

Virginia:

AT A CONTINUED MEETING of the Nelson County Board of Supervisors at 6:00 p.m. in the Former Board of Supervisors Room located on the fourth floor of the Nelson County Courthouse in Lovingston, Virginia.

Present: Board of Supervisors
Jesse N. Rutherford, East District Supervisor - Chair
J. David Parr, West District Supervisor– Vice Chair
Ernie Q. Reed, Central District Supervisor
Robert G. “Skip” Barton, South District Supervisor
Candice W. McGarry, County Administrator
Amanda B. Spivey, Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk

School Board
Shannon Powell, West District - Chair
Ceaser Perkins, South District – Vice Chair
Margaret Clair, Central District Trustee
Janet Turner-Giles, North District Trustee
George Cheape, East District Trustee
Dr. Amanda Hester, Superintendent of Nelson County Public Schools
Shannon Irvin, Assistant Superintendent for Administration
Tammy Ponton, Administrative Assistant to Superintendent

Absent: Thomas D. Harvey, North District Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rutherford and Ms. Powell called the joint Board of Supervisors and School Board meeting to order at 6:01 p.m. with three (3) Supervisors and four (4) School Board members present to establish a quorum. Mr. Parr and Mr. Perkins arrived shortly after and Mr. Harvey was absent.

II. BOARDS’ DISCUSSION

- A. Updates and Comments – School Board Members
- B. Updates and Comments – Board of Supervisors

Ms. Powell welcomed everyone and thanked them for being present at the meeting. She explained that the purpose of the meeting was for the two Boards to discuss their collaborative projects as well as the budget. She invited everyone to visit the coffee shop between the joint meeting and the regular School Board meeting. She noted that the coffee shop was put on by one of their school groups as part of a work-based learning project.

Mr. Rutherford noted that they were excited to update the School Board on where things were at. Ms. Powell indicated that the School Board was interested in getting some updates from the Board on the budget, uses of the Larkin property that may impact the schools, and recreation fields. Dr. Hester also noted they would like any updates on facility use for the 4th of July.

Mr. Rutherford reported that the Board had a budget meeting earlier in the week. He noted that they were very proud of County staff, as there had been some staffing changes over the past year but they were able to get the budget accomplished. He noted they were not done yet as they would have the public hearing on the budget in May with the intent to adopt the budget in June. He indicated that there was a chance that they would be seeking a revenue enhancement for the Transient Occupancy Tax. He reported that the Board did not choose to make any increases to the Real Estate, Personal Property, or Machinery and Tools tax rates. He noted that in County staff’s work on the budget, they tried to model their request after the School’s request. He commented that the State had not decided on a 7 percent salary increase yet. He reported that they were currently looking at a 5 percent salary adjustment for County and movement to the minimums, with 5 percent salary adjustment and a step for schools to stay along same lines. He noted that things could change between the public hearing in May and budget adoption in June. He indicated that there had been some discussions on capital improvements. He suggested that the rest of the Board have a chance to speak on the budget before discussing capital improvements.

Mr. Reed commented that Mr. Harvey was not present for the budget work session earlier that week. He reported that the Board was pretty much split on 5 percent or 7 percent, but they needed to have something to advertise for the public hearing. He also noted that they were having a public hearing on a 2 percent increase to the Transient Occupancy Tax (TOT) rate. He commented that if they were to accept a 2 percent increase to the TOT, it would provide the ability to go to a 7 percent salary increase for County staff and provide the same opportunity for the Schools. He noted that he would love to have seen a public hearing

on a fully funded school budget to gain public comments from the public. He felt that might be an opportunity for the Board to consider what the fifth vote would have looked like, had Mr. Harvey been present at the budget work session. He was optimistic that there was an opportunity to work with the potential 2 percent TOT increase.

Mr. Parr did not have anything to add at the moment.

Mr. Barton commented that the proposed tax increase related to being able to fully fund the school budget and raise salaries by 7 percent. He noted that the County was not a business, but a lot of what was done, was run like a business. He indicated that Ms. McGarry kept an eye on everything so they would operate in an efficient way. Mr. Barton referenced an article regarding ways that businesses were cutting labor costs by eliminating benefits. He stated that Nelson County had clearly been positive to its employees and it had benefitted the County greatly. He did not feel that 5 percent or 7 percent covered the inflation over the last few years, but noted that it was more to show appreciation for the work done by the employees. He reiterated Mr. Reed's comment that the proposed TOT increase of 2 percent would enable the County to fully fund the School budget and have 7 percent salary increases. He commented that the people visiting would pay the Transient Occupancy Tax, not the people of Nelson County. He pointed out that there was a cost to maintaining the beauty of Nelson County. He felt that it was perfectly fair for those visiting to pay some of that cost.

Ms. Clair commented that she was at the budget meeting. She thought that the Board had a great conversation. She was complimentary of the work that went into the County budget by staff. She noted that some sacrifices were made and she could tell that they focused on what was important to the School Board.

Mr. Cheape thanked both Boards for all of their hard work and appreciated the consideration for what their employees and students needed.

Ms. Turner-Giles stated that the most precious resource that both the Schools and County had were their employees. She noted that whatever could be done to continue to support them, was much appreciated.

Ms. Powell commented that this was her fourth budget cycle. She was very appreciative of the collaboration, work and positivity through the process. She noted that they were not in the business of telling the Board how to drive revenues. She commented that the School Board would always be in support of anything that provided more revenue to the schools. She expressed appreciation to the Board for their continued support and noted that they would appreciate any additional funds that could be given. She indicated that if the Board of Supervisors stayed at 5 percent and a step, they would be appreciative of that. Ms. Powell indicated that the School Board was interested in updates on the Larkin property.

Mr. Barton noted there had been a lot more cooperation between both Boards than previously. He commented that he felt the School Board had made an effort to have a realistic budget for the next fiscal year.

Ms. Powell asked where things stood with the Larkin property and any impacts that development may have on the Schools and facilities around the Schools. She wanted to ensure there was open communication to plan for the future. Mr. Rutherford reported that since the purchase of the Larkin property, the County had been working with consultants to determine what would be feasible on the site. He noted that the Board had been working on a priority list, with recreation being at the top of the list. He indicated that they were not sure what that would look like yet in terms of fields or facilities. He noted they were not yet in a position to make any decisions. He reported that there were other issues relating to infrastructure. He noted that water and sewer capacities were the next hurdles. He indicated that they would need to work with the Service Authority to see if there was any potential to have something that would utilize a lot of water. He noted that as with any capital project, debt service would come along with it. Mr. Rutherford noted the Board's recent letter of support for the high school renovation grant, and he indicated that the Board needed to be prepared to support that project which was estimated to cost around \$20 million.

Ms. McGarry reported that the consultants were working to determine the best sites for the Board priorities on the Larkin property. Mr. Rutherford suggested that they may be ready to have more specific conversations on the property in late summer. Mr. Reed pointed out that when dealing with capital projects, things took a long time. He reported that every site diagram he had seen so far, had athletic fields. He noted that the timeframe would be really hard to predict, especially with the water situation, and not just for the Larkin property but Lovington and Arrington as well.

Mr. Barton noted they wanted to properly plan for the future and not place something in an area that would be better suited for something else later on. Ms. Powell noted that was the challenge as it was not just a five-year plan. Mr. Rutherford noted it was more like 30 years and with the water and sewer situation, it made it very cost intensive. Mr. Barton commented that the recreation portion could be done sooner.

Ms. Powell asked what the Board had gauged as the largest priorities based on recreation feedback from surveys and stakeholder meetings. She asked whether it was fields or facilities. Mr. Barton noted that people wanted fields, but they also wanted a place to swim. He commented that it would be great to have a place for people to bring their children, grandchildren, and neighborhood kids. He described his vision of a park with a swimming area in the middle, surrounded by the mountains.

Ms. Powell asked about potential field infrastructure, and whether the Board was taking into account the school infrastructure and fields. Mr. Rutherford noted that the Board had created a sports committee board which included some County staff and School staff, but they were not sure what that collaboration would look like yet. Dr. Hester noted that the pool and outdoor fields were the most consistent needs mentioned in each of the prior discussions. Ms. Clair asked if some flat general purpose fields could be put in for the time being. She noted that if something were to be put there later like apartments, there would be no infrastructure to remove. Mr. Reed commented that would a question they would ask once they were able to see what the consultants came up with. Mr. Rutherford noted topography was nice on the property. Mr. Barton also noted that the views were very nice. Mr. Rutherford and Mr. Reed both commented that Nelson County High School student Matthew Drumheller was very helpful in providing tours of the Larkin property.

Mr. Rutherford reiterated that as far as timeline and where things would go on the site, the Board was unsure. He noted they would hear back from consultants on site plan options and then they would also need to consider the infrastructure needs.

Ms. Powell discussed the subject of facilities use and Fourth of July. She asked for the Board to keep the School Board in the loop regarding the use of school facilities. She noted that the School Board wanted to be present and partner as much as possible. Mr. Rutherford reported that the Fourth of July event was conceptual and nothing was planned yet. Ms. Powell updated her School Board to note that there had been some discussions about having the use of school fields for Fourth of July activities. Mr. Rutherford noted that he and the Lovington Volunteer Fire Department had discussed having fireworks following the Fourth of July parade in Lovington. He commented that one idea was to have that at the high school but they were not sure yet. He noted he was hoping to have more discussion in May on the subject.

Dr. Hester noted the positive working relationship through the budget and appreciated the ability to talk with Ms. McGarry about anything. She noted that they wanted to be able to support community events. She also noted that she had some good conversations with school families who wanted to be more involved in the community, as well as community members wanting to be more involved in the schools. Dr. Hester noted that there were some things like the roofing project that they may need to navigate around with any community events. She wanted to make sure a process was in place to reserve spaces and avoid obstacles or scheduling conflicts.

Ms. Powell suggested bringing back Nelson County Day.

There were no other questions from the School Board for the Board of Supervisors.

Mr. Reed commented that it was great to have everyone at the table with a good feeling about what was going on.

Mr. Parr agreed with Ms. Clair. He felt that the Board work session on Tuesday was productive and things were moving in a positive direction.

Mr. Rutherford commended the staff for the success of the budget, noting they were adjusting well to their new roles.

Mr. Barton felt that Ms. McGarry had created a situation that allowed people to do things to make Nelson better. He noted that education was about possibilities, which was why he felt they should fully fund the budget. He thought it was important to maintain the momentum they had going, noting the more people were involved, the better off they would be.

Mr. Rutherford hoped to have more conversations to discuss future plans. He also suggested that more 1x1 and 2x2 meetings in the future would be good. He noted they were in the process of Comprehensive Plan updates. He indicated that the decisions they made in the next two years would set a lot of timelines for the next 25 years.

Ms. Powell reiterated the School Board's appreciation for the time and commitment that both Boards have put into their working relationship. She noted that the School Board appreciated the Board's continued investment in the schools. She invited the Board to join in and visit one of the program's they supported through school funding. She explained that Ms. Sarah Viar's class had a coffee shop set up for service as part of a work based learning project. She invited the Board to visit A Little Something Special Coffee

Shop which was setup down the hall for service that evening. She noted that the School Board had to return to the meeting room at 7 p.m. for their regular meeting.

III. OTHER BUSINESS (AS PRESENTED)

Mr. Parr commented that the Director of the Department of Social Services, Ms. Angela Rose, was retiring after 42 years. He noted that he was currently serving on the Social Services Board. He reported that the Social Services Board was making a request that the Board of Supervisors make a contribution toward her retirement celebration. Mr. Parr asked the Board of Supervisors to approve a donation toward the retirement celebration for Angela Rose. Mr. Parr moved to allocate \$1,000 toward Ms. Rose's retirement celebration and Mr. Barton seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Supervisors unanimously approved the motion (4-0) by roll call vote.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 6:44 p.m., Mr. Reed moved to adjourn the Board of Supervisors meeting and Mr. Parr seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, Supervisors approved the motion by vote of acclamation and the meeting adjourned.

Ms. Turner-Giles moved to adjourn the School Board meeting and Mr. Cheape seconded the motion. There being no further discussion, School Board members approved the motion unanimously and the meeting adjourned.