

At a **public information session** 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 13, 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
Julia G. Williams, Finance Director

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

Mr. Kenneth Payne of Moseley Architects presented a demographic study performed by his company at the request of the Southampton County School Board. The School Board requested the study because Southampton County would likely have an additional 700 students above their current capacity by the year 2010, which was a 25 percent increase. A proposed 400-home development in the County could bring an additional 260-300 students over the 25 percent increase. As a result of the study, the School Board had formulated a 5-year plan that included building new Hunterdale and Capron Elementary Schools, and installing temporary mobile units at Southampton High School. Implementation of the plan was expected to cost \$23.8 million and could have a major impact on County taxpayers.

Mr. Payne explained that in order to determine desired facility specifications, they evaluated student-teacher ratios, projected student enrollment, programs requiring specialized classrooms, and state and national average of square footage needed in the facility per student. The main goal was to eliminate all structures that were not permanent, bricks and mortar.

He reported that the middle and high schools were expected to decrease in enrollment in the year 2010, with a 22 percent decrease for grades 6-8 and a 10 percent decrease for grades 9-12. However, as the elementary students increased, they were eventually going to move up to the middle and high school levels. The high school was currently over capacity, and was expected to be so by more than 100 students by 2006. The maximum capacity of the elementary schools was 1,070 students, the middle school – 704 students, and the high school – 879 students. He advised that at least 102 square feet of space inside the schools per student was recommended by the state. Meherrin Elementary had 182 square feet per student. Nottoway Elementary and Capron Elementary had 150 and 110 square feet per student respectively. Hunterdale had only 93 square feet per student, which was below the state recommendations.

Mr. Payne reported that scores on adequacies including site size, heating/air-conditioning system, storage space, and space for specialized programs such as science, art, and gym were also looked

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at. The middle school scored well and the high school receiving an excellent rating. Meherrin and Nottoway Elementaries had marginal ratings in music and storage. Capron and Hunterdale Elementary Schools received the lowest scores due to their size, age, and lack of specialized instruction space. Of the 22 things looked at in Capron, 17 had marginal or inadequate scores, while Hunterdale had 14 inadequate and 4 marginal scores.

He advised that there were immediate needs at Capron, Hunterdale, Nottoway, and Southampton High School. The elementary school increase would affect the high school by 2013. Capron had 100 students over capacity. Hunterdale had the highest enrollment, was 120 students over capacity, and was the smallest school. The rated capacity of the elementary schools, especially Capron and Hunterdale, were not adequate for current and projected enrollment. He stated that he did not recommend adding on to existing facilities because preexisting gyms and cafeterias could not accommodate the additional students.

Mr. Michael Johnson, County Administrator, presented a fiscal impact study on the School Board's \$23.8 million capital improvement plan. He stated that the County needed to figure out how it was going to pay for it and how it would affect the taxpayers. He noted that the County was presently faced with financing \$2.8 million for a new public safety radio system for local fire/rescue and law enforcement agencies.

He advised that the School Board wanted a new Hunterdale Elementary opened by 2006. They were looking at \$1.2 million to start and \$14.8 million to finish. The money would have to be borrowed in the next few months. For a new Capron Elementary, \$800,000 would be needed in FY 2007 and \$6.6 million in FY 2008. The most cost-effective source in which to borrow money for schools was the Virginia Literary Loan Program, where Southampton County would be eligible to borrow up to \$7.5 million per school at a 2 percent interest rate. However, it usually took 12-18 months for loan approval, so in the meantime, multiple interim loans would be necessary. He explained that based on the County's current debt service, the expense of the new schools, and factoring in the new revenue that real estate taxes were expected to generate during the next year due to the reassessment, the County would need to increase real estate taxes 3 cents by FY 2007, and another 7-9 cents the following year. The bottom line – to be able to fully fund the project, the impact on the tax rate would be 10-12 cents over a 3-year period.

Chairman Jones advised that a public hearing on this subject would be held on Thursday, January 20, 2005 at 7:00 PM, again at the Southampton High School auditorium.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:00 PM.

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

Michael W. Johnson , Clerk