

April 20, 2021

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 20th day of April, 2021; at 7:00 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.

Chairman Emert called the reconvened meeting to order.

Mr. Douglas Stanley, County Administrator, stated two public hearings would be held, first on the tax levies and then another on the County and School budgets. He said the state code dictates the advertisement is for informational purposes; a full copy of the budget and a comparison of the FY21 and FY22 budgets are available for public review on the County's website.

Mr. Stanley said the Board would hold the Public Hearings, at 7:00 p.m. for the proposed Real Estate, EMS Tax Levy and Poplar Hill Tax Levy, being held separately pursuant to Section 58.1-3321 of the Code of Virginia from the public hearing at 7:30 p.m. on the proposed FY 21-22 County and School budgets and other tax rates. He said following the public hearings, the Board must wait seven (7) days prior to adoption of the budgets. Mr. Stanley said the Board and staff held seven meetings specifically on the budget; the advertisement for the public hearings was published in the April 9, 2021 and April 16, 2021 editions of The Farmville Herald.

Mr. Stanley said the total budget is showing an increase of 7.98%, going from the current budget of \$58,735,393 to \$63,426,043, an increase of \$4,690,650.

Local revenue is showing an increase from \$19,286,000 to \$21,830,529, an increase of \$2,828,443. He said a significant portion of that increase is due to the proposed real estate tax increase and natural estimated increase in personal property tax collections. He said also showing a moderate increase in state revenue from \$4,480,485 to \$4,615,884, an increase of 135,399, which represents a 3.02% increase.

The proposed budget includes an across-the-board 5.00% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for all employees. The General Assembly approved a 5% increase for Comp Board funded positions, starting July 1. He said several positions in the Sheriff's office will add a full-time Court Security position, with the increased demands of COVID-19 and security at the door. Also included is a full-time / part-time position of Receptionist in the Administration office; additional funding for other departments include Elections Officials, increase of \$28,860, Sheriff's Office overtime, an increase of \$34,000; the Sheriff's Office Courts, Part-Time, an increase of \$25,494; and PEVRS, an increase of \$12,000.

Mr. Stanley then reviewed funding changes to the Cannery, Planning & Zoning, Reassessment, General Properties, Tourism and the Contingency fund.

Supervisor Townsend left the meeting at this time.

Mr. Stanley discussed projects in line for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). He said the Planning Commission is in the process of preparing the CIP for presentation to the Board for public hearing this fall; currently there is \$1.4 million included in the draft budget. He said potential projects include:

- Sandy River Reservoir - \$185,000 has been budgeted for engineering for the Sandy River Reservoir up to date with the withdrawal permit; he said the permit renewal would allow the County to construct and operate a long planned water supply system to Prince Edward County and neighboring areas in support of economic development efforts.
- Elementary School – he presented photos taken during a recent tour; multiple locations where the roof is leaking, other issues such as mold and floor tile.
- Convenience Sites – need updated amenities and parking access.
- PEVRS Building – the current location has a leaky roof over the apparatus section of the building and the building may not be in the right location from the standpoint of providing coverage to the entire county.
- Animal Shelter – the current building was constructed in 1970s and is in need of replacement.
- Emergency Radio System – Communication system has holes within the County, have contacted Motorola for recommendations.
- Landfill Compactor – these range from \$800,000 to \$850,000.

- Courthouse Chiller – the one currently in use is 25 years old and parts are no longer available; he said the Courthouse is spending \$10,000 a month in electricity
- Yak Attack Roof – the roof is leaking; three quotes have been received.
- Document Management System – Information can be scanned, organized and more easily found.
- Cannery Boiler – Current boiler manufactured in 1992 and installed 20 years ago; it is starting to fail.
- Wayfinding Signage System – used to direct tourists to various locations, can be paid for with the lodging tax
- Courthouse Phone System – the one currently in use is over 15 years old, parts are unavailable.

Mr. Stanley said that with the reassessment, each penny of real estate (tax) will generate approximately \$185,000. He said the full eight cents (\$0.08) would provide between \$22 million and \$25 million of debt service. He said this would also allow the County to pay cash over the years instead of financing the projects. He added the lodging tax at 5% would provide between \$50,000 to \$60,000 per year; with two percent (2%) going to the General Fund and three percent (3%) going into the Tourism fund. Mr. Stanley said the Meals Tax and Cigarette Tax could also provide additional revenue.

Mr. Stanley then said the request received from the School includes positions cost increases of \$605,544. This includes the new transition counselor, the new family support specialist, an ESL teacher, an ITIS from 10 to 12 months, a 10.6% health insurance premium increase, and update for the finance system, their State supported salary increases of 5%, with a total cost of \$853,849. Total State and Federal funding increases equal \$941,393 which leaves a local funding increase request of \$517,010. Discussion followed.

Mr. Stanley discussed the increase of eight cents (\$0.08) for real estate and mobile home tax rates; he said the rate is equalized at \$0.43, based on a 18.27% average increase in assessed values. He said neighboring localities are staying the same as 2020; he said based on the advertised rate at \$0.51, Prince Edward County is the third lowest rate for the region. Mr. Stanley explained the equalized rate is to generate the same revenue as the previous rate. He said the operating budget is balanced at \$0.43; he said each penny over \$0.43 provides approximately \$185,000 in revenue and \$1.4 million has been budgeted for future capital improvements. He proposed that any reduction from the advertised rate would be removed from the CIP line.

Mr. Stanley then reviewed a budget comparison. He said the State compiled a comparison using the 2019 reports; Prince Edward County is eighth in total expenses per capita; in education, Prince Edward

County ranks eighth of eight in Education, Health, and Welfare, and ranks seventh in Government, General Government Administration, Public Works, Law Enforcement, and Traffic Control; Prince Edward County ranks lower in all categories except Correction/Detention, Public Safety, and Community Development. Prince Edward County has the third lowest tax rate.

Supervisor Wilck asked if the rate would be lowered. Mr. Stanley said the Board will review and deliberate, hold the public hearings, and make the final decision at next week's meeting.

In Re: Public Hearing – Real Estate Tax Rate, EMS Tax Levy, and Poplar Hill CDA Tax Levy

Chairman Emert announced that this was the date and time scheduled for a public hearing on the proposed 2021 Real Estate, EMS, and Poplar Hill Tax Levies. Notice of this hearing was advertised according to law in the April 9, 2021 and April 16, 2021 editions of THE FARMVILLE HERALD, a newspaper published in the County of Prince Edward.

Chairman Emert opened the public hearing.

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

Chairman Emert said the Board will meet Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. for the adoption of the County and School Budgets and Tax Rates.

In Re: Public Hearing – FY 22 County Budget, School Budget & CY 21 Tax Levies

Chairman Emert announced that this was the date and time scheduled for a public hearing on the proposed FY22 County Budget, FY22 School Budget and the 2021 Tax Levies. Notice of this hearing was advertised according to law in the April 9, 2021 and April 16, 2021 editions of THE FARMVILLE HERALD, a newspaper published in the County of Prince Edward.

Chairman Emert opened the public hearing.

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

Supervisor Jones stated that in the presentation, the comparison ranks Prince Edward County at seventh or eighth in what it spends per citizen, but normally, Prince Edward County provides more for the schools than surrounding localities. Mr. Stanley said this is for 2018-2019 and does not include debt service.

Mr. Stanley said the roof on the school needs attention but the total need of building must be determined; some of the bathrooms are in poor shape, and wall sections; there is a need for repair. He said energy savings could be had from the use of LED lights and certain HVAC systems.

Mr. Stanley expressed his appreciation for staff assistance with this budget; he said it is balanced and equalized, and includes the amount requested by the schools. He said the largest things are the 5% COLA and the reduction in health insurance to reduce the cost to employees.

Mr. Stanley said none of the surrounding localities did reassessments this year; Cumberland and Buckingham Counties did their reassessments last year. Mr. Stanley said Prince Edward County may want to go to a four-year cycle for reassessment; discussion followed.

Chairman Emert said the Board will meet Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. for the adoption of the County and School Budgets and Tax Rates.

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

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		

the meeting was recessed at 7:50 p.m. until Tuesday, April 27, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room.