

A WORK SESSION OF THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS WAS HELD ON THE 23RD DAY OF FEBRUARY IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND FOUR OF OUR LORD IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AT 6:00 P.M.

IN RE: ROLL CALL

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| Mark E. Hill | Present |
| D. M. "Marty" Sparks | Present |
| Stran L Trout | Present |
| W. R. "Ray" Davis, Jr. | Absent (arrived at 6:40 p.m.) |
| James H. Burrell | Present |

Chairman Burrell called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

School Board Chair, Van McPherson, called roll of the School Board. Those present were Terri Lindsay, Gail Hardinge, Joseph Yates and Van McPherson.

IN RE: 2004/2005 SCHOOL BUDGET

School Superintendent Roy Geiger reviewed the proposed school budget by power point presentation. Their vision statement remains "be the best small public school division in the Commonwealth of Virginia". Budget goals for the upcoming year include retaining/attracting quality staff; maintaining safe school environments; providing adequate support staff; improving student achievement; increasing student/staff technology skills; and meeting projected cost increases of key budget items (VRS and health insurance). Key additional costs involving personnel include a 4.5% salary increase (includes step increase), VRS increase (\$300,000+), health insurance increase (20% increase in premiums), part time occupational therapist (mandated - increase in students), high school special ed math teacher (to work with special ed teachers), middle school special ed aide, middle school 8th grade teacher (to lower teacher/pupil ratio from 27.8 to 24.8), high school assistant principal (who will also manage educational foundation and hopefully write grants), middle school guidance counselor (currently not meeting state guidelines), gifted resource teacher (2 teachers now serve 2525 students), full time bus driver (to serve as substitute bus driver instead of mechanics – real dollar savings) and clerk of the works (to oversee elementary and primary school projects). Non-personnel costs include contracted physical therapy (\$40,000), textbook adoptions (\$20,000 for science books– goal is one book for every student); HVAC contract (\$15,000+ - rebidding), middle school football program (one time start up cost of \$16,000), and additional Governor's School student (2 kids per grade level). Dr. Geiger reviewed the rationale for each of these items. He noted that they would not need trailers for any of these new positions.

Dr. Geiger provided a salary comparison of New Kent teachers to those in surrounding localities, which reflected that New Kent has moved into the median range in most levels. He reported that new teachers in New Kent next year will earn just above \$30,000. He reported that localities to the east of New Kent are looking at teacher pay increases of 5% - 6% and those to the west at 3.5%. He stated that it was important for New Kent not lose the ground it has gained in the last few years. The 4.5% pay increase will be for all personnel. He stated that pay rates for all school personnel was competitive, with the exception of the bus drivers.

Dr. Geiger reviewed the items proposed to be funded from the capital account, which include 5 replacement buses, an electrician vehicle, a service truck, a drivers ed vehicle and 2 replacement cars. There was discussion regarding bus replacement, improved safety features, lower maintenance costs and expanded life. Dr. Geiger reported an expected decrease in the bus fleet by the proposed move in 2005-2006 to a double run student transportation system as a result of conversion to K-5 schools.

State funds expected are \$9,916,430 (based on a student population of 2575) and federal funds of \$890,000. County funds expected are \$8,088,832 (same as last year), and additional funds needed are \$820,000 (of which approximately \$520,000 are mandated). Dr. Geiger warned that VRS can still increase by \$76,000 more than budgeted.

Dr. Geiger reviewed the items that the School Board had removed from its budget, which included increases for RTC and staff development, which they hope to pay for out of carry over funds.

There was discussion regarding teacher aides (paraprofessionals) and the programs to upgrade their qualifications and pay, there past efforts to locate a grant writer, the position of clerk of the works, the General Assembly budgets, and the state's failure to do its fair share in funding education.

Mr. Hill stated that he felt that \$896,000 in additional funds was a more realistic figure than \$820,000.

Chairman McPherson adjourned the meeting of the School Board.

IN RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Larry Forbes, chairman of the New Kent Economic Development Authority, introduced the EDA members in attendance which included Paul Robinson, Charles Davis, Conway Adams and Gratton Stephens, as well as Andy Hagy, the Economic Development Director.

Andy Hagy provided the Board members with a marketing brochure, and gave an overview of the accomplishments of the EDA since he was hired in 1999, which included developing partnerships with the VEDP, Colonial Downs, Chesapeake Corporation, and the Virginia Port Authority as well as efforts to develop the Peavy tract. He reviewed efforts relating to the Route 33 corridor, and his marketing efforts with Virginia Business Magazine, Inside Business and trade shows. As a result of the relocation to New Kent by Basic Construction, Commercial Carrier, Curtis Contracting, Interior Specialty and Jasper Automotive, 250 jobs have been created and \$15 million in investment. He reviewed his efforts regarding technology infrastructure and the displays to be located in the eastbound I-64 rest area. The Board was also provided with a sample of the marketing presentation developed for Weir Creek Commerce Park and the Route 33 corridor, as well as a glimpse of the EDA's web site.

By power point presentation, Larry Forbes reported that the mission of the EDA was to "enhance the quality of life and raise the standard of living for all people living in New Kent County by establishing an aggressive economic development strategy and program to maintain and enhance the rich history, rural environment and country lifestyle". Goals include supporting and maintaining existing businesses and jobs; developing light/medium manufacturing; developing service industries and supporting commercial businesses; developing a County tourism industry; developing/supporting entrepreneurial and home-based businesses; and developing/supporting utility and technology infrastructure throughout the County.

Mr. Forbes asked the Board to review the handouts and provide input to the EDA as to how they can work together.

There was discussion regarding the bond financings of the EDA and the resulting revenue. It was reported that the EDA wants to put these funds to good use for the County. Mr. Forbes stated that at its last meeting, the EDA had voted to repay the County whatever has been expended on its behalf for FY03/04.

Mr. Trout commended the EDA for its good work on its strategic plan.

There was discussion regarding the advantages and disadvantages of New Kent's joining a regional economic development partnership, as well as the EDA's plans for the commerce park and perceived competition with private landowners.. Mr. Robinson stated that it was not the EDA's role to own and manage structures, but to facilitate growth and economic development in the County. Mr. Hill suggested that the EDA use its funds to install a road and utilities in the Commerce Park in order to

improve its marketability. There was discussion about the EDA's plans to timber the property and install a graveled road, and the price tag of over \$1 million to install a paved road.

There was also discussion about public private partnerships, and Mr. Christie suggested that those questions be directed to Davenport & Associates who will be appearing at tomorrow night's meeting. There was also discussion regarding competing sites in other localities. Mr. Hagy reported that two disadvantages of sites in New Kent are the lack of natural gas and the lack of rail service.

IN RE: COUNTY STRATEGIC PLAN

Mr. Sparks distributed a draft strategic plan which had been prepared by the committee consisting of himself, Mr. Trout, Mr. Christie and John Crump. This plan addressed business development, infrastructure, natural and rural resources, tourism, public safety, public services, human services, education, public facilities plan and recreation. Mr. Sparks asked Board members to review the plan and bring comments and input back to the meeting on February 26. Once those comments have been incorporated, he suggests that the Board take the plan into their districts for review and comment, and thereafter schedule it for a public hearing.

IN RE: LAND PRESERVATION TAX ACT

County Attorney, Phyllis Katz, provided a handout which compared AFDs to Special Assessments for Land Preservation (Land Use Tax). She reported that a major difference is that there is no provision for open space in the AFD. Another significant difference is that an AFD requires a core of at least 200 acres in one parcel or contiguous parcels; for Land Preservation, as little as 5 acres would qualify. Both require roll back payments of taxes with a change in status. AFDs are costly and cumbersome, and require advertisement and public hearings before three different bodies, as well as significant staff time. Eligibility for land use tax is determined administratively by the Commissioner of the Revenue, based upon interpretation of the criteria established by the Board of Supervisors and the County's land use map, and is less burdensome on County staff. Ms. Katz recommended that the current re-assessment year would be a good opportunity to consider this option. The current AFDs can continue until expiration, and there would be no renewals or additions. The consequence could be that more parcels of land qualify for lower taxes, but it would serve to maintain open space and the rural character of the County.

Commissioner of the Revenue John Crump expressed his concern that the Board needed to be clear in what it wants to achieve and how, and that he would need this clarification in order to be able to make determinations. He stated that land owners would need to file an annual recertification that the land use has not changed. Appeals of Mr. Crump's decision would be made to the Circuit Court.

Community Development Director George Homewood was concerned about the 25 acre lots in the County that would presumably qualify for land use tax, which would not currently qualify for AFD status. Ms. Katz stated that the Board could designate the parts of the County in which these parcels could be located.

It was reported that some localities use both systems. In James City County, property must be located outside of the service area (for public utilities) to be able to qualify.

Mr. Trout stated that AFDs were often used to delay payment of taxes until land became suitable for development.

Mr. Davis was concerned that this option would remove three filters (AFD board, Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors), and provides for no opportunity for public input.

The Board decided that this option is worth considering, and will work toward making a decision this summer. In the interim, it was suggested that the terms of the AFDs be shortened and that the AFD Board be tasked with making a recommendation as to length of terms.

There was some discussion regarding an application by Ducks Unlimited for a perpetual easement recently approved for 890 acres, and an application for 3100 acres to follow, and the need for the Board to provide some guidance for Mr. Homewood. Mr. Homewood has suggested that the applicant follow the model of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation for future applications.

IN RE: JUNK CARS

Mr. Davis reported that this is a problem for many localities and there is no consistent policy from County to County. There was discussion regarding lack of staff. Even if a list of offenders is obtained and notices are sent, there has to be a way to follow up with enforcement.

Ms. Katz reported that Caroline County has recently had the same problem and has cleared up approximately 80% of the vehicles.

Mr. Sparks suggested some type of amnesty program, giving offenders a 60 – 90 day window to remove the inoperable vehicles. One option would be for the County to offer to pay to have the vehicle towed during that time, and thereafter will charge the owner.

Mr. Homewood reminded that the County does not have the manpower to handle this process, unless other tasks go undone. There was discussion regarding a non-threatening public relations campaign to clean up for the 350th celebration, using a private contractor, and other incentives. The Board members were asked to consider this problem and be prepared to make a decision at the next meeting.

IN RE: CONTINUATION OF THE MEETING

The meeting was continued to Tuesday, February 24, 2004, at 7:00 p.m. The meeting was suspended at 9:35 p.m.
