

February 20, 2024

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 20<sup>th</sup> day of February, at 5:30 p.m., there were present:

Pattie Cooper-Jones  
J. David Emert  
Victor “Bill” Jenkins  
E. Harrison Jones  
Odessa H. Pride  
Jerry R. Townsend  
Cannon Watson

Absent: Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.

Also present: Douglas P. Stanley, County Administrator; and Jimmy Sanderson, Senior Vice President, Davenport and Company.

Chair Cooper-Jones called the special meeting to order as a Budget Work Session.

In Re: Prince Edward County Capital Improvement Financing Update

Jimmy Sanderson, Davenport and Company, reviewed the updated Financial Review. He presented updated information on the County’s peer comparatives and the Capital planning with emphasis on the schools. He then presented a fund balance overview, and explained Rating Scores. He discussed peer comparisons on growth, real estate taxes and assessed values, stating the County saw a 20% increase in assessments in 2021.

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the General Fund and said the County is in a “good place” with a healthy reserve. He stated an unassigned fund balance can be used throughout the year, usually for one-time costs.

Mr. Stanley said the schools underspent local dollars by \$3.2 million in FY23 and two years ago, requested reappropriation of the leftover funds for use for capital projects; part of that gives the County a head start on the funds for the design costs for the Elementary School [renovation].

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the existing debt profile and said the existing taxable debt is scheduled to mature by 2035. He stated the County’s debt value is lower than its peers. He then reviewed the Capital Planning for the Schools and presented several scenarios, both with and without the state grant funding. Mr. Sanderson reviewed the impact of one penny on the tax rate.

Mr. Sanderson said the County is doing well to maintain the fund balance surplus. Some discussion followed.

In Re: Proposed Budget Goals

Mr. Stanley stated that the proposed budget goals are to maintain or improve current levels of service, to stay competitive with staff salaries, continue financial planning for the capital projects, and to promote economic development, and maintain a low real estate tax rate. He stated capital projects include the Elementary School renovation, Sandy River Water System, Public Safety Radio System Improvements, and the Animal Shelter. He stated in Economic Development, the County applied for a grant for the HIT Park and Persimmon Tree Fork Road; he said they requested \$16 million in funding from the business-ready sites program, which will require a significant match, but he did not anticipate the County getting the full amount. He said if the County can get enough to build the water line connection to the Town and the water tank, that would provide water to the site.

Supervisor Jones asked what the goal is to see someone on site. Mr. Stanley stated that Consultant Rhett Weiss feels strongly that the site has great potential for development for a data center. He said interest has picked up significantly. Discussion followed.

Mr. Stanley said the Manor Project had floundered since 2007; he said that at one point, there was a plan to four-lane the highway from Lowes to Worsham. VDOT subsequently applied the project funding to a project in Lynchburg. There will have to be turn lanes if they intend to put in more than 25-35 houses. He said the County successfully applied for \$1.5 million in Revenue Sharing funding in 2021; he said at The Manor, there could ultimately be 1,500-2,000 houses built there.

Mr. Stanley then reviewed proposed FY 2024-2025 budget cost drivers. He said the County have not seen a significant number of new houses or new vehicles, there is little to no growth, which means a flat revenue. He said there are a few personnel priorities and discussed the proposed 3% cost of living increase (as proposed by the state). He said the State School Composite Index increased which will require the County to pick up additional funding, and they will lose some federal funding.

Mr. Stanley stated funding must be included for the proposed Capital Improvement Projects. He added there are increased operational costs at the Regional Jail due to losing federal inmates and increasing costs.

Mr. Stanley asked the County departments were asked to provide justification for additional expenses for the proposed budget. He said any merit increases would be considered after the review of anticipated revenue. He

stated one proposed position would be a Permit Tech position to work in the Planning Department and the Building Department. He said turnaround time for the permits needs to be faster. He said discussion is ongoing on a joint dispatch for the County and Town of Farmville.

Mr. Stanley said the health insurance increase is expected to be less than 5%. Discussion followed on various details.

On motion of Supervisor Emert, seconded by Supervisor Watson, and adopted by the following vote:

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

the meeting was recessed at 6:49 p.m. until Thursday, February 22, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. at the Robert Russa Moton Museum, 900 Griffin Boulevard, Farmville, Virginia, for a Comprehensive Plan work session jointly with the Planning Commission.