

JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 2, 2009

At a joint meeting of the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors and the Pulaski County School Board held on Monday, March 2, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at the new Riverlawn Elementary School in Fairlawn, Virginia, the following Board of Supervisor members were present: Joseph L. Sheffey, Chairman; Dean K. Pratt, Vice-Chairman; Ranny L. Akers; Charles Bopp; and Frank R. Conner. School Board members present included Paul Phillips, Chairman; John Wenrich, Vice-Chairman; Jeff Bain; and Dr. Rodell Cruise. School Board member Pam Chitwood was unable to attend the meeting. Staff members present included: Dr. Donald Stowers, Superintendent of Schools; Jean Cox, Clerk to the School Board; Dr. Tom Brewster, Assistant Superintendent; Ron Nichols, Director, Operations; Dr. Jim Sandidge, Director, Information Technology; Chris Stafford, School Finance Director; Joe Makolandra, Director of School Human Resources; John Bowler, Riverlawn Elementary School Principal; Pete Huber, County Administrator; Thomas J. McCarthy, Jr., County Attorney; Robert Hiss, Assistant County Administrator; Diane Newby, County Finance Director; and Gena Hanks, Clerk to the Board of Supervisors. Also present from the public were Bill Benson, John Hocker, and Brenda Blackburn.

1. Welcome and Dinner

Dr. Stowers welcomed those in attendance and provided a tour of the new Riverlawn Elementary School.

Following a tour of the school and dinner, Mr. Sheffey called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone in attendance.

2. Update on Current Initiatives:

a. Facilities and Transportation

Mr. Nichols advised facility renovations and transportation were ongoing and proceeding in a normal manner.

Mr. Sheffey inquired if garbage trucks could be used for snow removal, referencing a recent story related to snow removal in New York being accomplished through use of garbage trucks. Mr. Nichols advised that while the garbage trucks are not designed for snow removal, it could certainly be considered; however, he felt the maneuvering of the garbage trucks might be more difficult.

b. Telecommunications

Dr. Sandidge thanked the Board of Supervisors for approving the commitment to use \$370,000 in currently unobligated reserves for the Regional Wireless Authority Grant. He advised that PSK.net was no longer in business and that the changeover to another internet provider had gone smoothly, resulting in 160 of the 162 customers changing internet providers.

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Dr. Cruise questioned the possibility of extending hardware to the Ruebush Road area of the county. Dr. Sandidge advised of plans to expand service from the Cloyd's Mountain site. Supervisor Akers questioned if there were any monies expected from the stimulus package. Dr. Sandidge indicated he did not know what funds could be expected, if any, from the stimulus package.

Mr. Sheffey referenced the need for provision of more spaces for towers. Dr. Cruise requested a copy of the vendor listing of internet providers. Dr. Sandidge advising the current vendor listing can be found at www.citizens.coop.

Dr. Stowers expressed concern on behalf of the Board for not being able to receive connections.

Mr. Huber advised the recently approved fiber optic funding should provide the backbone needed to provide connection to the schools.

Dr. Sandidge advised the technology provided to the new Riverlawn Elementary School was state-of-the-art, noting there were over 400 computers in the new school.

c. Finance and Health Insurance

- Health Insurance

Mr. Hiss and Mr. Makolandra provided a summary on the vendor process for reviewing and receiving health insurance Request for Proposals (RFP), noting the RFP process was initiated by the health care consultants in October, 2008, with five companies returning a competitive bid. He advised the final three companies selected were Anthem, Gateway, and Southern Health, with the Consortium choosing Anthem.

Mr. Makolandra and Mr. Hiss discussed the benefits of choosing Anthem, including the potential growth of the Consortium, a solid reputation and name recognition, a very competitive rate, the offering of a 3% cap on administrative costs for year two, the inclusion of all wellness visits at no cost to the member, good wellness philosophy and a more comprehensive vision plan. They also noted the challenges with Anthem included the reallocation of the formula billing and changes in drug tiers.

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- Finance

Mr. Stafford presented a spreadsheet on the comparison of proposed state revenue reductions for the Fiscal Year 2009-1020. He also reviewed a chart on the proposed non-personnel budget reductions for the Fiscal Year 2009-2010. A copy of both the spreadsheet and chart are filed with the records of this meeting.

Dr. Cruise inquired as to where stimulus monies would be designated, if received. Dr. Stowers advised if the Senate budget is restored, those monies would have to be spent on capital projects. Mr. Stafford advised the Senate plan does not include money for teacher raises.

Ms. Newby presented a preliminary summary of county expenditures for the end of February, 2009. Mr. Huber reviewed in detail a budget summary noting the impact of economic changes are moderated by strict budgeting by the Board of Supervisors and county departments over the past two years. He indicated the General Fund is going into the budget year with about \$2.3 million less in expenditures than revenues. He noted there had been no change in the tax amount in five years, despite financing of parts of both new elementary schools. A copy of the budget summary is filed with the records of this meeting.

Dr. Cruise questioned the cycle for conducting reassessments. Mr. Huber advised the typical cycle was every six years; however, the four year cycle is the best method.

d. Office Locations

Mr. Huber advised of plans to determine the best course of action for moving MTM to another location in the Maple Shade building to accommodate the planned move to the building of the human services agencies, including Social Services, the Health Department, Court Services Unit and Information Technology.

Mr. Huber advised plans were to have the School Board administrative offices to relocate to the County Administration Building.

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e. Other Initiatives

Mr. Huber advised Board members that staff welcomed suggestions from board members on future joint efforts between the two boards. Mr. Huber advised that county and school staff stood ready to explore options for joint operations, so that operations could be structured to allow the school system to continue to focus on education and the county to focus on administrative matters.

Mr. Sheffey inquired as to the current Average Daily Membership (ADM) in the school system. Dr. Stowers advised the current enrollment was at 4,708, with the ADM at 4,718. He noted the increase in students was due in part to out-of-state students coming into the county to live with relatives due to job loss, etc. He also advised there were approximately 1,550 students at Pulaski County High School. Dr. Stowers noted the school budget is built on a student base of 4,623. He advised the enrollment was projected to decline due to changes in the economy.

Mr. Bain advised the school system had been reviewing an energy savings initiative in the county's school buildings with an anticipated potential energy savings of approximately \$255,000. He noted action would require putting the energy savings initiative out to bid. He suggested the county also consider implementing such an energy savings plan. Mr. Bain suggested the county could potentially save over \$250,000 in energy costs. Mr. Sheffey requested county staff work with Mr. Nichols towards this effort.

Mr. Sheffey advised he had suggested area businesses contact the staff of the new Riverlawn Elementary School for use of the school conference rooms as a potential meeting place in the Fairlawn community.

Dr. Stowers thanked the Board of Supervisors for action taken allowing for the construction of the new Riverlawn Elementary School. He advised that March 19th would be the last day of operations at the old Riverlawn Elementary School and that the school would be closed on March 20th. He advised an open house for the new school to be held on March 22nd from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. for students and parents, with a March 29th grand opening celebration planned for the general public from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Commonwealth Attorney HVAC Bids

Mr. Huber reported bids were received late on February 20 for installation of the HVAC system in the Commonwealth Attorney's Office. Bids were received from Highland Mechanical Contractors, Hillsville, Virginia in the amount of \$79,952, and Valley Mechanical Contractors, Riner, Virginia in the amount of \$124,660.

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On a motion by Mr. Pratt, seconded by Mr. Conner and carried, the Board approved award for the installation of the HVAC system in the Commonwealth Attorney's Office to Highland Mechanical Contractors of Hillsville, VA in the amount of \$79,952.

Voting yes: Mr. Pratt, Mr. Bopp, Mr. Conner, Mr. Sheffey, Mr. Akers.
Voting no: none.

Additional Assessment Dates

Mr. Huber shared additional Board of Equalization assessment hearing dates with the two boards.

Community Webinar

Mr. Huber shared information regarding an upcoming *Community Capitalism* Webinar.

Mr. McCarthy shared an article which appeared in the Sunday, March 1 edition of the *Roanoke Times* as it relates to the setting of the county's property tax rate by the Board of Supervisors.

3. Next Meeting

By consensus, the Board of Supervisors and School Board scheduled its next joint meeting for Monday, October 5, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. at the Pulaski Elementary School in the Town of Pulaski, with the School Board to provide dinner arrangements. Chairman Phillips suggested flexibility by the two boards by allowing for an opportunity to schedule an additional joint meeting of the two boards prior to October 5th, if needed, for the purpose of discussing concerns related to the FY 2010 budget.

4. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Conner, seconded by Mr. Akers and carried, the Board adjourned its special joint meeting to reconvene at a special budget meeting to be held on Monday, March 9, 2009 at 6:00 p.m. in the County Administration Building, 143 Third Street, N. W., in the Town of Pulaski.

Voting yes: Mr. Pratt, Mr. Bopp, Mr. Conner, Mr. Sheffey, Mr. Akers.
Voting no: none.

Joseph L. Sheffey, Chairman

Peter M. Huber, County Administrator