

## BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES OF APRIL 11, 2007

At a joint meeting of the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors and the Pulaski County School Board held on Wednesday, April 11 at 6:30 p.m. at Pulaski Elementary School, in the Town of Pulaski, Virginia, the following members were present: Joseph L. Sheffey, Chairman; Frank R. Conner, Vice Chairman; William E. "Eddie" Hale; Ranny L. Akers and Dean K. Pratt. School Board members present included Paul Phillips, Chairman, John Wenrich, Jeff Bain, Beth Nelson and Pam Chitwood. Staff members present included: Dr. Donald Stowers, Superintendent; Jean Cox, Clerk; Libby Vansant, Assistant Superintendent, Administration; Ron Nichols, Director, Operations; Dr. Jim Sandidge, Director, Technology; Joe Makolandra, Human Resource Specialist; Linda Hill, Director of Instruction; Pete Huber, County Administrator; Robert Hiss, Assistant County Administrator; and Gordon Jones, Finance Director. Also present were Mike Williams, publisher, *The Southwest Times*; and Paul Dellinger, reporter, *The Roanoke Times*.

1. Presentation of Pulaski County School Board Budget – Don Stowers and Rick Patterson made the following points in describing the School Board budget noting that enrollment is increasing, the School Board now employs 835 persons, with most of the growth being in the paraprofessional staff due to more focus on special education. With a total school board budget of \$42,575,650, including a \$500,000 reduction in sales tax receipts due to an error in the projection of state revenues last year. It was noted that Pulaski County has more employees than usual in attendance and health areas and that those employees are classified as administrative. While lottery funds help pay for repairs to school buildings, schools no longer receive federal impact fees due to the location of the Radford Army Ammunition Plant. All school debt is carried by the County but reported as school debt. It was also reported that the required state match for next year is almost \$10 million in local funding and that the state mandates where to spend vast majority of the local monies.

Pulaski and Critzer elementary schools are the only schools qualified as Title I (40% or more of students qualify for the federal free lunch program) but state and federal officials are reviewing an extension of the Title I program to high schools. The school system is facing a decrease in Perkins training grants with increasing student achievement.

Salaries and benefits comprise \$35 million of the budget with 25% of teachers have five years or less of experience; 50% of teachers have between 5-25 years of experience and 25% of teacher have over 25 years experience. The school board is currently looking at a 3% raise for SOQ positions starting in Dec., 75% of teachers in this category. However, this increase is offset by an 11% increase in health insurance premium for next year. Ongoing health fitness programs include health fair participation and online help through Southern Health.

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2. Camelot School Lease of Claremont Elementary School – Dr. Stowers reported that Camelot Schools proposes to develop a therapeutic day school and residential treatment center in Claremont. The therapeutic school would serve students aged 5 – 21 (or possibly 18). The Autism Center would provide services for students who are diagnosed with autism disorder. Additionally, the center would offer a diagnostic and assessment unit. The advantages for locating this company include reducing existing costs of sending students to other special treatment center out of County or even out of state. Dr. Stowers noted that the day program would start in August with the residential program to take place after further renovations are completed. The proposed lease with the school system would be in five-year increments. Mr. Hale questioned whether this would return the property to taxable status since this was a for-profit company. There were also questions as to the level of security in the building to which it was responded that the residential facility would be staffed 24/7 with rooms not necessarily locked, but floors and building are locked and a high level of security used.
  
3. Presentation of Pulaski County Budget – Gordon Jones described the various funds which comprise the County budget and Pete Huber described revenues supporting County and School Board functions with a focus on property taxes as the only source of significant locally controlled funding. Specifically, a \$.01 increase in the real estate tax results in a \$180,000 increase in local revenue. The machinery and tools tax rate is linked to personal property tax while Public Service Corporation Tax revenue is linked to real property taxes. The closing of Pulaski Furniture closing will negatively revenue from machinery and tools; however, that decline is not expected until the 2008-09 fiscal year. The county's tax rates are average when compared with adjacent localities. It was noted that economic development funds are used for the NRV Alliance, Bobwhite building, contributions, cost of maintaining industrial park, and minor advertising. It was also noted that revenues and expenditures for education purposes show all state and federal funds and that the new Riverlawn School will cost more than all other school construction and renovations over last few years combined. A review of areas of concerns was described as were things the boards could do to address budgetary issues.
  
4. Adjournment - On a motion by Mr. Hale, seconded by Mr. Conner and carried the Board of Supervisors adjourned with the next joint board meeting scheduled for 6:30 p.m. on Monday, June 11, 2007 at Pulaski Elementary School.

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Joseph L. Sheffey, Chairman

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Peter M. Huber, County Administrator