

April 21, 2009

At a reconvened meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday the 21st day of April, 2009; at 7:00 p.m., there were present:

William G. Fore, Jr.

Sally W. Gilfillan

Robert M. Jones

Charles W. McKay

James C. Moore

Howard F. Simpson

Lacy B. Ward

Mattie P. Wiley

Also present: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator; and Jonathan Pickett, Director of Planning and Community Development.

Chairman Fore called the meeting to order, stating that this is the date and time that has been advertised for the public hearing on the combined Prince Edward County Budget, to include the Prince Edward County Public Schools, for the fiscal year commencing July 1, 2009 and ending June 30, 2010.

“The Board has taken this opportunity to conduct a combined public hearing on both the overall county budget and tax rates, and the school budget. We believe this consolidated public hearing is a good idea 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:

- A decrease of \$822,000 in revenues in the County General Fund, mainly attributed to an anticipated decrease of approximately \$450,000 of personal property tax collections.
- Decreased funding in the operating budgets of most County departments and Constitutional Offices;
- No pay raises for County employees;
- Reduced operating hours of the solid waste convenience centers;

- A reduction of \$100,000 in the General Fund transfer to the Schools, which is a decrease of 1.25% from last year and represents only 36/100 of one percent of the entire school budget;
- Suspension of the \$15,000 contribution to the volunteer fire departments for equipment until the Board learns the results of a firefighter grant application;
- New annual debt service of approximately \$250,000 for the construction of the library;
- Minimal capital expenditures; and
- Miscellaneous reductions of various annual donations to community organizations.

In recognition of the economic climate, no tax rate increases are proposed. Holding the Personal Property Tax Rate steady coupled with the large decreases in the assessed values of automobiles and trucks, some greater than 40%, means that many of our citizens will see an actual reduction in their tax bills.

The budget, as advertised, is balanced. If the citizens of Prince Edward County ask the Board to increase expenditures in this proposed budget, that will require additional resources, which means either an increase in taxes or a further draw down of the fund balances.

I will now open the floor for public comment. Let me 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 then opened the public hearing.

Sheriff Harris, Prospect District, said he spoke with the Personnel Committee regarding the funding for overtime in the Sheriff’s Department. He asked to reserve the right to ask questions at a later date.

Sgt. R. S. Raybold said Sheriff Harris previously addressed the overtime funding; he asked the Board to revisit the DUI Reimbursement Ordinance as it has not been implemented and no fees are being recovered. He asked that this ordinance be implemented.

Chief Timothy M. McKay said, on behalf of the Fire Department, nearly 200 men and women place their security and safety above their own, regularly, and without compensation. He said the funding provided by the County is not in personnel costs but for operating costs. He said the Fire Department asked

for an increase a few years ago, but didn't request an increase this year due to the economic climate and was surprised that the funding to the departments was cut by 20%. He said the reduction in funds is for apparatus replacement; he added all fire departments except one have financial obligations to apparatus payments, which were taken responsibly, using contract and bid processes to get best-value equipment. Chief McKay said on January 1st, 2010, the EPA will add requirements that will cause diesel motors to increase in cost between \$10-15,000. He added the NFPA recommends replacement of apparatus at about 20 years old; the Rice and Farmville Volunteer Fire Departments have 29-year old brush trucks and Darlington Heights has a 25-year old brush truck and was planning to replace it this year.

Chief McKay said the cut in funding affects their financial obligations, giving an example of the Farmville Fire Department's payment of \$37,000 per year for 11 years still owed on the apparatus purchased previously. He said the ability to purchase necessary turnout gear, air packs, hoses, and things that affect operations and firefighter safety is diminished, compromising safety and reliability of the equipment. He said time which must be spent fundraising and not receiving training is detrimental to the safety of the citizens, and asked that the funding be included in the County budget.

Jeff Hudgins, Lockett District, said one of the key variables considered by businesses as they look to a locality in which to come to is the support and strength of the education system. He said he is concerned that the school budget may not be fully-funded, as it could be sending the wrong message to any potential businesses that are interested in relocating here. He said it could mean the loss of potential jobs and potential revenue that would more than make up for the cut from the School Budget. He asked the Board to fully fund the Prince Edward County School budget.

Teri Kidd, Farmville District, said the Board was presented a [school] budget that had already been cut, and asked that the Board support the school budget and fund it in full as presented.

Kenneth Jackson, Leigh District, questioned the Board about the credit of over \$600,000 for water and sewer, and said health, education and welfare is necessary but saw budget cuts. He said the textbooks need to be replaced to prepare the children for the future. He said the fire departments and the Sheriff's department should be fully funded as well; public safety shouldn't have to wait on grants.

Sharon Dotson, Leigh District, said the Sandy River Reservoir, the landfill, and water utilities don't affect the County immediately. She said the Board should look to make cuts on things that are not

necessary and have shown no income to the County, such as the water utility system, the future plans for the Industrial Development Authority, and moving a road.

Cornell Walker, Prospect District, commended the Board on the vision for the infrastructure; he said it must be planned carefully for the future. He said there was a lot of discussion about the school budget and the fire departments, but not the Sheriff's department. He said given the current economic conditions, the crime rate will increase, and the Sheriff's department should be fully funded or increased to keep enough deputies on duty for the citizen's safety. He added the Sheriff's department does a tremendous job.

Larry Jackson, Leigh District, expressed his concern about the growth of the county. He said the Board has made bad decisions towards profit, such as the proposed "land deal" for The Manor Conference Center. He said the sale of the land, going into debt to help develop it, and the tax incentives provided no profit to the County. He said the Sandy River Reservoir was poorly planned in construction, was built on a dump site, and potential loss of millions to fix means no profit. He said in addition, the County wants to spend millions on infrastructure for potential customers, providing no profit.

There being no one else wishing to speak, the public hearing was closed.

Chairman Fore said, "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 tonight and will consider the adoption of the School Budget and County Budget at its 5:00 meeting on April 28, 2009."

Chairman Fore said, "Board members, let me have your attention a minute. I kept you here because of the hub-bub, and I apologize, but it was only a few minutes. Tomorrow, at 11:00 a.m., we will assemble out at Settle Hall at Hampden-Sydney, and so we will recess this meeting to be continued out at Hampden-Sydney. But I wanted to tell you that tomorrow when we meet at Hampden-Sydney, we're going

to be in Closed Session. There are going to be several groups there who will also be in Closed Session; so what we will do is we will congregate somewhere, in the hall or whatever, and go into Closed Session, and then go in – go into the luncheon and the business to take place. So, I just wanted you to be aware of that so when I whistle for you out there tomorrow, that we can get together for two minutes and call ourselves to order. ...We will reassemble and go through the normal process to unwind a Closed Session.”

Supervisor Jones and Supervisor Moore advised the Board they are unable to attend. Chairman Fore said no decision will be made.

On motion of Mr. Moore and adopted by the following vote:

Aye:	William G. Fore, Jr.	Nay: None
	Sally W. Gilfillan	
	Robert M. Jones	
	Charles W. McKay	
	James C. Moore	
	Howard F. Simpson	
	Lacy B. Ward	
	Mattie P. Wiley	

the meeting was recessed at 7:48 p.m., and will reconvene at 11:00 a.m., Wednesday, April 22, 2009, at Settle Hall, Hampden-Sydney College.