

At a Special Meeting (Budget Work Session) of the Board of Supervisors  
Held in the General District Courtroom  
on Thursday, May 18, 2023 – 4:00 pm

**BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT**

C. Eric Fly, Sr.  
Alfred G. Futrell  
Debbie P. Jones  
Wayne O. Jones  
Susan B. Seward  
Steve White, Tie Breaker (Virtual)

**BOARD MEMBER ABSENT**

Rufus E. Tyler, Sr

**STAFF PRESENT**

Richard Douglas, County Administrator  
David Conmy, Deputy County Administrator and  
Economic Development Director  
Deste J. Cox, Treasurer  
Eric Danuser, IT Manager  
Ernest Giles, Sheriff  
Kelly Moore, Finance Director of Finance  
Nick Sheffield, Emergency Services Chief  
Matt Westheimer, Shared Building Official  
Shilton R. Butts, Assistant to the County Administrator/  
Clerk to the Board of Supervisors

**Item 1. Call to order/Determine Quorum**

Chairman W. Jones called the May 18, 2023 Special meeting and Budget Work Session of the Sussex County Board of Supervisors to order.

**Item 2. Invocation**

The Invocation was offered by Supervisor D. Jones.

**Item 3. The Pledge of Allegiance.**

The Pledge of Allegiance was recited by all.

**Item 4. Agenda Amendment**

There were no agenda amendments.

## **Item 5. Approval of Agenda**

ON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR D. JONES, seconded by SUPERVISOR FLY and carried: RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors hereby approved the May 18, 2023 Special meeting and Budget Work Session agenda as presented.

## **Item 6. Presentation of Proposed FY24 Operational and Capital Budgets**

County Administrator Douglas stated that he reviewed the Revenue, highlighting the expenditures. The funding for Outside Organizations were not reviewed. He stated that generally all Outside Organizations were level funded from the current year. If there were any questions from the Board on particular organizations, the numbers may be less. Those would decisions would have to be made by the Board. He noted that there was detailed discussion of the Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE). He stated that VCE is currently funded at \$40,000 to represent Agriculture agent. He stated that the Board could discuss if that number could be increased, decreased, or remain the same. Any changes would be at the desire of the Board.

County Administrator Douglas discussed the Board's approval to remove the Solid Waste Fee. He wanted to reiterate that it was approximately \$300,000+. He stated that he was under the impression that a couple of the adjacent counties were including the fees on the tax bill. He spoke other County Administrators. He stated that he spoke with a couple of county administrators. He was not aware of any using that method. He supports the removal of this item. With this removal, there was approximately \$500,000 in the Contingency Fund line item. He noted there were approximately \$400,000 at play in the expenditures.

County Administrator Douglas stated that in regards to the expenditures, there was a lot of discussion of the Public Works Budget (Solid Waste and Building & Grounds sections), as well as the additional supervisor position. He stated that he and staff have had considerable discussion on those positions. County Administrator Douglas stated that he is now recommending in lieu of the Solid Waste Supervisor position, that this position be an entry-level position as a Solid Waste Technician position at a salary of \$35,000, not including benefits. He stated that a convenience site attendant is currently scheduling and dealing with personnel. He stated that an extra person was needed to assist with illegal dumping and roadside sign replacement. He noted he requested \$45,000; however, he is now requesting \$35,000 instead in the budget.

County Administrator Douglas stated for information, that he is not going to budget any revenue, however, he has been in discussion with the Department of Social Services (DSS) staff. He stated that DSS has a program called Virginia Initiative for Education and Work (VIEW). This program works with Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) recipients. The recipients/ individuals may work in positions they are qualified. He noted individual in the VIEW program may be utilized for the Solid Waste position. He noted from a financial perspective, the County, as an employer, would receive \$6,000 over six months to help offset the initial costs of the salary. He stated that two positions had been identified that could be paid.

County Administrator Douglas stated that in regards to the Building & Grounds, he proposed a lead maintenance worker be deemed as crew leader. He stated that in talking with the employee,

his skillsets in all the various trades. He stated that he was recommending that the position be maintained at a \$45,000 salary, but be called a tradesman to reflect his actual projects/work. In summary, his request for the lead maintenance worker position be changed to tradesman, but at the same \$45,000 salary. He stated that \$51,000 (?) is the total salary including the benefits. He reiterated that the County doesn't have an elaborate pay classification system.

County Administrator Douglas stated that he was recommending again, that out of ARPA funds, that the County consider doing a full paid position classification system. He noted that this was not in the budget. He also recommended using ARPA funds, that a confidential update of Human Resources (HR) policies by a neutral third party. He stated that the County include and consider practices and policies that will help the County in retaining and attracting employees. He stated that he had one addition that was not included in the proposed budget; however, he wants to add it to the budget. He stated that the current Payroll Clerk handles all the benefits and any HR tasks already. He thinks it could be supplemented. One person couldn't do it all. He recommends that her title be changed to HR Technician with a \$10,000 increase to accommodate her responsibilities.

*Vice Chair Seward entered at 4:26 p.m.*

County Administrator Douglas stated that there is approximately \$400,000 extra over the \$100,000 as mentioned at a previous meeting. He stated that his recommendation is to not account for that, but if revenue projections come through, it will give the County insurance.

The County Administrator stated that he did not address the School's budget. Their budget would be at the Board's discretion to restore the \$247,000 that was removed two years ago. He reiterated that his concerns with being involved in the budget process in its entirety its very concerning that all the departments, constitutional officers, participate in multiple meetings to present all their projected costs and needs, and the Schools requests at the last minute to restore the funds. He noted that there was some cushion in the budget to accommodate to school, if the Board so choose. He turned the budget over to the Board and stated that he would answer any questions.

There was inquiry in regards to the HR policy and payroll clerk title change to the HR technician as to whether she do the work. There was inquiry regarding Solid Waste department t, and moving employees from one department to another, as to whether they would be supervising the lead crew member of whether he would be supervising the Building & Grounds staff. There was clarification that the person would be utilized for maintenance. There was inquiry of the person that was in the lead position and their salary.

There was brief discussion of outside agencies funding.

There was inquiry of the cushion in the Contingency Fund, which is \$425,579. It was noted that it included the five percent Cost of Living Allowance (COLA). There was discussion of big items that would effect the budget. It was noted that anything extra from the schools would affect the budget. The County Administrator noted that the change in the DSS formula should be accounted for in the Revenue. There was also mention of the funding, \$462,000, for the debt service for the fire truck would not be in the budget next year.

It was noted again that the Public Hearing for the budget is Wednesday, May 24. He noted that there was a reduction in the Virginia Cooperative Extension budget from \$82,000 to \$40,000 in the budget, which accommodates the Agriculture Agent and nothing else. The County Administrator stated that he met with VCE along with Surry County to ensure that positions are shared and what their impacts were. He advised that the County funds the Agriculture Agent at 50% with Surry County. He stated that he was told that there was very little chance that Sussex could get an Agriculture Agent, because there are vacancies and they will not double up. The 4-H position is shared with the State. This position is not included. The Family Consumer Service (FCS) Agents is funded at 50%. The County funds approximately \$2,500 as administrative oversight.

There was inquiry of the funding for the 4-H Agent position.

Ms. Moore, Finance Director, requested to send an official notice to not send invoices directly to the County to avoid paying any invoices that are not to be paid as part of reimbursement by the County.

County Administrator Douglas discussed placing the Agriculture Agent under Economic Development to help some things for the farmers. There was discussion of the FCS agent position and its core issue programs. It was stated that the farmers were only concerned with the Agriculture Agent.

There was discussion of one of the 4-H Agent big jobs was working in the schools on SOL prep, Civic classes, etc. which is an important, positive role. There was request to have a representative from VCE and the farmers to attend a Board meeting regarding their budget.

Supervisor Fly stated, that the problem with the other two positions, FCS and 4-H Agent positions, if the County isn't going to accomplish anything by bringing them back is that the 4-H are controlled by Virginia Tech. They can't go outside the guidelines that Virginia Tech has given them. Virginia Tech, through VCE, has taken the 4-H Program so far off track, it no longer teaches the kids where goats, pigs and where food comes from, i.e. not the grocery store. It was stated VCE is concerned with Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). It was stated that in the 4-H Agent report last year, most of the time spent in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) training. It noted that nothing was wrong with receiving the training; however, why was the County paying for it and does it have to do with kids. It was stated that the 4-H Program. It was discussion of games/activities at different 4-H program. The 4-H Agent has to do what Virginia Tech tells him to do. It was discussed that the County develops its own Parks and Recreation program. It was noted that this has been discussed with VCE previously.

Supervisor Fly recommended voting on the line item to approve or disapprove the line item approving the line of \$40,000 which accommodates the Agriculture Agent only.

**ON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR FLY, seconded by SUPERVISOR SEWARD and carried: RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors hereby accepts Line Item 875 in the amount of \$40,000.**

Voting aye: Supervisors Fly, D. Jones, W. Jones, Seward  
Voting nay: Supervisor Futrell  
Absent: Supervisor Tyler

### **Item 7. Review of Proposed FY24 Operational and Capital Budgets**

Supervisor Fly noted his disappointment after requesting a full budget from the School Board, after the Board of Supervisors' last meeting and receiving on two pages shortly before the meeting. It was noted not knowing how to move forward without knowing funding will be utilized (what/how funds will be used). There was inquiry of the Category: Self Sustaining Fund, \$3.593 million; and Category 1000 - Salaries, Fringe Benefits, Operating Expenses. It was noted that there were categories with millions of dollars with no explanations. It was noted that the County are still maintaining the schools, i.e. buildings, in debt service.

There was discussion of the Public School's request to restore \$247,000 to their budget that was cut two years ago. County Administrator Douglas stated that there was no understanding that the \$247,000 reduction was only going to be a one-year agreement. He stated that he could attest the in the two years of reduction, there has been zero communication--in-person, verbal, written or otherwise--of any impact of that loss. He clarified that the letter that the Board received last week was the first time that he received any indication that the school was negatively affected or the loss of any teachers due to the cut. County Administrator Douglas stated if it was communicated prior, he probably would have had a different position in terms of the recommendation.

There was discussion of the decrease in the Average Daily Membership (ADM) by 50 students.

It was noted that enough information was not received from the schools to make a decision. There was discussion of the lack of communication. There was discussion that the Finance Department had reached out to the schools, Mr. Broderick. The initial request was for the request for the budget, in which the response was Federal, State, and Local. The County Administrator reached out, as well as the County Administrator.

Supervisor W. Jones discussed the County providing the schools level funding previously. He noted that with the ARPA funding, the County requested holding \$250,000 from their budget two ago. He stated that he spoke with some members of the School Board and Dr. Jarrett to inquire why funding is needed back in the budget. He stated that Dr. Jarrett advised that he, along with some of the School Board members, that they were under the impression that it was only for one year.

Supervisor W. Jones suggested having mandatory quarterly meetings with the Board of Supervisors, the School Board and the Superintendent of the Public Schools, so that everything can be transparent and move forward.

There was discussion again regarding the Schools' ADM declines each year. It noted that level funding changes based on the student enrollment. It was reiterated that the ADM number declines

each year. In summary, the level funding is funding less students, i.e. receiving the same amount of funding for less students. The funding should have declined to match the number of students.

County Administrator Douglas discussed trying to schedule a meeting. When they finally met, they were empty-handed. The Schools provided no information.

The County Administrator recommended having a Funding Agreement in place.

It was clarified that the most of the safety funding for schools, it provided in the Sheriff's budget for the School Resource Officer (SRO).

There was discussion for the school functioning without the funding last year. There was discussion of the School Board, by law per Virginia Code, any access funding in their budget the school had, being rolled back over to the County previously. It was noted that no funding has been rolled back to the County in a couple of years.

Supervisor Fly requested the Board to consider moving \$20,000 from the Contingency Fund to the 4-H Center line item, specifically to purchase time for pool and gym programs in the Summer.

ON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR FLY, seconded by SUPERVISOR SEWARD and carried: RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors hereby allocates \$20,000 from the Contingency Fund and appropriate the \$20,000 to Line Item 907 for the purpose of purchasing and pool and gym time at the Airfield 4-H Conference Center, in addition to the \$5,000 contribution. All Board members present voted aye.

There was discussion of guaranteeing the time due to the summer camps. It was noted that the pool closes for seven weeks for camp. There was discussion of the different times of access to the pools.

The County Administrator clarified that it appears that the County cut out funding for the Chesterfield County Medflight, because it shows \$0. He noted that it was at the request of Chesterfield County Medflight. He stated that Chesterfield County Medflight worked a new arrangement with Chesterfield County. They are not requesting any funding from any of the surrounding counties. It was noted that services will still be received.

There was a request for the Board to review the Revenue in the first seven pages of the budget. The Fines and Forfeitures from tickets from the Sheriff's Department have not recovered since the Pandemic. Machinery and Tools taxes have decreased.

The Board requested the County Administrator to contact the schools to attend the May 24, 2023 Board's Special Meeting to provide information and or answer any questions.

## **Item 8. Citizens' Comments**

A Comment was heard from:

- Kevin Bracy (Yale District) - Decreasing revenue: taxes and farm and citizens paying taxes; cutting unnecessary expenditures.

### **Item 9 Adjournment**

ON MOTION OF SUPERVISOR SEWARD, seconded by SUPERVISOR FLY and carried: RESOLVED that the Sussex County Board of Supervisors hereby adjourned the May 18, 2023 Special Meeting and Budget Work Session at 5:50 p.m. All members present voted aye.