

AT A MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
HELD ON TUESDAY, APRIL 27, 2004 IN THE BOARD ROOM OF THE
WOODWARD BUILDING, SALUDA, VIRGINIA:

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

Charles M. Culley, Jr., County Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

Mrs. Weber called the meeting to order at 7:30 P.M. Mr. Williams opened with a prayer and Mr. Culley led in the Pledge.

PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED TAX RATE

Mrs. Weber read a prepared statement regarding the purpose of the meeting, which was to hear comments regarding setting the tax rate at 48 cents per hundred. Also, Mrs. Weber announced the requirements of speakers to limit their comments to three minutes and that there would be no action taken at tonight's meeting. The hearing was opened for comments from the public.

Cynthia Pitts – speaking as Acting School Superintendent and mother of children in the school system – proposed that another hearing be set to raise the tax rate even higher as she did not think that there was enough to cover the needs of the coming year; suggested creating a vision for the next four years, until the next assessment. Mrs. Pitts added that even with fixed incomes, the County's tax rate is lower than surrounding counties. She suggested that if more of an increase in the tax rate is not supported, then some of the fund balance should be used to increase support to the schools and County services.

Eileen Smith – concerned with tax rate and how it affects the needs of the school system. Hopes the Board will set a rate that is good for all citizens over the long haul.

Dennis Durette – appreciates the Board's efforts to look at needs of the entire county. Urged Board to look at how revenue needs will increase in the next year – the need to keep teacher's salaries competitive, construction of a new animal shelter, completion of the new Courthouse. Board needs to look at future, two to four years down the road; seems the County is behind in some areas; need to have the best we can at a reasonable cost.

There being no further comments, Mrs. Weber closed the public hearing and requested comments or questions from the Board.

Mr. Williams asked how much over last year's revenue the increase will bring. Mr. Culley advised that it would bring in approximately \$90,000 new revenue, not quite what a full one-cent would bring (\$114,000). Mr. Williams questioned what was being done with teacher contracts. Mr. Culley advised that he had met with Mrs. Pitts and advised her to have the contracts reviewed by an attorney to ensure that the County has an out, in the event that the State does not fund their budget. According to Mrs. Pitts, the contracts include a 2-1/2 to 3% increase over current salaries.

Mrs. Weber noted some of the big projects coming up that will strain resources – re-roofing courthouse complex buildings, voting machines, animal shelter.

Mr. Miller expressed his compliments to Mr. Culley and Mrs. Pitts and advised them to continue to advise their people that adjustments may be forthcoming.

Mr. Jessie commented that the Board should have advertised the rate at 50 cents to have more of a cushion. Mrs. Weber noted that the Board has always been conservative, but will try to do the best that can be done for employees and citizens. Mr. Jessie noted that the Board should also do it's part to keep up with the cost of living, which is increasing with gas and food prices on the rise.

NEW SUPERINTENDENT

Mr. Goforth reminded the Board of the reception scheduled for April 29, 2004, to introduce the new superintendent..

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the motion to adjourn the meeting until the regular meeting on May 4, 2004, was made by Mr. Miller, seconded by Mr. Jessie and carried unanimously.

Lenora O. Weber, Chair
Board of Supervisors