

## JOINT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING MINUTES OF MARCH 1, 2010

At a joint meeting of the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors and the Pulaski County School Board held on Monday, March 1, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the cafeteria of the Pulaski Elementary School, in the Town of Pulaski, the following Board of Supervisors members were present: Joseph L. Sheffey, Chairman; Ranny L. Akers; Frank R. Conner; and Dean K. Pratt. Supervisor Charles Bopp was unable to attend the meeting. County staff present included; Pete Huber, County Administrator; Thomas J. McCarthy, Jr., County Attorney; Robert Hiss, Assistant County Administrator; Diane Newby, County Finance Director; and Gena Hanks, Clerk to the Board of Supervisors. School Board members present included Paul Phillips, Chairman; John Wenrich, Vice-Chairman; Jeff Bain; Pam Chitwood; and Dr. Rodell Cruise. School Board staff present included: Dr. Thomas Brewster, Interim Superintendent of Schools; Lesli Farmer, Student Information Tech Specialist; Ron Nichols, Director, Operations; Mr. Tim Barnes, Director, Information Technology; Chris Stafford, School Finance Director; Joe Makolandra, Director of School Human Resources; Bridget Parsons, Principal, Pulaski Elementary School; and Toni Elitharp, Director of Special Education. Present from the local news media were Mike Williams of The Patriot newspaper and Melinda Williams of the Southwest Times.

### 1. Welcome

Chairmen Sheffey and Phillips welcomed those in attendance. Chairman Sheffey advised this was a meeting between the boards and did include general participation by the audience as would normally be the case with meetings of each individual board.

Chairman Sheffey called for a moment of silence in memory of Supervisor Bopp's mother Dorothy Kitts Bopp who had passed away on March 30, 2010.

- Multi-Jurisdictional Major Crime Scene Memorandum of Understanding

Mr. Huber requested the Board adopt a resolution entering into a Multi-jurisdictional Major Crime Scene Memorandum of Understanding with the Galax Police Department, the Blacksburg Police Department, the Virginia Tech Police Department, the Radford City Department of Police, the Wythe County Sheriff's Office, the Giles County Sheriff's Office, the Pulaski Police Department, the Christiansburg Police Department, the Grayson County Sheriff's Office and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.

On a motion by Mr. Akers, seconded by Mr. Pratt and carried, the Board adopted the following resolution:

BE IT RESOLVED that pursuant to Section 15.2-1736 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, the Board of Supervisors of Pulaski County, Virginia, hereby consents to the Sheriff of Pulaski County, Virginia, entering into a Multi-jurisdictional Major Crime Scene Memorandum of Understanding with the Galax Police

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Department, the Blacksburg Police Department, the Virginia Tech Police Department, the Radford City Department of Police, the Wythe County Sheriff's Office, the Giles County Sheriff's Office, the Pulaski Police Department, the Christiansburg Police Department, the Grayson County Sheriff's Office and the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office.

This Resolution shall be effective immediately upon its adoption.

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

Voting no: none.

Not present: Mr. Bopp.

### 2. Budget Situation

Mr. Huber advised both boards had been provided with the schools statement of needs resulting from state cutbacks. He advised making up for the estimated \$5 million in state funding loss for education alone (not including an additional \$600,000 for constitutional officers), on an annual basis, would require a \$0.17 cent, or a 33%, increase in the real estate rate and noted as an alternative, the personal property tax rate would have to be increased by \$1.94, or 91%.

As provided in the meeting packet, board members reviewed a summary describing limited options for raising significant additional revenue. Also provided to the boards was a draft budget plan and a revised budget schedule allowing for maximum time for determination of state funding levels.

Mr. Huber advised there was currently \$11 million in unobligated reserves; however, pulling the full amount of the budget shortfall to the schools from these reserves would use 46% of the reserves, and could potentially threaten the county's ability to address prospective industry needs.

Mr. Huber advised the county had been contacted about a potential prospective industry that would employ 2,500 individuals. He advised that while this was only an inquiry at this time, the successful recruitment of a project of this scope would require an investment of at least \$5 million. Thus, one of the uses for a substantial reserve would be for addressing economic development concerns and the ability to respond to growth opportunities.

Mr. Huber explained the affects on the county's loss of revenue as a result of the recent closing of the TMD facility.

Dr. Brewster advised he anticipated receiving information from the state on the impact to the school budget within the week following the joint meeting.

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Dr. Brewster advised one option for addressing the budget shortfall was through attrition of school employees. He advised the School Board had passed an early retirement incentive, as well as a sick leave payout option. He suggested the two boards look at options where employees could choose between a sick leave payout or 20% payout.

Mr. Sheffey inquired if public education funding to charter schools would be affected by the budget reductions. Mr. Bain explained there are currently seven charter schools in southwest Virginia. He advised there had been strong opposition to the changes in laws related to charter schools. He advised all applications for charter schools are brought before the local School Board for appeal or denial.

Mr. Huber suggested the boards join with each other in addressing the budget concerns at the state level while working together to reduce operating costs.

- a. **Legislative Efforts** – As reported in the Board packet, continuation of joint visits to legislators was suggested, as is researching the statewide number of teachers affected by state cuts in comparison with reductions in the state workforce. It may also be helpful to enlist the assistance of local plant managers (in part through the Corporate Roundtable), human resource officers, chambers of commerce and others affected by the quality of the state education system in addressing the funding situation.
- b. **Initiation of a Joint Efficiency Study** – As reported in the Board packet, participation in, and expansion of, the state school efficiency study program was recommended to include both school and county operations. The \$20,000 - \$30,000 cost of this system could be considered for possible funding through reserves since this would be a one-time cost resulting in possible long-term savings. Implementation of the proposed efficiency study would be conditional on conferring with other localities that have conducted efficiency studies to determine that a study could be conducted without recommending initiatives that are costly to the locality.

Dr. Brewster recommended setting guidelines when conducting an efficiency study to include a review of areas where the county and schools interconnect, such as information technology, personnel and finance.

Mr. Stafford advised the school efficiency study began in 2004 with the initial cost between \$20,000 and \$30,000. He advised that an additional 25% could be incurred by the school system, if at least 50% of the recommendations in the study are not implemented.

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Mr. Huber advised it would be helpful if the school efficiency study could also cover the county. Mr. Stafford advised such a study would take approximately six to nine months to complete.

- c. **Joint Services Oversight Board** – As reported in the board packet, staff recommended that both Boards appoint two representatives each to serve on a Joint Services Oversight Board. This step was recommended in a previous report to the boards and also called for in the original agreement.
  
- d. **Expansion of Joint Services Concept to include Regional Agencies and Non-profit Organizations** – As reported in the Board packet, Pulaski County is host to a number of regional authorities and non-profit organizations. The County also has a history of establishing regional partnerships and is surrounded by localities with similar financial difficulties. These factors combined with quality staff and programs provides the Board of Supervisors and School Board the opportunity to reduce net costs by charging for support services such as information technology, financial accounting, vehicle repair, emergency dispatch, and similar “back office” operations.

Mr. Huber advised both boards are in a good position to do things together and indicated there is willingness by other jurisdictions to also participate in joint ventures.

Chairman Phillips advised he had been contacted by a representative of Tazewell County requesting a copy of the Pulaski County School Board model.

Mr. Bain expressed concern over the proposed joint services. He indicated the \$3.9 million reduction in state funding did not seem to allow for the school system to become involved in other endeavors, due to school staff taking on additional duties from employees facing potential layoffs.

Mr. Huber advised the services provided by Information Technology could be used as a way of providing services to outside agencies, as well as a tool for marketing IT's services for the purpose of generating additional revenue for the schools.

- e. **Maximizing the Use of Existing Buildings** – Dr. Brewster explained the current status of the School Board renting the Allen building and the bank building, noting the county and school staff are looking at options for getting the maximum use of existing county buildings, rather than paying rent for buildings not owned by the county.

Mr. Huber explained two options facing the school and county staffs, with the immediate option to consider use by the School Board staff of the space recently vacated by the Commonwealth Attorney staff and the other being to expedite an internal addition to the County Administration building.

3. **Update on Current Initiatives**

a. **Facilities and Transportation** – Ronnie Nichols provided an update on operations, transportation, county garage and PSA. He advised both garages are working together to provide services to the county and school vehicles. Mr. Nichols thanked the county staff and Board of Supervisors for use of the bottom floor of the Bob White building for use as a maintenance facility.

b. **Grant for School Emergency Preparedness Planning** – As reported in the Board packet, Pam Frasier, who has been contracted to write grants for the County, school staff and County emergency management staffs have submitted a \$150,000 grant to be used to update and coordinate various individual school emergency plans, purchase additional communications radios and provide National Incident Management System training for key employees.

Mr. Nichols thanked Ms. Frasier and others for the work towards the grant application allowing for upgrades in communication and video equipment.

c. **Telecommunications** – Tim Barnes provided an update on the following various projects underway by the county and school system: a blog had been created for the county and was operational; efforts were underway for improving the county's web site; an annual security review was being conducted of all systems; addressing problems with Sheriff's Office communications system; and efforts were underway to creating an IT manual. He advised the manual will be distributed when completed and would address both the county and school IT related matters.

d. **Finance and Health Insurance** – Mr. Makolandra provided an update on the school systems health insurance, noting an expected increase of approximately 1.7%. He provided details regarding the various health insurance options available to school employees. He advised he did not expect Montgomery County schools to join the consortium this year.

e. **Office Locations** – Mr. Huber provided an updated timeline from Architect Glenn Reynolds for improvements to the Maple Shade building. He advised staff plans to ask Mr. Reynolds to move forward with the plans for renovating space to accommodate the IT department.

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- f. **Other Initiatives** – Mr. Huber indicated staff's desire to receive comments from the public and board members in ways to meet the difficult decisions facing both boards.

Mr. Sheffey advised both boards were to be commended for their ongoing joint meetings, especially during the difficult economic times. He noted his service on the Virginia Association of Counties Education committee allowed him the opportunity to hear concerns from other localities that are not favored with the ability of both the School Board and Board of Supervisors to work cooperatively.

Mr. Phillips echoed Mr. Sheffey's comments expressing appreciation to both the county and school staffs in working together during the difficult economic times.

4. **Next Meeting**

By consensus, the Board of Supervisors and School Board scheduled its next joint meeting for Monday, October 4, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. at the Pulaski Elementary School in the Town of Pulaski.

Mr. Hiss provided an update on the Health Department roof replacement, advising the Health Department roof should be completed by end of the week. He advised Health Department staff had moved to other locations until the roof replacement was completed.

5. **Adjournment**

By consensus, the Board adjourned its special joint meeting. The next meeting of the Pulaski County Board of Supervisors is a budget work session scheduled for Monday, March 8, 2010 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the County Administration Building, 143 Third Street, N. W., in the Town of Pulaski.

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Joseph L. Sheffey, Chairman

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Peter M. Huber, County Administrator