

CLARKE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
March 4, 2009 Budget Work Session 7:00 p.m.
Board of Supervisors Meeting Room

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Clarke County, Virginia, held in the Board of Supervisors Meeting Room, 2nd Floor, Clarke County Circuit Courthouse, Berryville, Virginia on Tuesday, March 4, 2009.

Board Members Present

Barbara Byrd; A. R. Dunning, Jr.; J. Michael Hobert; John Staelin; David Weiss

Staff Present

David Ash, Tom Judge, Lora Walburn

Others Present

Janet Alger, Robina Rich Bouffault, Jennifer Welliver, Mike Murphy, Rick Catlett, Laura Oleniacz and other citizens and members of the press.

Call to Order

Chairman Staelin called the meeting to order at 7:01 p.m.

Chairman Staelin requested the addition to the agenda of:

- Discussion Budget Schedule
- VDOT – Proposed Changes
- Personal Property

Budget Schedule

In response to questions posed by the Chair, Tom Judge provided the following:

- Estimate of final numbers for restoration of funds to constitutional offices were received today.
- Friday, the details of school funding should be made known. It is believed that a substantial sum will be restored but questions remain as to which areas of funding will be restored.
- An April veto session of the General Assembly could change things.

- The proposed School budget was developed within the established parameters.
- Setting of the FY10 budget can be delayed one week from March 10 to March 17.
- The Treasurer has expressed concern regarding the possible impact of delayed approval. David Ash told the Supervisors that this is the first year to include decal fees on the personal property bill.

By consensus, the Supervisors agreed to postpone setting the FY10 budget for one week.

Supervisor Byrd joined the meeting at 7:10 p.m.

Supervisor Dunning requested that staff follow up with the Treasurer on the investment of County funds.

FY10 Budget Discussion - Clarke County Public Schools Superintendent's Budget Proposal to School Board

Tom Judge distributed a revised FY10 Clarke County Proposed Budget from the Clarke County Public Schools.

Chairlady Janet Alger and Superintendent Mike Murphy joined the Supervisors to discuss the FY10 Budget. Mrs. Alger stated that following the construction committee meeting this Thursday the School Board will be discussing the budget.

Superintendent Murphy advised that the amount of stimulus funds, as well as restored funding from the State was uncertain. He said that the Schools were not expecting a large windfall. He noted that School Administration drafted the preliminary budget. Dr. Murphy provided a brief synopsis of the budget cuts in various stages of the process.

Superintendent Murphy described the review process following notification of local funding reductions as the tier two cuts. He quickly summarized the actions and additional cuts necessitated by reduced county, state and federal revenues. Highlights of the proposed changes:

- Budget reflects \$1.3 million in federal, state and local cuts.
- ADM is budgeted at 2,142 students.
- Protecting the classroom is a priority.
- The field trips budget was not cut.
- No stipends for salaried employees.
- Lunch fees will be raised.
- Parking fees will be raised.
- Increase efficiencies in transportation.
- Realigning the way business is done at the high school.
- Summer school budget has been reduced from five to two locations and transportation has been eliminated. This program will be restored, with changes, should funding become

- available. Dr. Murphy informed the Supervisors that last year 149 students in K12 participated in the Summer School program with the bulk in elementary.
- Superintendents Kellison and Taylor from Winchester and Frederick County made the decision to cut middle school sports thus negatively impacting Clarke's program by removing the bulk of competitors.
 - Freezing of staff levels. He stated that Clarke County Public Schools was not a lean organization. He opined that there was a great student-teacher ratio, which could not be sustained in this economy. He said that some elementary classes have as many as 24 students while some high school classes had less than 10 students, which must be balanced.
 - If a class has 15 or fewer students, justification shall be required to keep the class.
 - Licensed contract days have been reduced to 200 days. Twelve members of staff have contracts greater than 200 days.
 - Elimination of vacation for some employees.
 - Supplemental contracts are also being reduced.
 - Teacher home-visit days will be eliminated.
 - Teacher workdays are scattered throughout the year.
 - Will no longer cover the expense of TB testing for new hires.
 - The LINCS program will be eliminated; however elementary and middle school programs will be considered if funds are reinstated.
 - Raising out-of-division tuition for employees; currently 39 students enrolled.
 - A target reduction of employees has been set at 15. At this point, nine employees are to be transferring or retiring.
 - Administration is working on a workforce reduction policy. Dr. Murphy noted that support personnel were classified as at-will employees and could be terminated within 20 working days.

Addressing concerns raised by Supervisor Dunning in response to an email from an anonymous citizen, Dr. Murphy offered to provide source data on salaries for comparison and noted that the Winchester Star was to publish salaries of top area school employees.

Chairman Staelin suggested removing the dollar amount for the renovation of the high school into an elementary school.

Superintendent Murphy stated that the TIA for the new high school should be available next week. He assured the Supervisors that the Schools were working toward results.

Chairman Staelin asked that a schedule be developed for school construction. Tom Judge said there was one and that he would forward to Mr. Staelin.

Dr. Murphy stated that the Schools' budget was far from perfect; and that next year, he would like to develop the budget differently, as well as earlier and make the process more public. He told the Supervisors that Tom Judge had been exemplary in his support of the Schools' budget development. He concluded by affirming his focus on academics and his intent to protect the core.

Chairman Staelin encouraged the School Board in their continuing efforts to finalize the details of the FY10 budget.

Stimulus Projects

Chairman Staelin reviewed the list of projects proposed for stimulus funding.

Supervisor Dunning asked for the inclusion of upgrades for the Boyce Water Treatment Plant.

Vice Chairman Hobert suggested the addition of The Barns of Rose Hill. There was discussion regarding the availability of funding for non-profit organizations.

Supervisor Weiss put forth that it was his understanding that consideration was only given for shovel-ready projects.

By consensus, the Supervisors directed staff to request that the Town of Berryville make a request for funding for the Barns of Rose Hill.

By consensus, the Supervisors approved the list of stimulus projects as presented.

VDOT

Chairman Staelin apprised the Supervisors of proposed reduction in road standards sponsored by VDOT. Vice Chairman Hobert noted that under this proposed plan most of the roads in Clarke County would be downgraded thus reducing the winter clearing, vegetation removal and basic repairs. Chairman Staelin put forth that the gravel roads in the County would only be graded once per year.

Chairman Staelin notified the Supervisors of VDOT's announced intent to close the Luray residency transferring operations to Edinburg. He stated that VDOT proposed the closure of two residencies but scheduled only one public hearing for both closures, which is to be conducted within the affected jurisdiction of the Verona Residency in Augusta County. He stated that he had drafted a letter to the Commonwealth Transportation Board expressing concern about the proposed changes and requesting that a separate public hearing be heard on the closure of the Luray residency that is within covered jurisdiction to ensure equal opportunity for public comment.

By consensus, the Supervisors approved forwarding the correspondence modified to include a copy to VACo to the attention of Jim Campbell.

Personal Property

David Ash distributed personal property reports provided by Sally Sheckels, Deputy Commissioner of the Revenue II.

Chairman Staelin reviewed the reports with the members of the Board. He advised that even with the reduction in used car values and the a proposed \$1.02 increase in the personal property rate that 73% of taxpayers with cars worth less than \$20,000 would be paying less in personal property tax and an additional 19% would pay less than \$10 more.

Adjournment

Following discussion, the Supervisors determined to:

- Cancel the Budget Work Session for Thursday, March 5.
- Meet as scheduled at 5:30 pm on Tuesday, March 10 to discuss the FY10 budget and review State revenue changes, school budget and reinstatement of constitutional offices.
- Request from the Treasurer an investment report of County funds.

There being no further business to be brought before the Board at 8:45 pm Chairman Staelin adjourned the meeting.

Next Meeting Date

The meeting of the Board of Supervisors is set for Tuesday, March 17, 2009 at 1:00 p.m. in the Main Meeting Room, 101 Chalmers Court, 2nd Floor, Berryville, Virginia.

ATTEST: March 4, 2009

John Staelin, Chair

David L. Ash, County Administrator

Minutes Recorded and Transcribed by:
Lora B. Walburn
Deputy Clerk, Board of Supervisors