

April 25, 2012

Virginia:

AT A CALLED MEETING of the Nelson County Board of Supervisors at 3:30 p.m. for a joint meeting with the Nelson County School Board in the Board of Supervisors room located on the second floor of the Nelson County Courthouse in Lovingston, Virginia.

Present: Allen M. Hale, East District Supervisor
Constance Brennan, Central District Supervisor
Thomas H. Bruguere, Jr. West District Supervisor - Vice Chair
Larry D. Saunders, South District Supervisor
Thomas D. Harvey, North District Supervisor -Chair
Candice W. McGarry, Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk

David Parr, Nelson County School Board
Mary Cunningham, Nelson County School Board
Amy Snapp, Nelson County School Board
Jane Bibb, Nelson County School Board
Kathy Hughes, Clerk Nelson County School Board

Absent: Margaret Clair, Nelson County School Board

I. Call to Order

Mr. Harvey called the meeting to order at 3:35 pm with all Supervisors present to establish a quorum.

II. Joint Meeting with Nelson County School Board on Fiscal Year 2012-13 Budget(s)

The two Boards made introductions and Mr. Harvey noted that he would like for the School Board to discuss the things that were important to them, and what things were in their budget that were driving things; not wishing to discuss numbers. He added that the County would have some one time monies in this fiscal year due to the tax increase and there were some capital projects that he would like to see done.

Mr. Harvey then led the discussion by noting that he had heard that they very much wanted to implement teacher raises.

Mr. Parr noted that they would like to include a raise and that they had numbers showing that the VRS costs were the big thing. He noted that their Board had discussed doing the VRS mandate as 5% at one time; which was preferred. He added that if they did the phase in over 5 years, then they would have two different scales because new employees after July would be required to pay the 5%. He noted that he understood that this is what Ms. McCann also preferred and that if they could make it a 6% raise, they could address the FICA/Medicare associated with the 5%; which would cost \$151,915 additional dollars.

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Mr. Harvey acknowledged that unless they did this, employees would be getting a 5% raise and taking home less money. Mr. Parr then reiterated that they preferred to implement the 5% raise and 5% employee contribution all at once.

Mr. Harvey then inquired about them wanting to adjust their pay scale and Mr. Parr noted that it was in the works but could not be finalized at this point.

Mr. Hale then asked the School Board to explain the pay scale problem and its impact. Mr. Parr replied that they thought that the problem with the scale was a Board of Supervisors problem and not a School Board problem. Ms. Brennan stated that teachers did not get the same percentage raise because of the way the scale is structured. Mr. Harvey added that the scales did not escalate evenly, that the scale was front-loaded to have a good starting salary and they were now in the top 15% of the state for starting teacher salaries. He noted that this salary now was the same after five years.

Mr. Parr then explained that the Board had redone the scale using the logic that it was front loaded for the first five years to attract good new teachers. He added that the scale then evened out in the middle and was heavier on the end. He noted that he thought that the end of the scale was an issue for the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Bruguiere stated that this was a problem for teachers not for the Board as ones with twenty years experience were not paid much over first year teachers. He added that he thought that the starting teacher salaries did not need to be in the top 15%.

Mr. Harvey asked if the teacher's scale peaked and then there were no more steps and it was noted that it did but they do get a percentage raise at the top of the scale. Mr. Parr then explained that they have done small percentage increases and were not moving up the scale and have also done some lump sum bonuses. Mr. Harvey noted that bonuses were great but did not really benefit employees.

Members discussed when the schools would have salary figures and it was noted it would be a few days after they get them from state.

Mr. Hale related that the Service Authority was facing the same issues and were discussing doing a 6% raise to keep people even. He noted that he would be in favor of this in general but did not think that because of new obligations that they could do raises beyond that.

Mr. Harvey suggested that the Schools look at where they want to be and see how it could be phased in over a longer period of time. He then related that he understood that some employees would get as much as a twenty-five percent raise and Ms. Brennan noted that she thought that some did get larger raises than others. Mr. Bruguiere noted that if given a percentage increase then they would all get the same percentage of their salary and Mr. Harvey added that if they equaled out the scale, then some would get more than others.

Mr. Parr noted that he thought that front loading the scale was working and that they were attracting a lot of young qualified and good teachers that were staying for five years. He added that in the five years they become established in the County and want to stay. He noted that his sister, who is a career teacher in Lynchburg, has said it was known that Nelson was an attractive division for younger teachers. It was

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then noted that affordable housing in the County was an issue for new teachers establishing residency here.

Mr. Harvey then noted that the biggest issue was salaries because it was the largest part of the School budget and the School funding was the largest part of the Board's budget.

Members then discussed educational programming and Ms. Bibb reported that scores were up and they hoped to not lose any programs. She added that the Elementary scores were up due to work in the afternoons on remediation. She reported that she is on the prep board that works with impaired children and those costs were going up. She noted that the Prep program was needed to accommodate those with extreme special needs and they did not want to go backwards. She reported that the County has three slots for this and they could buy another for \$30,000 for the whole year. She noted that some students stay in the program for varying lengths of time and that she and Dr. Collins have decided that they would keep slots open and not give them to other localities. She noted that they have had completely blind, deaf, and extremely emotionally disturbed students and the slots were generally not all filled at one time. She then added that the Region Ten positions were very beneficial for kids especially at the Middle School level; where there seemed to more problems than at the High School. She also touted the benefits of the Early Childhood Program.

Members then discussed new positions and Ms. Cunningham then noted the high need for a technology support position that was in the budget; because of the small current staff and the increased reliance on technology and the need for teaching it. Mr. Parr added that they were working towards a one to one ratio of student to computer; whether they were taken home or not and they needed the support to fix the ones they have before they move forward with this. He added that they really needed a technology person in each school but want to add the one that would be division-wide. He noted that they had technology people in different roles throughout the division. Mr. Bruguiere suggested using a staff development day to teach teachers how to fix common technology problems themselves and Mr. Parr noted that this would not take care of all of the technology problems out there. Ms. Bibb concurred and noted that there was so much to know about the whole system that a teacher should not be expected to learn all of this and retain it. Ms. Cunningham agreed and noted the likelihood that new teachers coming in were more adept at dealing with technology. Mr. Parr then added that the position would be mainly to handle hardware issues and Mr. Harvey noted that this type of position was also important to the County staff.

Mr. Parr then noted that the Financial Literacy Course requirement necessitated a new teaching position which would be for the ninth grade. It was discussed that they weren't sure which department this would fit into but may be in the Business Department or in Social Studies.

He then noted that there was a Middle School position for language arts that was coupled with a couple of staff changes: specifically that Janet Wade was retiring but with the domino effect of this and the required ratio, they would need one more Language Arts teacher. It was noted that Ms. Wade could come back in a half time position and still be retired.

Mr. Parr then reported that they were requesting a half of a gifted position that would be division wide, and noted that they should have one per 1,000 students per the State and they currently have Betty Tabony. Mr. Parr then noted that the typical yearly enrollment was 1,915-1,920 students. He noted that

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the Kindergarten class was projected to be up next year. It was discussed that overall the student population was pretty level from year to year.

Mr. Parr then noted that the elementary position needed was for Mr. Dolaris who was coming back, after having taken a year off. Members then questioned what happened with the position while he was gone and Mr. Saunders noted that if it was not filled, then they did not need it. Mr. Parr noted that they wanted to add it back and that he taught fifth grade science at Rockfish Elementary. He added that part of his leaving was honoring his request to preserve his position for when he came back. He added that they somehow managed without him and maybe they increased class sizes to make this work. Members noted that how they made this work was a question that needed to be answered.

Mr. Harvey noted that the Board had not started its work on the agency funding or expenditures as they wanted to work on the school budget first.

Mr. Parr then reported that there was \$125,000 in the budget for the Health Insurance Increase and that he thought that there was not much difference budgetarily if they implemented the 5% VRS mandate in one year or spread it out over five years. It was then reported that a 1% raise across the board would cost around \$151,915. Mr. Parr and Ms. Cunningham both noted that there was no fat or fluff in the budget and no new things or incentives.

Ms. Brennan then inquired about the graduation rate and it was noted that there were varying ways to calculate this as no one looks at this the same way. Ms Cunningham added that the Federal people wanted it reported one way and the State another.

Mr. Hale noted that many school divisions had to lay off and that Nelson has been fortunate; however they still needed to look at things. He added that as far as the computers for students went, some already had computers and would not need to be provided one. He then suggested that they provided them only to those that needed them.

This led to a brief discussion on the movement towards electronic textbooks and Mr. Parr noted that some publishing companies did not offer them and it was hard for everyone to have access to them due to limited internet for most people. He noted that he would love to have an electronic edition in addition to a hard copy textbook. It was supposed that it could work if these were saved to the computers and Ms. Cunningham added that they were looking at this but that it was just not widely offered right now.

Members then discussed School buildings and Mr. Parr noted that there were currently no major problems. He noted that there was a wish list and referred to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) that totaled approximately \$1.6 million.

Members then discussed School buses and Mr. Parr noted that there were sixty-nine (69) buses total in the fleet. He added that there were fifty-seven (57) permanently assigned buses consisting of forty-six (46) used for standard routes, two (2) used for Handicap routes, five (5) used for substitute buses and four (4) used for trips. He then noted that a total of twelve (12) buses were in the shop consisting of four (4) out of the rotation for inspection every 30 days, two (2) out for breakdowns, two (2) spare handicapped buses, and four (4) extra for spring sports. He added that they had no parts buses.

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It was noted that they may have purchased three (3) new buses last year and could get by with a break on the four (4) requested but would need \$50,000 to refurbish the current ones if they wanted to deviate from the replacement schedule. Mr. Parr noted that they go by the State recommended replacement schedule; which was four years.

Mr. Harvey noted that they were done with paying off the leases now and inquired as to the average age of the current buses. Mr. Parr noted that they ranged from 1996-2013 and that the replacement schedules were based on age and equipment not mileage.

Mr. Harvey noted that he was hearing complaints that buses were coming out of schools with only a few children on them and Mr. Parr explained that unless the bus is seen in the middle of a route, you cannot get a good sense of how many kids were on it. He added that drivers begin and end routes at varying places and that there were a lot of buses that transferred students from one route to another.

Mr. Saunders noted that he had observed buses going in and out of schools that were pretty empty and Mr. Parr noted that they were not saying that they were all full and Ms. Snapp added that on the other side of the County you might see the opposite situation where the buses were packed.

Mr. Parr then assured the Board that Mr. Johnson looked at the routes as population changed and other factors occurred and that he did a really good job at looking at all of the factors. He reiterated that there were transfer points also where larger loads were dispersed onto smaller loads.

Mr. Bruguere commented that there were too many buses being run and that he did not think that they were looking at the details of the system and the routes. Mr. Parr then confirmed that they did have a program that helped Mr. Johnson to design the routes. Mr. Harvey then added that he agreed with Mr. Parr that determining the appropriate routes was a balancing act and the only change to be made would be to cut out the early route home and the majority agreed they were not ready to do this.

Mr. Harvey then expressed concern that if they deviated from the new bus rotation schedule that it would come back to bite them. It was reiterated that based on the replacement schedule they should be replacing four (4) buses but could get by without them if they had \$50,000.00 to refurbish some.

Mr. Parr then noted that there were no vehicles in the budget request but that an amount of \$25,000.00 was in the CIP for sedans.

Mr. Harvey then noted that it was hard to put a finger on fuel costs and that they just needed to pick a reasonable number and then make it whole later if needed and Mr. Parr reported that their budget number was based on \$3.25 per gallon. Mr. Saunders inquired as to whether or not they could lock in a price as they did several years ago and it was noted that was unlikely as prices were so much more volatile now.

Mr. Hale then noted that any difference in the budgeted amount and the actual for fuel would be covered and any remaining funds at the end of the year should remain in that line item and not be spent for other things.

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Members then discussed the Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) and Mr. Hale inquired as to the School Board's priorities.

Mr. Harvey noted that his priority was lights for the baseball and softball fields; adding that he thought it was a shame that Nelson was the only school in the district that did not have them. He added that the Board would have a one-time windfall in this fiscal year from the tax increase to be used for one-time expenses and he thought that the lights were overdue. It was noted that the estimated cost for this was \$200,000. Mr. Parr noted that this has been an ongoing discussion and he would love to bring closure to this if possible. Mr. Harvey reiterated his interest in seeing this project done. Members discussed public use of the fields and it was noted that they were currently not utilized but could be for summer leagues. Mr. Bruguere concurred and noted that since the public was paying for these they ought to be able to use them. He noted that Nelson baseball players have to go to Amherst to play summer American Legion ball and that it would be nice if they could play in Nelson.

Members then discussed the High School bleacher replacement and Mr. Harvey noted that Waynesboro High School was doing a big bleacher replacement because of a liability issue. Mr. Parr noted that the list showed indoor/outdoor bleachers but that the main concern was replacing the old High School gym bleachers that were mostly used for students and classes.

Mr. Parr then noted that the tennis courts and track needed to be repaired and resurfaced. He also noted that he thought that some greenhouse repair had already been done.

Members then asked if the Tye River Elementary School gym floor was still the old mats and Mr. Parr noted that it was. Mr. Harvey noted that there was no use in changing the floor unless they enlarged the gym. He explained that the Board thought they were getting a full sized gym at the time and later found out it was a full sized elementary gym. They then made sure that the Rockfish Elementary School gym was built as a full regular sized gym.

Mr. Saunders asked for an explanation of what the School Board meant in wanting a hallway to the auditorium. Mr. Parr explained that there was currently nothing on the outside of the building to note the entrance to the Auditorium and Ms. Brennan concurred that this needed to be fixed. Mr. Parr noted that it was desirable to have something there to mimic the look of the Middle School and High School entrances that would essentially be a fake roofline. He added that he had personally requested this as well as a new sign out on the road. Mr. Saunders noted that he had just recently been made aware that a person had offered to build a new sign out there and was turned down. Mr. Parr questioned this offering and noted that this offer had never come to the Board for consideration.

Mr. Saunders then questioned the legitimacy of the project costs included with the CIP and suggested that the list should not have been submitted with best guess figures. Ms. Cunningham acknowledged that these numbers were mostly estimates; however they would get real numbers if an item was chosen to be seriously considered.

Mr. Harvey then concluded by noting that the Board of Supervisors would meet the following night and would potentially work on the budget. Mr. Hale noted that he would like to make the joint meeting an annual exercise and Mr. Harvey suggested that they meet early on in the process as well as later in the

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process. Mr. Bruguire agreed but noted that the schools would not get all of the funding for the things discussed and that there were a lot of places they could trim their side of the budget.

Mr. Parr thanked Mr. Harvey for the relaxed format of the meeting and Mr. Harvey noted that the County has been very fortunate that there has not been a tough budget year yet for the schools and that they were getting something for the money.

III. Other Business (As May Be Introduced if All Members Are Present)

There was no other business considered by the Board.

IV. Adjournment

At 4:45 pm, Mr. Hale moved to adjourn and Mr. Saunders seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Supervisors voted unanimously by voice vote to approve the motion and the meeting adjourned.