

A SPECIAL BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WAS HELD ON THE 16th DAY OF APRIL IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND THIRTEEN IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING IN NEW KENT, VIRGINIA, AT 8:30 A.M., HAVING BEEN CONTINUED FROM THE APRIL 8, 2013 BUSINESS MEETING

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IN RE: CALL BACK TO ORDER

Chairman Davis called the meeting back to order.

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IN RE: ROLL CALL

Thomas W. Evelyn	Present
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Absent (arrived at 8:35 a.m.)
James H. Burrell	Present
Ron Stiers	Present
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Present

All members were present after Mr. Tiller's arrival.

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IN RE: VIRGINIA VOLUNTEER WORKFORCE SOLUTIONS PROGRAM

Before the Board for consideration was a request from Fire Chief Richard Opett for New Kent to participate in the Virginia Volunteer Workforce Solutions Program.

Chief Opett explained that this was a marketing program to help recruit volunteers, offered through the Virginia Fire Chiefs Association, the Virginia Department of Fire Programs, and the International Association of Fire Chiefs, at no cost to the County. He indicated that New Kent was one of 20 localities in Virginia that had been invited to participate, and all that was required was execution of a Memorandum of Understanding agreeing that the County would participate for two years, identify a program leader, and attend orientation meetings. He advised that the program involved entering the demographics (addresses only, no names) of current volunteers into a GIS system, which would then be used to identify areas where recruitment efforts should take place.

Following discussion, Mr. Burrell moved that the Board accept the request from the Fire Chief for the Volunteer Workforce Solutions Program. The members were polled:

Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Abstain (because of his late arrival)
James H. Burrell	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Aye

The motion carried.

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IN RE: DIGITAL RADIO SYSTEM

Chief Opett and Chief Deputy Joe McLaughlin updated the Board on a recent proposal for New Kent to join a regional communications/radio system.

Chief Opett explained that York County had approached New Kent with a proposal to become a partner in its regional radio network that would "bridge Hampton Roads and Central Virginia". He reported that the Virginia Department of Emergency Management

(VDEM) fully supported the proposal as it considered New Kent to be a "missing link" in the interoperability system and had indicated that any grant application would receive priority consideration. He explained that New Kent currently used a conventional analog VHF radio systems for the Sheriff's Office, Fire-Rescue, the Transportation Department, and the Schools, which provided only 80% coverage under the best circumstances, and were more than 15 years old and would no longer be serviceable because of the unavailability of parts. He indicated that there were funds in the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) to replace the radio system in three years.

He explained that the system being used by the Sheriff's Office had two channels that were repeater capable and recorded, and four channels that were not. He indicated that system was interoperable with Charles City and West Point, although West Point would soon be upgrading to digital and would no longer be interoperable with New Kent's Sheriff's Office. He advised that radio coverage was greatly diminished five miles outside of County boundaries, making it difficult to communicate with prisoner transports, mental health transports, and mutual aid requests.

He reported that the system used by Fire-Rescue had four channels that were repeater capable and recorded, and six channels that were not. He explained that the system was also interoperable with Charles City and West Point (until it was upgraded) and, like the Sheriff's Office, its radio coverage was greatly diminished five miles outside of County boundaries, making it difficult to communicate with hospital transports.

Regarding the system used by the Transportation Department, he indicated that its daily operations resulted in reports of continuous interruptions in communicating with and understanding the bus drivers, and as well as reports of lost radio communications outside of New Kent and no interoperability with neighboring jurisdictions or agencies.

He advised that the Schools had self-sustained communications on a separate system with no automated interoperability and no interoperability with neighboring jurisdictions or agencies.

He reported that the proposal was to investigate New Kent's becoming a regional partner in the York-Poquoson-Williamsburg-James City-Gloucester radio system - a 700/800 MHz analog/digital radio system that interoperated with federal, state and local agencies, originating in York County. He indicated that a "white paper" needed to be submitted by mid-April 2013 which would reserve funding in anticipation of a grant application that would need to be submitted by July 2013. He advised that York County's Chief of Emergency communications had offered to submit the white paper to VDEM on New Kent's behalf at no charge. It was confirmed that submittal of the white paper was not a commitment on New Kent's behalf. He spoke about the benefits of such a partnership, which included lower procurement costs and regional redundancies. He reported that the grant could provide up to \$2 million towards this project, and service and maintenance would be provided by Motorola out of its York County shop.

Chief Deputy McLaughlin remarked on how with this joint regional system, a partner locality could seamlessly take over New Kent's dispatch center in the event of a failure, and how it would provide radio communication capability across the State.

It was confirmed that there was a chance that the system could co-locate on existing towers, which would decrease the cost of the project.

Chief Opett indicated that the County's total cost for the project was estimated to be between \$6 and \$6.5 million over five years, and it would be FY15 before New Kent would have to put any money towards it. However, that estimate did not take the \$2 million grant into account, and would be lower if existing tower sites could be used. He explained that the first step was to do a feasibility study (\$25,000 to \$30,000) to look at existing infrastructure and it might be that it would not make sense for New Kent to enter into the partnership.

He indicated that the new system would provide New Kent with 95% coverage 95% of the time, which was above and beyond the standard.

He pointed out that there was \$120,000 in the CIP for FY14 for a needs assessment and \$16 million for radio replacement in FY16, and by joining this partnership, New Kent could save at least \$11 million, or 67% of what was currently in the CIP, and would also save on maintenance costs.

There was discussion regarding radio problems during recent incidents around the County and the cost of radios and towers, as well as mandates from the Department of Homeland Security. Chief Opett played some audio clips that demonstrated the problems with the current radio system.

School Superintendent Robert Richardson, Jr. agreed that there would be benefits "across all agencies" should the project move forward, with safety and security needs being paramount.

Mr. Burrell commented that since New Kent would be compelled to do something anyway, an upgrade of the existing system would not give the County what it needed, and submission of the white paper was not a commitment, he moved that New Kent ask York County to write the white paper on its behalf and explore grant opportunities. The members were polled:

C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
James H. Burrell	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Aye

The motion carried.

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IN RE:            PROPOSED FY14 BUDGET

Mr. Hathaway provided handouts with additional FY 14 Proposed Budget information.

He reviewed the new positions that were mandated. He advised that there were some part-time positions that were proposed for upgrades to full-time because of new regulations in the Affordable Care Act that required the provision of health insurance for staff working more than 29 hours. He reported that two new environmental positions were mandated by the State and that staff was looking into how to establish some fees to help pay for those new positions. He pointed out that funding for two new firefighter positions was in the budget, as well as for an administrative assistant for the Comprehensive Services Act office that was now required to be a stand-alone department.

He reported that the proposed budget provided a decrease in funding over all departments, a 2% employee salary increase, and an additional transfer to the Schools in the amount of \$700,000.

Mr. Burrell suggested that the Board consider giving larger increases to those on the lower end of the salary scale. The County Attorney advised that could be considered discrimination as not all employees would be treated equal. Mr. Burrell asked staff to look into it nonetheless. He also spoke about how proposed funding for the Airport "would go a long way for the Schools", commenting about its location and the fact that it was a hobby airport. Staff clarified that local funding for the Airport was \$31,674, and the rest of its funding came from federal and state agencies. There was discussion regarding the offices in the terminal building and how the lack of high-speed cable had discouraged potential tenants.

Mr. Hathaway provided comparison information from other localities that reflected how many were facing the same pressures, and proposing raises and tax increases.

There was discussion regarding meals tax revenue. Mr. Hathaway confirmed that meals tax revenue had been dedicated to economic development, parks and recreation and schools when it was first established, but was now going directly into the General Fund.

There was discussion regarding off-track betting revenue. Assistant Financial Services Director Larry Clark confirmed that those revenues had started to decrease several years earlier and those decreases were assumed to be related to the economy and not the closing and opening of facilities.

It was confirmed that the Schools were disappointed that their budget request was not proposed for full funding. Superintendent Richardson advised that many of the bus drivers were already covered by health insurance and the ACA would not impact them as much as it would their substitute teachers.

Mr. Stiers asked that the amount proposed for rent expenses for the Heritage Library, be increased from \$20,000 to \$40,000, so that it could restore some of its programs.

He also asked if there was any way to have a less than 8% increase in water and sewer usage rates for FY14. Other Board members commented that the utility system needed to be funded by its users and not the taxpayers. Mr. Stiers clarified that he was not suggesting otherwise but was asking if a lower rate might be considered. There was discussion regarding connection fees and the Bottoms Bridge ad valorem tax rate.

Board members discussed the proposed four-cent increase on the real estate tax rate.

There was discussion regarding the proposed employee salary increase as well as a review of employee salary increase history. Mr. Hathaway pointed out that if the 2% employee raises were eliminated, there would be a savings of \$164,000, but it would not impact the Constitutional Officers, Registrars or Department of Social Services employees who the State were mandating receive a 3% raise effective August 1. Mr. Davis advised that he had received no comments supporting a raise for employees. Mr. Evelyn noted the amount saved by cutting staff raises did not add up to a penny on the real estate tax rate.

Mr. Davis remarked that he liked designating two cents of the proposed tax increase for renovating the Historic School for classrooms. Mr. Evelyn advised that he was part of a group that was meeting weekly on that project and they still needed to "get some hard

numbers to see if it was going to be feasible, as there was some point of diminishing return”.

Mr. Davis asked about the overtime paid out to Fire-Rescue staff.

Mr. Evelyn asked for information on the amount budgeted for dues and association fees.

Staff agreed to provide more information, as requested. There was consensus among the Board members to advertise a four-cent increase with the understanding that the Board could adopt a lower rate than what was advertised.

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IN RE:           ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Evelyn moved to adjourn the meeting. The members were polled:

James H. Burrell	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Aye

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:10 a.m.