

A SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND NEW KENT COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD WAS HELD ON THE 14TH DAY OF FEBRUARY IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND ELEVEN OF OUR LORD IN THE BOARDROOM OF THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING IN NEW KENT, VIRGINIA, AT 5:00 P.M.

IN RE: CALL BACK TO ORDER

Chairman Evelyn called the meeting, which had been continued from February 2, 2011, back to order.

IN RE: ROLL CALL

Thomas W. Evelyn	Present
David M. Sparks	Absent (arrived at 5:05 p.m.)
James H. Burrell	Present
Stran L. Trout	Present
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Present

School Board Chair Leigh Quick called the School Board meeting to order. School Board members present were Mrs. Quick, Terri Lindsay and Jim Noctor. It was reported that Gail Hardinge was en route and that Joe Yates was unable to attend.

IN RE: FY12 BUDGET

School Superintendent Robert Richardson distributed information regarding potential State funding. He noted "considerable disparity" between the Senate and House proposed budgets, with the House budget reducing education funding and the Senate increasing it. He reviewed some known impacts on the School budget that included increased Virginia Retirement System (VRS) contributions, decreased funding resulting from a change in the Local Consumer Price Index calculation method, and the elimination of federal stimulus funding that had been received in the past two years. He pointed out that the Governor's proposed budget provided for a reduction in education funding of \$50.1 million over the next two years, and that overall funding for education as a percentage of the State budget since 2009 had dropped from 35% to 29.9%. He indicated that Medicaid funding appeared to be increasing in proportion to the decreases for education, and that proposed funding for higher education appeared to have increased.

He advised that the School Board was required to adopt a budget by April 1 and hoped to have more definitive information by early March. He reported that General Assembly bills that would require employees to make a 5% contribution to VRS (accompanied by a 3% raise) were "close to dead" in both chambers, explaining that such a proposal would represent a 2% net cut in pay for employees who had not received raises in three years. Some Board members predicted that the proposal would likely reappear at some time in the future.

Dr. Richardson reported that the School had approximately \$547,000 in "Jobs" money from last year, which was one-time funding, that it would likely use to pay for the positions funded with stimulus funding for the past two years. He noted that those positions were necessitated by the 2.7% enrollment increase as well as some new special needs students who had moved into the County, and using those funds in that way would give them "another year to see what could be worked out".

IN RE: HISTORIC SCHOOL RENOVATION PROJECT

Chairman Evelyn explained that the County had rejected the proposals received under an unsolicited Public Private Education Act (PPEA) process for renovation of the Historic School and had advertised its own scope of work as a solicited PPEA. Copies of the Request for Proposals were distributed to members of both Boards.

General Services Director Jim Tacosa reviewed the scope that had been developed for the two buildings. It was noted that only the front portion of the South building (7,200 square feet) had been included in the design, which had been based upon a sketch provided by School Board staff. He pointed out that the partitions would likely have to be moved as the project went forward, but that the design did set forth what would be needed from electrical, mechanical and architectural standpoints. Board members explained that the renovations of the South building had been scaled back to provide for immediate needs, in light of the state of the economy. It was confirmed that the lease for the current School Board offices ran through December 2012 and annual rent payments totaled \$45,000.

Mr. Tacosa indicated that he anticipated that the contractors bidding on the Historic School renovation project would submit their own plans for the project, at which time the School Board would have an opportunity to provide comments and input. He also indicated that he was searching for school yearbooks from the 1950s and earlier to use as a reference in the restoration of the 1930s building.

It was confirmed that the deadline for conceptual bids was March 18. Mr. Tacosa reviewed the process, and acknowledged that the deadlines in the RFP were "aggressive" and may have to be changed but had been set with the looming lease deadlines in mind. Ms. Lindsay noted that at the end of the School Board lease, the rental arrangement would convert to a month-to-month situation that would cost twice what was currently being paid.

Dr. Richardson indicated that New Kent was part of a regional Consortium comprised of five school divisions that had expressed interest in locating a regional career and technical education center inside the Science Building. He reported that members of the Consortium and its consultant had visited the building and had identified five program areas, including HVAC, Agriculture, Video Technology, STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) and Health Science (EMT training, nursing, and general science) that could be accommodated. He advised that students would attend their normal high school for half of the school day and spend the other half at the center, allowing the center to accommodate two separate student groups.

He noted that it had been determined that the former bus garage was not suitable for a modern auto technical program.

Dr. Richardson indicated that the five school divisions were "on board" and would be meeting during the upcoming week and most likely design a letter of intent indicating commitment and funding. He explained that New Kent County would pay to convert the space into a "shell" and the rest of the costs would come from the Consortium. He indicated that a proposed operating budget could be developed within a couple of months since the prospective programs had been identified and that the consultant was already talking to vendors about donations and looking at STEM grants. He remarked that the process was moving very quickly.

Board members asked about the expected length of any commitment. Dr. Richardson advised that the Consortium had been organized since 2002 and had a Foundation with some funding in place. He remarked that it was fair to say that its intentions were very serious.

Board members asked about canvassing students to determine interest in these programs. Dr. Richardson advised that there had been some canvassing but that more would be done now that the programs had been identified. He talked about dissatisfaction with Richmond Technical Center (RTC), where New Kent enrollment had dropped from 55 students to 10, and reported that the current annual cost to send a New Kent student to RTC was \$3,200.

Dr. Richardson confirmed that the costs of equipping the classrooms would be shared by the school divisions through their respective Capital Improvement Projects budgets, and that the operational budget would be driven by tuition. It was noted that having this center in New Kent would save the County money in transportation costs.

Staff confirmed that should the regional technical center become a reality, then renovations to the Science Building would be done as a separate project and would not interfere with the other Historic School renovations.

Dr. Richardson added that it would also provide a location for evening adult education classes, the demand for which was also increasing, and would not interfere with the operations of the technical center. County Administrator Cabell Lawton noted that it would be another useful tool to recruit businesses to New Kent by being able to offer workforce training opportunities.

Mr. Sparks commented that although there were some budget concerns, he felt that this was a way to provide a much needed educational alternative to New Kent's students.

Mr. Evelyn stated that the Board still needed to see what the cost was going to be before it made any decision.

It was noted that the School Board staff had previously indicated that it planned to relocate the offices of the Psychological Services staff to the Science Building. Dr. Richardson suggested that issue needed further discussion by the School Board.

Mr. Lawton advised that he would coordinate a follow-up joint meeting between the two Boards after the School Board had adopted its budget.

Mrs. Quick adjourned the School Board meeting.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

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

David M. Sparks	Aye
James H. Burrell	Aye
Stran L. Trout	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye

The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 5:40 p.m.