

Joint Meeting with the Board of Supervisors and the School Board (Wednesday, April 19, 2023)

Northumberland County, Virginia

Members present:

James M. Long, Richard F. Haynie, Thomas H. Tomlin, James W. Brann

Absent:

Ronald L. Jett

Other Staff Present:

Mr. Luttrell Tadlock, County Administrator

Mr. Drew Basye, Assistant County Administrator

Ms. Morgan Wilson, Executive Assistant

Mr. Robert Headley, IT Administrator

Mr. Matthew Bailey, IT Assistant

The joint meeting with the School Board was convened by Chairman Haynie and held at the Northumberland Courthouse located at 220 Judicial Place, Heathsville, VA 22473.

1. Opening of Meeting 5:30 P.M.

The School Board Chair called the School Board meeting to order as this was a joint meeting. Attending the meeting was Betty Christopher, Gayle Sterrett, Denise Mazyck, Dr. Cheryl Davis, and Dana O'Bier.

Information: A. Discussion with School Board

Superintendent Wargo provided the Board with some documentation to answer the questions asked by Supervisor Brann at the last Board of Supervisors meeting. Dr. Wargo explained that the first document is an assessment pass rate comparison that showcases third grade through high school SOL scores comparing the year 2020-2021 to 2021-2022. The following documents show pass rate comparisons to local counties for the years 2020-2021 and 2021-2022.

Finance Director Booth addressed the concern of cost per pupil in Northumberland County and explained that the projected cost per pupil in 2022 was \$16,279, but in actuality it was \$16,558. Mrs. Booth wanted to compare the County's cost to other local counties, but the most updated information from the VDOE is from the 2020-2021 school year. The only County Mrs. Booth could find information on for the 2022 school year was Richmond County and their estimated cost per pupil was \$13,541.

Superintendent Wargo continued the presentation by reviewing the changes in the FY 24 school budget request that the School Board approved at their board meeting on April 13, 2023. The operational budget request from the school is \$23,331,811 which represents a salary increase for all current personnel ((5% increase plus 1.25% step) \$1,033,729), an adjustment to

paraprofessional's salary scale for minimum wage (\$63,930), an increase in technology admin software (\$42,000), additional personnel (three security officers (\$134,844), one speech pathologist (\$116,130), and one occupational therapist (mid-year 2023, \$110,880)), a regional program increase (Governor's School, \$10,125), health insurance and benefits for bus drivers (\$300,222 and \$68,254), a 9.9% increase in local choice rates (\$219,696), an increase in the Service Master contract (\$24,000), and an increase in fuel (\$120,000). The changes made from the first budget proposal from the school are the addition of health insurance and benefits for bus drivers and an increase in fuel.

Ms. Branham came to the Board to explain the recent request for a categorical change for fuel. Ms. Branham explained that the fuel line for the 2022-2023 school budget was \$130,000. As of January 25, 2023, the total spent was \$131,057.47. Ms. Branham continued by stating that NWP brought an additional \$47,669.38 in total fuels from January 31, 2023, through March 29, 2023, making the school over their fuel budget by \$48,726.85. Ms. Branham then applied a credit due to a miscalculation by NWP, which made the school over their budget by \$28,870.58. Ms. Branham then estimated fuel usages for the months of April, May, and June to see what is needed to get them through the fiscal year. When totaling the three months estimated fuel usage, the cost is \$30,403.45 and this makes the school over their budget by \$59,274.03.

Ms. Branham also wanted to make the Board aware the NWP charges fees for federal oil spill tax, Virginia UG storage fee, Federal UG storage fee, and wholesale tax.

Supervisor Brann wanted to clarify that these numbers were just for diesel and gas.

Ms. Branham confirmed this was for diesel and gas, not heating and oil.

Finance Director Booth addressed a question from the Board of Supervisors about the fuel budget and the category total. Mrs. Booth informed the Board that Ms. Branham had three engines rebuilt this year at an estimated cost of \$40,000 each, so her other line items are either close to, at, or right over the budget amount. Finance Director Booth stated that she foresees the category exceeding the amount that was appropriated based on the increase in fuel price and the need for bus engines.

Supervisor Tomlin asked if the overhauls were planned or unplanned.

Ms. Branham stated that the overhauls were unplanned.

Supervisor Tomlin asked how far the buses were in their useful life.

Ms. Branham explained that the three buses were at a mileage of 150,000, 170,000 and 200,000 miles.

Supervisor Tomlin asked when they decide to surplus buses.

Ms. Branham stated they do not surplus any bus unless they are simply unrepairable.

Supervisor Tomlin asked how often the engines are replaced.

Ms. Branham stated that until recently, it's been quite a few years since the bus engines needed replacing. She informed the Board that the engines that are being replaced are being replaced with a cummins engine.

Supervisor Tomlin asked how many international bus engines there are in the County fleet in comparison to the cummins.

Ms. Branham explained that there are 7 buses with cummins and the rest (approximately 20 buses) have an international engine.

Supervisor Tomlin asked how many buses were approaching the 150-170,000 mileage.

Ms. Branham stated that all buses except two are close to this mileage.

Supervisor Tomlin asked about the price difference between a cummins and an international.

Ms. Branham explained that the last time she replaced an international it was around \$23,000 and the cummins is approximately \$36-38,000.

Mrs. Gayle Sterrett acknowledged that there are six buses on the capital improvement plan, but three buses are urgent.

Finance Director Booth explained that \$20,000 of the additional request will be for Mr. Brann because he does foresee his budget line going over as well due to the increase in fuel.

Supervisor Tomlin asked if Mr. Brann spoke on the increase in fuel usage or the increase in fuel price.

Mrs. Booth informed Mr. Tomlin that she didn't have this information at the time, but she would get it over to him.

Chairman Haynie asked if it would be beneficial to the school to hire another employee instead of accepting services from Service Master.

Superintendent Wargo stated that the school is exploring this option.

Superintendent Wargo brought attention to the CIP request from the school relating to replacement flooring at the elementary school. In order to complete that project during the summer months, the LVT flooring must be ordered as soon as possible. Another project that is a safety concern is the rooftop stairway installation discussed at the last quarterly meeting.

Supervisor Tomlin asked County Administrator Tadlock if a budget amendment would be required if the Board decided to move forward with the replacement of the elementary floors.

County Administrator Tadlock stated that a budget amendment would be needed, and the monies could be handled in one of two ways. Mr. Tadlock explained that the School Division would carry out the procurement process and complete the project, but the invoice would come to the County so no transfer of monies would be needed, and the funds would be placed under the capital improvement line item. The other option is to transfer monies to the School Division.

Supervisor Tomlin asked if the school has put out for procurement for the project.

Superintendent Wargo explained that they have not.

Mrs. Dana O'Bier asked for an update on the old EVB roof where the School Board is currently housed.

County Administrator Tadlock explained that the documents and drawings are put together and ready to be bid out, but he believes the Board is waiting for further information regarding the new school board building.

Mrs. Sterrett asked how long will be too late to order the LVT flooring.

Superintendent Wargo stated that the sooner the better, but the school has a plan to relocate students if need be because the flooring has become a safety and health issue, so it needs to be addressed.

Chairman Haynie asked if any of the ESSER grant monies can be used for their capital improvement plan.

Supervisor Tomlin explained that there are less restrictions on the ARPA funding than the ESSER grant funds.

Superintendent Wargo addressed Chairman Haynie's question by stating that the School Board has given her direction to build a new school board office.

Supervisor Brann asked if the roof was fixed at the old EVB building, would the School Board consider staying in that building and using the ESSER funds for some capital improvement projects.

Mrs. O'Bier stated that is something for the School Board to discuss.

Supervisor Tomlin believed the School Board needs to weigh their options and prioritize their projects wisely, but he does believe that the EVB roof needs to be repaired as well.

Superintendent Wargo suggested another discussion point for both Boards on the possibility of the School Board staying in the EVB building and being permitted to do some minor upgrades, leaving money for other projects.

Mrs. O'Bier stated there was no other option and this is an opportunity to have a new building paid for. Mrs. Sterrett stated this opportunity will never come back.

Finance Director Booth explained that the funds are specific to a new construction grant, so those funds would not be eligible to be used for the floor replacement at the elementary school.

Supervisor Tomlin asked who designated those funds for new construction.

Mrs. O'Bier informed the Board that the federal government designated those funds for new construction.

Mrs. Mazyck reiterated that everything put forth before the Board is in consideration of health.

Supervisor Tomlin asked what the cost was for the JROTC building.

Superintendent Wargo stated it was about \$1.6 million.

Supervisor Tomlin asked how the school board office was going to be cheaper than the JROTC building.

Superintendent Wargo explained that they are working on the design build and ensuring that it is capable of being added on to in the future.

Supervisor Long wanted the school to go over what is needed right now in the overall budget.

Mrs. Sterrett stated the health insurance and benefits for bus drivers, the paraprofessional salary upgrade, the 5% salary increase plus the step for staff, and the safety upgrades (3 security officers and the panic button on their identification badge) are needed and prioritized right now.

Chairman Haynie explained that there are a lot of other agencies in the County to consider and when looking at the school, there is a nine to ten-cent tax increase and when looking on the County it's also another ten-cent tax increase, making a 20-cent increase to a taxpayer in the County.

The School Board's Chair, Betty Christopher, adjourned to close the joint meeting.

2. County Administrator Items

Action, Information: A. CARRIED OVER FROM THE APRIL 13, 2023 REGULAR MEETING: Create a tent camping zoning ordinance section, make commercial camping (with compensation) a conditional use in A-1, Agriculture, R-2, Residential Waterfront and C-1 Conservation zoning districts. Commercial camping (with compensation) will be prohibited in all other zoning districts. Camping without compensation on undeveloped properties less than one acre would require the use of a health department approved sanitation facility. Further discussion led the Planning Commission to recommend to the

Board of Supervisors to replace the term “undeveloped land” with “property without a dwelling unit or recreational vehicle connected to a permitted septic system.”

County Planner McKenzie explained that action was taken at the April 13, 2023 meeting in regard to deleting the definition of travel trailers, defining recreational vehicles, and renaming the Travel Trailer ordinance to “Recreational Vehicles.” This modification also included separating tent camping into a new zoning ordinance section. The item that is up for consideration tonight was tabled due to the Board wanting to hear more from the Health Department on how they classify an approved sanitation facility. Mr. McKenzie informed the Board that because they chose to not take action on this matter at the April 13, 2023 meeting, it meant there was no tent camping ordinance in the County.

Mr. McKenzie explained that the County refers to the Health Department for all waste systems because they are the most appropriate agency, so regardless of what they determine an approved sanitation facility, it will be as they define it. Mr. McKenzie suggested the Board adopt the language put before the Board so there will be a tent camping ordinance in the County.

Motion to approve the language as advertised with the Planning Commission's recommendation, however, the time period is extended to ten days and not seven. Included in the motion is to have the Planning Commission review the acreage requirement related to non-commercial tent camping.

Motion by: Thomas H. Tomlin, second by: James W. Brann.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Aye: James M. Long, Richard F. Haynie, Thomas H. Tomlin, James W. Brann

Mr. McKenzie asked for clarification from Mr. Tomlin on whether he would want more than one acre or less than one acre to be considered.

Supervisor Tomlin stated possibly less but he would like the Planning Commission to focus on lots that were developed before the zoning ordinance.

3. Items Related to Closed Meeting

Action: A. Convene into Closed Meeting

Motion to Action: A. Convene into Closed Meeting: convene into closed meeting as permitted by Virginia Code Section 2.2-3711 (A)(29); 29. Discussion of the award of a public contract involving the expenditure of public funds, including interviews of bidders or offerors, and discussion of the terms or scope of such contract, where discussion in an open session would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body.

Motion by: Thomas H. Tomlin, second by: James M. Long.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Aye: James M. Long, Richard F. Haynie, Thomas H. Tomlin, James W. Brann

Action: B. Reconvene into Open Meeting

Motion to reconvene into open session.

Motion by: Thomas H. Tomlin, second by: James M. Long.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Aye: James M. Long, Richard F. Haynie, Thomas H. Tomlin, James W. Brann

Action: C. Certification of Closed Meeting

Motion that the Northumberland Board of Supervisors return to Public Meeting and certify by roll call vote that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, and as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered during the closed meeting.

The vote on the motion was passed by a roll call vote as follows:

Aye: Richard F. Haynie, Thomas H. Tomlin, James M. Long, James W. Brann

Motion by: Thomas H. Tomlin, second by: James M. Long.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Aye: James M. Long, Richard F. Haynie, Thomas H. Tomlin, James W. Brann

4. Closing of Meeting

County Administrator Tadlock provided an updated budget calendar for the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Tomlin mentioned that he would be unable to attend a meeting on May 9, 2023, so the Board agreed to change the proposed date to May 8, 2023.

The Board also agreed to authorize staff to advertise the school budget for a public hearing on May 4, 2023 at 7:00 p.m.

The Board then asked County Administrator Tadlock to reach out to Ms. Seward with the Rural Solar Development Coalition to see if she can meet with the Board on May 2, 2023 at 1:00 p.m. Chairman Haynie asked that Zoning Administrator Marston, County Planner McKenzie, and the Planning Commission be in attendance at this meeting.

Action: A. Carry Over

Motion to carry over to the special called meeting on May 2, 2023 at 1:00 p.m.

Motion by: Thomas H. Tomlin, second by: James W. Brann.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Aye: James M. Long, Richard F. Haynie, Thomas H. Tomlin, James W. Brann