

April 4, 2017

Clarke County Board Of Supervisors
Clarke County School Board
Budget and Tax Rate Public Hearing
Main Meeting Room

1:00 p.m.

At the FY2018 Budget and CY2017 Tax Rate Public Hearing of the Board of Supervisors and the School Board of Clarke County, Virginia, held in the Berryville Clarke County Government Center, 101 Chalmers Court, 2nd Floor, Berryville, Virginia conducted on Tuesday, April 4, 2017.

Board of Supervisors Members

Present: Mary L.C. Daniel – Berryville District; David S. Weiss - Buckmarsh / Blue Ridge District; Terri T. Catlett - Millwood / Pine Grove District; Barbara J. Byrd – Russell District; Bev B. McKay – White Post District; Absent: None

County Staff Present

David Ash, Brian Lichty, Lora Walburn

School Board Members

Present: Monica Singh-Smith - Buckmarsh / Blue Ridge District; Jon Turkel - Millwood / Pine Grove District; Tom Parker – Russell District; Absent: Chuyen Kochinsky - Berryville District; Chip Schutte – White Post District

School Staff Present

Chuck Bishop, Rick Catlett, Tom Judge, Renee Weir

Constitutional / State Offices

Pam Hess, Becky White, Anthony “Tony” Roper, Brian Rosenberry

Press

Cathy Kuehner - The Winchester Star

Others Present

Van Armacost, Jay Arnold, Jason Burns, and other citizens

1) Call to Order

At 7:33 p.m., Chairman Weiss called the Board of Supervisors meeting to order and called for a motion to adopt the agenda.

Vice Chair McKay moved to adopt the agenda as presented. The motion carried by the following vote:

Barbara J. Byrd	- Aye
Terri T. Catlett	- Aye
Mary L.C. Daniel	- Aye
Beverly B. McKay	- Aye
David S. Weiss	- Aye

Chairman Weiss expressed thanks to all attending the meeting.

At 7:34 pm, Chairman Parker called the School Board meeting to order.

2) FY2108 Budget Public Hearing

Tom Judge, Director Joint Administrative Services, provided highlights of the proposed FY2018 Budget:

- Reduce Real Estate Tax rate \$.01 (-\$218,655).
- Budget funds for a salary increase in the amount of 3% of current salary (\$636,000 including the impact on benefits) to agencies funded by the County, including Public Schools, Social Services, and Joint Administrative Services, to be further distributed by those agencies based on the pay and classification systems in use by those agencies. Note that this does not mean that each individual employee receives a 3% salary increase.
- Position Changes:
 - Add Human Services Assistant to Social Services: \$23,872.
 - Add additional on-call pay to Social Services: \$1,170.
 - Add additional part-time EMT: \$25,760.
 - Add to contingency full-time clerical to serve multiple departments: \$49,118.
- Add to General Government Capital \$376,746 to fund the first phase of the Communications System upgrade.
- Add \$200,000 for convenience center operations.

- Reduce local tax funding for CSA \$307,969 based on reduced need.
- Reduce School Debt service \$843, 798 based on reduced need.

Following review, Chairman Weiss called for questions from the Board; being none, he called for technical questions from the audience. With no questions from the audience, Chairman Weiss asked Mr. Judge to explain pay-as-you-go funds. Mr. Judge explained that pay-as-you-go means paying cash not borrowing, a sound fiscally-conservative principle.

At 7:43 p.m., Chairman Weiss opened the public comment portion of the public hearing.

Jason Burns, Ebenezer Road, representing Blue Ridge Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company:

“Thank you for your time tonight. I just want to reiterate the budget request came in from all three departments asking for an increase this year; and really, it may not be possible this year. But, we really need to look at it in the future because the financial burden of the fire department is exceeding what our people can do. We definitely need the help from the County. So, the cost of equipment, the time put into fundraise – we have some very talented people out there that volunteer that are spending a lot of time working bingo, doing fundraisers. Couple great examples: Brian Conrad at Boyce, excellent farm machinery guy, teaches us all kinds of stuff in classes; but he is probably working bingo two times a week to finance the fire department. Chris Shipe at Enders, excellent expert on the insurance industry, he could have had our insurance stuff done; but, he has multiple other things he does. If we were to free up our volunteers with some of this fundraising, we could do a lot more for the County that would be “where the rubber meets the road” actually providing services to citizens instead of worrying about where our next dollar is coming from.

Please keep in mind. Maybe it is too late to get it into this year’s budget what we requested; but, in future, please, we need the money. Thank you.”

Chairman Weiss thanked Mr. Burns for his comments and his service, as well as the services provided by Blue Ridge.

Van Armacost, Walnut Street, Representing John H. Enders Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company:

“When I joined in the ‘70’s, it was standing room only to get in a station. You had to impress the officers, knock out a couple weekends at fire school, take a quick CPR class, and you could ride in the truck. Now, it takes 210 hours of EMT, 32 hours EVOC, 16 hours emergency room training, precept for 10 calls – that is just to get on the ambulance and run BLS [Basic Life Support]. If you want to do ALS [Advanced Life Support], it is another 1,000 hours [training]. So, it is a huge commitment for a volunteer person.

Currently, Clarke has only 70 volunteers that ran 850 calls. There were 2,600 EMS calls last year. Three volunteer companies at 14 trucks, 5 ambulances, and 6 vehicles on the road, which we must maintain at all times. These dedicated men and women have outside jobs and give up time with their own families in order to provide a critically necessary service to the taxpayers of Clarke County. Currently, these volunteers are struggling to keep up with mandated training, fundraising, meetings, and, of course, the main focus of our cause, running calls.

The Board of Supervisors has initiated the Fire and EMS Commission to oversee the countywide fire and EMS system and has hired a director to run the daily operations within the system. These are great improvements and a step in the right direction.

I strongly encourage this Board to look into the future, foster this volunteer and paid system as we move into the future. You have a dedicated and committed director in place with 6 full-time employees and 16 part-time employees that can help lead the 3 volunteer companies in the right direction but it is going to take funding. Please be proactive and support the countywide fire and EMS system as we continue to grow and provide this critical need at greatly reduced cost to the taxpayer.”

Chairman Weiss thanked Mr. Armacost for his comments and his service, as well as the services provided by Enders.

Being no other persons wishing to address the Boards, Chairman Weiss closed the public hearing at 7:49 pm.

Chairman Weiss noted that the Board cannot take formal action on the budget for a minimum of one week following public hearing as set forth in State statute

3) FY2017 Tax Rate Public Hearing

At 7:49 p.m., Chairman Weiss opened the public hearing for public comment. There being no persons desiring to speak, Chairman Weiss closed the tax rate public hearing.

Chairman Weiss commented that as previous Boards worked through construction funding a commitment was made to the citizens that if it were possible in the future the Supervisors would reduce taxes as the bond was paid down. He opined that the budget allows the County to keep its commitment while also meeting the needs of its citizens, schools, and departments.

Supervisor Byrd expressed appreciation to members of the Finance Committees of the Board of Supervisors and the School Board, as well as staff and former Supervisor John R. Staelin for their efforts on the FY2018 budget. She also thanked those persons providing fire and EMS to the County.

Chairman Weiss offered his personal thanks and appreciation to David Ash, Lora Walburn, Tom Judge and his staff. He further commented that it was a pleasure to have the School Board participate with the Supervisors. He opined that this kind of relationship makes life a much easier. He expressed appreciation for the efforts of the School Board and its staff.

Next Regular Meeting Date

The next regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors is set for Tuesday, April 18, 2017, at 1:00 p.m. in the Berryville Clarke County Government Center, Main Meeting Room, 101 Chalmers Court, Berryville, Virginia.

4) Adjournment

At 7:52 pm, being no further business, Chairman Weiss adjourned the Board of Supervisors.

Immediately following, Chairman Parker adjourned the School Board.

ATTEST: April 4, 2017

David S. Weiss, Chair

David L. Ash, County Administrator

Minutes recorded and transcribed by: Lora B. Walburn, Deputy Clerk to the Board of Supervisors