

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STAFFORD, VIRGINIA
MINUTES
Special Meeting
April 24, 2018

Call to Order A special meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors was called to order by Meg Bohmke, Chairman, at 4:30 p.m., on Tuesday, April 24, 2018, in the Board Chambers, George L. Gordon, Jr., Government Center, 1300 Courthouse Road, Stafford, VA.

Roll Call The following members were present: Meg Bohmke, Chairman; Jack R. Cavalier; Thomas C. Coen; L. Mark Dudenhefer; Wendy E. Maurer; and Cindy C. Shelton. Gary F. Snellings, Vice Chairman, arrived at 4:33 p.m.

Also in attendance were: Thomas C. Foley, County Administrator; Rysheda McClendon, County Attorney; Marcia C. Hollenberger, Chief Deputy Clerk; associated staff and other interested parties.

Mrs. Maurer motioned, seconded by Mr. Coen, to adopt the agenda as presented.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(6)	Bohmke, Cavalier, Coen, Dudenhefer, Maurer, Shelton
Nay:	(0)	
Absent:	(1)	Snellings

CLOSED MEETING

At 4:31 p.m., Mr. Cavalier motioned, seconded by Mrs. Maurer, to adopt proposed Resolution CM 18-10.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea:	(6)	Bohmke, Cavalier, Coen Dudenhefer, Maurer, Shelton
	(0)	Nay:
Absent:	(1)	Snellings

Resolution CM18-10 reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE CLOSED MEETING

WHEREAS, the Board desires to hold a Closed Meeting for consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members regarding a specific legal matter requiring the provision of legal advice by counsel; and pertaining to probable and actual litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the Board.; and

WHEREAS, pursuant to Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(7) and (A)(8) such discussion may occur in Closed Meeting;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors on this the 24th day of April, 2018, does hereby authorize discussion of the above matter in Closed Meeting.

CLOSED MEETING CERTIFICATION

At 5:16 p.m., Mrs. Maurer motioned, seconded by Mr. Coen, to adopt proposed Resolution CM 18-10(a).

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Bohmke, Cavalier, Coen, Dudenhefer, Maurer, Shelton, Snellings
Nay: (0)

Resolution CM-18-10 (a) reads as follows:

A RESOLUTION TO CERTIFY THE ACTIONS OF THE STAFFORD COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN A CLOSED MEETING ON April 24, 2018

WHEREAS, the Board has, on this the 24th day of April, 2018, adjourned into a Closed Meeting in accordance with a formal vote of the Board and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Freedom of Information Act, as it became effective July 1, 1989, provides for certification that such Closed Meeting was conducted in conformity with law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Stafford County Board of Supervisors does hereby certify, on this the 24th day of April, 2018, that to the best of each member's knowledge: (1) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under the Virginia Freedom of Information Act were discussed in the Closed Meeting to which this certification applies; and (2) only such public business matters as were identified in the Motion by which the said Closed Meeting was convened, were heard, discussed, or considered by the Board.

At 5:17 p.m., the Chairman adjourned the afternoon session of the April 24, 2018 meeting.

At 7:00 p.m., the Chairman reconvened the April 24, 2018 special meeting. Ms. Bohmke led the Invocation and Mrs. Maurer led the Pledge of Allegiance to the United States of America.

PUBLIC COMMENTS The following persons indicated a desire to speak:

Colleen Weiners - A resident of the Rock Hill District and an employee of Stafford County Public Schools (SCPS) who thanked the Board for asking probing questions of the School Board and thanked especially Mrs. Maurer, Mr. Cavalier, Mr. Snellings, and Mr. Coen for probing into the School Board's budget and insisting that SCPS receive raises this year; she noted that there was always money allocated to technology when it should go to teachers and support staff.

Rob Hollister - A resident of Autumn Ridge who requested that the Board fund the Schools' budget and raise taxes to fund raises for teachers and support staff; also to help with construction of new schools. They moved here in 2009 because of the good quality of the school system; now their children were in 7th and 9th grade and many of their beloved teachers left to go to other localities with better salaries, and not having to work two or three jobs in order to live in Stafford County on a teacher's salary. He commutes to Washington DC and does not mind doing so because he loves living in Stafford County; he is thrilled with the Schools' curriculum and asked the Board to invest in the Schools' as they were a very worthy cause.

Christina Lewis - A SCPS employee who wanted to express her appreciation to the Board for digging deep into the School Board's budget; said that the School Board has good intentions but are not making good choices.

PUBLIC HEARING

Finance and Budget; Consider Tax Rates for Calendar Year 2018

The Chairman opened the public hearing. The following persons indicated a desire to speak:

Jack Kimmel	Dana Brown
Heidi Freeman	Colleen Weiner

The Chairman closed the public hearing.

Mr. Dudenhefer motioned, seconded by Ms. Shelton to adopt proposed Resolution R18-47, with the advertised tax rate of \$.099 per \$100 assessed value, including the tax rate for the Hidden Lake Service District at \$0.368. Mrs. Maurer noted that the change to the Hidden Lake Service District was to bring it to the effective rate and had no impact on any residents outside the Hidden Lake subdivision and was intended to fund road and dam repairs in the community.

Mr. Dudenhefer said that times were changing and he had many requests to raise taxes; the tax rate had not been adjusted for inflation in many years. He noted that the Hidden Lake assessment up 8% was a two-year assessment, not an increase of just one year. Mr. Dudenhefer said there were many critical needs in the County Administrator's budget and not enough money to take care of them without the \$.099/\$100 tax rate. He also noted that it was the School Board that set the teacher's salaries and determined if they got raises, it was not up to the Board of Supervisors. There was much skepticism about the relationship between the Board and the School Board, which was frustrating when the Board was trying to do what was right for teachers, bus drivers, and all school staff, as well as County staff.

He said that he could not hide behind a pledge to never raise taxes, and he was not hypocritical; Mr. Dudenhefer said he wants to do what is right for the County and its schools.

Ms. Shelton said that demonstrating fiscal responsibility did not mean going without. She said that traffic congestion was her number one priority and the County has to do something to address its traffic issues. She said that she believes in the Schools and also considers teachers and staff to be a top priority, which is why she supported the \$.099/\$100 tax rate.

Mrs. Maurer said that she, too, supported the advertised tax rate but she wanted to let everyone know that in order to fully fund the Schools' request, the tax rate would have had to go up to \$1.05/\$100 assessed value. The \$.099/\$100 would fund the base budget, help to manage growth, and provide raises for County and Schools' staff, but the decision had to be made across the street to use the funds allocated for School staff raises in that manner. She said that the five-year forecast was grim and that in addition to Schools, resources were needed for Fire & Rescue, the Sheriff's Office, etc., steps were being taken toward critical service goals and Mrs. Maurer said that she hoped that the School Board would use the additional money to fund its 2.5% COLA. She noted that this evening the vote was on the tax rate, not the FY2019 budget.

Mr. Snellings asked County Attorney, Ms. Rysheda McClendon, about categorically funding the Schools' budget at budget adoption, which was scheduled for next week. Ms. McClendon said that it could be included with the budget appropriation. Mr. Foley said that if categorical funding was the desire of the Board, the School Board would have to come back to the Board of Supervisors with directions on the categorical breakdown, which may be challenging given that it would be a less than 24-hour turn around.

Ms. Shelton asked about the timeline for adding bond referendums to the November election ballot to finance school or County projects. Mr. Foley said that it had to be at least 81 days prior to the November election date, which was mid-July or thereabouts.

Mr. Cavalier noted that this was the 15th budget cycle that he'd been involved with and it was the least amount of contact he received from constituents about the advertised tax rate; he typically had a slew of comments by now. Mr. Cavalier added that it feels right to support the \$.099/\$100 tax rate as the County's needs have grown, but pointed out that even at the advertised rate, it will not fulfill all of the County's and Schools' needs. His School Board counterpart, Ms. Jamie Decatur, told him that if the Board went with the advertised rate, the School Board would fund the 2.5% COLA for Schools' staff across the board. He said that he hoped that the School Board follows through and he wished that the County staff could count on a 2.5% COLA instead of the 2% COLA in the County Administrator's proposed budget. He said that the additional ½ percent raise added \$280,000 to the County's budget, which for the sake of parity, he hoped would be found as it was the way to go and that it was important to put people first.

Mr. Coen said that it was a different climate that he's seen in the past – from Earl's Hardware to the Giant; from Briarwood to England Run – residents were telling him to go with the \$0.99/\$100 advertised tax rate; to spend it wisely to the benefit of public safety, education, and infrastructure. Regarding the speaker who spoke about the tax burden on the

elderly and disabled, Mr. Coen noted that there were special programs for those people and there were certain triggers that would alert the Commissioner of the Revenue to those needs. He asked that a report on those programs be brought back to the Board's Finance, Audit, and Budget (FAB) Committee at its next meeting in May. Mr. Coen said that the County was losing quality teachers because of low salaries and the advertised tax rate was a step in the right direction; that the Board exercised due diligence in making this decision.

Ms. Bohmke commended the County Administrator and said there were two important things to consider: the first was adopting the CY2018 taxes; and the second was how working out the budget and taxes in Mr. Foley's second budget cycle was very different than in past years. There were many work sessions, with others scheduled next week, and staff and the Board turned over every rock in looking for funds to take care of teachers, paraprofessionals, bus drivers, janitors, public safety staff (especially the E-911 operators who worked at an incredibly stressful job; a different type of stress than a teacher facing 25 students each day). Ms. Bohmke said that Stafford County's Fire/Rescue Department worked on a hybrid system with volunteers and career staff, and the volunteer numbers were dwindling. With every new engine, it cost \$1.2 Million to run it 24/7. She said that she did not take adoption of the advertised tax rate lightly but supported it as it was the right thing to do.

The Voting Board tally was:

Yea: (7) Bohmke, Cavalier, Coen, Dudenhefer, Maurer, Shelton, Snellings
Nay: (0)

Adjournment At 7:38 p.m., the Chairman adjourned the April 24, 2018 special meeting of the Stafford County Board of Supervisors.

Thomas C. Foley
County Administrator

Meg Bohmke
Chairman