

VIRGINIA:

A FY 2016-17 Joint Budget Work Session of the Lancaster County Board of Supervisors and the Lancaster County School Board was held in the Administrative Building Board/Commission Meeting Room of said county on Thursday, March 24, 2016.

Board of
Supervisors

Members Present: William R. Lee, Chair

Ernest W. Palin, Jr., Vice Chair

F. W. Jenkins, Jr., Board Member

B. Wally Beauchamp, Board Member

Jason D. Bellows, Board Member, was absent.

School Board

Members Present: Dr. Robert Westbrook, Chair

Audrey Thomasson, Vice Chair

Robert Smart, Board Member

Kenya Moody, Board Member

Joan Gravatt, Board Member, was absent.

Mr. Lee called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m. and Dr. Westbrook called the meeting of his board to order at 5:00 p.m.

BUDGET CONSIDERATION

Mr. Steve Parker, School Superintendent for Lancaster County, gave a hand-out of the summary of the proposed school budget to all members. He stated that the budget included an addition of one special education teacher at the primary school. He stated that it was also in last year's budget, but found it was not needed then. He stated that another addition is a career technical education teacher at the high school. He stated that this position has become necessary because beginning with the class of 2017, students who do not graduate with an advanced studies diploma must have an industry certification in order to graduate. He stated that they have changed one of their guidance positions to a twelve month position and that will allow some guidance work such as working on schedules and registering students to continue throughout the summer.

Mr. Parker stated that last year's budget included retirement incentives for seven retirees and two employees took the offer. He stated that this year's budget includes the five remaining slots.

Mr. Parker stated that they had a salary committee do a review of their salary scales for the teachers in 2014. He stated that the committee recommended a certain increase in the salary scale and putting every teacher on the correct step. He stated that they had planned on implementing that over three years, but they wanted to do the majority of it this year because of increased VRS contributions in the next two years. He referred to the two percent salary increase for all other staff and stated that was based on a recommendation from the budget advisory committee that they mirror the proposed salary increases for other County staff.

Mr. Parker stated that they are proposing an increase in the health insurance contribution that matches that of the County on the recommendation of the budget advisory committee.

Mr. Parker stated that the proposed budget is based on a projected average daily membership of 1145 students. He stated that the actual number of students is closer to 1300 because of the pre-school students.

Mr. Jenkins asked if there was any state or federal funding for the pre-school students.

Mr. Parker replied that only local funding goes towards the pre-school program.

Mr. Smart stated that there are many studies that show that pre-school education is very important to children and they desperately want to keep those programs going.

Dr. Westbrook stated that the state doesn't look at need, but rather goes by a funding formula that he believes is skewed.

There was discussion about the effect of the local composite index on the funding that the County receives.

Mr. Jenkins suggested that they meet about those issues after the budget season.

Mr. Parker stated that on the positive side, they did see about a three percent drop in the local composite index for this biannual and have seen more money earmarked for the standards of quality. He stated that he thought the total state contribution was up approximately \$522,000.

Mr. Jenkins stated that he suspected that had a lot to do with the last real estate reassessment.

Mr. Parker stated that the proposed budget also includes \$11,000 for a part-time assistant for the volunteer tutor coordinator, who has had a very successful program. He stated that there is a lot of administrative work involved with the tutoring program.

Mr. Parker stated that the increase in textbook funds is strictly for local match, so that they receive all of the state funds that they are offered.

Mr. Parker stated that the school's proposed budget is based on the Governor's budget because that is what they had at the time it was presented to the School Board. He stated that it has changed very little since the conference budget came out.

Mr. Parker stated that the proposed school budget also includes \$10,000 for signing bonuses for hard to fill positions, such as math teachers, and was recommended by the budget advisory committee. He further discussed the challenges of finding qualified math teachers and the stringent state requirements for them.

Mr. Parker stated that they have done their best to become much more efficient.

Mr. Dan Russell, Assistant School Superintendent for Lancaster Public Schools, stated that it will be the third year that he and Mr. Parker have not asked for a pay increase, showing a commitment by administration to concentrate on teacher salaries.

Mr. Lee referred to the proposed three percent pay increase for teachers and asked how that compares to the surrounding localities.

Mr. Parker replied that with the proposed increase Lancaster County will be about in the middle, regionally, for teacher salaries.

Mr. Russell stated that they needed to continue to work on raising the salaries of starting teachers because that salary is lower in comparison with surrounding localities. He stated that after step nine, the Lancaster salaries tended to be higher in comparison.

Ms. Thomasson asked if there would be a surplus balance for the schools by the end of the fiscal year.

Ms. Whitney Barrack, Finance Director for Lancaster Public Schools, replied that there will be a surplus due to unfilled positions.

Mr. Parker stated that their biggest expense, approximately eighty percent, is personnel. There was further discussion on salaries and what it takes to attract new teachers.

Mr. Parker stated that the sooner they can get a public hearing for their proposed budget, the better position they will be in to hire the most qualified teachers.

Mr. Jenkins stated if a trust can be developed between the two boards and if the Board of Supervisors has problems with other parts of the school budget, would the School Board feel confident enough that the personal services portion of the budget would not be changed and they could proceed with their contracts and letters of intent for prospective teachers.

Mr. Parker replied that he would have no problem with that, but it is up to the School Board.

Dr. Westbrook stated that he thought the Board of Supervisors would pass the school's budget, so that they can begin the hiring process for new teachers.

Mr. Pleva explained the advertising and waiting time requirements for the public hearing.

The consensus was to advertise the proposed FY 2016-17 school budget in the March 31st edition of the Rappahannock Record, hold the public hearing on April 7th and vote on the budget on April 14th.

ADJOURNMENT

Motion was made by Mr. Jenkins to adjourn the Board of Supervisors' meeting.

VOTE:	William R. Lee	Aye
	Ernest W. Palin, Jr.	Aye
	F. W. Jenkins, Jr.	Aye
	B. Wally Beauchamp	Aye

Motion was made by Mr. Smart and seconded by Mrs. Moody to adjourn the School Board meeting.

VOTE:	Robert Westbrook	Aye
	Robert Smart	Aye
	Kenya Moody	Aye
	Audrey Thomasson	Aye