

March 25, 2025

At the reconvened meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 25<sup>th</sup> day of March, 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; Cheryl Stimpson, Director of Finance, and Crystal Baker, Finance Manager/HR.

Chairman Jenkins called the reconvened meeting to order.

In Re: Approval of Remote Access Participation

Douglas P. Stanley, County Administrator, made the following statement:

I wish to recognize that Supervisor Pattie Cooper-Jones and Supervisor Odessa Pride are participating 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 Cooper-Jones and Supervisor Pride each provided notice that they would have to be physically absent from tonight's Board meeting. Supervisor Cooper-Jones has a conflict with an out-of-town work commitment and will be participating from her hotel in Richmond; Supervisor Pride had a long-planned medical appointment and will be participating from her vehicle in Richmond. Each 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 Cooper-Jones and Supervisor Pride's remote locations shall be approved, and shall be recorded in the minutes of this meeting.

There were no objections.

In Re: Senator Cifers, Prince Edward County Legislative Priorities

Douglas P. Stanley, County Administrator, introduced Senator Luther Cifers, III, to discuss Prince Edward County's Legislative Priorities. He stated his appreciation for the Senator's attendance to speak with the Board.

Senator Cifers stated he is spending time with the ten localities in his district to listen to their concerns and take their voice to Richmond. He stated he represents one-third of Prince Edward County; he said smaller counties have a hard time getting the attention over the larger ones. He said he can take 20 bills into the General Assembly next year. He wants to allocate those in a way to be as effective as possible. Some will likely be technical fixes, some will hopefully be to make the lives of everyday Virginians better. He said he also wishes to move the needle in terms of conversation, those that may be less likely to pass but would get the conversations in front of the General Assembly. He then stated that Prince Edward County is a natural growth-hub, geographically, and there is a hospital system, and a lot of bones worth investing in at the state level as well. Senator Cifers said he wants to know what the Board would like to see in Richmond.

Senator Cifers gave a brief summary about his background, and stated that he dealt with the consequences of government as opposed to dealing with the solution of government. He said he came into this process rather cynical about the government, feeling that the government is, in a lot of ways, dysfunctional and disconnected from the people. He stated he is happy to report that the last three months have restored his faith in our government, and realized that there are meetings like this one where people can show up and make their voices heard, participate in the process. He said he can't count many times he did that [prior to being elected]. He said he is realizing that we have a functional government, a functional system; he said it has its problems just as in our personal lives and private sector, but there are a lot of good, well-intentioned people working really hard to do the right thing. He said there are people that have ideological differences but they are there for the right reasons, trying to do the right things. He stated that he wants to be a productive part of the process and how to make sure that Prince Edward County will get support at the state level and at the very least, it will be well-represented.

Mr. Stanley said the 1% Sales Tax for Local School Construction or Renovation went to the General Assembly and was denied. He said that as a community, Prince Edward County is like a lot of rural communities, and is struggling to be able to provide school facilities that provide good educational space to educate the children. He said there were a few local students that went to the General Assembly and so eloquently said that they didn't understand why, because they grew up in Prince Edward County, they can't have what is two counties away in

Chesterfield as far as facilities. Mr. Stanley said part of that is due to the tax base; he added that Bobby Jones, former Board of Supervisors member, said he supported going for capital improvements for schools but it could not just be from raising the real estate rate, that there had to be other alternatives to funding. Mr. Stanley said the sales tax option would be an option but the constituents would have to vote to put it in place, that the Board of Supervisors could not enact it without voter approval through a referendum.

Senator Cifers said that he voted against the bill because, while it doesn't relate to Prince Edward County as much as it relates to other counties in the district, but the rural counties that don't have a lot of commerce have to go to the cities to shop. He said if this is enacted state-wide, the cities will enact their 1% and the people shopping in the cities will be paying the taxes to build the schools for the cities that already have the funding. Senator Cifers said when he looked at the majority of the 10<sup>th</sup> District is oriented that way.

Mr. Stanley countered, saying it needs to add localities that can prove the need. He said the \$3,000,000 - \$3,500,000 that it may generate for Prince Edward County would take a real estate increase of \$0.20 under the 2024, \$175,000 per penny, calculation. He said there are a lot of visitors that come through Prince Edward County, and while the General Assembly may not want to approve it for all districts, it would benefit Prince Edward County. He said that is more agreeable than adding to the real estate tax only.

Senator Cifers said there is a lot that can be done without spending a lot of money. He said businesses have to show a proportional return, and in government, we have to show incremental return. He said money is like fuel but if the engine is not operating at its optimal efficiency, it won't go nearly as far. He said he would like to see sharing best practices and pairing folks with those that have been through it. He said in some cases, you need the resources to make it happen, but in some cases, you can make it happen through other means. He offered his assistance in making that happen.

Mr. Stanley said the School Board is going to have to address funding and the capital needs aspect, and the outcomes. He said the cost of construction have far outstripped of the ability of the counties to pay for the debt service. He said in 1995, they built a \$9 million Elementary School and now it costs \$40 million on a renovation. The costs have astronomically increased due to rising costs of labor and materials. Mr. Stanley said he would like to give the Prince Edward County citizens the option to choose from.

Mr. Stanley said there is a push at the State level to take away local authority for the siting and approval of utility-scale solar projects; the County feels strongly that these land-use decisions are best left at the local level. He said the County appreciates his support on this issue.

Senator Cifers said he voted against this on the floor; he said this should be left to the localities.

Mr. Stanley then said the Board of Supervisors requests that the General Assembly take all necessary steps to support the funding and development of the Sandy River Reservoir project. He said Prince Edward County was selected several years ago by the Department of General Services to provide water to the three State facilities in Burkeville and Crewe, the Nottoway State Prison, Piedmont Geriatric Hospital and VCBR. He said that for Prince Edward County, this is a 50-year project of the Sandy River, to put the [water treatment] plant in place, put the distribution pipe in place, and have baseline of customers. He said the County knew that the County will have to subsidize the project until such time as we have a data center or another significant water user in Prince Edward County. He said the base flow that would have been sold to the State facilities would have gotten the project off the ground. Mr. Stanley stated the Board of Supervisors looked at this as a long-term investment in the community, and also did not want that asset to go unused; once Prince Edward County had a signed agreement, the County spent \$2 million in furtherance of the project for plans and PPEA to construct the facility. He said the Commonwealth then decided they wanted to work with Crewe who did not put a proposal on the table. He said the Board of Supervisors would like to see State acknowledgement of that, whether it be in the form of reimbursement or an investment in the HIT Park to help move the community forward. He said without the utilities, it is hard to do so; the permit and plan are still in-hand and if the situation dictates, we would like a budget amendment next year to make us whole or to make an investment.

Senator Cifers said that is a technical document and we can talk more and see where some opportunities may be; he added that it may help demonstrate that Prince Edward County has been overlooked. Senator Cifers then said that they are looking at the GDPs of the counties, the population of the counties, and the tax contributions of the counties, and what goes back to the counties from the State. He said there may be a case there, as well, where Prince Edward County has disproportionally contributed. Senator Cifers then said that he has heard about the flood mitigation over the years, and that is a long process with the Corps of Engineers, and asked what studies have been done. He said would the downtown area and the areas outside of town would be more investible if it wasn't for the flood risk.

He said he also has heard about the Route 15 bypass issue which would transform the character of the downtown area if tractor-trailers are not traveling downtown.

Mr. Stanley stated the East Third Street Interchange project is critical, not only for the County but that end of town could grow in a similar way to what is happening on Main Street. He said getting the HIT Park and significant economic development there will spur additional development. He said the data center of a million and a half square feet will take two years of construction and will fill every hotel in Farmville for two years. It will fill restaurants, it will generate economic activity unlike what we've seen in the past. He said the County could also have the plans for the interchange or intersection in the works.

Supervisor Jones said expanding that interchange from a two-leg to a four-leg would be much cheaper than a Route 15 bypass and it would increase the traffic at this intersection.

Mr. Stanley said that currently there are dump trucks carrying 20 tons of gravel doing U-turns in the middle of Route 460 which is not safe. He said unfortunately, for the project to score higher would require more accidents and fatalities, but that is exactly what the County is trying to avoid, but it is not yet getting the attention it needs. Because of the high cost of the project, and because of the scores in northern Virginia's higher traffic counts.

Supervisor Gilliam referred back to the [Sandy River Reservoir] water project; he said that during the drought in 2002, a person could step across the Appomattox River, and that is where the Town gets its water. He said there was a question whether Longwood College would even open that semester. He said the water treatment plant would have been a major system to supply water to Farmville as well as Crewe. He then said Hampden-Sydney relies on seven wells, but if they run dry, the Town will also have to go over there. Discussion followed.

Senator Cifers said he will bring the Sandy River Reservoir issue to the General Assembly.

Mr. Stanley said there are representatives from the School and School Board in the audience; he said the budget includes a three percent increase for the local and school employees to meet their SOQs. He said that to get \$350,000 in Virginia extra state funding in the budget plugged in, but to give the 3% to all of the employees, costs \$1,500,000. He said the hard part is for the employees at both the County level and the School level to receive the raises, the Board of Supervisors has to fund those requests.

Senator Cifers asked to clarify that of \$1.5 million, only \$350,000 comes from the state. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Emert said if an incumbent wishes to run for office, it is required they obtain 125 signatures; he asked why incumbents have to do that.

Senator Cifers said the incumbents in the General Assembly would appreciate that discussion also.

Supervisor Jones stated the Animal Control officers at the County level are limited with regard to dangerous dogs; he said that if a person intends to do harm to a large group of people, law enforcement can step in before they do harm. He said two pit bull mixed breed dogs chased his mother, emotionally and technically an attack but because there was no blood shed, they are not deemed dangerous. He said not two minutes previous, younger family members were in the backyard and had those dogs been loose earlier, one of those young lives could have been lost.

Senator Cifers presented a similar experience, and said that conversation can be held. He said liberty and safety often collide but in the case of animals, we should be able to be a lot more aggressive. He then stated his original goal is to meet with one county each quarter; he said he intends to hold a Town Hall [meeting] in Prince Edward County soon, and would appreciate the Board's participation. He said he would like to have an ongoing dialogue with the Board and School Board, and with the people that live here in the County. He said his intent to represent [the members of the County] is sincere.

The Supervisors thanked Senator Cifers for his time with the Board.

#### In Re: Review of Donation Requests

Mr. Douglas Stanley, County Administrator, stated the meeting provides the opportunity to hear requests from organizations in the County.

Discussion regarding presentations and donation requests from the various agencies were as follows:

AGENCY / ORGANIZATION	REQUESTED	RECOMMENDED	AMOUNT PROPOSED IN
		BY ADMINISTRATOR	WORK SESSION
Prince Edward Firefighters Association	\$8,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
Farmville VFD	\$88,000	\$82,500	\$80,000
Rice VFD	\$88,000	\$82,500	\$80,000
Prospect VFD	\$88,000	\$82,500	\$80,000
Hampden-Sydney VFD	\$88,000	\$82,500	\$80,000
Darlington Heights VFD	\$88,000	\$82,500	\$80,000
Meherrin VFD	\$88,000	\$82,500	\$80,000
Pamplin VFD	\$88,000	\$82,500	\$80,000
VFD Insurance	\$60,000	\$75,000	\$60,000
VFD Fuel	\$40,000	\$40,000	\$40,000
Prince Edward Rescue Squad	\$150,000	\$110,000	\$98,000
Meherrin Rescue	\$35,000	\$30,000	\$25,000
Rescue Squad Insurance	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Rescue Squad Capital Equipment	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Hampden-Sydney First Responder	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

Commonwealth Regional Council	\$19,000	\$19,000	\$19,000
Crossroads Community Services	\$157,832	\$130,000	\$100,000
Farmville Airport	\$7,600	\$7,600	\$7,600
Farmville Area Bus	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$25,000
Farmville/Prince Edward Library	\$324,136	\$324,136	\$324,136
Piedmont Soil & Water District	\$6,840-Operations \$5,000 Dam Maint.	\$6,840-Operations \$5,000 Dam Maint.	\$6,840-Operations \$5,000 Dam Maint.
Southside VA ASAP	\$10,000	\$10,000	\$5,000
STEPS – Community Action Program	\$22,171	\$22,171	\$22,171
SVCC	\$8,762	\$8,762	\$8,762
VHREDA	\$54,818	\$54,818	\$54,818
Virginia Cooperative Extension	\$85,024	\$75,000	\$80,000
Virginia’s Retreat/Virginia’s Crossroads	\$4,500	\$4,500	\$4,500
Downtown Farmville	\$12,000	\$8,000	\$8,000
FACES	\$9,250	\$9,250	\$7,500
Farmville Chamber of Commerce	\$0	\$300	\$300
Feed More, Inc.	\$5,000	\$0	\$0
Habitat for Humanity	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000
Heart of Virginia Festival	\$4,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
Heart of Virginia Free Clinic	\$6,000	\$6,000	\$6,000
Jolly Glee Senior Citizens	\$3,000	\$3,000	\$3,000
LOC Family Services	\$70,000	\$0	\$0
Longwood Center for Visual Arts	\$2,000	\$4,000	\$4,000
Longwood Center for Small Business	\$7,000	\$7,000	\$6,000
Madeline’s House	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Meals on Wheels	\$0	\$5,000	\$5,000
Pamplin Community Center/Ball Field	\$1,500	\$0	\$0
PE-FA Youth Association	\$40,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Piedmont Area Veterans Council	\$15,000	\$15,000	\$15,000
Piedmont Senior Resources	\$30,953	\$30,953	\$30,953
R. R. Moton Museum	\$8,500	\$8,500	\$8,500
Special Olympics	\$1,200	\$1,200	\$1,200
STEPS	\$20,000	\$20,000	\$20,000
Virginia Legal Aid	\$1,595	\$1,595	\$1,595
YMCA	\$60,000	\$45,000	\$40,000
Contingency Fund	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$5,000

Supervisor Jones left the meeting during the donation funding discussion, at 7:15 p.m.

The Board concurred on all donation requests as shown above.

Supervisor Gilliam announced that he spoke with an engineer from Verizon regarding the cell tower on Five Forks Road; he stated they are willing to use the tower at no charge [for emergency services]. Mr. Stanley said that will take care of the tower in the southwest part of the County; he said we may not be able to use the Dominion tower on Milnwood Road. Mr. Stanley then said one option would be to build a tower in town, and Mr. Pyle has been able to get a preliminary negotiation with the owner of the property on Leigh Mountain tower.

Supervisor Townsend made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Gilliam, to authorize advertising for public hearing the proposed real property tax increase and the 2025 tax levies with a proposed real estate tax rate of \$0.39; the motion carried:

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

On motion of Supervisor Townsend, seconded by Supervisor Gilliam, and adopted by the following vote:

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

the meeting was recessed at 7:42 p.m. until Tuesday, April 8, 2025 at 5:30 p.m.