

AT A WORKSESSION OF THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY BOARD OF
SUPERVISORS HELD ON MONDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2004, IN THE BOARD
ROOM OF THE WOODWARD BUILDING, SALUDA, VIRGINIA:

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

Charles M. Culley, Jr., County Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

The Chairperson, Mrs. Weber called the meeting to order at 10:00 A.M. and announced that the purpose of the meeting was to receive the presentation of the FY 05 School Board Budget. Mrs. Weber stated for the record that the current Board of Supervisors has always been supportive of the school system, especially evidenced by the Board's commitment to construction/renovation of the current three schools.

SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATION

Acting Superintendent Cynthia Pitts presented the proposed budget. School Board members Elliott Reed and Jackie Duke were also present.

Mrs. Pitts stated that the proposed budget reflects an increase of 9.76% or \$1,076,764 over the current budget of \$11,031,008 and is based on 1335 students. Mrs. Pitts advised the Board of an increase in unfunded mandates relating to retirement, which for professional staff had increased from 8.77% to 12.82%, and for non-professional employees had increased from 16% to 1725%. This increase amounts to an increase of \$289,000 in the budget. The School System is proposed to receive a holiday from a group life increase. Moneys have been included to address the anticipated increase in health insurance premiums and to add increases for specialists and para-professionals. Mrs. Pitts noted that she wanted to be competitive with surrounding county salaries. She added that pressure is already being felt in trying to obtain and maintain quality teacher levels required of the "No Child Left Behind Act".

Increases are also proposed to fund increased electrical expenses, especially with the gym air conditioning project nearing completion. Maintenance costs will also increase with contracts established to maintain various systems in the newer schools.

Additional positions are also proposed – a kindergarten teacher funded with Title II funds; a special education teacher; and a seven-period math teacher to replace one that is retiring who teaches four classes. Another teaching position has been added to

assist in the increasing load of limited English speaking students. A part time mechanics position has been added. An RN position, as recommended by the Health Advisory Board for the past three years, is proposed.

A salary survey comparing Middlesex with 9 other counties was presented. Middlesex Counties ranks between 8th and 10th for lowest salaries at different experience levels. The composite index ranks Middlesex at third in the ability to pay. According to Mrs. Pitts, teachers are increasingly challenged to meet highly specialized requirements and money is definitely one of the factors in getting and keeping teachers. Mrs. Pitts has proposed higher percentage increases for entry level teachers and is proposing to increase salaries to mid-level across the board over several years. She also noted that Middlesex has 25 or more teachers that are eligible for retirement. With other localities in the same position or with more eligible, Middlesex County must become competitive in order to recruit teachers to fill the positions.

Mrs. Weber questioned whether the school board had considered participating in the Virginia Association of Counties insurance program and Mr. Williams suggested combining health insurance with the County to get a better rate. Mrs. Weber questioned the Health Credit line in the proposed budget. Mrs. Pitts explained that this has not been broken out in the past because it was part of the retirement package that was funded by the State. It has now become a locally funded requirement and is broken out.

A breakdown of students at each location was given as follows: Elementary School – 507, Middle School – 370, High School 466.

RECESS

The Board recessed for lunch following the School Board presentation and reconvened at 1:30 P.M. to continue the County budget work session.

ADJOURN

The motion to adjourn the meeting was made by Mr. Williams, seconded by Mr. Miller and carried unanimously. The next regular meeting was scheduled for March 2, 2004.

Lenora O. Weber, Chairperson
Board of Supervisors