

VIRGINIA: At a recessed joint meeting of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors and the Tazewell County School Board held March 27, 2018 at 3:00 o'clock p.m. in the Tazewell County Career and Technical Center, Tazewell Virginia, 24651

PRESENT: Margaret A. "Maggie" Asbury, Chairperson
Travis Hackworth, Vice Chairperson
D. Michael Hymes, Member
Tom Lester, Member
Travis Hackworth, Member
Patricia Green, County Administrator
Eric Young, County Attorney
Ruth Groseclose, Executive Assistant
Arlene Matney, Budget & Finance Director
Members of the Press: Jim Talbert, CVN/RNP; Warren Hinkle, Tazewell County Free Press; Blake Stowers, Bluefield Daily Telegraph

OTHERS

PRESENT: Members of the Tazewell County School Board:
Donna Whittington, Chairperson
James Jones, Member
David Woodard, Member
Christine Moir, Member
Central Office Staff:
Dr. George Brown, Superintendent
Wendy Barringer, Supervisor of Human Resources
Richard Mullins, Transportation Manager
Vickie Bailey, Clerk of the School Board

Chairperson Margaret Ann Asbury, called to order a joint meeting of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors and the Tazewell County School Board. Member Hackworth gave the invocation with Supervisor Stacy leading those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Chairperson Asbury welcomed all those in attendance and stated that it was a pleasure to meet with the School Board to address 2018-2019 budget options. Concentration will continue with the 125% funding formula for the school system.

Supervisor Stacy stated that the meeting was called to explore funding opportunities for the school board because there was always more need than there was money available. He said it was a very important task because the public always look to the Board of Supervisors to run the government in a proficient manner . He said he felt both boards could work better together consolidating services; which he said had to be done in small steps in order to build a level of trust between the two boards. He said there were many duplicate services and reiterated that he wants both boards to agree with combined services and to be well thought out before final consideration was given.

Supervisor Hymes questioned budget numbers from the State. The Superintendent said no numbers had been received to date and he hoped that the numbers would be somewhat better or at least the same as last year. School Board member Woodard stated that the school board must meet within two weeks of the signed state budget and adopt a budget for the County School System. Supervisor Hymes questioned federal monies and possibly increases from same to the school system. The Superintendant said possibly Perkins funding would be increased. He mentioned that the majority of money for the school system comes from local and state funding. He mentioned rules about new attendance mandates, reiterating that new standards of accreditation allow for 15% of the school population can only miss 10% of the total school year and on a 180 day calendar, should 15% of the school population miss more than 18 days, the school would not be accredited.

Wendy Barringer, spoke of the difficulty in filling staffing positions, sometimes only one applicant applies for ten positions. She is attending several job fairs in hopes to reach out to potential applicants. School Board member Woodard said the School board might have to start buying back employees who left to go to higher paying divisions outside of Tazewell County.

Supervisor Stacy questioned where Tazewell County ranked as far as teacher pay; the first 15-20 years are low, but the higher years were more competitive, according to the Superintendent. Supervisor Hymes said it was an upside down pay-scale. Even though employers needed to recognize employees for longevity, the scale needed to be changed to attract young people to this area.

Supervisor Hackworth questioned proposed legislation with regard to school buses; with School Board member Woodard stating that he thought all school board legislation failed.

Supervisor Stacy said the only revenue sources the boards have right now is to increase taxes and said the Code of Virginia allows for a Meals Tax which most localities in the State of Virginia already have, but only can be imposed with a referendum by voters. The tax can be spread around throughout the County and affects out of county folks who dine in county restaurants; they leave a little bit of money for the County to use and if the County intends to develop and increase tourism, the meals tax is a must. He said he feels it was wishful thinking to count on additional funding from the state or federal side. He questioned shared services for the two boards that might work to reduce costs and save money for other things.

School Board member Jones suggested it was time to think about consolidating maintenance and the garage services. The County Administrator said a survey was conducted several years ago with VACORP and a lot of shared services included legal and technology services. The County Administrator was requested to run a report on costs of tire and maintenance costs as well as exploring ways to set up a maintenance and preventive schedule for vehicles.

Superintendent George Brown commended Eric Young, County Attorney, for his legal expertise and knowledge and thanked the Board of Supervisors for sharing the County's legal services with the School Board. He said Mr. Young does an excellent job for the school system as legal advisor.

The consolidation of Accounting/Payroll Services were also addressed. Ms. Matney, Finance/Budget Director for the County said that the payroll systems were totally different. The County Administrator, Patricia Green said consolidating payroll/accounting might be addressed in the future, but she did not believe it would help right now.

Supervisor Lester mentioned that usually there was an investment up front prior to returns; therefore consolidating a service would probably not be helpful in this year's budget. Supervisor Stacy suggested looking at areas that were easy to consolidate and keep adding to the list. The garage services were suggested to be the easiest to begin with. The County Administrator, Ms. Green, Superintendent Brown and Ms. Barringer will meet with several board members to look at all the numbers.

School Board member Mullins asked about a central purchasing system for the County, with the County Attorney mentioning the possibility of looking at procurement to buy in bulk.

Supervisor Lester questioned what the target was for the budget. Supervisor Hymes said the Board of Supervisors initiated the 125% approximately five years ago, with Supervisor Stacy stating that the 125% formula worked well for both boards because it was a predictable number.

Superintendent Brown suggested a figure of 135% (an additional \$1,000,000) in order to keep schools open and to wait on the proposed economic boosts, i.e. from project Jonah and the Hydro Storage Project. He also mentioned earlier discussions during budget sessions with the County's budget committee to possibly raise taxes or by place a referendum on the ballot to consider a meals tax, and said if the school system would be the recipient of the additional funds from the tax increase they would support the Board of Supervisors. He said if they intended to keep all the schools open and to have quality education then extra funding would be needed.

If imposed, Supervisor Stacy said he would dedicate the entire meals tax revenue to the School System. Supervisor Stacy said the County has looked at everything they could for revenues and county services are more than available income. There were several differences of opinion among Board members with regard to a proposed meal tax, as well as the idea of dedicating the revenue generated from the tax to the School System.

School Consolidation was addressed. Supervisor Stacy said the topic of school consolidation was not a new one, and he had requested that the School System forgo school closures until a decision was final on Project Johan and the Hydro-storage project. He said these two projects could drastically change the income/revenues for Tazewell County

Supervisor Lester questioned the costs saving by closing Raven Elementary. The Superintendent said the savings would be from heat and utilities, and other savings would be from staffing.

Dave Larimer, County Treasurer was in attendance with Supervisor Hackworth asking him how much money would be generated from a vehicle tax increase. The treasurer said approximately \$300,000 if everyone paid.

Supervisor Stacy questioned the Superintendent about the School Boards support of a resolution imposing a meals tax with the proceeds dedicated to the school system. School Board member Moir wanted to know why the Board of Supervisors needed the School Board to adopt a resolution requesting the Board of Supervisors ask that a referendum be put to vote. Supervisor Stacy said that the School Board sending a resolution to the Board would show both entities were in support of a meals tax. Supervisor Stacy and Supervisor Hymes both stated that if a meals tax was approved the additional monies collected from the tax would go directly to the school to be collected and deposited by the Treasurer.

Supervisor Lester said he could not say he was on board with the meals tax. He said the boards shouldn't forget about the people who struggle in Tazewell County just to go to McDonalds.

Supervisor Hymes said in order to balance the budget the County would need to cut two or three million out of the budget to break even. Supervisor Hackworth stated he felt the meals tax would generate the 125% school funding. The Treasurer reiterated that it would not be known until November 2018 if the meals tax passed so the FY18-19 budget could not be based on that.

In other school topics, and as a result of all the school violence in our nation, Supervisor Hymes said the County needs to secure a safe school environment. He said the County could use current staffing in our towns and county to make safer surroundings for our schools.

Insurance costs were then addressed. School Board Chairperson Whittington stated that the School Board continues to work not to increase health insurance costs. Ways to reduce employee deductibles are being reviewed, with the BPA insurance program endorsed by the School Board.

Supervisor Stacy stated that the County was currently self-insured with Supervisor Hymes stating that the County would remain at a flat rate this year.

Now, the School Board and Board of Supervisors expressed gratitude with each other for conducting the joint meeting.

OTHER ACTION:

CERAMIC TECHNOLOGIES, INCORPORATED

DEED APPROVED

County Attorney, Eric Young, requested that the Board of Supervisors approve a Deed of Bargain of Sale for Ceramic Technologies, Inc. 606 Wardell Road Cedar Bluff, VA.

Now, upon motion of Supervisor Stacy, seconded by Supervisor Lester and adopted by a vote of 5 to 0, with all members present and voting in favor thereof and no one against the same, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors hereby approves a DEED OF BARGAIN AND SALE by and between the BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF TAZEWELL COUNTY, VIRGINIA, and CERAMIC TECHNOLOGIES, INC. A VIRGINIA CORPORATION, 606 Wardell Road, Cedar Bluff, VA 24609, ie. All that certain lot or parcel of land, together with any improvements thereon and appurtenances thereto, located in Tazewell County, Virginia in or near Wardell, in the Wardell Industrial Park, indentified for taxation purposes as parcel 157-13-003, and more particularly described as "Parcel 4A" on a certain plat entitled "Wardell Industrial Site Jason Shortt Property" and recorded in the Tazewell County Circuit Court Clerk's Office in Plat Book 24, at page 37;

And being the same property which was conveyed by Ceramic Technologies, Incorporated to Tazewell County by Deed dated October 29, 1987 and recorded in the aforesaid clerk's office in Deed Book 571 at page 215.

A copy of the Deed as approved and as executed is on file in the office of the County Administrator, 197 Main Street, Tazewell, VA 24651.

ADJOURN

Now, there being no further business to be addressed, and upon motion of Supervisor Hackworth, seconded by Supervisor Hymes and adopted by a vote of 5 to 0, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors hereby adjourns this meeting.

The next regular meeting is scheduled for April 3, 2018 at 4:00 p.m.

Margaret A. Asbury, Chairperson

by: RG

4:50 p.m.