

April 22, 2025

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 22nd day of April, 2025, at 7:00 p.m., there were present:

Pattie Cooper-Jones

J. David Emert

Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.

Victor “Bill” Jenkins

Odessa H. Pride

Jerry R. Townsend

Absent: E. Harrison Jones, Cannon Watson

Also present: Douglas P. Stanley, County Administrator; Sarah Elam Puckett, Assistant County Administrator; Cheryl Stimpson, Director of Finance; and Crystal Baker, Finance Manager.

Chairman Jenkins called the special meeting to order.

Supervisor Pride offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

In Re: Public Hearing – Proposed 2026 County and School Budgets

Mr. Stanley stated that tonight’s meeting is on the Proposed 2026 County and School Budgets; the next meeting on Tuesday, April 29, 2025 is for consideration of adoption of the County and School budgets and Tax Rates. He said that in the years of a general reassessment, it is ordered that the Board of Supervisors public hearings for tax rates and County and School Budgets are held separately. Approval next week would deliver the budget to the School Board by the Code mandated May 1, which gives them ample time to issue their contracts to teachers. He said a meeting is scheduled on June 10, 2025, for the approval of the Appropriation Resolution, which allows the funds to be expended beginning July 1.

Mr. Stanley stated the Board of Supervisors and staff have been working on the proposed budget since January, with six meetings and work sessions specifically for the budget. He said the new assessments took effect January 1, 2025; the values increased by 37% on average, which means that the Board of Supervisors has to equalize the tax rate. He stated the current tax rate is \$0.51 with an anticipated “revenue neutral” tax rate of \$0.37 to offset the increased reassessment values. The tax rate has been advertised at \$0.39 per \$100, which puts still Prince Edward County at one of the five lowest [real estate tax] rates in the State of Virginia.

Mr. Stanley reviewed a presentation on the proposed FY 2025-2026 County and School Budget. He reviewed Budget Goals, Budget Cost Drivers, Budget Revenue Increases, Significant Funding Changes in Personnel, and stated there are no new full-time positions.

Mr. Stanley then reviewed the Final Budget Notes:

- Budget includes an across the board 3.0% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), and 2.5% step increase for ALL employees. In addition, a one-time 1.5% bonus has been included in the pay raise reserve. Ten employees have been identified for a 1-4 step merit increase.
- The proposed budget is balanced at a real estate rate of \$0.39 and personal property rate of \$4.50 (current rates).
- We have included a 5% increase for the Health Insurance costs.
- Outside agency budgets have been included as recommended by the Board of Supervisors.
- Prince Edward Sheriff's Office:
 - Overtime Increase (\$200,000 to \$217,056)
 - Part-time Increase (\$200,000 to \$225,000)
 - Maintenance Service Contracts (\$114,750 to \$145,340)
 - Vehicle Fuel (\$65,000 to \$80,000)
 - Police Supplies (\$60,000 to \$65,000)
 - Uniforms & Wearing Apparel (\$30,000 to \$35,000)
- Fire and Rescue:
 - Level Agency Contributions
 - Emergency Communications System Upgrade (\$250,000 to \$350,000)
 - \$64,967 towards Joint Dispatch Concept
- IT Department:
 - AS400 Replacement (\$32,500)
- Reassessment to maintain 4-Year Cycle (\$150,000)
- Regional Economic Development Initiative (\$54,818)
- Animal Shelter (\$350,000)
- School CIP Funding- No increase (\$650,000)
- Solid Waste
 - Paving (\$45,000)
 - New scale house (\$26,000)
- CIP - (\$508,708)
- Sandy River
 - Engineering (\$200,000)
 - Legal (\$17,500)
 - Debt Service (\$400,000)
- Contingency Funding (\$150,000)
- Estimated State Revenue included in budget
- School Budget increases
 - Federal, State and Local (Operating) – Used Governor's Estimate (\$384,850)
 - \$12,239,342 Operating
 - \$529,449 Debt Service
 - \$1,250,000 increase in Local Support
- Outside Agency increases – Board of Supervisors recommendations included in budget

Mr. Stanley then reviewed steps taken to close the gap in the difference of \$2,457,917 to balance the budget. He then presented the proposed Real Estate Tax Comparison with other counties in the region.

Chairman Jenkins opened the public hearing.

Justin Pope, Farmville, expressed his support of the proposed budgets. He said these are very reasonable [tax] rates, adding that Mr. Stanley and his team are “super prudent, super careful, super good stewards of public dollars, making sure they are spending our taxpayer dollars efficiently.” He then emphasized the importance of this moment and the opportunity that we have with the school leadership and their attention to the schools, to begin to recruit and retain quality teachers, and stated there is no pathway to long-term economic prosperity for our county if we cannot do that.

Chris Cook, Farmville, expressed his support for the proposed budget; he said he supports the public education and the quality of that education, not just for his children but also for all of the children in that school. He said he wants to make sure that all children of all circumstances get a similar quality education, to succeed and to become proud taxpaying residents of Farmville. He said it is a significantly transformational time for [Prince Edward County] public schools and its leadership, and leadership that is experienced proven leadership that knows how to maximize the resources at their disposal.

Jared Tackett, Farmville, expressed his support of the proposed budget. He said he knows what the power of a successful school system can do for the community and everyone involved. He said everyone should do everything they can to support the schools. He said the goal should be that the Prince Edward County Schools is a great school system with support from everyone. He asked that everyone continue to support the children, the administration, the teachers, and specifically the school system.

There being no one further wishing to speak, Chairman Jenkins closed the public hearing.

Mr. Stanley said the Board cannot take action on the budget at this time, but must wait at least seven days. The next Board meeting will be held Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at 7:00 p.m.

On motion of Supervisor Emert, seconded by Supervisor Cooper-Jones, and adopted by the following vote:

Aye:	Pattie Cooper-Jones	Nay: None
	J. David Emert	
	Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.	
	Victor “Bill” Jenkins	
	E. Harrison Jones	
	Odessa H. Pride	
	Jerry R. Townsend	
	Cannon Watson	

the meeting was recessed at 7:28 p.m. until Tuesday, April 29, 2025 at 7:00 p.m. for the adoption of the County and School Budgets.