

At a quarterly workshop meeting (Mini Retreat) of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors held at the Workforce Development Center in Franklin, VA on February 8, 2005 at 6:00 PM

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman (Drewryville)
Walter L. Young, Jr., Vice-Chairman (Franklin)
Walter D. "Walt" Brown, III (Newsoms)
Carl J. Faison (Boykins-Branchville)
Anita T. Felts (Jerusalem)
Ronald M. West (Berlin-Ivor)
Moses Wyche (Capron)

SUPERVISORS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator (Clerk)
J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Assistant County Administrator
Cynthia L. Cave, Community/Economic Development Director
Julia G. Williams, Finance Director
Robert L. Barnett, Building Official
Sandi P. Plyler, Data Processing Manager
Julien W. Johnson, Jr., Public Utilities Director
Hart Council, Public Works Director
Robert Croak, Utilities Systems Supervisor
Jackie Vick, Maintenance Director
Susan H. Wright, County Administration Executive Secretary

Supervisor Faison gave the invocation at 6:00 PM and dinner and fellowship immediately followed from 6:00 PM – 6:30 PM.

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order at 6:30 PM.

Mr. Michael Johnson, County Administrator, welcomed everyone and briefly discussed the benefits of a retreat. He then asked for the Board's input regarding the agenda and the board meetings. The Board members were pleased with the format of the agenda and with the amount of detail it contained, and were overall satisfied with receiving the agenda on the Thursday prior to the Board meeting. Some Board members thought that perhaps brief presentations and/or visuals should be presented to the public at the board meetings on key issues.

Chairman Jones stated that meetings should not last 4 hours and that *Robert's Rules of Order* should be more closely followed. Supervisor West agreed that meetings should be concise but should not limit discussion. The other Board members agreed.

As had been requested by the Board members, Mr. Johnson presented a PowerPoint presentation entitled "*State of the County*" in which he discussed the progress of the County over the past 10 years, issues they were facing now, issues that were looming, and issues on the horizon.

The County's progress over the past decade included over \$9 million in capital projects/equipment, more than \$15 million in water/sewer improvements, over \$2.8 million of grants for housing rehabilitation, millions of dollars in various other grants, the financing of the construction of 2 new elementary schools and \$1.5 million of improvements to two other elementary schools, fire/rescue contracts, agreements, and capital projects, development of a website and on-line GIS, and acquisition of an option on the Turner Tract, to name a few.

Issues facing the County right now were the construction of 2 new schools, growth management, and use value taxation. Mr. Johnson shared school enrollment projections, which was part of the basis for the School Board's requests for 2 new schools. Regarding growth management, he shared graphs demonstrating the rising growth trends of Chesapeake, Suffolk, and Isle of Wight from 1960-2003, and cautioned the Board to beware the trend because the growth was headed our way. In Southampton County in 2001, there were 49 new single family dwellings. That number increased to 81 in both 2002 and 2003, and increased again in 2004 to 111. As far as lots that had been developed in the County, Bethel Farms had 93 lots, Sandy Creek – 85, Regency Estates – 35, Woodland Park – 33, Brandywine – 26, Story Station Estates – 24, Highland Park – hundreds, and

Woods Trail – hundreds. In regards to use value taxation, he shared that per the *American Farmland Trust Cost of Community Services*, the cost of community services per dollar of revenue raised in the residential sector was \$1.15, commercial/industrial sector - \$0.27, and farms and forests - \$0.36.

Issues that were looming were solid waste collection, a plan for economic development, and expansion of the Courtland Wastewater Treatment Plant. Regarding solid waste, Mr. Johnson advised that the annual volume of solid waste disposed of in Southampton County in 2004 was 18,936 tons, which was up from 14,736 tons in 2003. The current disposal rate was \$47/ton which equated to a cost of \$889,992 for solid waste disposal in 2004. Southampton County led the communities serviced by SPSA in the per capita daily generation rate of solid waste with 5.86. In regards to a plan for economic development, they needed to look at what it takes to be competitive, the organizational structure, and regional collaboration. Ready to go sites were needed to attract business. Southampton's only current ready to go site was the Southampton Business Park with 65 developable acres. Regarding the Courtland Wastewater Treatment Plant, it would need to be expanded in future years in order to handle growth and development. The design flow was currently 303,000 gallons/day.

Issues on the horizon were organizational issues which included a pay and classification plan for staff, staffing levels, and space needs. Also included were technology issues such as E-Government and Cable TV Access.

There was much discussion among the Board particularly regarding the school construction and the impact it would have on the real estate tax rate. The Board members thought that the 2 new schools were needed but were overall concerned with how the County would finance the construction of them. It was projected that the real estate tax rate would have to be increased 10¢ - 12¢ over the next 3 years to finance the project. The Board agreed to have Mr. Johnson set this topic on the agenda each month for discussion at the regular board meetings until they were comfortable in making a decision.

There was also discussion on growth management. A public hearing on an ordinance that would limit the number of divisions of parcels in agricultural districts was scheduled for February 15, 2005.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 PM.

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

Michael W. Johnson, Clerk