

April 6, 2000

MEMBERS PRESENT: Emmitt B. Marshall, Chair
Mary Lee Carter, Vice Chair
Mark Cole
Gary Jackson
Patricia Messner
Benjamin Pitts
T. C. Waddy, Jr.

STAFF PRESENT: L. Kimball Payne, III, County Administrator; Douglas C. Walker, Deputy County Administrator; Tammy Petrie, Director of Finance; Mary Sorrell, Budget Manager

Mr. Marshall called the meeting to order for the purpose of conducting a budget work session.

The Board discussed the revised addition/deletion list.

Mr. Waddy asked about funding for the Belmont Fire and Rescue facilities. He was advised that approximately \$375,000.00 currently in the Capital Fund could be committed to the project.

On a **motion** by Mr. Waddy, seconded by Mrs. Carter and approved unanimously, the Board directed that the identified \$375,000.00 currently in the Capital Fund be committed to the Belmont Fire and Rescue facilities project.

The Board then engaged in a discussion of the funding of the Fredericksburg Regional Alliance with six of the seven Board members indicating that they would not support the full \$125,000.00 proposed funding. Mr. Jackson urged the Board to maintain the funding for at least a year to see how things went.

The Board discussed Mr. Marshall's proposal to provide an additional \$3,000,000.00 in funding to the schools. Mrs. Messner expressed concern about spending the fund balance and the impact that it would have on the next year's budget. Mr. Jackson commented that he didn't feel the amount was adequate because there were additional needs in the system. Mr. Jackson suggested that the Board should talk about other ways to raise revenues and expressed a desire also for salary increases for deputies and to hire additional Fire and Rescue personnel. He stated that failing to do so would put off the inevitable and make things more difficult down the road. Mr. Marshall commented that he was willing to talk about Mr. Jackson's proposal but that he was not willing to address any additional fees except in Code Compliance.

ADOPTION OF TAX RATE

The Board then discussed a proposal by Mr. Cole to fund a budget supported by a \$0.94 tax rate. Mr. Cole stated the lower rate would still provide additional funds for schools and the General Fund and explained that his goal was to provide relief for county homeowners.

Mr. Cole made a **motion**, seconded by Mrs. Messner, to adopt a \$0.94 real property tax rate.

Mrs. Carter asked for details of Mr. Cole's proposal. He explained that it would fund one emergency medical technician and one deputy, positions in Social Services and Code Compliance, called for fire fees of \$100.00 per call and EMS at \$50.00 per call and that it would cut funds to the regional agencies and the transfer to the schools.

Mrs. Carter expressed concern about Fire and Rescue fees and asked for more information. Mr. Marshall also expressed concern about Fire and Rescue fees.

Mrs. Messner commented on third party billing of fire and rescue fees for service noting that many other localities in Virginia had such programs. She commented on library funding and Stafford's lack of funding in the current fiscal year.

Mrs. Messner also suggested deferring capital projects to fund other priorities. She stated that funding of volunteer agencies should not be considered sacred cows and that sport programs should be self-supporting. She called for more volunteers and suggested that the Contingency Fund could be cut along with other proposals.

Mr. Jackson commended Mr. Cole for making his proposal but stated that he did not agree with his bottom line. He expressed a willingness to look at some of his proposals, such as fire and rescue fees and Parks and Recreation fees.

After further discussion, the **motion** was defeated on a vote of 2 – 5 with Mr. Jackson, Mr. Waddy, Mrs. Carter, Mr. Marshall and Mr. Pitts voting "no".

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Mr. Pitts then made a **motion**, seconded by Mrs. Carter, to maintain the real property tax and mobile home tax at \$1.02 per \$100.00 of assessed value, with all other taxes to remain the same.

Mr. Jackson expressed his opinion that that tax rate would not generate enough revenue and stated that he would vote against the motion as the resulting budget would not be adequate.

Mrs. Messner pointed out that the \$1.02 rate would be an \$0.08 effective increase. She commented on fire and rescue fees and said that she would not support both raising taxes and raising fees.

Mrs. Carter asked staff to contact insurance companies to explore the fire and rescue fee issue.

Mr. Pitts agreed with Mr. Jackson that the \$1.02 tax rate would not adequately fund the needs of the citizen, but he stated a \$0.94 tax rate would take the county backwards.

Mr. Pitts expressed his hope that the County could fund a COPS grant for additional deputies if the grant was offered. He also noted needs in Public Safety, Fire and Rescue and Education that were not being addressed by the proposed budget.

After further discussion, the **motion** passed on a 4-3 vote with Mr. Jackson, Mrs. Messner and Mr. Cole voting no.

The County Administrator then passed out the Commissioner of Revenue's response to a proposal to change the reassessment schedule to quadrennial rather than biennial. By unanimous consent the Board agreed to leave the schedule as it currently was.

CODE COMPLIANCE FEES

On a **motion** by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mr. Jackson and approved unanimously, the Board authorized a public hearing to consider adjustments to Code Compliance fees.

FINAL BUDGET NUMBERS

Staff was directed to bring the final budget numbers to the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, April 11, 2000 for final budget adoption.

ADJOURNMENT

On a **motion** by Mr. Pitts, seconded by Mrs. Carter and approved unanimously, the meeting was adjourned.

APPROVED:


CHAIR

ATTESTE:


L. KIMBALL PAYNE, III
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR