

VIRGINIA: At a recessed/joint meeting of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors and the Tazewell County School Board held April 27, 2010 at 5:30 p.m. in the Tazewell County Administration Building, Tazewell, Virginia 24651

PRESENT: Seth R. White, Chairman
Dave R. Anderson, Vice-Chairman
D. Michael Hymes, Member
Jim Campbell, Member
John Absher, Member
Jim Spencer, III – County Administrator
C. Eric Young, County Attorney
Patricia Green, Assistant County Administrator
Ruth Groseclose, Administrative Assistant
Members of the Press

Members of the Tazewell County School Board:

Dr. Brenda Lawson, Division Superintendent
Mike Dennis, Member
Randy Conn, Member
David Woodard, Member
Cookie Johnson, Member
Steve Davis, Member
Jamie Lester, Director of Finance/Clerk

Seth R. White, Chairman of the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors called the recessed/joint meeting to order and welcomed Dr. Brenda Lawson and members of the Tazewell County School Board.

The joint meeting was called to discuss the 2010-2011 school budget recently approved by the Tazewell County School Board.

Supervisor Dave Anderson gave the invocation with Supervisor Campbell leading those present in the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States Flag.

Budget FY10-11

- The amount of local funding that the Board of Supervisors would allocate to the School Board for FY10-11 was addressed. Board of Supervisor Chairman Seth White said he was committed to giving the school board current level funding in the amount of \$12,182,812.00 as well as the return any remaining left over funds for fiscal year 2010, in an approximate amount of \$250,000.00. Dr. Brenda Lawson said this would allow the School Board to operate next year without additional budget cuts.
- Discussed also was the teacher step increases that were removed from the school board's adopted budget. Supervisor Hymes disagreed with the removal of the step increases and said he felt that the step increases should be reinstated and asked that the School Board work toward doing so. Randy Conn School Board member suggested that both boards split the cost of giving the increases. Supervisor White and Anderson said it would be hard for the Board of Supervisors to do this since this was the second year County employees have not received a raise.
- Supervisor Hymes questioned page 2 & page 6 of the School Budget. He said that since 2004 the school system has removed 50 full-time teaching positions but added 12 positions in central office in the same period. Supervisor Hymes said he felt this gave the idea that classrooms were being cut into but not administration.
- **Shared services:**
 - Agreed to look into using the school system's garage services for placing inspection decals on all county vehicles
 - Suggested the possibility of utilizing career and technical students to perform vehicle repair work

- Discussed the idea of sharing Information Technology Services (IT)
 - Shared building and grounds services - The county administrator said that he was also working on a plan to allow the Little League group from the Abbs Valley Boissevain/Pocahontas area to mow the grass at Pocahontas High School as an exchange to use the school grounds for practice and games.
 - The Board of Supervisors requested that Ms. Green obtain ideas and suggestions with regard to shared services from other counties.
- ▶ **Carlock – Pruett Building:** Mike Patton was present and gave an update on the progress as well as the funding of the Carlock Pruett Building – athletic property at Graham High School. A field house and gym as well as another classroom are being planned at an estimated cost of \$2,497,000.00 (\$300,000 in interest). Once the buildings are complete, they will become property of the Tazewell County School Board and the school system will maintain the property. The School Board has also approved \$250,000 toward the project and the County Board of Supervisors will need to approve the agreement since the building process is through Public Private Education Act (PPEA) guidelines. The agreement should be ready for execution at the May 4, 2010 BOS meeting. Jamie Lester, Finance Director said the \$250,000 has been budgeted and ready to go. Supervisor Hymes raised concerns about the maintenance and upkeep of the building by the School Board. He questioned whether the schools should collaborate with the Town of Bluefield with regard to maintenance costs.
- ▶ **Part-time student:** Supervisor Anderson asked about the School Board’s policy regarding part-time students. Father Mark Tyson’s son is home schooled and the School Board will not permit him to take part in the Tazewell County Career and Technical Center’s curriculum. Dr. Lawson explained that the school policy does not allow home school students to

participate in the Career and Technical courses. She said a student must be enrolled in an academic class with the school system before he/she is eligible, and stated that not many school divisions in the State allow this. However, she will check with the School Attorney and have him review the Code as well as policy options. Chairman White urged the school board to work diligently and grant the request.

► **Step Increases for Teachers/Employee Pay Reductions:**

Dr. Lawson stated that the School System would be doing more with less in the upcoming budget and stated that one cost saving measure would allow school – central office personnel to substitute teach without additional pay, thus removing \$20,000 from the substitute teacher budget. Jamie Lester – School Finance Director said it would take \$565,000 to give *all* step increases. There are 30 higher-level steps for teachers with more time vested, resulting in a need of \$300,000 (included in the \$565,000.00). Supervisor Campbell wanted to know if cuts had been made to the central office staff, and if not, why? He said enrollment was down and central office staff increased 11-13 times over the last few years while enrollment declined by an average of 75-100 students per year, with 50 teaching positions eliminated as well during that time. Supervisor Campbell voiced concern that no central office employee had their contracts or pay reduced during that time. School Board Member Davis said all central office staff were needed despite lower enrollment. Following debate, Supervisor Hymes reiterated his position to restore the 30 higher-level teacher step increases. School Board Member Conn once again asked the Board of Supervisors to meet the School Board one-half way with funding the increases. Dave Anderson reiterated the need for the school board's salary committee to study the step increase issue and to come up with a better plan.

▶ **Truancy Control:**

Supervisor Hymes wanted to know why the part-time Truancy position in the Tazewell area was eliminated when Tazewell had the highest truancy occurrence. George Godbey, attendance supervisor, said the two full-time truancy officers in Bluefield and Richlands would cover the Tazewell area on certain days. Supervisor Hymes voiced opposition to this proposal and requested that it be revisited. He felt the Tazewell area would not be patrolled as good as it should be.

▶ **Healthcare Plan Costs and Plan Adjustments:**

Supervisor Hymes questioned if a plan for the School Board to adjust health insurance coverage was in place and wanted to know if the coverage was put to bid. The current school health insurance plan calls for a \$1,000 deductible for FY10-11 (existing policy). It was noted that the health insurance coverage was put to bid and the deadline for quotes is May 17.

▶ **Virtual Check Book:**

Supervisor Hymes requested that the School System place on the School's Website, a link entitled "Virtual Check Book" similar to the Tazewell County link showing quarterly expenditures of \$1,000 or more, excluding salaries.

▶ **Other:**

Supervisor Seth White announced the Donnie Lowe/Kids Fish Day event at Cavitts Creek Park on May 1. He invited all County youth and reiterated the many activities associated with the event.

Supervisor White announced that GeoComm vehicles would be in the County with regard to enhancing emergency response by providing verified locatable addresses for the County's 911 System. The vehicles will be clearly marked "GeoComm". The GeoComm field specialists will visually verify addresses on structures and if the address is not visible, they will speak to residents or businesses or leave a pamphlet behind asking them to fill out a survey to verify their address.

Supervisor Campbell questioned whether the School System had ever looked into participating in the School Efficiency Program. School Board member Dennis and Dr. Lawson reported that the School Board had reviewed the program and certain aspects of the program were used, such as the energy efficiency part.

Supervisor Absher ask Dr. Lawson if anyone from the Board of Supervisors or Administration had ever contacted her about any specific job or salary increases or adjustments as well as position changes. Dr. Lawson said that she could not remember anyone contacting her one-on-one about this subject; however, she said she did respond to questions she received from the County office in an email concerning various budget topics.

School Board member Dave Woodard questioned whether the fire hydrant issue had been resolved at the Tazewell Middle School. It was reported this matter was being discussed with the Town of Tazewell.

ADJOURN

Chairman White thanked Dr. Lawson and members of the School Board for participating in the joint meeting. The School Board will continue working on their budget at a meeting scheduled May 10. The next regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors is scheduled for May 4, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. The Board of Supervisors will consider approving the local funding allocation for the School System at the May 4 meeting.

Now, upon motion of Member Anderson, seconded by Member Hymes and adopted by a vote of 5 to 0, the Tazewell County Board of Supervisors hereby adjourns this meeting.

Seth R. White, Chairman

By: rg