

AT A SPECIAL MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF THE COUNTY
OF JAMES CITY, VIRGINIA, HELD ON THE THIRTIETH DAY OF MARCH,
NINETEEN HUNDRED EIGHTY-ONE AT 7:00 P.M. IN THE COUNTY
GOVERNMENT CENTER BOARD ROOM, 101 MOUNTS BAY ROAD, JAMES
CITY COUNTY, VIRGINIA.

A. ROLL CALL

Jack D. Edwards, Chairman, Berkeley District
Abram Frink, Jr., Vice-Chairman, Roberts District
Gilbert A. Bartlett, Jamestown District
Perry M. DePue, Powhatan District
Stewart U. Taylor, Stonehouse District

James B. Oliver, Jr., County Administrator
John E. McDonald, Assistant to the County Administrator
Frank M. Morton, III, County Attorney

B. PRE-BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Mr. Edwards explained that this public hearing would give citizens an opportunity to express their views about the FY 82 Proposed Budget, as presented by the County Administrator. He commented that Mr. John E. McDonald would give a brief presentation on the budget, after which citizens could speak.

Mr. John E. McDonald, Assistant to the County Administrator, explained that this year there are actually two proposed budgets, the first would retain the current tax rate of 82¢ which would completely fund the proposed activities in the budget and provide for a legal supplement to allow the County to fund activities in the event of a court case on annexation. He said that in case the court settlement is not necessary, the proposed budget recommends a reduction of the tax rate from 82¢ to 78¢ and he wished to concentrate his comments on the 78¢ rate budget.

Mr. McDonald highlighted several elements of the budget. He commented that the total general fund revenue is up 9.7% which is somewhat less than the rate of inflation; the real estate tax rate at 78¢ - a reduction of 4¢; local school contributions +16%; total operating expense increased by 14%; the average residential assessment is expected to increase 9.5% coupled with a 4¢ reduction in tax rate, the average tax levy is expected to go up 4.2%; cost of living increase not including school is 9.5%. Mr. McDonald further stated that there was a significant reduction in surplus and the amount of funds expected in the Capital Improvements Program. He said that the Board will be asked to reconsider the current criteria for exemption or deferral of taxes for the elderly and permanently disabled.

Mr. McDonald further stated that the County is trying to make do with what they have and they have initiated programs to do that such as energy audits; studies on fuel consumption which is an annual goal funded by the State to reduce fuel consumption in the County by 10% per vehicle each year; analyzing light fixtures; improved maintenance on vehicles and equipment to prolong the life. He said that on the other side of the coin, the County has aggressively pursued cash management by doing their own internal audits, maximizing the County's use of Federal and State grant funds to return the dollar investment into the community. He also commented that the County is trying to reduce the impact of inflation by limiting the use of debt financing. He summarized that the proposed budget represents a fairly good balance of needs and there are three major areas where this can be seen: (1) education; (2) fire suppression and upgrading emergency services efforts and (3) a cost-of-living adjustment for County employees. He said that in the area of capital expenditures, there are five priorities: (1) water development, (2) aerial ladder truck for fire service; (3) landfill improvements; (4) recreation improvements and (5) possible school renovations. Mr. McDonald commented that the Capital Improvements Project is substantial although it is 40% lower than that of previous years.

AAJ927

Mr. Edwards opened the public hearing.

Mr. John Kozel commented that on January 12, 1981, a pre-budget hearing was held and only a small number of people spoke. To offset the idea that citizens are not interested in the County's financial affairs, a group had been organized to speak tonight. He asked the chairman to call on those persons from the list that he had received.

Mr. Wesley Sheldon commented that for years the percentage of personal and corporate income has risen directly by increased rates and indirectly by inflation which compounds the problem of overburdening the taxpayers. He also said that bankruptcies are on the rise and many wage earners are on limited hours. Mr. Sheldon said that taxpayers cannot afford all the things the government can and will do for us, therefore, he urged the Board to be diligent in setting their priorities. He concluded that the mandate issued by the federal government in November, 1980, should be carefully heeded by all local governments.

Mr. Robert Clifford commented that as a former United Nations Planning Advisor, he is fully aware of the problems faced by the County staff in preparing a five year Comprehensive Plan, followed by the Annual Budget required to implement the Plan. He thanked the County Administrator for inviting the groups to meet informally to discuss long-term goals and priorities. However, the group questioned the delay in updating the Five Year Plan which appeared six years ago, which makes it unfortunate that a 1980 Comprehensive Plan has not been completed to give the Board an up-to-date framework to consider the proposed budget against long-term County needs. Mr. Clifford further stated that in the absence of the Comprehensive Plan for 1980-81, it is difficult to judge whether the continuing trend in increased County services requiring additional personnel is actually justified. He commented that last year, the budget called for 18 new positions and this year calls for 8½ new people. Mr. Clifford said that the time has come for the Board to review and rationalize the various services offered today by the County.

He said that additional capital expenditures can be reduced. He commented that the water development has not been itemized, therefore, it is hard to evaluate, and he hopes the necessary studies have been accomplished. Mr. Clifford questioned the need for the Sheriff's Building and why the Board approved spending an additional \$394,000 after allocating \$364,000 in unspent funds in last year's budget. Mr. Clifford concluded that if the County moves forward on the budget, then there would be no 40% reduction on capital expenditures in 1982 as mentioned.

Mr. Kenneth Burns stated that he was encouraged to see a 4¢ reduction in the real estate tax. He said that there should be enough funds available within the 78¢ tax rate to cover legal and other consultant services connected with annexation, as well as enough to provide a 16% salary increase to teachers. He also noted that the budget lists an increase in neighborhood value averages before a rate reduction but feels this has been a very gradual and limited reduction. He said that with inflation, personal property values have increased measurably - so why not a reduction there? He asked that some of the capital projects be funded over a longer period of time. He suggested that real estate and personal property taxes can be reduced and the County could still operate handsomely.

Mr. Lawrence Herron, III, Falling Creek Circle, commented on the projected increase of \$60,000 or 27% in the recreation/cultural budget. He said that a recreation program is nice to have but certainly is not essential. He also said that the County has survived a number of years without a recreation director, but the first has been hired this month. Mr. Herron said that it seems to be inappropriate to spend 27% more of tax dollars on recreation as well as the \$17,000 for site work at Thomas Nelson Community College. He said that the budget says that surplus funds are used each year to contribute to capital projects and this year surplus funds total more than one million and six thousand and these funds are defined as contingency. He said that the \$240,000 to cover the court battle for annexation would cost each taxpayer 4¢ more for each \$100 tax assessment. Mr. Herron commented that with a built in surplus of over a million dollars there should be no need for a ¼ million surplus, just in case, to defend annexation. He said that citizens have not been given any details of the annexation agreement, only speculation from the press. He asked the Board to pass a resolution authorizing the County Administrator to issue a public release on those areas in dispute so that citizens can understand the issues.

Mr. John Kozell, last speaker of the group, quoted this portion of the 1980 update of the Comprehensive Plan:

James City County ranked 81st out of 136 counties and cities in Virginia as measured by per capita personal income for year 1979. Other peninsula jurisdictions ranked substantially higher than the County. Per capita personal income was only \$5,961 for 77% of the state average in 1979. The rapid increase in employment in the 1970's did not substantially alleviate the low income problem in the County. The percent of low income families in the County remains higher than the state and the rate of decline of low income families was substantially less for the state as the whole. Total revenues allocated for public expenditures nearly doubled from 5.2 million to 10.3 million dollars during the period of FY 1974 -79. During this same period, general property taxes increased as a proportion of general fund revenues from 43% to 58%.

Mr. Kozell said that this indicates that the County needs to take look at what they have been doing the past few years by expanding County governments increased facilities, capital improvements and a much larger staff. He said the Board should keep in mind that every increased facility calls for additional personnel. He noted that he had given the Board a departmental summary comparison he had compiled on the increase in operating expenses for FY 80 with proposed budget of FY 82, which showed an increase of 47.6% over a 2 year period. He asked the Board to look carefully at each department's budget. He concluded that he concurred with the remarks made by the previous speakers.

Mr. Edwin Oyer commented that he spoke on behalf of 42 other families in Poplar Hall and they have come to the conclusion that there is not an unlimited source of money out there. He said that the Board should impose a limit on the amount of increase allowed in any budget whether it is a percentage increase per year adjusted for inflation or not adjusted for inflation. He also said that perhaps the Board should identify priority for money being spent. He said if \$320,000 is available now in invested funds, why not use that as a starter and forget collecting \$250,000 as a standby for annexation. He questioned the average of 9% on real estate assessments when his own property has gone up 35% since 1978 and 13% this year. As for the pay raises for teachers, he said that they do need the increase, however, he does not feel that all teachers deserve a raise. He asked if the entire community is getting their money's worth from VPI & U Extension Service. He said that he feels the area of Civil Defense is very important and suggested that something be published about its activities in the event evacuation is necessary. Mr. Oyer said that when the landfill Operation was in its preliminary stages, he was told that it would not be an expensive project, yet it started out with one person and now has 4 employees. He said that residents are very concerned about how money is being spent, but are not able to attend the meetings because of their work schedules. He urged the Board to review the budget to assure that taxpayer's money is being well spent.

Ms. Cornelia Dexter commented that she is a taxpayer and parent and was present to encourage the Board to fully fund the proposed school budget because she feels this community is far above average and can afford to do more for children. She said she does not believe the County has financial problems and feels the tax rate can be maintained and priorities adjusted. Ms. Dexter stated that the school system has described their budget as "bare-bones", and the County Administrator recommends a reduced school budget obviously they don't believe that the proposed budget is accurate. She concluded that parents don't want their children to have a bare-bones education, therefore, she urged the Board to fully fund the school systems' budget so that teachers can stop their campaign and go back into the classroom.

Mrs. Margaret Brickhouse stated that she was on an advisory group for gifted and talented children but, if funds are cut, all children will suffer because education is important to all children regardless of the level of intelligence. She asked the Board to support the school system's budget because in order to have a good country, State or County, well-educated children are a must.

Mrs. Anne Hobson asked the Board to fully fund the school system's budget and added that if their budget is cut, it means that personnel be reduced or the proposed salary increase for teachers will be reduced and either one will have a bad effect on the educational program. She said that the County can afford to spend more on the schools than they presently do, even if it means

AAJ927

adding onto the tax rate because she feels that children should have the best education they can be given.

Mrs. Elise Emanuel, a teacher for Williamsburg-James City County Schools, commented that teachers did not join the teaching profession to get wealthy, but to earn a living commensurate with their training. She stated that teachers across the state are concerned that Virginia teachers' salaries have lagged far behind other segments of the population. She said that she is concerned that teachers' wages have not kept pace with purchasing power and it does not encourage competent persons to choose the classroom. She also stated that of the students taking their SAT's, less than 7%, among three choices, indicated that they wanted to be teachers. Mrs. Emanuel pointed out that she saw an ad in the paper for a Community Planner in the County and discovered that with three years of experience and a bachelor's degree, a County Planner would earn \$20,000. She said a teacher with 19 years of experience and a master's degree does not earn \$20,000 in the school system. She asked the Board to be considerate of teachers as they review the budget.

Mr. Donald Burke stated that when you start figuring what teachers are paid at 28 pupils per teacher, it comes out to be about 45¢ an hour. He said that it is the duty of the school boards and citizens to eliminate incompetent teachers. Mr. Burke commented that he is glad that education is top priority in the budget, therefore, he asked the Board to grant an across the board increase to teachers and fully fund the school budget.

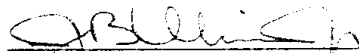
Mrs. Mary Ann Burke commented that as a parent, quality education is her primary interest in the budget. She said that each year teachers are faced with having their incomes published, analyzed and scrutinized before the whole community. She further stated that every tax dollar used for education will be well spent and educators should be given the incentive to perform their best, which can best be achieved by offering a pay scale we can be proud of. She asked the Board to authorize full funding of the school budget because we will get what we pay for.

Ms. Beverly Pinotti of 18 Whittakers Mill Road stated that she believes we are falling behind in our obligation to teachers and ultimately to our students when we continue to underpay teachers and at the same time increase our demands on them. She also stated that industry is attracting the best math and science graduates, which will make students suffer in those areas over the next few years. Ms. Pinotti asked the Board to consider fully funding the school budget.

There being no other speakers, Mr. Edwards closed the public hearing. He thanked the citizens for coming out and invited them to attend future work sessions on the budget and the final public hearing scheduled for April 20, 1981. Mr. Edwards commented that he believes the budget is a good one and compares favorably with budgets of surrounding jurisdictions and if anyone has any questions concerning the budget, Mr. Oliver and Mr. McDonald will be willing to answer their questions.

With no further discussion of business, Mr. Taylor moved to recess. The motion carried by a unanimous roll call vote.

The meeting RECESSED at 8:15 P.M until April 6, 1981 for a scheduled budget worksession.



James B. Oliver, Jr.
Clerk to the Board