

March 28, 2023

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 28th day of March, 2023; at 5:30 p.m., there were present:

Pattie Cooper-Jones
J. David Emert
Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.
E. Harrison Jones
Odessa H. Pride
Jerry R. Townsend
Cannon Watson

Absent: Victor “Bill” Jenkins

Also present: Douglas P. Stanley, County Administrator; Sarah Elam Puckett, Assistant County Administrator; Crystal Baker, Finance Manager; Dr. Barbara Johnson, Superintendent, Prince Edward County Public Schools; and Jimmy Sanderson, Davenport and Co.

Chairman Gilliam called the reconvened meeting to order, offered the invocation and led the pledge.

In Re: Presentation of School Budget

Dr. Barbara Johnson, Superintendent, presented the 2024 Prince Edward County Public School Preliminary Requested Budget. She reviewed positions requested, the budget development process used, and contributing factors. She stated that after several adjustments were made, the budget is based on an ADM of 1,750.

Supervisor Jenkins entered the meeting at this time.

Dr. Johnson reviewed the Schools’ strategic plan goals; she added that in June 2023, the School Board will attend a retreat to decide on the goals and priorities for the next five years.

Dr. Johnson presented the requested School budget; she reviewed the differences between the Governor’s budget, the House budget and the Senate budget. She stated the School has savings because they could not find teachers to fill all of the positions; they intend to convert some of the empty positions to something else. Dr. Johnson stated there is a mandated raise and touched on the proposed 0.5% step increase.

Dr. Johnson stated she will present the final requested budget to the County Administrator by the end of the week. She thanked the Board for its support and said she regrets she is unable to present specific numbers at this time due to the State budget.

Supervisor Cooper-Jones asked about the science teacher position that had been proposed; Dr. Johnson said the biology teacher is being supplied by Virtual Virginia.

Supervisor Pride asked how the Schools will make sure all the [student] needs are met. Ms. Gwendolyn McQuaige-Hicks, High School Principal, replied that there is teacher tutoring on Saturdays, and after-school tutoring on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays. Ms. McQuaige-Hicks added there is a consultant working with the students in the area of science and they are also partnering with Longwood University and hopefully Hampden Sydney College to have tutors during the instructional day.

Chairman Gilliam asked if the savings from last year [due to the teacher positions going unfilled] is rolled to this year; Dr. Johnson said it is.

Supervisor Jones asked how many teachers are anticipated to be leaving. Ms. LaRoya Eanes-Walton, Director of Human Resources, stated three are retiring, and 12 additional are leaving.

Supervisor Jones then asked if they have been in touch with Longwood University to recruit teachers just out of college. Dr. Johnson answered to the affirmative and stated they have also held job fairs.

Supervisor Pride asked if the vacancies are division-wide; Dr. Johnson answered to the affirmative.

In Re: Update on CIP Planning

Jimmy Sanderson, Davenport and Company, presented an updated Affordability Analysis on the County's CIP. He reviewed the potential outcomes associated with a three-cent increase in the County real estate tax rate and a four-cent increase for the Sandy River Reservoir Water Project. He also reviewed impacts of a proposed one cent increase for the Elementary School Project.

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the potential financial impact to the County, and stated that every one-cent of increase in the real estate tax rate would lower the total impact later and delays when additional pennies would need to be added. He said the County's policy of 3% of total debt versus assessed value, and debt service to expenditures is at 12%, and even with adding the Schools [project], the County would be below 8% and very strong from that perspective of the policy.

Mr. Sanderson said as proposed, the debt service for the Sandy River Water Project would begin in 2027; he said at that time, the anticipated 12-cent increase could go down to 11 cents. He discussed variations for funding. Mr. Sanderson then reviewed the combined projects and the necessary tax increases to cover the costs. He added users of the [water] facility would help cover those costs, and recommended a review of the County's policies.

Mr. Stanley stated this is the most conservative scenario. He added that he is still working on securing the 1% sales tax option for Prince Edward County for school capital improvements. He recommended advertising an increase [in the tax rate] for the projects; he stated the County is going from a six- to a four-year reassessment schedule. He said there will be two reassessments in the time [until the FY 2029-2030 budget].

In Re: Advertisement of FY 2023-2024 Budget and Tax Rates

Mr. Stanley presented the proposed Advertisement for the FY24 budget. The format closely follows those of previous years. As the state code dictates the attached advertisement is for informational purposes. A full copy of the budget and a comparison of the FY23 and FY24 budgets are available for public inspection/review on the County's website.

To maintain the County's budget schedule the Board of Supervisors would need to act tonight on authorizing the advertisement of a Public Hearing for April 18, 2023 at 7:00 pm. This public hearing would be for both the County and School budgets and tax levies. The advertisement for the budget and tax levies hearing would appear in the April 7th edition of the Farmville Herald.

Mr. Stanley reviewed his Final Budget Notes:

1. Budget includes an across the board 5.00% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) for ALL employees and an additional 2.0% COLA if approved through the State budget for Compensation Board funded positions. In addition, 13 employees have been identified for a 1-4 step merit increase.
2. The proposed budget is balanced at a real estate rate of \$0.47 and personal property rate of \$4.50 (current rates).
3. We have included a revised 3.2% increase for the Health Insurance costs. This is a reduction from the original estimate of 5%.
4. Outside agency budgets have been included as recommended by the Board at the March 21st work session.
5. Prince Edward Sheriff's Office:
 - Overtime Increase from \$120,000 to \$175,800
 - Equipment Maintenance from \$85,000 to \$95,000
 - Vehicle Maintenance from \$54,000 to \$75,000
6. Fire and Rescue:
 - Bumped VFD contributions up
 - \$74,800 to \$80,000
 - Fuel from \$35,000 to \$40,000
 - Emergency Communications System Upgrade - \$100,000
7. IT Department - To FT (\$40,000+)
8. Planning - Professional Services (\$50,000) - for Comp Plan update
9. Reassessment Increase to go to 4-Year Cycle - (\$75,000 to \$150,000)
10. Legal Services - (\$50,000 to \$75,000)
11. Building Inspections - Funding for lease of new vehicle (\$10,000)
12. Regional Economic Development Initiative - (\$25,000)

- 13. School CIP Funding- (\$250,000)
- 14. Solid Waste
 - Paving (\$45,000)
 - New scale house (\$26,000)
 - Equipment (\$20,000 + \$100,224 Debt payment for Loader)
- 15. CIP - (\$508,708)
- 16. Sandy River
 - Engineering (\$200,000)
 - Legal (\$17,500)
 - Debt Service (\$200,000)
- 17. Contingency Funding (\$98,328)

As noted above, the budget is balanced at a real estate (RE) tax rate of \$0.47 and a personal property (PP) rate of \$4.50 based on 100% of the 2023 NADA Clean Loan value assessment. As discussed with Davenport, the Board needs to give consideration of an additional increase in the RE rate to continue to plan for the eventual debt service needed for the Sandy River and Elementary School projects.

Mr. Stanley said that once advertised, a tax rate cannot be increased unless it is readvertised and a new public hearing held. There is no such requirement if the Board would like to decrease that rate.

The Board discussed options of the real estate tax rate, to increase the tax rate three cents for the Sandy River Water Project and one cent for the Elementary School project, for a total increase of four cents.

Mr. Stanley reviewed the adjustments to the proposed budget. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Cooper-Jones made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Townsend, to authorize the proposed FY 2023-2024 budget and tax levies for advertisement for a public hearing with a real estate tax rate of \$0.51; the motion carried:

<p>Aye:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pattie Cooper-Jones Llew W. Gilliam, Jr. Victor “Bill” Jenkins E. Harrison Jones Odessa H. Pride Jerry R. Townsend Cannon Watson 	<p>Nay: J. David Emert</p>
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Following further discussion, on motion of Supervisor Emert, seconded by Supervisor Cooper-Jones, and adopted by the following vote:

Aye:	Pattie Cooper-Jones	Nay: None
	J. David Emert	
	Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.	
	Victor "Bill" Jenkins	
	E. Harrison Jones	
	Odessa H. Pride	
	Jerry R. Townsend	
	Cannon Watson	

the meeting was recessed at 7:03 p.m. until Tuesday, April 18, 2023 at 5:30 p.m.