

At a **public hearing** of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors and the Southampton County School Board held in the auditorium of the Southampton County High School, 23350 Southampton Parkway, Courtland, Virginia on January 20, 2005 at 7:00 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

SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS PRESENT

Mr. Russell Schools, Chairman (Capron)
Mrs. Roberta T. Naranjo, Vice-Chairman (Boykins)
Mrs. Mary R. "Becky" Blackburn (Drewryville)
Mr. Ben Bryant, Jr. (Newsoms)
Dr. Deborah Goodwyn (At-Large)
Mrs. Diane B. Jones (At-Large)
Mr. David Watkins (Franklin)
Mrs. Florence W. Reynolds (Berlin-Ivor)
Mr. Christopher Smith (Jerusalem)

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator (Clerk)
Mr. Charles M. Turner, Superintendent of Southampton Co. Schools
J. Waverly Coggsdale, III, Assistant County Administrator
Cynthia L. Cave, Community/Economic Development Director
Susan H. Wright, County Administration Executive Secretary

Mr. Dallas Jones, Chairman of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors called the meeting to order.

He then opened the public hearing with regard to the School Board's \$23.8 million capital improvement plan, which would include the building of new Hunterdale and Capron Elementary Schools and installing temporary mobile units at Southampton County High School. To fully fund the project, taxpaying citizens of the County would have to incur a 10-12 cents tax increase over a 3-year period.

Mr. Samuel Joyner spoke. He advised that he was a bus driver at Capron Elementary School and was in favor of the school project. Students currently had to use mobile classrooms which was not safe.

Ms. Claudette Nichols, President of the Capron Elementary PTO spoke. She advised that Capron Elementary did not have classroom space and had no space for storage. There was only 1 bathroom each for the boys and girls and the teachers only had 1 bathroom. She stated that it was not safe for the students to be outside in mobile classrooms. Repairs had been done to the school but were not enough. She wanted what was best for the children. In spite of the problems, they made good use of what they had. If she could, she would do as many fundraisers as possible to help raise money. She extended an invitation to anyone who may want to come visit their school.

Mrs. Joyce Plyler spoke. She stated that she and her husband lived on Medicine Springs Road and were getting ready to retire. She was all for good schools and a good education, but she was concerned about the tax increases. She asked, why can't we try to get businesses to locate here to take some of the burden off of homeowners and landowners?

Mr. Michael Drake of the Newsoms area spoke. He advised that he was for a good education, but was concerned about how they were going to pay for it and to not be unfair to the landowners who already carried so much of the tax burden. They were already discussing land use issues and he was a little offended that the schools would push this issue now. Land use was on the table first.

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Also EMS issues were coming up. He thought the burden to fund the school project should be put on the people and not necessarily the landowners.

Pastor Evans of Capron spoke. He stated that he was a proud graduate of Capron Elementary. He had retired from the military and was back in the community as a full time pastor. He was also doing some tutoring and was appalled at the conditions at Capron Elementary. It was time for a new school in Capron. He understood the tax problem but thought they could find a reasonable way to finance it.

Ms. Vicki Brown spoke. She advised that she was a parent of 2 children who attended Hunterdale Elementary. She was opposed to any mobile classrooms because they were hardly ever replaced by permanent structures. There was no gym or music room at Hunterdale. The walls, floors, ceilings, and bathrooms were bad. She thought a new Hunterdale school should be built ASAP.

Mr. Ernest Claud, Jr. of the Capron area spoke. He stated that he was a product of Southampton County Schools. His daughter had attended Capron Elementary and his granddaughter, who was now in the 7th grade, had also attended it. He thought they should do what was necessary. Capron Elementary was 50+ years old and Hunterdale Elementary was 40+ years old. He understood that the County needed industry, but a good, sound school system was something that was looked at.

Mr. David Edwards spoke. He stated that he was all for a good education, but was opposed to higher taxes. His mother lived on a farm and relied on land rent to pay the bills. They needed to find a fair way to pay for this school project. Don't let the landowners pay for it, but let the people pay for it. Perhaps they could look at raising county stickers.

Mr. Glenn Updike spoke. He advised that he was neither for or against it. Accountability was the issue. We still owed money on repairs that were made to Capron Elementary. A tax increase would be hard on low-income people. He asked why the School Board did not present more than 1 option to the Board with the pros and cons of each? He thought it was time for the School Board members in Southampton County to be elected. That way, they would be more accountable to the people.

Chairman Jones closed the public hearing.

He advised that the Board of Supervisors would further discuss this issue at its regular board meeting on Monday, January 24, 2005 at 6:00 PM.

The meeting was adjourned at 7:30 PM.

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

Michael W. Johnson , Clerk