

County Council of Dorchester County
Regular Meeting Minutes
May 12, 2015

The County Council of Dorchester County met in regular session on May 12, 2015 with the following members present: Ricky C. Travers, President; Tom C. Bradshaw, Vice President; William V. Nichols; Rick M. Price and Don B. Satterfield. Also present were E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney; Jeremy Goldman, Acting County Manager; and Donna Lane, Executive Administrative Specialist.

REGULAR SESSION

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Councilman Travers led the invocation and the pledge of allegiance.

CALL FOR ADDITIONS OR DELETIONS TO AGENDA

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda.

APPROVAL OF DISBURSEMENTS

The Council approved the vouchers as presented with Councilman Travers abstaining for payments made to Simmons Center Market.

FINANCIAL REPORT: CASH AND INVESTMENTS

Councilman Travers reported total cash and investments as \$6,731,563.38.

BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Councilman Travers announced that during the public hearing on the proposed FY16 budget each individual will be limited to a maximum of five minutes at the podium and a group should choose a spokesperson in order to avoid repetitive comments. He said written comments can also be submitted. He also announced that a legislative public hearing on this draft budget will be held at the Council's May 19, 2015 meeting after which the Council will consider adoption. He explained that after this hearing the Council will take into account public comments and make adjustments, if any, to the proposed budget bill prior to that date. Councilman Travers advised that it is currently a balanced budget that includes capital projects but no tax increase.

The Council waited until 6:10 p.m. to convene into this public hearing.

Mr. Merryweather said this is the second public hearing on the 2015-2016 annual budget appropriation ordinance.

Jeremy Goldman, Acting County Manager, said speakers should state their name and address for the record prior to their comments.

Dr. Barbara Viniar, President, Chesapeake College, advised that the Cambridge Center will be refurbished this summer. She said tuition has been increased. She noted that expenses continue to rise, including technology costs, and that a contingency tuition increase has been established in case public support is not garnered. She referenced the request she submitted for approximately \$76,000 in additional funding, noting that since FY14 funding levels for the support counties for the college have decreased by \$139,488. Dr. Viniar explained that the College is partnering with the Dorchester County public school system to assist workers who will be laid off from Camtech. She expressed her desire for the College to be a part of the County's economic development initiatives, citing job training as a way to attract and maintain new employees. She asked the Council to provide the College the requested increase. She acknowledged that the following individuals are present: Jo-Ann Adams, Administrative Associate, Cambridge Center; Bob Boettger, Cambridge Center Director; and Tim Jones, Vice President of Administrative Services. She noted that other individuals from the College have signed up to speak.

Staci Garrison, Director of Academic Assessment, Chesapeake College, said she recently moved from Delaware to Dorchester County. She explained that she was admitted to the Emergency Room this morning and met three nurses who were Chesapeake College graduates. She noted that Dr. Viniar is asking for an increase from the five support counties and encouraged the Council to provide the funding as an investment in the local economy.

Katherine Lipsius, resident and a future College graduate, opined that while the Cambridge Center is smaller than other colleges it provides quality education in an integrated and intimate setting. She said it provides students who have limited funding the ability to obtain a quality education. She urged the Council to provide the additional funding.

Beth Spencer said she, her husband and her children live in the north Dorchester area and she works in the County. She noted that: 1) her oldest child graduated last year from North Dorchester High School (NDHS); 2) one will graduate this year; 3) her daughter is a freshman; 3) in 2022 her husband's twin daughters and her younger daughter will graduate from this school; and, 4) she graduated from this school. She thanked the Council for voting in favor of including funds for the planning and design for the future replacement of NDHS in the proposed FY16 budget. She commended the NDHS staff for meeting the academic needs of students, providing extracurricular activities, and improving academics and attendance at this facility. She stressed the need for a safe and secure campus. Ms. Spencer asked the Council to retain the funds for this project in the budget.

Ann Phillips, Executive Director, Dorchester County Historical Society, asked the Council to include funding for this entity in the budget. She said the County provided the Historical Society \$5,000 in 2007 and its offerings and services have increased since then. She noted that they conduct tours for students, teachers and visitors, including Harriet Tubman complementary tours, and offer world history and educational programs. She explained that she is the only paid staff member and that efforts are currently underway to relocate the Historical Society's resource library to the main building. She asked the Council to provide funding to this entity as an investment in the County's heritage. She thanked the Council for their time and consideration.

Jacqueline Sorrells, Principal, NDHS, stressed the need for the replacement of the school. She read a statement on behalf of mother, Louise Jackson McGuire, in support of a new high school

as an investment in the County and its youth even if taxes are increased. She explained that her mother is a resident and property owner who lives on a fixed income and was educated in Dorchester County schools.

Dwayne Abt, Assistant Superintendent for Administration, referenced the overview for the need of a new high school Dr. Henry Wagner, Superintendent of Schools, provided at the May 5, 2015 budget public hearing. He opined that the new school will address safety and security concerns. He noted that one efficient heating and cooling system and the latest technology in lighting and communications will be utilized which will result in an energy savings. Mr. Abt said as a citizen and taxpayer he encouraged them to retain the funding for the planning and design in the proposed budget. He thanked the Council for recognizing the need for a new high school and each Council member for serving the County and its residents.

Lorenzo Hughes, Assistant Superintendent for Instruction, also echoed the comments Dr. Wagner made in support of the replacement of NDHS at the May 5th hearing. He implored the Council to keep that funding intact. He expressed his understanding that one of the factors prospective buyers and homeowners consider before relocating is the quality of the local school system. Mr. Hughes said in addition to beginning a partnership with the Local Management and other agencies in an Early Child Advisory Council to focus on positively impacting student readiness, the following achievements were made in 2014: 1) 32 students were inducted in the national technical honor society with a minimum grade point average of 3.25 in technical program and a minimum of 3.0 in academic courses; 2) student athletes had their first signing day with 13 high school students being recruited to play collegiate sports including lacrosse, baseball, football, track, cross country, wrestling and softball; 3) 220 students enrolled in advance placement courses; 4) 17 earned the designation of being advanced placement scholars; 5) last year students received \$3.7 million in funding to continue their education on a collegiate level; 6) 68% of the 2014 graduates plan on attending a four year college and 16% plan on entering workforce; and 7) the County's four year graduation rate surpasses the State graduation average.

Mr. Hughes cited the following about NDHS: 1) it was home to the 2014-2015 First Class Teacher of the Year, Michael Pagliaro; 2) staff was awarded a Race to the Top technology grant and received laptop computers for which they recently received training; 3) 54.5 of its students earned a 3.0 grade point average or higher for the first semester of this school year; 4) during the third term, which just ended, 47 students earned honor roll status; and 5) this school currently has the highest attendance rate in the entire school system (96% all year). He applauded Ms. Sorrells for encouraging her students to attend school. Mr. Hughes said the Board of Education, staff and teachers are committed to ensuring that the youth who exit the local school system are college or career ready. He thanked the Council for its support of the public school system.

Earl Murphy, Council Member, Town Hurlock and resident since 2005, explained that his son is one of the students who is attending a Shorebirds game today in recognition of his attendance record at NDHS. He urged the Council to keep the money for the school replacement in the budget. He advised that he is willing to pay additional taxes to provide a quality education to the youth in the north Dorchester area. Mr. Murphy said his constituents asked him to relay to the Council their support for the new school. He asked the Council to fund the school replacement and to continue to support the local school system.

Stephanie Hallowell, a 2012 graduate of NDHS, resident, and a research assistant in the Department of Liberal Arts and Sciences at Chesapeake College, expressed her belief that additional funding should be provided to the College in order to maintain the quality of higher education at the school and in light of increased costs. She explained that she is conducting research collaboratively with the Department of Institute of Research at the main campus regarding a past program, the Program for Accelerated Student Success. She noted that many students dropped out of that program because they were not college ready. Ms. Hallowell said they are hopeful the new core curriculum for local public schools will assist in furthering that program. She opined that curriculum changes need to be made at the college and financial support is needed to hire qualified staff. She reiterated her request for the Council to provide the requested additional funding to the college.

Monroe Quailles, resident, said although he supports a new school another funding source needs to be identified instead of raising taxes which may impose a hardship on senior citizens who live on a fixed income.

Jim Bishop, resident, expressed his support for the construction of a new NDHS, noting he was principal at that school from 1992 to 2000 at which time he felt repairs were needed. He stressed the need to support the youth and the north Dorchester community. He thanked the Council for allowing him to speak.

Hershell Johnson, resident, advised that Ms. Phillips asked him to speak in support of her request for funding for the Historical Society. He explained that he and Bill Jarmon earlier today provided a tour of the Cambridge area to 27 tourists from a cruise ship who were not familiar with the County, on behalf of this entity. He expressed his belief that Ms. Phillips has drawn visitors to the County. He noted that the Historical Society also holds events in the County, including an East New Market Day. He commended Ms. Phillips for her efforts in promoting tourism in the County. Mr. Johnson said he is a former Board of Education member and spoke in favor of the replacement of NDHS and keeping the funding intact in the proposed FY16 budget for this project. He thanked the Council for giving him the opportunity to provide his comments.

Lenny Pffefer, resident, requested clarification on the \$8 million increase in revenue in the Landfill Fund referenced in the proposed FY16 budget. Michael Spears, Finance Director, said most of that funding is in the Capital Fund and the biggest change is the expenditure of more than \$7 million from this Fund in the construction of new cells. In response to a question from Mr. Pffefer, Mr. Spears said those funds were in reserves. Mr. Pffefer spoke in favor of a new school. He applauded the Council for being fiscally conservative, good stewards of the taxpayers and for ensuring there is money available for priority projects. He urged the Council to consider the replacement of NDHS as a priority project within the proposed budget and retain the funding for this purpose.

Dr. Tammy Field, stated that she was born in Cambridge and graduated from a County high school, however, she left the area to attend Salisbury College. She explained that she obtained a degree in the medical field and was in the Army. She said she began working at the College nine years ago and was offered a full time job to teach at the Cambridge Center. She noted that the College supports dual enrollment. She stressed that education is important and expressed her support of the public school system and the College.

The Council adjourned the public hearing.

PUBLIC HEARING-SCHEDULE OF FEES

E. Thomas Merryweather, County Attorney, said a public hearing is being held on the County's Schedule of Fees. He explained that there are no proposed changes; however, this hearing is being held in order to align future consideration of this schedule with the budget. There was no public comment. The Council recognized that the current fee schedule set by Resolution 565, which was adopted on February 3, 2015, is still in effect. The Council concluded the public hearing.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Mr. Murphy asked the Council and public to keep the Hutton family in their thoughts and prayers.

COUNCIL'S COMMENTS/ADJOURNMENT

Councilman Price said he wants to revisit the request of Nicholette Smith-Bligen, Social Services Director for funds for the accreditation of the Dorchester County Department of Social Services.

Councilman Price advised that he would also like to include in the FY16 budget \$5,000 for the Historical Society. Councilman Satterfield concurred. Councilman Bradshaw also concurred, citing the impact the Historical Society has on heritage tourism and economic development as the reason for this belief funding should be provided to this entity. Councilman Bradshaw said individuals all over the country conduct genealogy research at the Historical Society's library.

Councilman Nichols advised that he wants to redirect funding remaining in the FY15 Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Budget in the amount of \$50,000 towards retrofitting the old technology center as a County EMS station to achieve future savings. Mr. Goldman said it is his understanding that those funds have been re-appropriated as a local match to an equipment grant for EMS. Councilman Nichols asked staff to provide clarification on this action. He stressed his belief that these funds should be utilized to move forward with the renovations to the old school.

Councilman Bradshaw asked for the status of the equipment grant. Mr. Goldman advised that the fourth grant round was announced this Friday and to date the County has not been awarded funding. He explained that there are 18 to 20 rounds which will be announced each Friday.

Councilman Nichols referenced comments made during last years' budget process by a representative of the Historical Society which were disrespectful to him and to the Council. He said he is not in favor of providing funding to this entity in light of these comments.

Councilman Travers expressed his understanding that the key items the Council heard throughout the budget public hearing process were the NDHS replacement, an increase to Chesapeake College, the allocation of funding to the Historical Society and a County funding commitment for the efforts of the Department of Social Services in seeking national accreditation. He advised Council that he spoke to William McDonnel, the past Social Services

Director, who explained that the accreditation is similar to an ISO rating for a business; the County does not contribute to the services this agency provides; and this entity's money is spent in Dorchester County. Mr. Goldman said it is his understanding that this will enhance the Department's ability to garner grant funding.

The Council reached the following consensus relating to the proposed FY16 budget: 1) to flat fund Chesapeake College; 2) to allocate \$5,000 to the Dorchester County Historical Society, with Councilman Nichols opposing; 3) to allocate \$10,000 to the Department of Social Services towards accreditation; 4) to leave the funding for the planning and design of a replacement NDHS, with Councilmen Nichols and Price opposing; and 5) to add \$11,500 for a benefits package for a full time Attorney in the State's Attorney's Office whose salary is funded through a Safe Street grant.

Mr. Spears said he will add these items to the draft FY16 budget bill for the Council's final consideration at its May 19, 2015 meeting and will provide a list of all changes, including housekeeping items.

With no further business to discuss, the Council adjourned.

ATTEST:

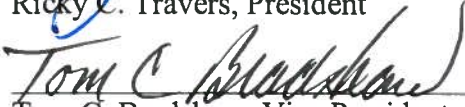


Jeremy Goldman
Acting County Manager

DORCHESTER COUNTY COUNCIL:




Ricky C. Travers, President



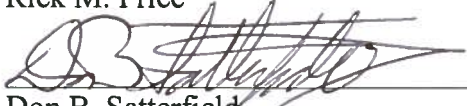
Tom C. Bradshaw, Vice President



William V. Nichols



Rick M. Price



Don B. Satterfield

Approved the 2nd day of June, 2015.