

February 18, 2025

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 18th day of February, at 5:30 p.m., there were present:

Pattie Cooper-Jones

J. David Emert

Llew W. Gilliam, Jr.

Victor “Bill” Jenkins

E. Harrison Jones

Odessa H. Pride

Jerry R. Townsend

Cannon Watson

Also present: Douglas P. Stanley, County Administrator; and Jimmy Sanderson, Senior Vice President, Davenport and Company.

Chair Cooper-Jones called the special meeting to order as a Budget Work Session.

In Re: Prince Edward County Capital Improvement Financing Update

Jimmy Sanderson, Davenport and Company, reviewed the updated Financial Review. He presented updated information on the County’s peer comparatives and the Capital planning with emphasis on the schools. He then presented a fund balance overview, and explained Rating Scores. He discussed peer comparisons on growth, real estate taxes and assessed values, stating the County saw a 20% increase in assessments in 2021.

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the General Fund and said the County is in a “good place” with a healthy reserve. He stated an unassigned fund balance can be used throughout the year, usually for one-time costs.

Mr. Stanley said the schools underspent local dollars by \$2.0 million in FY24 and will request a reappropriation of a portion of the leftover funds for use for capital projects. He reminded the Board that we had used a portion of the fund balance for the current FY25 budget.

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the existing debt profile and said the existing taxable debt is scheduled to mature by 2035. He stated the County’s debt value is lower than its peers. He noted that the County would repay almost 50% of its existing debt in the next 10 years. He then reviewed the Capital Planning for the Schools and presented several scenarios, both with and without the state grant funding. Mr. Sanderson reviewed the impact of one penny on the tax rate. Mr. Stanley added that they have a couple of years to fund the next increase in the debt service model.

Mr. Sanderson said the County is doing well to maintain the fund balance surplus. Some discussion followed.

In Re: Proposed Budget Goals

Mr. Stanley stated that the proposed budget goals are to maintain or improve current levels of service, to stay competitive with staff salaries, continue financial planning for the capital projects, and to promote economic development, and maintain a low real estate tax rate. He stated capital projects include the Elementary School renovation, Sandy River Water System, Public Safety Radio System Improvements, and the Animal Shelter. He stated in Economic Development, the County applied for a grant for the HIT Park and Persimmon Tree Fork Road; he said they requested \$12 million in funding from the business-ready sites program, but he did not anticipate the County getting the full amount. He said if the County can get enough to build the water line connection to the Town and the water tank, that would provide water to the site.

Mr. Stanley then reviewed proposed FY 2025-2026 budget cost drivers. He said the County have not seen a significant number of new houses or new vehicles, there is little to no growth, which means a flat revenue. He said there are a few personnel priorities and discussed the proposed 3% cost of living increase (as proposed by the state), a 2.5% merit increase, and a 1.5% bonus mandated for some comp board positions which the County would extend to all employees. He said the State School Composite Index increased which will require the County to pick up additional funding, and they will lose some federal funding.

Mr. Stanley stated funding must be included for the proposed Capital Improvement Projects. He added there are increased operational costs at the Regional Jail due to losing federal inmates and increasing costs.

Mr. Stanley stated the County departments were asked to provide justification for additional expenses for the proposed budget. He said any merit increases would be considered after the review of anticipated revenue.

Mr. Stanley stated the Tharpe Trucking collections lawsuit for unpaid 2023 was continuing and they needed to add the collection of 2024 taxes to the suit.

Supervisor Emert made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Townsend, to direct Sands Anderson Planning Commission to institute and conduct proceedings pursuant to Virginia Code 58.1-3953 and 58.1-3954 to collect J.R. Tharpe Trucking Company, Incorporated's delinquent taxes for tax year 2024; the motion carried:

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	

On motion of Supervisor Emert, seconded by Supervisor Townsend, 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 adjourned at 6:40 p.m.