

April 13, 2021

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 13th day of April, 2021; at 5:30 p.m., there were present:

Beverly M. Booth

Pattie Cooper-Jones

J. David Emert

Llew W. Gilliam, Jr

Robert M. Jones

Odessa H. Pride

Jerry R. Townsend

James R. Wilck

Also present: Douglas P. Stanley, County Administrator; Crystal Baker, Accounts Payable; Cheryl Stimpson, Human Resources.

Chairman Emert called the reconvened meeting to order.

Chairman Emert stated:

Due to the COVID-19 Emergency, the Board of Supervisors is operating pursuant to and in compliance with its "EMERGENCY ORDINANCE TO EFFECTUATE TEMPORARY CHANGES IN CERTAIN DEADLINES AND TO MODIFY PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH PANDEMIC DISASTER." This meeting is closed to in-person participation by the General Public, but citizens may listen to the meeting by calling 1-844-890-7777, Access Code: 390313.

In Re: Budget Work Session

Mr. Douglas P. Stanley, County Administrator, stated a public hearing will be held at 7:00 p.m. on the Real Estate Tax Rate, EMS Levy and Poplar Hill CDA Levy, and one at 7:30 p.m. on the budget and the rest of the tax rates; these must be separate. He said a meeting for the consideration of the budget will be held April 27. Mr. Stanley stated there are items to revisit to discuss the an adjusted or a full amount.

Chairman Emert stated Lisa Tharpe is not eligible to be re-appointed to the SVCC board; that position has a number of qualifications that applicants must meet. Mr. Stanley said Mrs. Puckett has advertised for the positions that will be expiring.

Mr. Stanley led a discussion of the donations to the various outside agencies. The Board concurred on the following:

Special Olympics	\$ 1,000
Jolly Glee	\$ 2,500
SVCC	\$ 8,797
Madeline House	\$ 4,800
Downtown Farmville	\$ 8,000
Piedmont Senior Resources	\$ 7,256
Meals on Wheels	\$ 5,000
FAB	\$ 5,000

Following some discussion, Supervisor Townsend made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Cooper-Jones to provide \$1,350 to Virginia Legal Aid; the motion carried:

Aye:	Beverly M. Booth	Nay:	None
	Pattie Cooper-Jones		
	J. David Emert		
	Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.		
	Robert M. Jones		
	Odessa H. Pride		
	Jerry R. Townsend		
	James R. Wilck		

Mr. Stanley said Crossroads Community Service Board is the last organization to discuss. He said \$60,000 in the proposed budget but based on feedback, there are questions about what their future plans are. He said the appropriations can be adjusted; the Board may wish to address the concerns before committing to that funding.

Chairman Emert stated he has received many emails from people; one person there for more than 23 years said that there were 20 people or more that would be glad to go to court if needed regarding things that were occurring. He said some were legal but not ethical, and a lot did not follow their handbook. He said one gentleman sent a 13-plus page email, and not asking for his job back, but said there is a serious problem with the organization. He said this gentleman sent information regarding Dr. Baker's previous employer who let her go after a few months for doing very much the same thing that is happening here; he

said the State Mental Health Board recommended her not be hired here. Chairman Emert said the Long-Term Care administrator who was there for 23 years was let go through “reduction in staff”; within a few days, hired someone else that just received their license, who was also the daughter of someone on the board. He said if she as administrator doesn’t, he wants to know who enforces the Bylaws. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Townsend asked if the Bylaws allow the Executive Director to make those decisions. Chairman Emert said that according to the State Code, she could not, and it would have to go to the board.

Mr. Stanley said the job of the Board is to set the vision and policy, adds programs and policies. He said typically the County Administrator must follow a personnel policy which gives protections to employees. He said if there is an issue with an employee, he would sit down and let them respond to it before any decision was made to terminate that employee or not. He said, in the case of Crossroads, cutting housing and programs are Board-level decisions. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Pride said that according to a letter to the News Media Editor, Dr. Baker stated she was not asked to attend the April 7 [2021] meeting, and stated the County’s funding of Crossroads is required by the Code of Virginia. Supervisor Pride said there are seven districts, and Prince Edward County is part of the Crossroads board; she said financially, Prince Edward County has to give funding according to Dr. Baker, and asked if the County can determine the amount of money provided. Chairman Emert said he spoke with two people serving on the board and they have never seen a state code section requiring a county to give [funding] to a state agency. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Pride asked about the citizens’ care if Prince Edward County does not provide funding. Chairman Emert said he was told their budget is about \$27 million; he said the funding provided by Prince Edward County is miniscule in comparison. He added that prior to appropriating funding, answers are needed, and then discuss the issues with all other board members in all counties regarding the bylaws changes that would circumvent why the bylaws are there in the first place.

Supervisor Gilliam said Dr. Baker should present this code section. He added an auditor should review this issue.

Mr. Stanley said he received a letter stating that in 2015, an alleged conflict of interest and the use of individuals receiving money from Crossroads CSB and staff to pick up hay at Dr. Baker’s farm. In interviews conducted, it was found that Crossroads CSB, who runs its employment program through an LLC

as Commercial Heavy Cleaning, this company is run by the CSB and organizes and manages the employment work done by individuals receiving services from the CSB. A CSB staff member is assigned to each job to oversee the completion of the work. The particular job in question has found that Dr. Baker had asked staff at Commercial Heavy Cleaning to pick up the hay at her farm. Staff reported that they did not feel coerced into accepting this assignment, and Dr. Baker was invoiced after completion of the work. A contract was not signed as is normally not done for small jobs; there is no indication that a specific statute was violated. The recommendation from the auditor was that while there was no statutes or regulations violated, it created the potential for appearance of impropriety. It was recommended the Board develop a Code of Ethics and Conflict of Interest Policies that any person in a governance, executor or senior management role discontinue the practice of having the CSB's agencies work for them.

Chairman Emert said since then, that audit firm was let go. He said they will need to appoint someone to the board and will need to send a plan to the state; since 2015, this has been an ongoing issue.

Mr. Stanley suggested leaving Crossroad's contribution in the budget; final authorization can come later.

Supervisor Wilck questioned the 5% increase in pay for the Board members. Mr. Stanley said that in order to give a raise for the Board of Supervisors, by July 1, the Board must pass a resolution to provide a 5% increase which will take effect January 1. In the past, the Board was included in the COLA but the Code requires an extra step to pass a resolution to grant a Cost of Living Increase with the other staff members, and to take effect January 1. He said while this is an extra step, he needs direction from the Board to do that.

Supervisor Gilliam stated he is not [serving on the Board] for the money, he doesn't want more.

Supervisor Townsend asked what happened to aligning with the Town on the health insurance. Supervisor Jones said the Board of Supervisors is way above [the others]. Chairman Emert said the Board cannot align itself with the Town as it completely different. Discussion followed.

Mr. Stanley said that "prior to July 1 of the year in which members of the Board are to be elected, or if the Board is staggered, at least 40%, the current board, by recorded vote of a majority present, shall set a maximum annual compensation which will become effective January 1 of the next year." He said the Board can set the rate at its current annual compensation plus 5%; he said this will be done through the Consent Agenda on the June agenda.

Chairman Emert stated information was sent out regarding two convenience sites; he said it is more than two sites.

Mr. Stanley said there have been a lot more complaints regarding litter and illegal dumping; he said he and Mr. Robert Love are following up on those two incidents. He said some is from people tossing stuff from their cars or falling off trash trucks, but some others involve properties such as the burned out house on Tuggle Road. Mr. Stanley asked the Board members to report it to himself or Mr. Love if they see something so it can be addressed. Mr. Stanley added Piedmont Court Services is having offenders provide trash pickup as community service. He said they are proposing litter crews from the Piedmont Regional Jail or private contractors.

Chairman Emert then said he received an email regarding the issue with Farm Use trucks, and did not think they can be stopped as a primary offense but after some research, it is. He said a driver has to be able to prove that 51% of your income comes from farming or agriculture and that the vehicle is insured. He added that there are State Codes that must be followed as well. Discussion followed.

Mr. Stanley said staff will make those corrections to the budget and will be ready for next Tuesday's public hearing.

Chairman Emert said PEVRS did not realize that they were going to get a certain amount for the roof repair, so part of their request was reduced to begin with. He said they asked about Four For Life, which is a pass-through.

Mrs. Crystal Baker, Accounts Payable, stated it is her understanding that that has not yet been received. Chairman Emert said when it is received, notice must be sent.

Chairman Emert declared the meeting in recess at 6:32 p.m. until Tuesday, April 13, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room.