

February 17, 2026

At the special meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Prince Edward County, held at the Court House, thereof, on Tuesday, the 17th day of February, at 3:30 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; Dr. Donald “Chip” Jones, II, Ed.D., Superintendent, Prince Edward County Schools; and Jimmy Sanderson, Senior Vice President, Davenport and Company.

Chair Jones called the special meeting to order.

In Re: Presentation of School Budget

Dr. Donald “Chip” Jones, II, Ed.D., Superintendent, Prince Edward County Schools, thanked the Prince Edward County Board of Supervisors and School Board for their support. He introduced J. Harvey Tackett, Susan Kimbrough, and Dr. James Arieti, School Board members; Thomas Foster, Coordinator of Data Analytics and Career Connections; Virginia Jones, Supervisor of Finance; Amy McClure, Coordinator of Grants; and Jeanine Garrett, Director of Curriculum and Instruction.

Dr. Jones presented an overview of the Proposed FY26-27 Budget. He said this shows where they are currently and where they want to go, sharing the vision for the students and the community. He highlighted goals of recruitment and retention of quality staff, capital improvement needs, transportation needs, and the importance of partnerships, communication, academics and safety. He then presented a staff overview, reporting 320 employees total, serving 1,960 total enrollment including Pre-K and itinerant services. He then reviewed the facilities; in addition to the Elementary, Middle, and High Schools, there is the New Horizons Alternative Education Center, the Career & Technical Education Center, the central office, maintenance shop, School Nutrition office, Barbara Johns Auditorium, Office of Special Education building, and the Transportation Facility.

Dr. Jones reviewed the student groups served, including students with disabilities (296), gifted students (110), English Language Learners (77), and student identified as homeless (29), and economically disadvantaged students (338). He said this year, the focus is on attendance improvement, academic growth and social-emotional support.

Dr. Jones reported there are three diplomas offered: Advanced Studies Diploma, the Standard Diploma, and the Applied Studies Diploma. He said all schools are fully accredited. He then reviewed the athletics and student activities, and reviewed the opportunities at the Career & Technical Education Center. He spoke about opportunities for professional development and leadership growth for the teachers and staff. He said there is instructional focus across the division, and he presented the current curriculum status and investment overview.

Dr. Jones then reviewed the Governor's Budget highlights; he said this is based on the budget figured by Governor Youngkin in December 2025, and he is waiting on the new budget. He said they anticipate an enrollment of 1,775 students next year. He added that the Composite Index funding formula is based upon data from 2023. The anticipated State Funds of \$19,776,427 as included in Governor Youngkin's proposed budget shows an increase of \$1.6 million. In Local Funds, he stated they are requesting an increase of \$400,000 for the FY 2026-2027, which brings the total budget request to \$13,176,158.

Dr. Jones stated there are several Cashbook Funds, such as rebates and refunds, insurance adjustments, surplus sales, and reimbursements, that will provide funds back to the Schools. He reviewed the salary scale and the benefits for the employees, stressing the importance to recruit the best employees; he reviewed strategic priorities and listed Capital Improvement Projects. Dr. Jones closed by saying that based upon the budget introduced by Governor Youngkin in December, he is requesting additional [local] funding of \$400,000.

Supervisor Gilliam asked if they have considered adding training for firefighters or EMS to their Career & Technical Center curriculum; Dr. Jones said yes, it is an expensive program to outfit but they are always looking for and working with the community college for offerings for the students. He said each school division is allocated a number of slots for the Forestry program and he is hopeful that [the Prince Edward County] students will be eligible to participate in that.

Supervisor Pride thanked Dr. Jones for all the work he is doing in Prince Edward County, because it is noticeable. She asked what he feels to be the greatest challenge; Dr. Jones said it is the recruitment and retention of staff.

Mr. Stanley stated that approximately 20%+ of the school staff are through international contract, and they provide a great service and are filling the void where there was a struggle to recruit. He asked if they cost more than a starting teacher would.

Dr. Jones said that currently, there are 47 international teachers; the majority are from the Philippines or Jamaica. He said it depends on their status, as they may be on the J-1B visa or on a H-1B visa. He said if they are on a J-1B visa, after five years, based on the agreement with the company that is used, they must return to their home country for at least two years. He said if they are on the H-1B visa, they are eligible to stay if a school division will sponsor them; the sponsorship is to help them become a citizen and get their full teaching license, which could cost an additional \$7,000 - \$10,000 that the school division must absorb. After a teacher has been with the school for three years, there is an option for renewal. He said they do not pay benefits to the teacher directly but it goes to the company [who provides that for them], and the fee that is associated with that can be from \$17,000 to \$22,000 per teacher, per year. Discussion followed.

Supervisor Emert asked the percentage of salary to benefits. Virginia Jones, Supervisor of Finance, Prince Edward County Schools, stated it is 24.25% of their salary.

Supervisor Townsend left the meeting at this time.

Chairman Jones asked about the requirements for American teachers versus international teachers. Dr. Jones stated all teachers need to have their teaching license, or they may be eligible to get a provisional license based on their degree or the classes that they take. He said a provisional license is a temporary teaching license from the Department of Education that can be in effect for three years but can be renewed up to five years. Dr. Jones said because of the teacher shortage in the Commonwealth of Virginia, there has been a lot of licensure flexibility; he added that in English, Communications, or Special Education degrees, [the school] will work with them to get a transcript audit and help them get the classes they need to become fully licensed.

Supervisor Emert asked where the most trouble is [in finding teachers]. Dr. Jones said it is most difficult to find Special Education teachers for middle and high school.

Supervisor Pride asked how many of the students are in Special Education. Dr. Jones said there are 296 students classified as having disabilities, or 16.38%, which is above state average. He said they receive one to one instruction.

Mr. Stanley thanked Dr. Jones for presenting his budget to the Board at the beginning of the [budget] process; Dr. Jones said this is a testament to the team he works with to be able to get their proposed budget ready.

In Re: Prince Edward County Financial Review

Jimmy Sanderson, Davenport and Company, presented the updated Financial Review. He presented updated information on the County's peer comparatives and presented a fund balance overview and Rating Scores. He discussed real estate taxes and assessed values, stating the County's last reassessment of Assessed Value occurred in 2024, with the new property values taking effect as of January 1, 2025.

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the General Fund and stated the unassigned fund balance is above 30%. He reviewed the Operating Overview, indicating a 30% growth in County revenue over the past five years.

Mr. Sanderson reviewed the existing debt profile and said the existing tax-supported debt is scheduled to mature by 2050. He stated the County's debt levels are below or in line with the medians for State and National Counties. He noted that multi-year Capital Planning is critical to understanding the County's future Debt Capacity and Debt Affordability. Mr. Sanderson reviewed the existing debt profile; the debt to assessed value is at 1.11%. He then reviewed Debt Service vs. Expenditures.

Mr. Sanderson discussed the cost of the school renovations, using a 20-Year Literary Loan vs. Structured Debt Service and the estimated future tax equivalent impact of a penny. He said the CIP contribution of \$250,000 in FY23 and an increase to \$450,000 in FY24 and annually going forward, there will be \$450,000 that will be applied to pay down this debt. He said the possibility of the meals tax contributions could provide \$250,000 in 2027 to pay down the debt.

Mr. Stanley said that part of the structure has been to see how the 1% [meals] tax plays out. He said that would add to the funding in CIP, which continues to help push off and reduce that future impact.

Mr. Sanderson then compared the amortizations with increases of a penny vs. two pennies. He said adding two pennies in FY27 would decrease the overall amount needed and would move back when you would need [to add] a penny from FY29 to FY30.

Chairman Jones thanked Mr. Sanderson and Mr. Stanley for all their hard work.

In Re: Proposed Budget Goals

Mr. Stanley stated the goal is to plan properly to minimize the impact. He said it is imperative that Davenport is keeping an eye on where the County is and what needs to be done in the future.

Mr. Stanley reported he has met with two-thirds of the [County] departments to date; he thanked everyone for keeping their budget requests down. He said the proposed budget goals are to maintain the level of service, provide competitive salaries, and continue the financial planning process for the capital improvement projects. He said goals also include the promotion of economic development and public safety investments, and to maintain a low real estate tax rate.

Supervisor Watson left the meeting at this time.

Mr. Stanley said his goal is to present a budget with no increase. He then asked for Board direction.

Chairman Jones requested further information regarding the increase in revenue over the last five years. Mr. Stanley said that when looking at the revenue from use of money and property, it shows that when the interest rates increase, the interest on the money that is sitting in the bank goes up. He said that can just as quickly go down. Mr. Stanley said that it was at about \$700,000 during FY21-FY22; he added the County is currently at about \$2.3 million, but that can evaporate in a heartbeat. Mr. Stanley said that revenue can be used for one-time items, but that should not be used for operating expenses. Mr. Stanley said there is \$700,000 more revenue this year from the ICE facility that wasn't there five years ago.

Mr. Stanley said the real estate and the personal property has been flat; he said the general property taxes have grown at much lower increase levels, but sales tax has increased. He added that if the interest rates went back down and the ICE facility closed, there would be a \$2 million gap in the current revenue outlook.

Chairman Jones said having such a low median income, energy costs will be a major conversation for the next four years as the demand is anticipated to double, the production is going down, rates are going through the roof, and people will be asking what the Board will do to help keep their heat on next winter. He said this will be a big issue in the near future.

Supervisor Cooper-Jones stated she approves of the way Mr. Stanley handled [the budget] over the past five years, in keeping the tax rates low, balancing the budget, and putting a "cushion" because what is going to happen with the economy is unknown.

Supervisor Gilliam congratulated Trey Pyle for obtaining the grant funding of \$150,000 for the air trailer. He then commented on the list of delinquent tax properties, he said there are many people just trying to make ends meet.

Supervisor Emert said [the County has] done a good job and must be careful.

Supervisor Jenkins left the meeting at this time.

Chairman Jones said he would like to “go lean” on the animal shelter; public safety has to come first.

Mr. Stanley said there are a few personnel priorities, such as transitioning Mr. Pyle [to full time]; he said Mr. Moore, Building Official, may put in some part-time funding there as well to try to keep the contractors moving if [Mr. Moore] is unavailable that day. He said there is a proposed 2% Cost of Living adjustment and a 2.5% step increase for compression. He said the health insurance may see a 10% increase, Virginia Retirement System (VRS) contribution will decrease from 10.14% to 8.6%, providing \$105,000 in savings. Mr. Stanley then reminded the Board of the upcoming Strategic Plan meetings on March 6 and March 7, and reviewed the upcoming budget schedule. He said he will present his proposed budget to the Board on Tuesday, March 10 at 5:30 p.m. and the next meeting after that will be to hear presentations from outside agencies on Tuesday, March 17 at 2:00 p.m.

Supervisor Pride stated she would really like to review the need for the additional \$400,000 from the schools, and that having 47 international teachers is a big concern. Mr. Stanley said these will never be tenured teachers; they will likely only be there for three to five years.

Supervisor Pride then said some of the things that are going on is concerning.

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.		
	E. Harrison Jones		
	Odessa H. Pride		
Absent:	Victor “Bill” Jenkins		
	Jerry R. Townsend		
	Cannon Watson		

the meeting was adjourned at 5:23 p.m.