to the schools.

Beulah Womack expressed her support for the Board to do whatever it takes to fund the schools.

There being no one further wishing to speak, Chairman Fore closed the public hearing.

Chairman Fore then stated:

It is important for all of the citizens of Prince Edward County to realize that this Board annually faces the difficult task of approving a budget that will meet the needs of our County and also maintain our financial stability.

We spend countless hours scrutinizing every line item in this budget and I can assure you that the Board and staff can and will account for every dollar collected and spent.

On behalf of the Board, I wish to thank all of you for coming out tonight to show your interest in the County's budget process. I assure you that your comments will be given serious consideration.

The Board will not take action on the budget tonight. The Board still has work to do on the County Budget and will consider the adoption of the School Budget and the overall County Budget at its meeting on Thursday, April 26th, which begins at 3:00 in the afternoon.

Thank you, again.

In Re: School Board Appointments

Chairman Fore stated the District 301 Citizen Committee presented Mrs. Harriett Fentress and Dr. Timothy Corbett as nominees for the Prince Edward County School Board.

Supervisor Simpson made a motion to authorize advertisement of a public hearing on the candidates from District 301 and District 501 for Prince Edward County School Board to be held Tuesday, May 8, 2012; the motion carried:

Aye:	Howard M. Campbell Pattie Cooper-Jones William G. Fore, Jr. Don C. Gantt, Jr. Robert M. Jones Charles W. McKay Howard F. Simpson Jim R. Wilck	Nay: None
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Supervisor Jones stated Prince Edward County does value education and reminded the citizens the cuts are in state funding. He reviewed the local expenditures per student from the surrounding counties:

Prince Edward:	\$3,251
Cumberland:	\$3,071
Buckingham:	\$2,849
Amelia:	\$2,573
Charlotte:	\$2,327
Lunenburg:	\$2,308
Appomattox:	\$2,133
Nottoway:	\$1,814

On motion of Supervisor McKay and adopted by the following vote:

Aye:	Howard M. Campbell Pattie Cooper-Jones William G. Fore, Jr. Don C. Gantt, Jr. Robert M. Jones Charles W. McKay Howard F. Simpson Jim R. Wilck	Nay: None
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the meeting was recessed at 7:48 p.m. until Tuesday, April 24, 2012 at 3:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room.