

JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 5, 2008

At a joint meeting of the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors and the Pulaski County School Board held on Monday, May 5, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. at the Pulaski Elementary School, in the Town of Pulaski, Virginia, the following members were present: Joseph L. Sheffey, Chairman; Frank R. Conner, Vice Chairman; Ranny L. Akers; Charles Bopp; and Dean K. Pratt. School Board members present included Paul Phillips, Chairman; Jeff Bain; Pam Chitwood; and John Wenrich. Staff members present included: Dr. Donald Stowers, Superintendent; Jean Cox, Clerk to the School Board; Libby Vansant, Assistant Superintendent; Ron Nichols, Director, Operations; Dr. Jim Sandidge, Director, Technology; Joe Makolandra, Human Resource Specialist; Linda Hill, Director of Instruction; Chris Stafford, School Finance Director; Tom McCarthy, County and School Board Attorney; Pete Huber, County Administrator; Robert Hiss, Assistant County Administrator; and Gordon Jones, County Finance Director. Also present were Bill Benson, Joe Hocker, and Jena Hardy, Reporter, *The Southwest Times*.

1. Welcome and Dinner

Mr. Sheffey called the meeting to order at 6:10 pm and welcomed everyone in attendance.

2. Update on Building Space Needs

Mr. Huber explained that the County and the Town are working out lease arrangements with tenants related to the acquisition of the Maple Shade property. Glenn Reynolds met this week with Social Services staff regarding possible lease revenue from the state for upgraded space as part of a possible rental agreement with the IDA. Ron Coake has obtained bids for the replacement of windows in the County Administration building; however the bids are over budget and staff is examining alternatives. Consideration to the disposition of the house portion of the former School Board offices is recommended through an RFP process.

Mr. Wenrich asked about the time line to finalize the outstanding leases at Maple Shade. Mr. Huber responded that it should be 30-45 days.

3. Middle School/Recreation Center

Mr. Huber said that a suggestion has been made to consider putting forth a bond referendum to fund both a new middle school and an indoor recreation center. This approach would ensure that nearly all residents of the County would benefit from the proposed community investments.

JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 5, 2008

Dr. Stowers said that a consolidated middle school is part of the building futures plan. A location has not been determined but one option is to locate close to PCHS. He suggested that both Boards need at least 18 months of planning and community work prior to issuing a bond. Renovations to the Dublin Elementary and Newbern Elementary are still needed.

Mr. Sheffey said that the County has a Recreation Committee specifically studying the viability of a future indoor recreation center in include needed amenities, location, and costs.

Mr. Akers asked about the need for one or two middle schools. Mr. Stowers said that the only public comments he has personally received to date are in regards to one middle school. Dr. Stowers further explained that Pulaski Middle School is landlocked, so expansion is practically impossible. Dublin Middle School has approximately 25 acres. A combined middle school would need a minimum of 25-30 acres, or more, depending on the needed athletic facilities with a 200,000 sq. ft. school. Mr. Akers said that he would prefer to see the middle school near PCHS so it can share athletic facilities.

Mr. Huber and Dr. Stowers both stated that the Boards need to solicit feedback from the public to include the level of tax increase needed. Dr. Stowers said that the school curriculum needs to be determined prior to meeting with architects.

The Boards took a dinner break from 6:30 pm to 7:00 pm

4. Update on New Riverlawn Elementary & Reuse of Old

Mr. Nichols provided an update on the construction of the school. He reported that the A and B wings are nearly completed and the other major areas are still on schedule, so the facility should have substantial completion by the end of October. The school system plans on performing its furnishings so it can open for school in January, 2009. Mr. Huber updated the boards on the remainder of financing for the school. The County is borrowing \$5.6 million through the VPSA as well as an additional \$1.3 million (over five years) for technology through SunTrust.

Mr. Huber explained that ideas for reuse of the old school include: a County office annex, recreational purposes, apartments, and private office space.

JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 5, 2008

Mr. Sheffey stated that he would like to see continued use of the gym and grounds for recreational purposes. He would further like the County's Recreation Commission explore the future needs of recreation on the east side of the county.

5. Joint Mowing Operations

Mr. Nichols announced that as of May 19th, the mowing operations would be nearing full staffing and all equipment should have arrived. The goal is to be on a five-day schedule for mowing all properties. This area of joint services provides transportation and operational efficiencies in mowing industrial parks, roadsides, recreational parks, ball fields, water and sewer installations and school properties totaling almost 200 acres.

Dr. Stowers said that he and Mr. Huber will be drafting an agreement for equitable sharing of costs, including appropriate funding for the timely replacement of mowing equipment, through the County's Internal Service Fund.

6. Impact of Declining Enrollment

Mr. Stafford said that the current year's budget was based on a 4,923 average daily attendance (ADM), however when school started in September, the system was already down 129 students and the county as of March 31 was 4,747. This will result in a \$740,000 loss of state funds in May and June payments to the system. Mr. Stafford said the school has reduced discretionary spending since this fall; however, reduced sales tax revenues may result in the school system requesting more funds from the County.

Dr. Stowers said that every school has been impacted by declining enrollments. Possible explanations include: starting this year, alternative out of school placements are deducted from the ADM; all day pre-k program in Radford; and job losses in the county.

Mr. Stafford said that the FY 2008-2009 state funds is based on an ADM of 4,742 students, but that the school system has chosen to base its budget on an ADM of 4,708. There are only 4,695 in school today. Mr. Stafford pointed out the system's concerns regarding the General Assembly's move to fund more of the school budgets through lottery funds.

Dr. Stowers explained that the system will receive \$1.5 million in additional funds from the rebenchmarking process which is due to the

JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 5, 2008

County' reduced ability to pay for certain programs (i.e. almost 43% of student are on free or reduced lunch). These funds will be used to make up the \$232,000 increase in fuel expenses, improve internet capabilities between schools, increases in health insurance costs, and cost of living adjustments. The school system is cutting six positions due to decreased ADM. Mr. Makolandra said that 15 teachers and 15 other staff have announced their retirement.

Dr. Stowers and Mr. Bain asked the Board of Supervisors to consider additional funding to increase teachers salaries so they can remain competitive throughout the region. Mr. Bain pointed out that the school system spends money on training teachers and then loses them in 4-5 years.

Mr. Sheffey said the County's budget is extremely tight next year and is the toughest budget he can remember since being on the Board. Mr. Huber announced that the recommended budget calls for a 14 cent increase in the personal property tax rate, which is a direct result of the State cuts. Mr. Huber also said that the County has increased school funding by \$1.3 million next year for debt service on the Riverlawn School. Mr. Akers expressed his concern that the County is very tight already coupled with the State changes to CSA costs and the increasing number of children needing out of home placements.

7. Update on Current Joint Operations

a. Refuse collection and vehicle maintenance

Mr. Nichols explained that both residential and commercial refuse collection are doing well and that he is exploring recycling programs within the schools and county government. He would also like to expand the types of products being received at the drop centers. The two garages continue to work well together.

b. Finance

Mr. Jones explained that GASB 45 regulations requiring actuarial evaluations will take effect in FY 2009. In FY 2008, the new SAS regulations take effect requiring documentation of internal control procedures, in which Mr. Jones is exploring how to establish.

c. Information Technology

Dr. Sandidge announced that 41 phones were installed in the new courthouse which should save \$45 per line per month. He is also exploring security issues in several buildings to include proximity cards, cameras, and alarms. He is working on the installation of a

JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES OF MAY 5, 2008

microwave internet system between schools due to currently exceeding the connectivity capacity almost daily. The RFP's for cell phone service has been narrowed down to Verizon and Ntelos. The public safety personnel desire to stay with the Nextel phones and the "direct connect" capability and its integration with the dispatch center.

d. Youth Services

Mr. Huber said that the after school program is going well and expect to have a good summer camp at Randolph Park. The Dublin High School Reunion Shelter is currently under construction. Loving Field negotiations are being finalized with the Town.

8. Other Matters: Frequency of meetings

It was discussed that the Boards meet every six months with the option to meet as needed should unforeseen opportunities or difficulties arise. Also, that Mr. Sheffey, Mr. Huber, Mr. Phillips, and Dr. Stowers should also meet as a group if necessary.

9. Next meeting – 6:00 p.m. Monday, October 6, 2008

10. Adjournment

On a motion by Mr. Connor, seconded by Mr. Pratt, and carried, the Board of Supervisors adjourned the joint meeting at 8:05 pm.

Voting yes: Mr. Akers, Mr. Conner, Mr. Sheffey, Mr. Bopp, Mr. Pratt.

Voting no: none.

Joseph L. Sheffey, Chairman

Peter M. Huber, County Administrator