

March 31, 2015

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 31<sup>st</sup> day of March, 2015, at 5:00 p.m., there were present:

Pattie Cooper-Jones

Calvin L. Gray

Robert M. Jones

Charles W. McKay

Howard F. Simpson

C. Robert Timmons, Jr.

Jerry R. Townsend

Jim R. Wilck

Also present: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator; Dr. K. David Smith, Superintendent of Prince Edward County Schools; Cindy Wahrman, Division Director of Finance; and School Board members.

Chairman Simpson called the meeting to order as a reconvened meeting.

In Re: Presentation of the Requested School Budget

Dr. K. David Smith, Superintendent, reviewed information regarding the requested school budget; the items on the priority list include a salary increase, salary schedule adjustment, purchase of three replacement buses, installation of a fourth camera on all school buses, installation of GPS on all school buses, greenhouse replacement at the Career Technical Center, and nine Elementary kindergarten classroom aides.

Dr. Smith reviewed the Operating Fund Revenues and Expenditure Projections. He stated the State Funds are projected to decrease by \$556,941 and Federal Funds are projected to remain level. An increase of \$35,771 in Local Funds would be required to maintain level funding. Debt service will decrease \$10,049. Dr. Smith stated the proposed total decrease in operating expenditures is \$531,219. Staffing and fringe benefits will decrease by \$302,300, and non-personnel costs will decrease by \$228,919 which is directly related to the reduction of state funds for purchased services and materials.

Dr. Smith stated the Budget Constants include online courses from Virtual Virginia which are offered during the school day and provide advanced placement classes. Hybrid courses are offered with Longwood University; 15 students per year may continue taking classes at Hampden-Sydney College, tuition free, as seats are available. He said Advanced Placement and Dual Enrollment classes continue at the high school. The Industrial Certification Program prepares students for the local workforce; the program will continue to expand at the Career and Technical Center. Teacher training and student support programs will continue. He added maintaining a safe and secure learning environment is vital.

Dr. Smith stated State Funds and State Sales Tax comprise 56% of the Operating Budget. The Federal Funds are approximately 7.3%, and Local Funds are approximately 32%. He stated that approximately 80% of the budget is personnel costs.

Dr. Smith stated the Food Service Program is self-sustaining. Efforts are being made to increase participation in the breakfast, lunch, and summer lunch programs.

Dr. Smith reviewed the decreases in State Funding and the State Basic Aid per pupil; they are ADM based. He stated State Grant Revenue shows a decrease due to the Security Equipment Grant being expended; it was a one-year grant. The school may reapply but it may receive a lower priority due to having received it last year.

Dr. Smith then stated the Debt Service is declining and reviewed the schedule of repayments. He reviewed the Capital Improvement Plan and stated it is up to date, based on the performance contracting project and its scope of work, the School Board will make adjustments following approval for the renovation project. He then stated due to the mileage and age of the school buses, some of the buses that are not safe need to be replaced. Other options for that replacement are being reviewed.

Supervisor Gray asked if the salary tier schedule is comparable to other localities. Dr. Smith said in the surrounding counties, beginning teacher salaries are comparable, but not in the metropolitan areas. They are requesting to move from a three-tier schedule to a two-tier schedule; he explained the benefit of providing incentive in the salary scale. One of the changes that helps add importance to rely on that scale is the change in the continuing contract designation in the Law of Virginia that moves it from three years to five years; when the plan was put in place, a teacher had to complete three years satisfactorily to be

awarded the continuing contract status and they must now complete five years satisfactorily. There is a cost which is dependent on funding.

Supervisor Wilck asked how the students are selected to go to summer school. Dr. Smith stated they encourage those scoring the lowest levels on the SOLs but any can attend. Most are not offering repeat classes at the high school level; remedial classes are offered for the elementary students.

Supervisor Wilck then asked the attendance rate. Dr. Smith said it is usually 50% and that 50%-75% is the goal.

Supervisor Cooper-Jones questioned the addition of aides for the kindergarten classes. Dr. Smith stated funding does not appear possible; he stated the schools have been reviewing the Federal Funding programs to find a way to transfer the necessary funds for the additional aides.

Supervisor Cooper-Jones expressed her concern for the lack of aides in the kindergarten. She stated the foundation of the student's education begins in the lower grades and is built upon. Supervisor Gray agreed; he stated the teacher to student ratio is disturbing and if the goal is to better the school system, efficient teachers cannot be cut if a better result is required.

Supervisor Wilck asked how many students will be recommended for summer school this year. Dr. Smith stated approximately 250 are going to be recommended to attend summer school.

Supervisor Townsend stated he is in agreement with Supervisors Cooper-Jones and Gray. He said he spoke with an instructor that stated there is a need for assistance in the classroom. Supervisor Townsend stated the foundation is in that grade level.

Supervisor Timmons questioned current class sizes. Dr. Smith stated approximately the ratio in the high school is 10 students to one teacher; in middle school, it is approximately 18 or 19 students to one teacher; and in elementary school, it is approximately 18 to 19 students to one teacher. Discussion followed on the number of para-professionals (aides) and the ratio with 2,035 students, 181 teachers and 31 para-professionals. Supervisor Timmons requested specific information regarding those numbers.

Supervisor Timmons also questioned the savings from the retirement of teachers and hiring of new teachers. Dr. Smith said based on retirees over the past four years, the average savings was \$85,400 per year, but it varied from \$34,000 to \$155,000. He said there is no pattern or way to predict the savings. Discussion followed.

Mr. Bartlett questioned the reduction in the Operating Fund Expenditure Projection regarding staffing and fringe benefits. Dr. Smith stated a reduction of teachers and aides is projected.

Mr. Bartlett then asked if that is part of savings from the retirees. Dr. Smith stated the staff members that have left are from all ages and experience levels. Not all positions are replaced. As there is movement at the end of the school year, there is a need to re-balance teachers, numbers and specific certifications; because of certification requirements, all teachers are not interchangeable. The schools consistently try to hire the highest qualified person; sometimes the replacement staff person is more expensive.

Mr. Bartlett then asked about the number of contractual employees. Dr. Smith said part of the numbers are because of program improvement; Special Education rate was at 23%, and because of the improved program and proper identification of the need and not misidentified as a behavior problem, the Special Education rate dropped to 12%, which is equal with the State average. He said many had teachers with just one or two students, and as the Special Education numbers dropped, those teachers were “dropped off” as well. Discussion followed.

Chairman Simpson declared a ten minute break.

Chairman Simpson called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Bartlett reviewed documents indicating the Actual Required Local Effort (RLE) for the Standards of Quality Compared to Actual Local Expenditures for Operations; the State has an amount based on the composite index of what the local effort is required to achieve the standards of quality for each local district in the state. Prince Edward County’s is approximately \$4.2 million; the actual expenditure by the County is approximately \$8.3 million, which is 95.62% above the RLE. He stated historically, Prince Edward County provides more than necessary. Mr. Bartlett then reviewed the School Funding History – Operations and FY13 Per Pupil Expenditures for Operations.

Mr. Bartlett reminded the Board of several upcoming meetings and events.

On motion of Supervisor Timmons, seconded by Supervisor Cooper-Jones, and adopted by the following vote:

Aye: Pattie Cooper-Jones  
Calvin L. Gray  
Robert M. Jones  
Charles W. McKay  
Howard F. Simpson  
C. Robert Timmons, Jr.  
Jerry R. Townsend  
Jim R. Wilck

Nay: None

the meeting was recessed at 6:04 p.m. until 2:00 p.m. on Tuesday, April 7, 2015, for a budget work session.