April 21, 2020

At a special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 21st day of April, 2020; at 5:30 p.m., there were present:

Beverly M. Booth
J. David Emert
Pattie Cooper-Jones
Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.
Robert M. Jones
Odessa H. Pride
Jerry R. Townsend
James R. Wilck

Also present: Wade Bartlett, County Administrator; Sarah Elam Puckett, Assistant County Administrator; and Terri Atkins Wilson, County Attorney.

Chairman Townsend called the special meeting to order.

Chairman Townsend stated: Due to the COVID-19 Emergency, the Board of Supervisors is operating pursuant to and in compliance with its “EMERGENCY ORDINANCE TO EFFECTUATE TEMPORARY CHANGES IN CERTAIN DEADLINES AND TO MODIFY PUBLIC MEETING AND PUBLIC HEARING PRACTICES AND PROCEDURES TO ADDRESS CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS ASSOCIATED WITH PANDEMIC DISASTER.” This meeting is closed to in-person participation by the General Public, but citizens may listen to the meeting by calling 1-425-436-6394, Access Code: 876576#.

In Re: Approval of Remote Access Participation

Chairman Townsend said:

I wish to recognize that Supervisor Wilck is with us this evening via remote telephone access. As required by the Board of Supervisors’ Electronic Meeting Policy and Section 2.2-3708.2 of the Code of Virginia, Supervisor Wilck (814 Creekwood Trail, Farmville, VA) provided me notification that he would have to be physically absent from tonight’s Board meeting, because of the COVID-19 pandemic. He has requested remote participation in tonight’s Board meeting from his address in Farmville, Virginia. His
request is in conformance with the Board’s Electronic Meeting Policy and the requirements of the Code of Virginia.

Pending an objection from a member of this Board of Supervisors, Supervisor Wilck’s participation from his remote location in Farmville, Virginia, shall be approved, and shall be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

There were no objections by the Board of Supervisors members.

Supervisor Gilliam gave the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

In Re: Emergency Management Update

Mrs. Sarah Elam Puckett, Assistant County Administrator, introduced Trey Pyle, Deputy Emergency Coordinator, presented a brief biography and said he has been invaluable on the team. She said he is also the Community Development Specialist and will be training for Stormwater & Sediment Control which has been cancelled due to the COVID-19. He is also working with Mr. Ron Van Eps on 911 addressing and updating the GIS site, which is current through 2018 and is expected to launch soon.

Mr. Pyle thanked Mrs. Puckett for the introduction, and thanked Mr. Bartlett for giving him this opportunity to continue to grow.

Mrs. Puckett stated Prince Edward County currently has a COVID-19 case count of 19; the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is providing hospitalizations and deaths at the County levels. She said Prince Edward County has community spread based on the information that we know.

Mrs. Puckett said the FARMVILLE CARES site, which is a coalition of community non-profits and faith-based organizations, continues to work and reported they are manning a community help line. She said that in the last four weeks, they have received over 300 calls from people on many subjects and concerns; Mrs. Puckett asked that they could report any emerging issues; one such issue is that people may time out on emergency housing because of limits within the programs’ rules. Another issue is that the disabled and elderly are having difficulty finding cleaning supplies and paper products.

Mrs. Puckett said there is a substantial uncertainty in the modeling in Virginia and is likely at or near the peak of its hospitalization rate during the physical distancing phase. She said the statewide hospital capacity is unlikely to be reached in the near term. She said they continue to source PPE and are starting to
assess the burn or utilization rate and use that to predict PPE needs in the coming months. She said the County may need to create an inventory of six months or more of inventory.

Mrs. Puckett said Mr. Pyle learned the school meals program, which is the partnership with the Postal Service and Baylor University will begin later this week.

Mrs. Puckett reported the Sheriff has initiated new Courthouse security protocols; she said this will minimize both contact and the opportunity for sharing respiration at the entrance of the Courthouse. She said the County distributed masks to County staff, the Sheriff’s department, Social Services and the volunteer fire departments.

Mrs. Puckett stated Centra Southside has tested 302 regionally; 32 are positive and 10 are in the COVID-19 unit at the hospital; of those ten patients, three are positive and seven are pending test results. She said the tests are returned in a day. She said Centra has limited in-house testing. She then said the EMS reported 41 calls last week, which is down from a typical week.

Mrs. Puckett said the economic impact is showing that 70% of restaurant employees are unemployed. She said this is a big economic sector for Farmville and Prince Edward County.

Supervisor Jones asked if the numbers count the two cases at the Piedmont Regional Jail. Mrs. Puckett said she is unsure; the numbers she receives are aggregated and just calls. She said she knows some are at a long-term care facility.

Mr. Bartlett said one was inmate transferred out with an elevated temperature; since that time, they tested four more and they are quarantined but do not yet have the results. He said one staff member has been tested and the results should be known tomorrow.

Mrs. Puckett said three or more [cases] are considered an outbreak; she said the Piedmont Health District would be notified and Dr. Nash would handle the management of that outbreak, which will show on the map on the VDH site.

Supervisor Gilliam asked if staff will work on a list of items and where to store them. Mrs. Puckett said staff will gather a list of essential items and project their usage to procure enough that agencies will have enough on hand.

Chairman Townsend asked about current inventory; Mr. Pyle said the County should be good for one and a half to two months.
In Re: Budget Work Session

Mr. Bartlett said to continue the process of budgeting conservatively and in response to the uncertainty caused by the pandemic, he did not include the revenue reimbursement from the Comp Board for the proposed 2% bonus but did include the expense of the 2% bonus. He said whether the bonus is given or not, the County’s budget will receive a positive adjustment. If the bonus is given, the County will receive an additional $39,877 in revenue that is not contained in the budget. If the Commonwealth does not award the bonus and assuming the County follows suit, then the General Fund Pay Raise Reserve would be zeroed out, reducing expenditures by $93,154 and allow the reduction of the transfer to the Solid Waste Fund by $7,124 for a total expenditure reduction of $100,278. Either way, he said the County will be in a better position.

Mr. Bartlett said the approved budget contained funding to allow the reimbursement of 100% of the salary for the Registrar. The state approved salary for the Registrar is $49,256. The state has been providing reimbursement of only 69.41% of that amount, or $32,254. If the Commonwealth does provide full reimbursement, that amount would increase by $14,214. He said this may be reduced if the state revenues do not meet certain goals.

Mr. Bartlett then reviewed the delayed purchases, which include the repaving of the parking area at the Natural Resources (Ag) building; travel accounts; the Solid Waste truck; and CSA programs. He said the $66,000 for the CSA Program is just the County’s match. He said there are vacancy savings from positions in the Planning department and at the Coop Extension; this provides a total of $330,801 in savings.

Mr. Bartlett said that there is $60,000 in the Solid Waste Fund for the shop which could be delayed, but then the County wouldn’t have a place to work on the equipment. He said that in FY21, there are several cars and trucks, recreation, the contingency fund, and capital ADP equipment and Courthouse FFE (furniture, fixtures and equipment) that could be delayed and total approximately $310,000. Mr. Bartlett said in the Solid Waste Collections line, there are sheds and bins for $53,000; tires and tracks for $56,000; this would reduce the amount of the transfer from the General Fund. He said if these are delayed, it may be a temporary hold if something breaks down, but the Board can delay purchasing until the Board is more comfortable with the revenue structure.

Supervisor Emert asked about the Animal Control and General Properties trucks in the next year’s budget; he said they were already purchased. Mr. Bartlett said Animal Control purchased a truck this year
and is in the FY20 budget; another one is required, but one was bought with this year’s budget for a new position.

Chairman Townsend questioned the School Budget providing a 2% raise for all staff. Mr. Bartlett said it was included in the budget approved by the General Assembly; the Schools will receive $173,000 salary supplement from the state. Mr. Bartlett said the state funds the teachers and administrators required by the SOQ; he said overall, the cost is $520,000 for everyone. He said the local governments have to cover the rest.

Supervisor Emert asked why the schools also want another school bus. Mr. Bartlett said the school bus is $120,000 and they also want four positions [filled] at $70,000 each. Mr. Bartlett said the requested school bus is to maintain their schedule of rotation based on mileage. Mr. Bartlett said the state recommends the replacement of a bus based on mileage; he said sometimes there is savings at the end of the year that they can purchase a bus. The Board of Supervisors appropriates by category and the Schools can request to move funds from one category to another. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Jones asked if there will be debt service retired. Mr. Bartlett said this is the final year for their debt service account of $60,425.

Supervisor Emert questioned the Family Preservationist position. Mr. Bartlett said the federal funding for that was greatly reduced nationwide and school systems had to figure how to provide that service; he said it was likely paid from savings from other positions.

Mr. Bartlett stated the Budget Public Hearing has been advertised for the following week; he said the tax rate is remaining level.

In Re: Closed Session

Chairman Townsend made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Cooper-Jones, that the Board convene in Closed Session for discussion of the contract of the County Administrator, pursuant to the exemption provided for in Section 2.2-3711(A)(1) of the Code of Virginia; the motion carried:
The Board returned to regular session by motion of Supervisor Emert, seconded by Supervisor Cooper-Jones and adopted as follows:

Aye: Beverly M. Booth
Pattie Cooper-Jones
J. David Emert
Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.
Robert M. Jones
Odessa H. Pride
Jerry R. Townsend
James R. Wilck

Nay: None

On motion of Chairman Townsend, and seconded by Supervisor Emert, and carried by the following roll call vote:

Aye: Beverly M. Booth
Pattie Cooper-Jones
J. David Emert
Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.
Robert M. Jones
Odessa H. Pride
Jerry R. Townsend
James R. Wilck

Nay: None

the following Certification of Closed Meeting was adopted in accordance with the Virginia Freedom of Information Act:

WHEREAS, the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Board of Supervisors that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors hereby certifies that to the best of each member’s knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors.
On motion of Supervisor Cooper-Jones, seconded by Supervisor Emert, and adopted by the following vote:

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the meeting was recessed at 6:55 p.m. until Tuesday, April 28, 2020 at 7:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors Room.