

A JOINT MEETING BETWEEN THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE SCHOOL BOARD WAS HELD ON THE 13TH DAY OF FEBRUARY IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND SEVEN OF OUR LORD IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AT 6:00 P.M.

IN RE: ROLL CALL

Mark E. Hill	Present
David M. Sparks	Present
James H. Burrell	Present
Stran L. Trout	Present
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Present

Chairman Trout called the Board of Supervisors' meeting to order. School Board Chair Gail Hardinge called the School Board's meeting to order, with all members present except Cynthia Gaines.

IN RE: NEW KENT COUNTY SCHOOLS PROPOSED 2007-08 BUDGET

Ms. Hardinge reviewed the School Board's proposed budget presentation which included impact of growth, strengths of the schools, challenges of the schools, tying in the Six Year Plan, budget requests including cost increases and local requests, and spending and teacher salaries.

It was reported that the School Board was requesting a local appropriation in the amount of \$9,673,503, an increase of \$771,140, or 8.6% over the current 2006-07 local appropriation.

It was reported that New Kent averaged 61 new students per year, which equaled 2 ½ new classrooms and that keeping up with that growth was the "biggest chunk" of their budget.

Ms. Hardinge reviewed the strengths of New Kent County Schools which included the fact that all schools were accredited via the Standards of Learning (SOL) program and that three of the four schools had met all 29 targets for No Child Left Behind (NCLB), noting that was no small feat for a small school division like New Kent. Other strengths included the fact that the High School's Beta Club had won the Academic Quiz Bowl State championship twice in the past three years and that New Kent's graduation rate exceeded the State's average.

Ms. Hardinge reviewed the challenges faced by the School Board in the budget process, which included recruitment and retention of quality teachers; continuing to meet increasing State accreditation and NCLB student achievement standards; efficiently managing a larger physical footprint after completion of renovations at the Elementary School; transition to K-5 at two of the schools (this included changes to the bus transportation and additional support for programs and materials at each school) and meeting the increasing cost of technology.

Goals of the Six Year Plan were discussed as well as the School Board's suggestions to meet those goals.

Regarding "How Do We Get There From Here?" on personnel growth, Ms. Hardinge clarified that "there" to the School Board meant average, reasonably competitive and mandated by the State and federal governments. She reported a current teacher/student ratio of 23:1 and indicated that with the new positions, that ratio could be reduced to 19:1 at the Elementary level.

New positions were reported to include one K-5 position, one Primary School Behavior Specialist, one high school science teacher, one high school special education teacher, and one career tech position at the high school.

It was noted that the CSA budget was about 50% higher. There was discussion regarding handling more situations in-school without going to CSA and there was consensus that it would be more cost effective. It was reported that there was currently one student that costing CSA approximately \$200,000. It was suggested that a discussion on special needs be held at a future time.

Regarding "How Do We Get There From Here?" on buildings and grounds, it was clarified that "there" to the School Board meant safe schools, clean schools and insured schools - that an average child would have a typical school day in a typical school building.

There was a discussion on the use of diesel-fueled buses. It was reported that almost all of New Kent County's school buses were diesel powered.

Ms. Hardinge emphasized that many factors, including increased costs for programming and testing for SOLs/NCLB, increased licensing costs and a new position for technology, and additional staffing and programming for special education were beyond the School Board's control.

It was represented that technology costs were the largest part of the request for increased funding, mainly because it has been cut in previous years due to a priority being given to salary and personnel increases. Ms. Hardinge indicated that the increases were due to licensing fees, computer replacement, bus routing software and the *Instant Alert* system.

It was reported that the School Board was efficient in its spending and that it spent less per pupil than the State average.

Regarding teacher salaries, it was reported that New Kent had lost ground since 2004 on its goal of being below the State median. Ms. Hardinge indicated that in 2006-2007, New Kent ranked among the lowest in pay for senior teachers and lower than the average in all 5-year intervals.

Mr. Hill asked for salary comparison information with comparable school divisions rather than all 134 schools in Virginia. The Board specifically requested teacher salary rank comparison figures for Goochland, King William, Hanover, Henrico, James City County and Powhatan, as those were the school divisions within driving distance. Director of Finance Ed Smith commented that no matter where New Kent ranked in relation to the median, it had lost ground in this area. Director of Instruction Leigh Quick added that New Kent lost approximately 30 to 35 teachers last year mainly to other school divisions, although some had retired and/or moved.

Mr. Hill inquired how the requested 5% teacher salary increase would affect the salary comparisons. Mr. Smith responded that it would depend on what other localities did. Ms. Hardinge indicated that a compensation study would help in taking a closer look at salaries and comparisons, commenting that New Kent was a "training ground" for many teachers who often left for other districts after three to five years. Mr. McPherson noted that many school divisions offered signing bonuses as an incentive. It was reported that New Kent most often lost its teachers to Hanover, Henrico, Williamsburg, James City County or Chesterfield.

Mr. Smith pointed out that there was little or no affordable housing available for teachers in New Kent.

There was a discussion regarding health insurance cost increases. Dr. Geiger provided an update on efforts to create a health insurance pool with other localities, advising that the option was still open but he was not optimistic.

Mr. McPherson emphasized that their budget requests had been had been significantly pared down.

There was discussion about the Governor's plan to provide schooling for four-year olds and the space problems that would result in New Kent.

There was discussion about the staggered bus schedule. Mr. Davis asked that Board members be given information to share with their constituents once the schedule had been developed.

There were suggestions to broadcast the School Board's budget presentation on the government access channel as well as post the PowerPoint presentation on the website.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, Mr. Davis moved to adjourn the meeting. The members were polled:

Mark E. Hill	Aye
David M. Sparks	Aye
James H. Burrell	Aye
Stran L. Trout	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Aye

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:20 p.m.

The School Board recessed its meeting to reconvene in the School Board conference room.
