

A SPECIAL JOINT MEETING WAS HELD BY THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND THE NEW KENT COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD ON THE 7<sup>TH</sup> DAY OF JANUARY, IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND FIFTEEN IN THE SCHOOL BOARD OFFICE/HISTORIC COURTHOUSE, NEW KENT, VIRGINIA, AT 5:00 P.M.

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IN RE: CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Evelyn called the meeting to order.

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IN RE: ROLL CALL

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

All members were present.

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IN RE: SCHOOL BOARD

School Board Vice Chair Sarah Grier Barber called the School Board meeting to order. Other School Board members present were Gail B. Hardinge and Dean M. Simmons. School Superintendent David A. Myers was also present. School Board Member Brett C. Marshall later joined the meeting already in progress.

Dr. Myers announced that School Board Chair Leigh R. Quick's flight out of Charlotte had been delayed and that she sent her apologies. He noted that this meeting had been scheduled as a result of a December meeting between School Board and County representatives and the focus would be on communication and sharing information.

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IN RE: SCHOOL ENROLLMENT AND CLASSROOM SPACE PROJECTIONS

Dr. Myers presented information on enrollment projections and reported that University of Virginia (UVA) data on birth rates as well as local housing data for recent years had been used to estimate student population through the 2022-23 year. He stated that although the data contained in the "Enrollment Projections based on a 7 year average including live births" tables was subject to change, he believed it to be solid information.

Mr. Davis asked how Hanover County had seemingly ended up with more schools than students when it did not appear that the county population was declining. He further questioned how projections could have been so far off. Dr. Myers responded that a recent UVA Weldon Cooper report revealed that a vast number of localities across the state were experiencing declining enrollment and that New Kent was one of only a few where enrollment was increasing. He added that he was not sure what had happened with Hanover projections but he believed New Kent was taking a conservative approach.

Dr. Myers drew attention to two high birth rate years which would significantly impact the elementary schools in 2016-17 and 2017-18 and the middle school in 2018-19 and 2019-20. Middle school enrollment was currently 701 and projected to reach 804 by 2018-19.

Dr. Myers also presented information on classroom requirements. He reported there was currently room for one additional classroom at each of the two elementary schools and, as a

result, a request for a trailer had not been included in the CIP for next year. He suggested that an additional trailer may be included in the following year. Current middle school facilities were adequate with enrollment projections suggesting the need for five to six additional classrooms by FY19. Dr. Myers reported that if the technology initiative was able to move forward, two to three computer labs could be reclaimed for use as general classrooms. No additional space requirements for the high school were noted in the foreseeable future.

Mr. Evelyn asked if any comparison had been done on the costs for additional trailers and the cost for expansion of the middle school. Dr. Hardinge suggested that the question of maximum number of students supported by current core facilities would need to be addressed if an expansion were considered. Dr. Myers agreed that expansion was a possibility that should be considered. He added that the estimated cost for an elementary school pod was one million dollars and if \$500,000 were to be spent on trailers, an addition may be a better approach.

Mr. Burrell suggested library facilities could be expanded to support higher student enrollment by making use of the empty vertical space over the middle school cafeteria. Dr. Myers noted that with the increased availability of technology, current new school trends included smaller school media centers. Dr. Hardinge also questioned if current computer lab space would support higher enrollment. She expressed her interest in a comparison of additional trailers vs. an addition as had been suggested by Mr. Evelyn. Dr. Myers indicated staff could provide such a comparison.

Mr. Simmons suggested, given the age of the middle school building (built in 1989), consideration should also be given to upgrading the infrastructure. Dr. Myers reported that current CIP requests included funding for the replacement of windows and HVAC controllers at the middle school. He also noted that the original New Kent Elementary School facilities were approximately forty years old and had never had any major renovations or upgrades.

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IN RE: NKPCS DIGITAL CONVERSION UPDATE

Dr. Myers presented information on NKPCS plans for digital conversion. He reported that the instructional vision included:

1. Greater use of web-based materials with less reliance on textbooks, worksheets and stagnant content knowledge-based materials
2. Greater use of 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, including critical thinking, analysis, application, collaboration, and creativity
3. 1:1 technology to support 21<sup>st</sup> century skills on a daily basis in all classrooms
4. Continued teacher training to create engaging, student-centered, higher order thinking lessons

Dr. Myers added that teachers were doing a phenomenal job but they needed to be provided with the tools necessary to provide instruction in a 21<sup>st</sup> century environment. To do this students and teachers would need to be given greater access to technology which would allow them to readily have the tools necessary to research, problem solve, collaborate and create in every class, every day.

Dr. Myers indicated that the 1:1 technology initiative had been a School Board vision for some time and that he believed it could be accomplished without breaking the bank and without being done at the expense of employees. A move to more technology-based instruction would reduce the needed funding for hard-copy textbooks and economies of scale would make the purchase of 1:1 technology more affordable.

Dr. Myers drew attention to several sample 21<sup>st</sup> Century Lessons which were very interactive and engaging and suggested that students would much prefer to be in classrooms involved in activities such as these rather than more teacher-centered classrooms working through textbooks and worksheets. He added that digital conversion would not happen overnight; the process would need to be slow and steady.

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IN RE: BRIDGING COMMUNITIES UPDATE

Dr. Myers presented information on Bridging Communities Technical School enrollment for 2014-15 and reported that the programs had been a great success so far but were not fully enrolled.

Mr. Davis asked if there was any particular reason why enrollment had not increased this year. Dr. Myers noted that the programs had gotten off to a slow start in the first year and that there had been some problems initially with staffing. He reported that good programs were being offered and that the School Board had given increasing enrollment to him as a goal for the year. Mr. Davis asked if surveying high schools students to determine programs of interest was still a practice. Dr. Myers indicated interest surveys were still being administered and that a great deal of interest had recently been shown in EMT instruction. He reported that RCC (Rappahannock Community College) was currently offering EMT courses at the Bridging Communities facility. These courses were open to the general public and were not a part of any current Bridging Communities programs.

Dr. Hardinge added that answers to the questions regarding Bridging Communities enrollment were complicated. She reported that Bridging Communities was working in collaboration with RCC on some of the programs and students were required to pass the RCC admissions test for placement into some of the courses. She also reported that Bridging Communities Board Members and Superintendents had recently met for a very productive meeting regarding enrollment, recruitment and admissions testing.

Dr. Myers again emphasized that the programs being offered were good programs. He reported that HVAC students were eligible to receive the highest level of industry certification and that some who had received this certification possessed higher credentials than some of the foremen who had supervised them during summer employment. He added that the goal was to maximize every seat.

Mr. Davis asked if there were any other school divisions interested in becoming a part of Bridging Communities. Dr. Myers indicated that no divisions were asking, but that the Board and Superintendents had discussed reaching out to several. He added that the biggest question for many would be where to find the additional funding.

Mr. Davis reported that he noticed buses bringing students to Bridging Communities with only a few students on board and asked why the divisions didn't carpool. Dr. Myers responded that he wasn't sure if they were all on the same operating schedule. Mr. Davis urged Dr. Myers to suggest that other divisions consider the possibility of using Bay Transit as a cheaper alternative to transport students.

Dr. Myers thanked the Supervisors for their ongoing support of Bridging Communities and its programs. Mr. Davis indicated that the Supervisors wanted Bridging Communities to be a success and they wanted students who did not go to college to be successful too. Dr. Hardinge stressed that emphasis was on students being college and career ready and that

students should be able to go to Bridging Communities to make themselves more employable and better able to find a job.

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IN RE: NEW KENT COUNTY DEBT STATUS AND LIMITS

County Administrator Rodney Hathaway opened discussion on the County's debt status and limits. He reported that he had invited Ted Cole, Senior Vice President with Davenport & Company, the County's financial advisor, to come and share information on the County's debt status. He indicated that although Mr. Cole had prepared an in-depth presentation, only a brief overview of its contents would be provided. Mr. Hathaway reported that there would be a change in the way the budget and CIP would be presented this year and that he believed that more information provided would result in better input received.

Mr. Hathaway reported that the CIP recommendations had been drafted and would be sent out next week. The document would include a summary of the CIP fund including revenue sources and how much funding was available. He added that this would be a very tight CIP year. He reported that the County continued to pursue the radio project and was considering buying down some of the project loan principal with CIP funds.

Mr. Hathaway indicated that he had been enjoying working with Dr. Myers and that they had a good relationship. He added that addressing core needs would continue to be a priority and that he would always be open to discussion.

Mr. Evelyn reminded everyone that the radio project was not a "done deal" and was very much still under review.

Mr. Hathaway turned the floor over to Mr. Cole. Mr. Cole provided copies of his report and opened with a summary of the basic goals and objectives including presenting a detailed analysis of the County's existing tax-supported debt profile, providing an overview of the County's E-911 radio system project and providing a review of the Citizens and Farmers Bank bid for financing the E-911 radio system project.

- Existing Tax-Supported Debt – Mr. Cole reported that the County's current debt service totaled \$54.5 million; \$48.3 million for schools and \$6.2 million for County projects. He noted that the debt profile was based on 2014 year-end figures and reflected the savings generated by a recent bond refunding. Dr. Hardinge asked for details on what comprised the school division's portion of the debt service. Mr. Cole directed her to pages 14 through 16 of his report. Mr. Davis noted that Mr. Cole and his staff had done a wonderful job of staying on top of the recent bond refunding which had resulted in a substantial savings to the County; \$281,000 per year. Mr. Cole reported that all "Key Debt Ratios" were in compliance with County policy. A brief overview of the "Debt Affordability Analysis" was provided and included information on the repurposing of one cent of the current tax rate. Dr. Hardinge asked for clarification regarding the repurposing of the one cent. Mr. Hathaway noted that two cents of the tax rate had been set aside for historic school renovations and the recommendation being considered was to repurpose one of the two cents in support of the radio project. Mr. Cole reported that approximately twenty-one cents of the current tax rate was being paid to debt service. Mr. Stiers noted that he had not heard the School Board's opinion in regard to the radio project and asked if the School Board was on board with the County's plans to move forward. The general consensus was that the School Board recognized the importance of this project and the impact it would have on school operations. Dr.

Hardinge indicated that the two boards would need to work together in a difficult year to resolve funding needs.

- Potential E-911 Radio System – Mr. Cole presented information on the potential E-911 radio system project and drew attention to a number of variables. The project was estimated to cost approximately \$6.7 million but this figure remained subject to change. The County had analyzed multiple funding scenarios and had decided to proceed with a financing structure that included ten annual principal payments, one year capitalized interest and a \$1,966,068 down payment. Funds for the down payment could potentially be generated by savings from various CIP projects, the repurposed one cent and \$1.5 million from Fund 7. A “Net Borrowing Amount” of approximately \$5 million would remain.
- Citizens & Farmers (C&F) Bid – After securing bank bids to fund the project, the County was considering moving forward with C&F. If the project moved forward, the average annual debt service payment would be \$556,352. Mr. Cole reported all “Key Debt Ratios” would remain in compliance with County policy after adjustments for the additional debt service. The “Debt Affordability Analysis” indicated the need for a new tax rate penny in FY16, the repurposing of one penny already included in the tax rate and the potential need for an additional penny in FY19.

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IN RE:                    COMMUNICATION AND FUTURE JOINT WORK SESSION AGENDA ITEMS

Dr. Myers asked if the Board Chairs would like to make any comments regarding future joint meetings. Mrs. Barber indicated that she felt that the more opportunities the two boards had to sit together and discuss the issues the better. Mr. Evelyn agreed and noted that every year since he had been on the Board had been a “tough year”. He added that he appreciated that the School Board budget presentations to the County over the years had been based on critical needs. He indicated that it had been great getting to know Dr. Myers and that he and Mr. Hathaway seemed to be working very well together. Mr. Evelyn suggested that he and Mr. Hathaway would get together to discuss possible dates for a future meeting between the two boards and get back to Dr. Myers. Mr. Hathaway noted that Supervisors were tentatively scheduled to have a work session the last Wednesday in February which may be a good date for a future joint meeting.

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IN RE:                    ADJOURNMENT

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

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

The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 6:14 p.m.