

COUNTY OF BATH, VIRGINIA
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
BATH COUNTY COURTHOUSE, Room 115

Tuesday, April 29, 2014, 7:00 p.m. Budget/Tax Levies Public Hearing

At the Public Hearing of the Board of Supervisors of Bath County, Virginia, Bruce McWilliams, Chairman; Henry "Kevin" Fry, Vice Chairman; Claire A. Collins; Phillip "Bart" Perdue; Clifford A. Gilchrest; Lady and Gentlemen Supervisors; Michael M. Collins, County Attorney; and Ashton N. Harrison, County Administrator.

Chairman McWilliams called the meeting to order.

The Chairman led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Mr. Perdue offered the invocation.

Mr. Ashton N. Harrison, County Administrator, gave an overview of the general fund revenues. Mr. Harrison said the projected revenues were generally conservative and the biggest change was a proposed increase to the personal property tax. Mr. Harrison said the proposed increase was not considered lightly and would change the current personal property tax rate of \$0.35 per one hundred of assessed value to \$0.70 per one hundred of assessed value. Mr. Harrison said he was somewhat conservative in projecting Commonwealth revenues, and the proposed federal revenues included Payment In Lieu of Taxes funding. Mr. Harrison presented expenditures by department. Mr. Harrison explained most departments have decreased their budgets or kept increases to a minimum. Mr. Harrison explained the proposed transfers to the schools \$703,449; school food \$14,420; and Virginia Public Assistance \$4,936. Mr. Harrison said capital projects was a very hard decision. He said while there were many legitimate and needed requests, the proposed budget includes items that the County was already committed to, Burnsville Fire Station, and Millboro Fire Department truck loans. Mr. Harrison stated the capital projects category also included \$163,820 for upgrades to E911 software, but a grant of \$150,000 will cover the majority of this expenditure. Mr. Harrison said regardless of budget unless the County makes cuts the County would need to tap into reserves in the amount of \$1,777,365. He said if all requests were fully funded including capital the County would need to take \$2,528,111 from reserves to balance the budget. Mr. Harrison said the recommended budget meets the County's fund balance requirement of 15% or \$3,323,765. Mr. Harrison said his recommendation would be 20%. An additional \$3,731,095 would remain for the Boards consideration. Mr. Harrison presented the proposed revenues from the lodging taxes and explained how the monies are collected and expended.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

Ms. Debra Hunt spoke in support of funding the public library and suggested a citizens committee to explore grants to build a larger facility. Ms. Hunt suggested an additional tax on alcohol, cigarettes, and junk food to help fund the library.

Mr. Carl Chestnut, Cedar Creek District, spoke against an increase in the personal property tax.

Messrs. Dave Powell, Jeff Wilson and another gentleman from Bacova spoke to the Board regarding drainage issues in the village of Bacova. They asked the Board to support them and to urge VDOT to remedy the drainage issues that are damaging properties.

Mr. Jeff Wilson, Warm Springs District, also spoke against any increase in the tax rate. Mr. Wilson said the Board is focusing too much on wants and not enough on needs.

Mr. Wally Robertson, Cedar Creek District, agreed the Board needed to focus on needs. Mr. Robertson said the citizens are not getting much for their taxes and was not in favor of an increase.

Mr. Charles Hamilton, Cedar Creek District, disagreed that a tax increase was necessary and said it would hurt senior citizens who live on a fixed income.

Mr. David Jurcak, General Manager of The Homestead spoke against the proposed personal property tax increase, referring to the increase as an unnecessary burden on businesses.

Mr. Harold King, Williamsville District, said in December 2013, he spoke to the Board about the needs of fire and rescue departments and presented a 25 year plan. Mr. King noted that fire and rescue departments need good reliable equipment to protect the lives and property of citizens and volunteers and expressed disappointment that all capital requests from the Fire and Rescue Association had been removed from the proposed budget.

Mr. Carl Chestnut, Cedar Creek District, said the schools budget request had increased by another \$750,000, which he didn't feel was needed. Mr. Chestnut also urged the Board to make the necessary repairs to the transfer station because in his opinion the cost would be minimal.

Mr. Glen Criser, Warm Springs District, said the Board needed to be more realistic and conservative.

Mr. Stuart Hall, Williamsville District, said the increase in the personal property tax would realize about \$192,000 in revenues. He asked the Board if they had considered an increase of \$0.01 to the real estate tax which would create about \$238,000 in revenues. Mr. Hall said an increase to personal property would hit the lower income individuals who live in mobile homes which are taxed as personal property. Mr. Hall said the Board needed to get to know the working class citizens of the County and understand how they struggle.

Mr. Jeff Wilson, again urged the Board not to raise taxes.

Supervisor Perdue read a letter addressed to the Board from Mr. Jay Trinca, Warm Springs District. Mr. Trinca stated in his letter that he could not attend the meeting but wanted to share his thoughts. Mr. Trinca's letter stated that the Board had no logical reason to raise taxes. The letter questioned the Board's management and judgment when spending County funds. Mr. Trinca stated he liked living in Bath County because of its uniqueness and felt lower tax rates were part of the uniqueness.

The Chairman closed the public hearing. The Chairman thanked the public and continued the meeting to Monday, May 5, 2014 for a work session of the Board.

Ms. Collins made the motion to adjourn the meeting until the work session on Monday, May 5, 2014, at 5 p.m. The motion was adopted 5-0.

The Chairman adjourned the meeting.

Ordered that this Board do now stand adjourned until 5:00 p.m., May 5, 2014, for a work session of the Board. The next regular monthly meeting of the Board of Supervisors is scheduled for May 13, 2014 at 7 p.m.

Ashton N. Harrison, Clerk

APPROVED:

Bruce W. McWilliams, Chairman