

April 22, 2013

At a special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 22nd day of April, 2013; 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: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator; and Sarah Elam Puckett, Assistant County Administrator.

Chairman Fore called the reconvened meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

In Re: Public Hearing – FY 14 County Budget

Chairman Fore announced this was the date and time scheduled for a public hearing on the Fiscal Year 2014 County Budget. Notice of this hearing was advertised according to law in the Friday, April 12, 2013 and the Friday, April 19, 2013 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, 2013 and ending June 30, 2014.

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.*

- *Compared to the starting budget for last year the County anticipates an increase in local tax revenues of approximately \$200,000, slightly more than 1%.*
- *A 2% salary increase is proposed for County employees.*
- *Level or decreased funding is proposed in the operational budgets of most County departments, Constitutional Offices, and County Emergency Service Agencies.*
- *The proposed budget includes \$8,106,652 of local funds for the Prince Edward County Public Schools. But during previous budget work sessions it appears there is strong support among the Board to provide the schools an additional \$240,148. This will allow the Schools to provide a 2% salary increase to all of their employees.*
- *For the first time Prince Edward has to budget for the housing of Prince Edward County prisoners in the Piedmont Regional Jail. This anticipated amount is \$700,000 and is the major challenge in this year's budget.*
- *\$1,150,500 is budgeted for the opening of a new cell and the closing of another at the Prince Edward County landfill.*

There has been much discussion in the community concerning the new expense connected to the Jail. Many of our citizens think the loss of the immigrant detainees and the resulting loss of revenues for housing those detainees is the cause of the problem. That is not true. To absorb that loss of revenue the Jail reduced expenditures by reducing its work force and mothballing facilities that were no longer needed due to the decrease in the prisoner population. In addition the Jail developed new contracts bringing in new sources of revenues.

The true culprit in the increase in the expense for the Jail is the loss of revenues from the state and the loss of inmates from Dinwiddie and Mecklenburg Counties when they opened their own regional Jail. Over the last four years the state has reduced the amount it provides the Jail for each prisoner day for out-of-compliance prisoners from \$28 to \$12 and also reduced the amount provided for local prisoners from \$8 to \$4 per day. This reduction equates to a loss of state funding of more than \$1 million annually. When Dinwiddie and Mecklenburg opened their own regional Jail the result was a loss of over \$900,000. Together that has caused a loss in revenue of approximately \$2 million. No agency can absorb that kind of funding reduction; therefore, Prince Edward County is projecting a new expenditure of \$700,000 for the new fiscal year.

The budget, as advertised, is balanced. If the citizens of Prince Edward County as 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, and could require changing the tax rates and re-advertising the budget for another public hearing.

As I said earlier, the County of Prince Edward has not and is not cutting funding for our schools. Any shortfall that the schools are anticipating is due to the state, not the County's failure to adequately fund public education.

The actions taken by the General Assembly in regard to the Schools and the Jail are only two of a host of actions that have resulted in either lower revenue to local governments or mandated cost increases. I urge each of you to contact Senator Garret and Delegate Edmunds to express your concern and, frankly, your outrage over actions taken by the General Assembly over the last few years to decrease funding to local governments and to move costs from the state to local governments.

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.

Andrew Goss, Assistant Chief of the Farmville Volunteer Fire Department, requested a 10% increase in funding due to the increase in costs incurred for diesel and steel. He stated the EPA requirements call for truck replacement when they are 20 years old. A new ladder truck costs over \$1 million; truck costs increased to \$625,000. New updated equipment is also required. Major Goss stated volunteers undergo 156 hours of training; old gear is given to the members in training.

Dallas Tinsley, Prince Edward Firefighters Association, thanked the Board for support and requested the Board increase their donation to the fire departments.

Peggy Epperson, Farmville-Prince Edward Community Library, thanked the Board for its support and reported 284 visitors had made use of the library by 5:00 p.m. that day.

Dr. K. David Smith, Prince Edward County School Superintendent, thanked the Board for the support past and promised, and reported that the schools hosted a review team from the Advanced Ed National Level Accrediting Agency, formerly known as "SACS," the Regional Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, which recommended the Prince Edward County schools be accredited. Final word will be in June 2013; more detailed information will be forthcoming.

Dave Landrum, Cumberland County, thanked the Board for its support of the Farmville Prince Edward Community Library. He stated the library is vastly improved; because both sons use the internet at the library for homework and his wife attends online classes, they are grateful for the evening hours.

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

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

Aye:	Howard M. Campbell	Nay: None
	Pattie Cooper-Jones	
	William G. Fore, Jr.	
	Don C. Gantt, Jr.	
	Robert M. Jones	
	Charles W. McKay	
	Howard F. Simpson	
	Jim R. Wilck	

the meeting was recessed at 7:25 p.m. until Tuesday, April 30, 2013 at 3:00 p.m.