

## **VIRGINIA:**

A meeting of the Lancaster County Board of Supervisors was held in the Administrative Building Board/Commission Meeting Room of said county on Thursday, May 23, 2013.

Members Present: F. W. Jenkins, Jr., Chair

Jason D. Bellows, Vice Chair

Ernest W. Palin, Jr., Board Member

William R. Lee, Board Member

B. Wally Beauchamp, Board Member

Staff Present: Frank A. Pleva, County Administrator

Crystal Whay, Building/Land Use Secretary

Mr. Jenkins called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

## **PUBLIC HEARING**

1. FY 2014 Lancaster County Schools Budget- Mr. Pleva welcomed the guests and stated that the advertised public hearing on the fiscal year 2014 school budget was being conducted in accordance with the Code of Virginia 1950, as amended. He stated that the proposed budget was adopted by the school board on March 25, 2013 and subsequently presented to the Board of Supervisors. He stated that the total expenditures in the school budget total \$15,832,191, which is an increase of \$ 247,191 over the current fiscal year. He stated that on the revenue side, as far as County funds are concerned, the request is for \$10,838,557, which is an increase of \$ 420,001 over the current fiscal year. He stated that, in accordance with Virginia Code Section 15.2-2506, the Board of Supervisors shall wait at least seven days following the close of the public hearing before it may consider adoption of the proposed school budget with or without modification. He further stated that a hard copy of the detailed proposed school budget has been available for public inspection in the County Administrator's office and has also been posted on the school board's website. He stated that there was a sign-up sheet for anyone wishing to make public comment.

Mr. Jenkins opened the public hearing.

Mr. George Bott, a District 1 citizen, stated that he had some difficulties with the school board's request for an additional \$420,001 from the County. He stated that the first issue was living within our means. He stated that the local taxpayers are twenty-five percent less wealthy after the current reassessment. He stated that that means seven hundred million dollars of wealth out of the personal property as a result of the last reassessment. He further stated that the school board management is inefficient and the Freedman study stated that Virginia, along with Ohio, has the highest overhead in America. He stated that as the student population increases slightly throughout the nation, the overhead increases substantially. He stated that money isn't always the answer. He stated that from 2006 until 2012, Lancaster County added \$3,237,434 to the schools.

Mr. Bott stated, that in his memo to the Chairman, he had made suggestions. He stated that he would support an equal pay raise to the school SOL population. He stated he would recommend adding two teachers from those that are requested by the schools. He stated that he had heard that the Dean of Students at Lancaster Middle School had had a drastic effect on discipline issues and is well worth the cost. He stated that he was not sure if both a resource officer and the Dean of Students were both needed.

Mr. Bott stated that he would highly recommend the STEM program. He stated that one of its principal targets is marine sciences, which would benefit this County.

Mr. Bott stated that if his recommendations were totaled, it would be approximately \$250,000 or approximately one percent of the current reassessed property tax rate. He stated that this could be paid for by reducing some overhead. He stated that this could be achieved by removing one \$100,000 position in operations and one position in administration. He stated that school board member, Bob Smart, has said that there are fifteen employees making an average of \$100,000.

Mr. Bott stated that two of the three school principals have recommended that they have a two week longer school year. He stated that Lancaster is one of the last counties to go back to the longer school year.

Mr. Bott stated that according to a recent chart in the Wall Street Journal, the per student spending at the elementary and secondary levels of public school systems fell four tenths of a percent to \$10,560, which is about \$1500 to \$2000 less than the County is spending now.

Mrs. Tara Booth, a District 3 citizen, stated that she was at the meeting as a taxpayer and a parent and her only request was for the Board to consider what was in the best interest in education for the children in Lancaster County.

Mr. Jack Larson, a District 1 citizen and former Lancaster County Assistant Administrator, stated that he had looked at the school budget as he had looked over many budgets over the years and he saw some good things. He stated that it was a good presentation with facts such as the breakdown of teachers with how many are core and non-core. He stated, however, that he has some concerns with this budget when it comes to its execution.

Mr. Larson stated that he agreed with school board member, Bob Smart, who has spoken about the high administrative expenses and salaries, which amounts to about ten percent of the total budget for fifteen people. He stated that he did not understand how the other school board members could not see that information and question it.

Mr. Larson stated that in focusing on the instruction category of the budget, he saw that in fiscal year 2012, there was \$515,000 that the Board of Supervisors appropriated to the schools to spend on instruction and there was \$515,000 that was not spent and he would like to know why not.

Mr. Larson referred to the fiscal year 2013 school board budget and stated that as of April 30<sup>th</sup> for the classroom portion, out of some \$8,873,000 in the original budget, with some carryover monies, there is an unencumbered balance of \$4,169,417. He stated that this was for a budget that was so tight, that the superintendent came back for a supplement of \$50,000 for a music teacher within a month or two after the budget was approved. He stated that he did not understand why the money was not being spent on instruction. He stated that he held the teachers in the highest regard and they should be given the resources to do their jobs. He further asked why we have the lowest paid school teachers at the entry level on average of any other locality in the Middle Peninsula or the Northern Neck, when there are only approximately ten percent of schools in the state that are better funded. He stated that he thought that the areas of operation, maintenance and transportation need to be looked at. He stated that he did not understand the purchase of two extra school buses that were purchased out of instructional monies.

Mr. Larson stated that, in his opinion, one solution would be to give the schools a categorized budget. He stated that, secondly, when the Capital Improvement Budget was started in 2004 or 2005, buses were included and should be because they meet the criteria. He stated that he would ask that the proposed buses be included in the Capital Improvement Budget again, so the Planning Commission can ask for the justification for purchase. He further stated that the taxpayers, teachers and students deserve better.

Mrs. Joan Blackstone, a White Stone citizen, stated that Prince William County has 93 schools with 84,000 students and their superintendent makes \$270,000 plus benefits. She stated that Lancaster County has only 3 schools and did not understand why more money couldn't go to teachers and less to

administration. She stated that she did agree with a categorized budget for the schools.

Mr. Charlie Costello, a District 2 citizen, stated that he agreed with Mr. Larson on a number of items. He stated that it would be difficult to change the salaries of the administration once contracts are made. He stated that he thought that categorization was the best way to go.

Mr. Costello stated that he wanted to support the dean of students at the middle school. He stated that he was doing a good job and he needs to be retained if at all possible. He stated that he would support a pay raise, similar to what Northumberland County has done, which is a raise across the board. He stated that they need to attract teachers and not fall further behind.

Ms. Stephanie McLean, a citizen, stated that she was a parent and a former teacher. She stated that her request was that the Board not cut any monies to the school. She stated that how the money is being divided might not be to the Board's liking, but cuts seem to hurt students the most. She further stated that the school buildings need to be improved and if they were, they might attract teachers. She also suggested going back to the longer school year, so students could be involved in more programs at school.

Ms. Kendra Moody, a citizen and a parent, stated that she feels like the school system is at the bottom, when they used to be a top school. She stated that she appreciated the Board of Supervisors taking the time to consider the budget and taking it seriously. She stated that the School Board and the Board of Supervisors are elected and citizens trust them to make good decisions. She urged everyone to put aside differences and move forward.

Mr. Welby Saunders, a White Stone resident, stated that his wife is a former teacher and asked that he attend the meeting. He stated that last year, the school budget was cut and his son did not have a music teacher, which was upsetting. He stated that he knows the Board tries hard and he requested that they really look at the budget and get involved and make sure the money is spent wisely.

There was no more public input.

Mr. Jenkins declared the public hearing closed.

No action was taken.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Motion was made by Mr. Jenkins to adjourn the meeting to Wednesday, May 29, 2013 at 4:30 p.m. for a Budget Work Session.

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