

A SPECIAL WORK SESSION OF THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WAS HELD ON THE 17th DAY OF MARCH IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND FIVE OF OUR LORD IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AT 6:05 P.M.

IN RE: ROLL CALL

Mark E. Hill	Present
D. M. "Marty" Sparks	Present
James H. Burrell	Absent (Arrived at 6:15 p.m.)
Stran L Trout	Present
W. R. "Ray" Davis, Jr.	Present

Chairman Davis called the meeting to order.

IN RE: OTHER BUSINESS

Interim County Administrator Richard Ellyson reported that he and Accounting & Budget Director Mary Altemus met with Dr. Geiger to discuss the possibility of sharing human resources and payroll. Dr. Geiger was open to the suggestion and staff is looking into how that might be accomplished, recognizing that any human resources office should be convenient to all staff. Ms. Altemus explained that the School Board was considering outsourcing their benefits and payroll process upon the anticipated retirement of one of their employees.

Mr. Davis concurred that the Finance Department needs another full time position in order to track the utility and school construction projects. There was discussion regarding whether the County or the School Board should handle the accounting of the financing for the school construction. Ms. Altemus indicated that she will check to see what other localities do. Mr. Davis stated that it would make sense to have one staff person that handles all of the loans. There was also a discussion about the School Board's control over their unspent budgeted funds, and what incentive they would have to surrender that to County. There was a consensus to discuss this issue with the School Board on March 28.

Mr. Ellyson reported that there had been a request to use the training room at Fire Station One to hold weekly meetings of a Girl Scout troop that is forming. There was consensus that this would not be a suitable or safe place for the troop. Mr. Ellyson will follow up with the person who made the request and offer suggestions of alternate sites.

Regarding the community meeting on easements scheduled at the March 28 work session, it was agreed to retain the work session seating arrangement and not have a sign up sheet. It will not be videotaped for broadcast.

The Deputy Clerk reported that the new County Administrator is looking into renting an in-law suite rather than staying at one of the local bed and breakfast establishments, and had inquired if the Board would contribute to the cost. The Board will discuss that with him at the Retreat on March 19.

Mr. Burrell was not feeling well and departed at 6:35 p.m. Mr. Sparks left at 6:45 p.m. to attend the Social Services Board meeting

IN RE: FY05/06 BUDGET

Staff distributed Budget Summary for Administration Recommended Budget, Local Discretionary Revenue, Possible Budget Cuts from Administration Requests and Analysis of Designated Funds.

Mr. Ellyson explained that a good projection on real estate tax revenue has not yet been received from the Commissioner of the Revenue because of some problems with Vision's inputting current assessment information into the system. The total assessed value figure provided by Visions today is less than what was shown in the last land book. Mr. Crump is working with Visions to work out the discrepancies.

It was reported that current uncollected real estate taxes total \$219,725, and that there will be an estimated \$4 million in the general fund fund balance at the end of the year. Projected revenues were reported to be approximately \$1.4 million less than proposed budget requests.

Possible adjustments to revenues suggested by staff were an upgrade of the cable franchise fee from 3% to 5%; adoption of a cell phone tax; upgrade of the electricity consumption tax from \$1.50 to \$3.00; adoption of a 5% lodging tax; and upgrade of the admissions tax from 2% to 10%.

It was reported that assessment reductions made by the Board of Equalization totaled over \$12 million and that assessments of new construction at Brickshire totaled only \$9 million.

Mr. Davis stated that he feels that revenue will be generated by new development but admitted that the County "can't take the chance if it doesn't".

There was discussion about adoption of a lodging tax. Even though there are few businesses to which it would apply, it would be wise to have it in place prior to the time that growth and development occurs. It was reported that such a tax would apply to camp grounds, motels and bed and breakfasts.

Ms. Altemus reported that New Kent may have "missed the mark" on some taxes, including the cell phone tax. Furthermore, the personal property (or "car tax") will be frozen at the amount received this year and localities will have to take steps to make up the difference. There was discussion about raising the rate from \$3.75 to \$4.00.

The Board reviewed the staff-recommended cuts in the various budgets, and made additional adjustments, which included reducing Clerk of the Board professional services to \$10,000; reducing the Treasurer's advertising budget to \$1,000 and storage relocation expense to \$1,500; Fire & Emergency Management convention & education to \$15,000 and uniforms & apparel to \$37,350; Planning's printing & binding to \$8,000 and elimination of their food & serving supplies and uniforms & apparel budget; Economic Development's professional services was eliminated but \$5,000 was added for promotional material; and \$1,000 was re-instated for

professional services for the Board of Zoning Appeals. New positions that have made the first cut are 2 new inspectors under Building Inspectors, and a Fire Marshall. The Board changed the grade and step for the Fire Marshall position to a grade 27, step 5, and changed the upgrades for the lieutenant positions to a grade 23, step 4. Staff reported that they had increased the gasoline costs in both the Fire and Sheriff budgets. Only one GPS unit has been included in the Planning Budget, and the Social Services vehicle has been eliminated. The cost for LEOS has not been included in the budget, but there is \$50,000 set aside for implementation of the salary study. Positions eliminated include the Assistant to the County Administrator and all six new fire fighters. An assistant for Buck Stewart has been included, but no new positions in Planning. The money for roof repairs at the Old Courthouse has also been eliminated.

Staff reported that the cost for the video surveillance system was not included in next year's budget and the Board was of the consensus that there was money in this year's contingency fund to pay for it. It was reported that the Sheriff's Office is in the process of obtaining estimates for installation of panic buttons in additional areas around the building, which can also be paid for out of contingency.

It was reported that the assessor position has not been included. There was discussion about the cost of a full-time assessor compared to the cost of hiring a reassessment firm and loss of revenue due to 4-year cycle. It was agreed that the County would wait one more year before hiring a full time assessor.

There was a discussion about the firefighters' schedules and holiday pay, and whether a special personnel policy should be developed for the paid fire staff.

Mr. Davis suggested using the building that once housed Fire Co. 1 as a new site for the animal shelter. Mr. Ellyson will check on the title to the property.

There was a discussion about the school budget and how the same percentage raise that is given to teachers is also given to administrative staff. \$300,000 is included in the proposed budget to cover interest on the loan for elementary school renovations.

The upgrade of the administrative assistant for Economic Development was discussed, and it was decided to discuss this issue further with the EDA at the retreat on March 19.

The Board instructed staff to make the changes discussed, and to compute revenues based on adoption of a utility consumer tax on telephones, a transient occupancy tax of 5%, a cable franchise fee upgrade, an increase in the personal property tax to \$4.00, and a 2¢ increase in the real estate tax.

Ms. Altemus advised the Board that she needs to meet with them to discuss Fund 7 and Fund 98. It was agreed that the next budget meeting will be held on Thursday, March 24, 2005, at 6:00 p.m.

IN RE: CONTINUATION OF MEETING

The meeting was continued until Saturday, March 19, 2005. The meeting was suspended at 9:11 p.m.
