

**Special Called Board of Supervisors Meeting (Thursday, June 6, 2024)**  
*Northumberland County, Virginia*

**Members present:**

James M. Long, Richard F. Haynie, James W. Brann, Chip Williams, AC Fisher, Jr.

**Other Staff Present:**

Mr. Luttrell Tadlock, County Administrator

Mr. Drew Basye, Assistant County Administrator

Ms. Morgan Wilson, Executive Assistant

Mr. Carl Hayden, IT Technician

The special meeting was convened by Chairman Haynie and held at the Northumberland Courthouse located at 220 Judicial Place, Heathsville, VA 22473.

**1. Public Hearing 7:00 p.m.**

**Discussion, Information: A. The public hearing is being held pursuant to Section 15.2-2506 of the Code of Virginia, 1950 as amended, allowing the public to question and comment on the proposed budget. This proposed budget reflects a \$0.08 increase in the current real estate tax rate.**

County Administrator Tadlock explained that the County budget totals \$50,513,252 and does reflect a \$0.08 increase in the current real estate tax rate. Mr. Tadlock stated that there will be no action taken tonight on the budget as there is a 7-day waiting period required by state code.

**Public Hearing Open.**

Dr. Pica expressed her concern about a 13% tax increase necessary to fund the budget in full. After looking at the budget, in particular the School Board budget, she believes that some judicious cuts and expenses can be made. She explained that the school budgeted \$3.7M from the state with the existing local composite index (LCI) in 2022. The budget for 2024 is anticipating \$3.5M from the state even though the local composite index is increasing. Dr. Pica stated that is a difference of \$200,000, not \$1.7M. She suggested adding the salary increase for the teachers as well as their health insurance, which is another \$300,000, meaning the budget would only require a minimum increase of \$500,000. She then brought attention to the state already providing them with \$568,000. Dr. Pica believes that it's not an LCI issue, but it is an expense issue. She informed the Board that the County audit, the School Board's response, and the Superintendent's report all have different amounts listed when it comes to the school's surplus for FY23, and she believes the expenses need to be figured out before giving any more money to the school.

Mrs. Suzanne Smart believes that giving every want to every department in the County is unrealistic and irresponsible. She also doesn't believe the Board can expect the taxpayers to provide for those wants. Additionally, she stated that increasing the tax rate in the County does

not necessarily mean that the revenue will increase. There will be fewer businesses, people will be unable to pay their taxes, and residents will move.

Mr. James Penney stated that the County departments had to reduce their budgets last year to meet the School Board's wants. He stated this year the school budget needs to be cut because the County cannot afford to continue on this path of fully funding the school's desires.

Mr. Maurice Johnson stated that every year we get hit with the risk of increased taxes and all of the County resources are not going where they need to be. He believes money needs to be spent on building businesses to create new job opportunities and the County can't keep doing the same thing over again expecting any change.

Mrs. Laura McMillan shared her concern on the increased tax rate and asked that the Board not support it.

### **Public Hearing Closed.**

Chairman Haynie announced that they must wait 7 days before they can take action on the budget.

Vice Chairman Brann wants the citizens to know that a lot of the increases in the budget this year are out of their control, for example retirement and health insurance, but he stated that he's not going to vote for the budget as it is presented tonight. He believes there are tough decisions to be made.

County Administrator Tadlock stated that he sent some information to the Board from the Sanitary District's Plant Supervisor, Mr. Woolard, related to a disturbance noticed in Cockrell Creek in the area of the outfall pipe. It is believed to be due to changes made at the plant which were increasing pump sizes and other various things. Mr. Woolard received a quote from Crofton Industries to dive on-site at the outfall pipe site, which is different from the location where the sewer pipe rupture occurred earlier this year. The quote amounted to \$6,650 and Mr. Tadlock asked the Board how they would like to proceed.

Supervisor Williams stated that Mr. Woolard believes the quote from Crofton Industries is high. He stated that the emergency dives in Reedville earlier this year were significantly less than this amount, so he'd like to reach back out tomorrow for an updated figure.

Supervisor Fisher asked if Mr. Woolard knows what was leaking from the pipe.

Supervisor Williams stated that he believes it is air.

Vice Chairman Brann clarified that this is clean water being released and not contaminated water.

Chairman Haynie suggested the Board wait for the updated quote from Crofton.

Chairman Haynie then stated that people are anxious about getting Smith Point dredged.

County Administrator Tadlock explained that they are working to get another meeting with the Army Corps of Engineer to get an update on that. The funding that was presented to the Virginia Port Authority for Cranes Creek and the Little Wicomico was approved for the third phase which is to do engineering studies and to move forward with the paperwork required prior to that project. He explained that the funding does not contain anything in it as far as performing the actual dredging.

Chairman Haynie asked Mr. Fisher and Mr. Williams how much water was in the jetties right now.

Supervisor Williams stated that he knows commercial watermen who go through there daily without trouble, but they are very familiar with how the channel has changed. He believes that someone who goes through there once a year could easily have trouble.

## **2. Closing of Meeting**

### **Action, Information: A. Carry Over**

Motion to carry over to June 12, 2024 at 5:30 p.m.

Motion by: James W. Brann, second by: Chip Williams.

Final Resolution: Motion Carried

Aye: James M. Long, Richard F. Haynie, James W. Brann, Chip Williams, AC Fisher, Jr.