

Patrick County Board of Supervisors

Continuation of Budget Work Session

Patrick County Veteran's Memorial Building – Third Floor – Boardroom

Thursday, March 4, 2010

Present: Karl Weiss, Chairman, Ron Knight, Vice – Chairperson, Crystal P. Harris, Roger Hayden, and Lock Boyce Board Members

Staff Present: Jay Scudder, County Administrator, Tom Rose, Assistant County Administrator, Donna Shough, Finance Officer, and Geri Hazelwood, Assistant to the County Administrator/Clerk

Media: Tom Bishop, Chamber of Commerce, Richard Rogers, WHEO, Nancy Lindsey, the Enterprise

Call to Order: Mr. Chairman

Mr. Tom Bishop led the invocation.

Mr. Hayden led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance

Mr. Chairman called for a moment of silence in honor of past and present members of our armed forces serving here and abroad.

Mr. Chairman opened the public comment period.

Ms. Joanne Spangler, Blue Ridge District, Emergency Alert System; was disappointed in the Board for not approving the emergency alert system for the county. She didn't think that Mr. Allen was given the opportunity to fully explain the program. She stated that people have gone missing here in the county and if the service were in place maybe it could have prevented something like this from occurring. She asked the Board to please consider the system.

Ms. Rhonda Mulherin, Smith River District, Rescue Squad, spoke proudly of the rescue squads. She spoke in favor of the enhanced training for the volunteers and the importance of being able to administer potentially lifesaving medications when necessary. Everyone in the county deserves the same care of ALS trained volunteers. The county needs to provide this training to ensure top quality care. It may save a life like it did for her husband.

Mr. Garry Ayers, Stuart, Rescue Squad, stated that he had been a member of the Jeb Stuart Rescue Squad and is able to provide ALS backup. He stated that they need to have the support of the Board and that we should not charge the volunteers to get the needed education in order to provide ALS quality care to the Patrick County citizens.

Mr. Lucian Belcher, Blue Ridge District, Rescue Squad; He has been a volunteer for six years on the Vesta Rescue Squad and is currently enrolled in the paramedic program at PHCC. He spoke in favor of the County providing the volunteers with the proper training in order to run ALS calls stating that the need was great. He stated that the benefit of the classes is priceless.

Mr. Jack Williams spoke on behalf of Rodger Williams who was injured in an accident. He thanked the EMS squads, for their expertise and training. He stated that if it were not for Steve Allen, Rodger might not be here today. He said that he called at 10:40 and by 11:30 he was in Winston. He would not have been alive 15 minutes later. He encouraged the Board to train and afford the opportunity to the volunteers. He stated that no dollar figure should be put on a person's life.

Mr. Charles Vivier, Blue Ridge District, Budget, referenced the budget on p.3 stating that a lot of pages have zero's, with a carryover of \$3.8 the current budget needs to be amended according to Mr.Vivier. He stated that the County was not going to spend the windfall this fiscal year. He spoke of concerns for the public utility, real estate tax, worker's comp, and expenses for vehicles. He thanked the staff for putting the budget online.

The Board members responded to the public comment speakers.

Mr. Hayden stated that the County cannot do without EMS and can't afford to pay the volunteers. We need to support them anyway we can. This is critical infrastructure. He asked how much it would cost to install the emergency alert system.

Mr. Allen stated that it would cost \$2,000.00 the first year and \$5,000.00 after that.

Mr. Scudder stated if it would cost \$5,000, would there be any additional fees?

Mr. Allen stated no.

Ms. Harris stated that the presentation she attended was very impressive.

Mr. Hayden stated that he would like to find ways to move money in order to fund this system. He stated that it is a lot of benefits for the money. The training for the ALS is a cost issue. \$50,000.00 is a lot for training.

Mr. Allen stated that it would cost a minimum of \$57,000.00 to train 14 volunteers.

Mr. Scudder asked where the volunteers would have to go in order to take the class if not offered here.

Mr. Allen stated that they would have to go the New River Valley or PHCC.

Mr. Scudder stated that in 2008 -09 the amount allotted for training was zero. Last year the amount was \$7,000.00. We talked about raising the amount to \$14,000.00 at the last meeting.

Mr. Knight asked how many applications per district have been received.

Mr. Allen stated that he has two members in Ararat who are willing to take the class and at this time we have zero ALS in that area. Mr. Allen presented the Board with the following letter from Dr. Edsall.

Jason W. Edsall, MD, FACEP

Patrick County Board of Supervisors

To the Board of Supervisors, Patrick County, VA:

As the Operational Medical Director for every EMS agency in Patrick County, daily I face deep concerns regarding the level of care provided to the citizens of this county. As an attending physician at Northern Hospital of Surry County, I see the ramifications of that care. Just today I treated a patient in my ER who had been given CPR for 45 minutes by a crew that was unable to administer potentially life saving medications due to a lack of certification. This theme is repeated all too often in this county to ignore.

It is my understanding that Mr. Steve Allen has asked for funding to hold a class that will create as many as 18 new providers that could administer such care. If this class is successful, that would increase the number of available providers 200%, from a current maximum of 9, to a maximum of 27. What you need to understand is that all of these people are volunteers. As such, they all hold what we call "real jobs" to support their families. During the times the people are working, there may be as few as 3 or 4 such providers available in the county at any given time. Do you want to take the risk that one will be available when you or someone in your family has a heart attack?

I am aware that with the current economic crisis, money is tighter than it has ever been. It is during these times that investments can be made that will pay off large dividends in the future. Please consider greatly the investment in this training class that will pave the way for more rapid, efficient, and available care for the citizens of Patrick County. We have 18 people willing to donate a total 10,440 hours to this community free of charge, that would be 5 FTE's, or \$75,690 at minimum wage. Please consider helping them with the cost of the training itself.

Respectfully,

Jason W. Edsall, MD, FACEP
Operational Medical Director
Patrick County, Virginia
3/2/2010

Mr. Knight stated that when the Board chose to do away with the QRV by a unanimous decision and we were to cover the funds before. We are obligated to take care of our volunteers and pay for their training.

Mr. Weiss stated that not one person was not supportive. He stated that two years ago we cut \$100,000.00 and committed that we would provide training money for ALS.

Ms. Harris stated that we can put \$50,000.00 into remodeling but we can't put it into ALS training to save lives.

Mr. Scudder stated that he presented the Board with a balanced budget. He stated that the QRV was in operation for two to three months. If we wanted to cover ourselves financially we should have raised the personal property taxes and vehicle decals \$10.00 which would have raised the revenue.

Mr. Hayden stated that he was not in favor of raising any more taxes. He stated that the budget needed to be cut.

Mr. Hayden stated that the Library is not critical infrastructure with 11,026 visits to the Bookmobile. We should make 2.5% cuts off each budget and that would be fair.

Mr. Knight suggested reducing contributions in order to pay for the training.

Mr. Allen stated that he needed to notify Jeff Reynolds as soon as possible so he can get Patrick County accredited at the PHCC off campus site.

Mr. Boyce stated that Jay should write a letter and see if there's any way to get the training at a reduced price. Whatever the cost we do not need to raise taxes. We need to fully fund the ALS training. He suggested that all rescue squads should use soft billing.

Ms. Harris stated that they are looking for grant funding for the training.

Mr. Scudder stated that budget is set comprehensive; it is up to the Board. Within the budget I think there are ways to do it, use some contingency funds, etc.

Mr. Allen asked that the Board add \$55,000 to the emergency services budget to provide ALS training to 18 volunteers from Patrick County.

On motion by Lock Boyce to fully fund the ALS training and see what can be done to make it more efficient seconded by Ron Knight and carried unanimously.

Voting Aye: Hayden, Boyce, Knight, Harris, Weiss

Voting Nay: None

Mr. Weiss applauded Mr. Boyce for making the motion.

The Board discussed the emergency alert system.

On motion by Roger Hayden seconded by Lock Boyce to budget \$5,474 for the emergency alert system and carried unanimously.

Voting Aye: Hayden, Boyce, Knight, Harris, Weiss

Voting Nay: None

The Board thanked Ms. Spangler.

Mr. Allen stated that he would have Mr. Reynolds to give a presentation to the Board on the March 8, 2010 meeting.

Mr. Hayden complemented Mr. Neyman on the article he placed in the local paper referencing the joining of the Treasurer's Office and the Commissioner of the Revenue's office into one thus saving money.

Mr. Scudder stated that it could be looked into.

Break: 7:30

The Board discussed the contributions section of the budget and made the following changes:

On motion by Lock Boyce to dissolve the \$1,500 contribution and not fund the Blue Ridge Heritage anymore dollars seconded by Roger Hayden and carried 3 to 2.

Voting Aye: Hayden, Boyce, Knight

Voting Nay: Harris, Weiss

On motion by Roger Hayden to reduce the Library's contribution by five percent, \$13,000.00 seconded by Lock Boyce and failed 3 to 2.

Voting Aye: Hayden, Boyce

Voting Nay: Knight, Harris, Weiss

On motion by Lock Boyce to reduce the Library's contribution by \$10,000.00 seconded by Roger Hayden and failed 3 to 2.

Voting Aye: Hayden, Boyce

Voting Nay: Knight, Harris, Weiss

On motion by Roger Hayden to reduce the Library's contribution by \$5,000 seconded by Lock Boyce and carried 3 to 2.

Voting Aye: Hayden, Boyce, Knight

Voting Nay: Harris, Weiss

On motion by Lock Boyce to raise the contribution to the Caring Hearts Free Clinic to \$15,000.00 seconded by Roger Hayden carried 4 to 1.

Voting Aye: Hayden, Boyce, Knight, Weiss

Voting Nay: Harris

The Board discussed the departments of Economic Development and Tourism.

On motion by Crystal P. Harris to leave the Tourism Budget as presented seconded by Karl Weiss and carried 3 to 2.

Voting Aye: Knight, Harris, Weiss

Voting Nay: Hayden, Boyce

Mr. Hayden asked when the EDA meetings were held and to be put on the list to be notified.

The Board added \$33,000 to the Economic Development Department in the form of a Governor's Opportunity Grant funded by the state.

The Board added \$13,000 to the jail operations for the county's contribution to a home for juvenile defenders.

The Board cut office supplies in E – 911 by \$1,000

On motion by Roger Hayden to cut the Soil and Water Conservation contribution to \$5,000.00 seconded by Lock Boyce and carried 3 to 2.

Voting Aye: Knight, Hayden, Boyce

Voting Nay: Harris, Weiss

Mr. Scudder stated that the Board needs to set the tax rate by the end of March. We need to advertise the public hearings to set the tax levy at 48 cents and the public hearing on the budget for March 22, 2010.

The Board had discussion as to whether or not to publish a full page ad of the budget or half page ad of the budget synopsis.

On motion by Lock Boyce seconded by Ron Knight to advertise the synopsis For The Year July 1, 2010 to June 30, 2011 budget in the local paper and carried 3 to 2.

Voting Aye: Knight, Hayden, Boyce

Voting Nay: Harris, Weiss

On motion by Lock Boyce seconded by Crystal Harris to advertise to set the tax rate at 48 cents and FY 2010 – 2011 budget as is with noted modifications to go to public hearing on March 22, 2010 and carried 3 to 2.

Voting Aye: Boyce, Knight, Weiss

Voting Nay: Hayden, Harris

On motion by Lock Boyce seconded by Crystal P. Harris to adjourn until March 8, 2010 and carried unanimously.

Voting Aye: Hayden, Boyce, Knight, Harris, Weiss

Voting Nay: None

