

At a **budget workshop meeting** of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors held in the Board Room of the Southampton County Office Center at 26022 Administration Center Drive, Courtland, Virginia on April 16, 2003 at 6:30 PM.

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

Reggie W. Gilliam, Chairman  
Eppa J. Gray, Jr., Vice-Chairman  
Carl J. Faison  
Dallas O. Jones  
Charleton W. Sykes  
Walter L. Young, Jr.

SUPERVISORS ABSENT

Ronald W. West

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator (Clerk)  
J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Assistant County Administrator  
Julia G. Williams, Finance Director  
Cynthia L. Cave, Community/Economic Development Director  
Susan H. Wright, County Administration Executive Secretary

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

Mrs. Jane Maddrey, Director of the Southampton County Department of Social Services, was the first to speak regarding her agency's respective budget. She distributed handouts providing an overview of their budget situation and FY 2002 revenue production data. She stated that the biggest contributing factor in their ability to keep costs down had been staff downsizing, an effort that dated back to 1991 when they elected to begin reviewing each vacant position prior to undertaking recruitment activities. She reported that they had 34 full time staff members at that time, and today had 26 full time and 1 part time position. That represented a 22% staff reduction that was reflected in all facets of their agency including office support, direct line, and supervisory and administrative staff. She noted that their current staffing level was now felt to be dangerously low and may require upward adjustment. She stated that if you could image where you would be financially if your personal income had stayed the same for more than 13 years without any adjustment for inflation, then been further reduced, while your expenses for necessities such as hospitalization coverage grew, you may be able to better appreciate their situation. She noted that their efforts to restrain spending to the point of not utilizing all available state and federal funding had put them in the best possible position to sustain the reduction of \$42,868 in administrative funding that would impact their FY 2004 budget.

Mrs. Maddrey stated that while revenue was shrinking, they were seeing some increases in their TANF caseload and they projected substantial growth in their Food Stamp Program due to changes in policy and statewide outreach activities. They were continuing to see growth in Medicaid, their largest program. She advised that options such as reducing operating hours and/or concentrating only on mandates, which was feasible for some other agencies, was not feasible for theirs. They operated under stringent federal and state requirements, some of which were enforceable by federal court order and others by chargeback if actions were not taken in a timely and accurate manner. Also, some of their funding was performance based. They could not walk away or reduce service hours that extended to 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in cases of child and adult protective services. People turned to them when they had nowhere else to turn and they assisted those people to the best of their ability and/or connected them with other resources. She reported that their agency was crucial to the economy of the County, as \$13,813,320 of revenue flowed through Southampton County due to their existence. She noted that 98% of that total came from federal and state sources. Their impact on human life was immeasurable. Mrs. Maddrey advised that the Southampton County Board of Social Services was respectfully requesting a very modest \$2,223 increase in local funding for FY 2004.

Mr. Paul Hubbert of the Virginia Legal Aid Society addressed the Board regarding his agency's budget. He advised that their Suffolk, VA location served Southampton and Isle of Wight Counties and the City of Franklin. They also had locations in Lynchburg, Danville, Emporia, Halifax, and Farmville. They were a nonprofit law firm whose mission was to resolve serious legal problems of low-income people, promote economic and family stability, and reduce poverty through effective legal assistance. They provided free legal information, advice, and representation in civil cases to those people. They solved problems in areas such as housing, health care, public benefits, family relations, advance directives, and education. He reported that for over 25 years, they had been the only

institutional provider of such services in Central, Southside, and Eastern Tidewater Virginia. They were not a governmental agency, but a charity. Thus, their funding had to come from a variety of sources including private donations, foundations, area agencies on aging, local governments, and state and federal funding. He noted that they only had the resources to help half of eligible applicants. To be eligible for their services, clients had to have incomes below 125% of the federal poverty level. He advised that their agency was requesting \$2,000 in local funding for FY 2004, which was the same as appropriated in FY 2003.

Mr. Wayne Cosby, Clerk of the Circuit Court, spoke to his respective budget. He reported that their budget had been initially reduced by \$30,000, but after pleas with the Governor, they were able to get \$11,000 back. Therefore they were faced with a budget reduction of \$19,000 rather than \$30,000. He advised that they did all they could to help themselves. They were fully computerized, had purchased copy machines, and had data stored on microfilms at no cost to the County. Their office collected fees but had no control over where or how that revenue was used unless appropriated by state and local localities. He requested that the Board of Supervisors assist them with their budget shortfall.

On behalf of the Southampton County Fire and Rescue Association, Mr. Ed Bond advised the Board that they would appreciate anything the County could do to assist them regarding their budget.

Mr. Frankie Britt of the Communications Committee of that organization addressed the Board. He stated that Mr. Mike Johnson, County Administrator, had worked with them and had budgeted funds for a Needs Assessment for the public safety radio system as well as additional funds after the assessment to develop the specifications needed to interview and compare vendors and negotiate a contract for utilization in FY 2005. He asked the Board to approve Mr. Johnson's appropriations regarding their respective budget.

Ms. Beth Fox, Educational Outreach Coordinator for the Rawls Museum Arts (RMA), spoke to their respective budget. She distributed handouts and brochures that provided an overview of their programs and services along with letters of support. She advised that their organization provided *Gifted Art Outreach* classes for grades 3-12 for students of Southampton Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, Southampton Academy, and Home School groups. More than 100 students were able to spend a day each month during the school year learning art activities taught by state, regional, and local artists that they would not ordinarily be exposed to in school. All of the classes were designed around the Standards of Learning (SOLs) mandated by the State Department of Education. She noted that the program was offered at no cost to participating schools. They provided *Certified Educators' Workshops* at no cost that enabled teachers to receive points towards recertification and learn ways to focus on the SOLs through art, art history, science, and art appreciation. She stated that Southampton students participated in the Regional Photography Show and annual High School Art Exhibition and had won numerous ribbons. RMA participated on the Southampton County Public Schools Gifted Art Advisory Council and co-sponsored Virginia Museum of Fine Arts Artists Workshops, cultural workshops and performances, and art workshops for challenged adults of Main Street Opportunities. Their activities promoted individual expression, creativity, and development of fine motor skills, and provided a diversion to people of all ages. She advised that RMA was requesting \$5,000 for their *Education Outreach Program* (in addition to \$5,000 for leverage to access the Local Government Challenge Grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts.)

Mr. David Taylor, Director of the Fifth Judicial District Community Corrections Program, addressed the Board regarding his agency's budget. He advised that they were located in Suffolk and currently served the City of Suffolk, City of Franklin, and Isle of Wight and Southampton Counties by providing services to defendants referred to them. In 2001-2002, they served 54 Southampton County defendants. He reported that the combination of state budget cuts, increasing prices for materials, and the steady increase in the number of defendants referred to their program had placed them in jeopardy of being insolvent. As a grant funded program, it was imperative that they receive funds annually from the localities in which they served. He advised that his agency was requesting \$4,554 so they could continue to help maintain public safety. The funds would be used to purchase supplies necessary to monitor the progress of defendants, to purchase drug-testing kits and cover the cost of laboratory testing, and to pay for postage for correspondence. In addition, the funds would be used to pay travel expenses for the probation officer who would travel to testify in court, meet with defendants for intakes, and travel for monthly meetings, and to pay for training and seminars to ensure the staff was abreast of the best techniques to monitor the defendants.

The Honorable Robert Edwards, Southampton County General District Court Judge, spoke to their respective budget. He stressed that they needed additional personnel in their clerk's office. He made known that the personnel in that office frequently received phone calls from people who had received

traffic tickets and had people coming to the window asking questions and needing assistance. That was in addition to their everyday full responsibilities.

The Honorable Bill Moore, Southampton County Juvenile and Domestic Relations Judge, emphasized that numerous things flowed through that office and their personnel did a remarkable job under the stressful circumstances. They were stretched, experiencing burnout, and there was no relief in sight. They currently had 3 full time and 2 part time employees. They were very much in need of another full time employee in order to continue providing quality service. (Essentially they were asking for funds to be appropriated to enable them to hire another full time employee).

Mr. Charles Turner, Superintendent of Southampton County Public Schools, was the last to address the Board regarding his budget. He introduced Dr. M. Timothy Kelly, Southampton County Public Schools Director of Instruction, who distributed booklets that provided an overview of the proposed School Board operating budget for FY 2003-04. Mr. Turner announced that their proposed budget was a financially concise document evidencing necessities while being cognizant of the financial situation of the County and state. The budget had been significantly pared from its initial state to reach a point of financial sensitivity. There were certain fixed costs such as transportation, utilities, and heating that they had no control over. He mentioned that the transportation infrastructure would have to be looked at carefully in the future. He advised that the budget included a 4% salary increase for their staff members. That would make the starting salary for teachers \$30,775, which was comparable to other school districts in surrounding areas. They had been fortunate in having an outstanding staff and it was critical that they maintain that staff and be prepared to competitively recruit additional teachers with a high degree of expertise and competence. That was especially true in view of *No Child Left Behind* requirements for hiring highly qualified teachers in an era of teacher shortages. He noted that the booklets Mr. Kelly distributed also contained their mission statement, *Standards of Learning (SOL)* scores which were very good, and areas of focus so the Board could see their progress and how funds were being spent. He stated that they would continue to make Southampton County Public Schools one in which all could be proud. They had made great strides and the momentum must continue.

Mr. Michael Johnson, County Administrator, advised the Board that the budget requests of the first 5 agencies who were represented tonight (Department of Social Services, Virginia Legal Aid Society, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Fire and Rescue Association, and Fire and Rescue Communications Committee) and the Public School System had been fully funded in the Southampton County FY 2004 draft budget. He noted that the request of the Southampton County General District Court for funds to enable them to hire another full time employee came in after the draft budget was prepared.

Vice-Chairman Gray commented that he thought the County was creating some of the problems in the General District Court Clerk's Office, given the pressure of issuing traffic tickets.

There was some discussion as to whether the General District Court wanted to make one of their part time employees a full time employee and then hire a part time person, or if they wanted to keep their personnel as it was but add an additional full time employee. Supervisor Faison suggested that they appropriate funding and let them make that decision. The Board ultimately decided to appropriate an additional \$12,000 to the General District Court for the hiring of an additional employee.

Vice-Chairman Gray stated to Mr. Johnson that he would like the salary increases of the County employees to be comparable to the increases that the constitutional officers and their employees had received in the recent past. Mr. Johnson advised that he would look into that.

Mr. Johnson advised that the Rawls Museum Arts was requesting \$10,000 total. They were requesting \$5,000 for leverage to access the Local Government Challenge Grant from the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which was fully funded in the Southampton County FY 2004 draft budget, and \$5,000 for their *Education Outreach Program*, of which \$1,500 was appropriated.

Regarding the Community Corrections Program, Mr. Johnson stated that \$1,048 of the requested \$4,554 was funded in the draft budget. He commented that he did not think any other locality serviced by that program was appropriating the full amount requested. Supervisor Faison suggested that Southampton County appropriate the same amount as Isle of Wight, which was \$2,054. The Board ultimately decided to follow his suggestion and appropriate \$2,054 for that program.

The Board asked Mr. Wes Alexander, Southampton County Cooperative Extension Agent, who was present in the audience, to inform the Board of the situation in his office. Mr. Alexander advised that Ms. Melanie Goerger, Associate Extension Agent, had resigned from his office effective April 10, 2003, and would be transferring to the Isle of Wight County Extension Office as the 4-H Agent. The

state would only provide funds for an agent transferring from another extension agency to fill the position at his office; no new agents could be hired. He advised that \$13,800 in local funding had already been appropriated under the *full time salaries* line item to help fund the now vacant position, as it was not known at the time of budget preparation that the state would not provide funds for the hiring of new agents. He requested that the Board move the \$13,800 from *full time salaries* to *part time salaries* and appropriate an additional \$200 to *part time salaries* for a total of \$14,000. That would allow for the hiring of a part time person (to work 20 hours per week), as the \$14,000 in local funding would pay for the salary and benefits of such a person. He mentioned that Virginia Tech would do the hiring. (Note: Virginia Cooperative Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.) The Board agreed to honor Mr. Alexander's request.

Supervisor Gray asked if they were comfortable with the funding for economic development? Ms. Cindy Cave, Community/Economic Development Director, replied that they would do the best they could with what they had. She noted that the County had gone from appropriating essentially little to no funding for economic development to appropriating a considerable amount. It was definitely a good starting point.

Mr. Johnson stated that he wanted to point out that there was no funding in the budget for the Suffolk Shelter for the Homeless, Inc., an organization that had addressed the Board several months ago and asked for support. Chairman Gilliam reminded that there was some discussion at the last regular board meeting regarding the possibility of the Board funding the \$500 for the County's appointed member on that board. (One of the criteria for being a board member was the person had to have the ability to contribute \$500 annually. Supervisor West, who had agreed to seek an appointee, had been experiencing difficulty in finding an appointee due to that requirement.) Mr. Johnson stated that the Board could certainly specially appropriate that \$500.

Mr. Johnson stated that he thought the toughest issue with the budget this year would be the water and sewer issues in which they had proposed to increase the rates from \$45/month to \$60/month. He advised that notices went out today to all of their water and sewer customers informing them of the public information forum that would be held on May 6 regarding that issue. The notice also informed them of the budget public hearing to be held on May 19.

Mr. Gilliam mentioned the news of the possible expansion of the Deerfield Correctional Center in Capron. Mr. Johnson then announced that there was a proposal by the Department of Corrections (DOC) for Southampton to be one of six locations for the development of an entirely new prison with about 2,000 beds, and for Deerfield Correctional Center to expand by 1,200 additional beds. He advised that he had a speaker scheduled to provide some information regarding that topic at the next regular board meeting on April 28, 2003. He commented that the news was interesting because just last year the DOC was thinking about closing Southampton Correctional Center.

Mr. Johnson recapped the adjustments the Board had agreed to make to the Southampton County FY 2004 Draft Budget which were as follows: 1) increase funding for the General District Court by \$12,000 to allow them to hire an additional employee, 2) increase funding for the Community Corrections Program by \$1,006 for a total of \$2,054, and 3) regarding the Cooperative Extension budget, move the \$13,800 from *full time* to *part time salaries* and appropriate an additional \$200 to *part time salaries* for a total of \$14,000 to allow for the hiring of a part time person.

Vice-Chairman Gray reminded Mr. Johnson that he wanted him to look into the salary increases of the County employees to ensure their comparability to those received by the constitutional officers and their employees in the recent past.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:09 PM.

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Reggie W. Gilliam, Chairman

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Michael W. Johnson, Clerk