

AT A MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
HELD ON TUESDAY, MARCH 27, 2000, IN THE BOARD ROOM OF THE  
WOODWARD BUILDING, SALUDA, VIRGINIA:

Present: Fred S. Crittenden, Pinetop District  
Kenneth W. Williams, Pinetop District  
Lenora O. Weber, Saluda District  
John D. Miller, Jr., Saluda District  
Frank Jessie, Jamaica District

Charles M. Culley, Jr., County Administrator

**CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman, Mr. Miller, called the meeting to order at 7:30 p.m. in the Board Room and opened with a prayer.

**RECESS AND RECONVENE**

Because of a large number of people present for the public hearings, the Chairman requested that the meeting be recessed and reconvened in the Courtroom.

**FIRE AND RESCUE DEPARTMENT SIGNS AS GOVERNMENTAL SIGNS**

Mr. Miller reopened the meeting. Mr. Culley presented a request for the initiation of an amendment to the Middlesex County Zoning Ordinance regarding signs for the volunteer fire departments and rescue squads. The motion to adopt the following resolution was made by Mrs. Weber, seconded by Mr. Williams and carried unanimously:

**RESOLUTION**

***Whereas**, the volunteer fire departments and rescue squads operating in Middlesex County provide invaluable service to the citizens of Middlesex County, and*

***Whereas**, these volunteer agencies operate in close coordination with local, state and federal governmental emergency management agencies and are instrumental to the Middlesex County Board of Supervisors in fulfilling their obligation to protect the public welfare, and*

***Whereas**, these volunteer fire departments and rescue squads operate facilities in Middlesex County and the improvement and operations of these facilities are subject to the requirements of the Middlesex County Zoning Ordinance, and*

***Whereas**, to promote the public convenience, general welfare and for good zoning practice the Middlesex County Board of Supervisors desires to amend the regulations of Article 16, Signs so that local volunteer fire departments and rescue squads will be regulated on the same basis as governmental agencies,*

**Now, Therefore, Be It Resolved** that the Board of Supervisors does hereby initiate amendment to Article 16-2, Governmental Sign Excluded, of the Middlesex County Zoning Ordinance to expressly include volunteer fire departments and rescue squads in the meaning of the term "governmental function" as used in Article 16 of the Ordinance.

**Be It Further Resolved** that this amendment be forwarded to the Middlesex County Planning Commission for public hearing and recommendation and that public hearing on this amendment be scheduled for public hearing by the Middlesex County Board of Supervisors pursuant to Sections 15.2-2204 and 15.2-2286.7 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended.

Adopted by the Middlesex County Board of Supervisors this 27th day of March, 2000.

## **PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED SCHOOL BUDGET**

Mr. Culley presented the proposed school budget, which includes \$4,980,744.00 in local funds, an increase of \$380,664.00, or 8.28% over the amount approved last year. The School Board Request was for \$5,791,600.23 in local funding. It was proposed that local funds for operations would be level funded compared to last year, with an 85.84% increase in debt service. Money has been included to purchase buses at \$102,934. Mr. Culley presented a summary of new money required against new money available to fund either a 3% increase in salaries (\$45,209.15), or 4% increase (\$110,672.95). The motion to add \$45,209.15 from the general fund to the school budget, which would be enough to fund an average 3% salary increase, was made by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Crittenden and carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller opened the public hearing for comments from the public. Mrs. Sandra Davis, representing a group of faculty from Middlesex High School, requested additional funding for higher increases. According to Mrs. Davis, even with the 3% cost of living increase, most teachers would experience a pay cut because of increases in health insurance costs. Mrs. Davis also commented on the additional duties performed by teachers without additional pay. Mr. Randy Hester, School Board Member, commented that he did not believe that a 4% salary increase was an unrealistic request. He noted that this percentage maintains, but does not move teachers forward toward matching salaries in surrounding counties. Mr. Richard Shores, School Board Member, commented that citizens he represented were willing to pay for quality education in a good quality environment and the Board should reconsider increasing the pay requested. Mr. Charles Lackey, Superintendent, requested an additional \$110,000 to fund salary increases, noting that he had originally requested a 6% increase for the employees. Mr. Lackey stated that not only did the teachers need the increase, but they also earned the increase.

There being no additional comments, the public portion of the hearing was closed. Mr. Crittenden commented that there was an effective tax increase of 3 cents proposed to balance the County budget. Mr. Williams commented that he would prefer to reduce some of the debt service on the proposed construction, then look next year at more of an increase in operations to the schools.

## **PUBLIC HEARING - PROPOSED COUNTY BUDGET**

Mr. Culley presented the proposed County budget, a total of 11,249,488, a 9.77% increase over last year's budget. This figure will increase \$45,209.15 from the general fund due to the motion adopted earlier to increase the school budget. Revenue includes a net gain of three (3) cents in real estate tax collections due to reassessment. A change in the valuation of boats is proposed to increase personal property collections by two (2) cents. A 4% salary increase is proposed for County employees at a cost of approximately \$9,000 for each percent of increase.

Mr. Miller opened the hearing for comments from the public. Linda Whitmer questioned the spending of a large sum of money for a reassessment and the money the County will end up paying because of errors. Mr. Culley explained that the County was participating in a study of performing regional reassessments, however, it is unknown if the General Assembly will allow this.

Tim Blackwood, President of Board of Middlesex County Public Library, Sherry Inabinet, Librarian, Jack Tarran, Stephen Longest, Kelsey Robusto, Suzanne Smith, Raynell Smith and Judy Woodbury, all spoke in support of increasing proposed funding for the library. The Library Board requested a 5% increase and \$12,000 for their automation project. The proposed budget includes a 4% increase and no funding for automation. Mr. Blackwood and Mrs. Inabinet commented that fund drives have been short of goals and critical repairs have been delayed due to lack of funds. Their statistics have shown that 37% of citizens in the County use the library. Mr. Tarran commented that the Library Board would be requesting additional funding in the next two years of \$12,000 each for the automation project.

Mr. Jack Dozier, Ken Schmalenberger and Mrs. Holt all commented in opposition to the proposal to change the rating structure for boats. They all also requested that funding be restored to Virginia's River Country, the regional tourism board.

Mr. Bill Yarrington encouraged all to preserve depleting natural resources.

Mr. Dabney Miller commented that revenues could not be raised without hurting large numbers of people. Mr. Miller encouraged the Board to be creative in finding ways to generate revenue without adding taxes while at the same time protecting our agrarian culture.

There being no further comments, the Chairman closed the hearing for public comment and invited Board members to comment.

Mr. Crittenden commented regarding the cut of funding for the Virginia River County, noting that until such time as the County is getting fair treatment with regard to development opportunities, he would not vote in favor of funding.

Mr. Jessie commented that the procedure for taxing boats would be left up to the Commissioner of Revenue.

Mr. Williams requested confirmation on boat tax rates of surrounding counties, adding that it was not his desire to run boaters away. With regard to the request for additional funding for the Library, he indicated he would support funding an additional \$6,000. Mr. Williams also commented that he believed a 3% increase should be proposed for the County employees, the same as proposed for school employees.

Mrs. Weber commented that she would not support the full request for automation for this year. Mrs. Weber added that she did not believe Mrs. Ebinger could be mistaken in that Middlesex County was higher in its boat tax than surrounding counties. Mrs. Weber also supports restoring funds to Virginia's River Country.

Mr. Miller commented that the boat tax would be addressed at a later meeting. He also commented that the salaries of County employees and School employees were not the same and increases should not necessarily be the same. Mr. Miller commented that all requests would be considered, but reminded the public of the projects that would be coming in the near future.

### **PUBLIC HEARING - EFFECTIVE TAX INCREASE**

Mr. Culley commented that due to reassessment, the tax rate necessary to generate the same amount of revenue as last year would be 49 cents. Because the Board of Supervisors has proposed to keep the rate at 52 cents, there is resulting tax increase of three (3) cents. Mr. Miller opened the hearing for comments from the public.

Mr. Sheldon Blake commented that an increase should not be necessary after his reassessment because the value of his property increased enough to cover the difference. There being no further comments, the public portion of the hearing was closed.

Mr. Culley addressed the reassessment process for manufactured homes that went into effect with the last assessment. The Board of Equalization is meeting with citizens appealing their real estate values. Mrs. Ebinger is meeting with citizens who have errors in the manufactured home information. An opinion has been requested from the Attorney General as to the appeal process for manufactured home owners.

Regarding the taxing of boats, the Board will request a further clarification on values from Mrs. Ebinger.

### **ADJOURN**

The motion to adjourn until the regular meeting scheduled for April 4, 2000, was made by Mr. Crittenden, seconded by Mr. Williams and carried unanimously.

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John D. Miller, Jr., Chairman  
Board of Supervisors