

An adjourned meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, was held on February 29, 2012, at 6:00 p.m., Lane Auditorium, County Office Building, McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia. The meeting was adjourned from February 8, 2012.

PRESENT: Mr. Kenneth C. Boyd, Mr. Christopher J. Dumler, Ms. Ann Mallek, Mr. Dennis S. Rooker, Mr. Duane E. Snow and Mr. Rodney S. Thomas.

ABSENT: None.

OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Thomas C. Foley, County Attorney, Larry W. Davis, and Clerk, Ella W. Jordan.

Agenda Item No. 1. The meeting was called to order at 6:02 p.m., by the Chair, Ms. Mallek.

Agenda Item No. 2. Pledge of Allegiance.
Agenda Item No. 3. Moment of Silence.

Agenda Item No. 4. Adoption of Final Agenda.

The agenda was accepted as presented.

Agenda Item No. 5. Brief Announcements by Board Members.

There were none.

Agenda Item No. 6. From the Public: Matters Not Listed for Public Hearing on the Agenda.

There were none.

Agenda Item No. 7. **PUBLIC HEARING** to receive comments on the County Executive's FY 2012/2013 Recommended Budget. (*Advertised in the Daily Progress on February 25 and February 26, 2012.*)

Mr. Foley stated that the budget was focused on the County's future as well as seeking opportunities to get through recent difficult times that the County has been faced with. He said that the County is in a time of transition from the challenging years, so as staff put the budget together they did so with the principle of continued commitment to excellence, scrutinizing expenditures and look at better ways to do business in County government but also by making some investments to shore up basic or core services that have suffered over the past few years. Mr. Foley noted that after the last several years there would be some modest investment required just to stay where we are. He stated that the second major principle was a focus on the future, which meant making modest investments to keep up with the changing growth that positions the County for the future and to avoid future crisis this budget invested in trying to stay ahead and move forward. Mr. Foley said that the investment in both principles allowed the County to proceed without any increase in taxes on the average homeowner.

Mr. Foley reported that there had been a significant decline in revenues over the last several years, and 2009-2011 had been a period of reduction and repositioning, with budget reductions of over \$40 million and taxes held flat in FY10 with decreases in FY11. He said that the County had reduced the volume of projects in the five-year capital plan by over \$118 million during the plan period and made necessary reductions to school system support by approximately \$4 million or 4% as well as eliminating 66-70 local government positions during this period of time, which has returned the County to its 2002 staffing levels on a per-capita basis.

Mr. Foley reported that the current fiscal year and the FY13 budget show modest signs of revenue recovery; in FY12, the general fund expenditures increased by only 1% and it was a hold the line budget while dropping the tax rate in both FY11 and FY12. He said that there was less uncertainty in looking to FY13, and there is more confidence in improved revenues and overall budget situation. Staff moved from a hold the line budget to one that moves ahead with investments and urgent needs to avoid potentially negative consequences. Mr. Foley stated that the investment in FY13 was not an investment in new programs or enhanced services, but supports the availability and quality of basic government services such as public safety which could deteriorate if investments weren't made in shoring up the core services. He said that in looking to the future, the commitment to excellence remained constant and this budget continued to rely on reductions, repositioning and streamlining across the organization; staffing in this budget was back to 2001 levels in spite of a few increased positions for core services.

Mr. Foley stated that the County was focused on generating alternative revenues and was exploring new business practices as well as continuing partnerships to take advantage of available opportunities. He said the County had become a more flexible and agile government and continued to stay focused on high performance and improved processes, such as continuing with a modified zero based budgeting approach that included tightly scrutinizing expenditures and starting at a new baseline each year. Mr. Foley said that staff felt it was critical to lift our heads up from these past challenges and

begin to focus on the future, and staff were working through this budget to make steady advancement in overcoming challenges and achieving community priorities as well as looking for new opportunities.

He stated that a focus on progress didn't mean immediate or dramatic change, but meant modest steps forward such as the Crozet Library, which would provide needed library services in the western part of the County, but would also help revitalize the downtown area of Crozet for economic development efforts. Mr. Foley said that the budget also included investments in public safety facilities that would improve response times and ensure reliable quality services. He noted that taking advantage of opportunities would help the County capitalize on possibilities such as the Ivy Fire & Rescue Station, which was being built through a partnership with the University of Virginia that allowed the County to build the station for \$1 per year in a lease. Mr. Foley added that the County was also entering into a partnership with Martha Jefferson Hospital that would allow provision of a new EMS service on Pantops with no capital costs, saving a significant amount of capital costs.

Mr. Foley reported that the progress made with new core facilities such as those presented to the Board tonight and improvement in basic services, along with the opportunities through partnerships and other means, were the primary reasons the proposed budget demonstrated a commitment to excellence and a new focus on the future. He said that a commitment to excellence is supported by the first two goals in the budget: ensuring that the County could fund obligations and commitments that have impacted the budget and supporting continued transformation in sustaining the services available now at a quality level. Mr. Foley said that a focus on the future required that the County invest in strategic priorities to position it for the future, and this budget would be discussed in terms of these goals and principles going forward.

Mr. Foley reported that revenue, including what would come in for schools and local government operations totaled \$311,677,000. He said that the revenues supported all operations of the County government including the general fund, the school fund and capital fund, but also included funds such as debt service and school self sustaining funds that run the school system. Mr. Foley stated that the largest portion of revenues continued to be property taxes, which together with all other local revenues comprised about 65% of revenues in the budget and that state revenues provided about 22%. He said that expenditures included about 60% for schools, which is pretty typical in a given year, supporting their operations, capital and debt service. Mr. Foley said that general government accounted for about 35.5% and included public safety, human services, and other services provided. He noted that 5.6% was allocated for revenue sharing to the City of Charlottesville.

Mr. Foley reported that the budget was balanced on an equalized tax rate of 76.4 cents to offset a 3% decline in the total assessed value of property resulting in the fourth straight year of no tax increases, with two of those years actually having reduced taxes. He said that total revenues had increased in the budget by \$7.3 million or 2.4%, the result of a modest increase in non-real estate tax revenues such as meals tax and sales tax and enhanced collection of delinquent taxes by the Finance Department. Mr. Foley said that state revenues were up about \$2.7 million, with \$2.5 million of that going to the school system to support their operations. He stated that general government operations were up 3.6% primarily due to new obligations for VRS, shoring up core services, and modest steps toward the future. Mr. Foley noted that school operations were up slightly more than that, but VRS mandates were a big driver in that increase. He said that the County's capital improvement plan was up about 16% with the construction of the Ivy Fire & Rescue Station, the Crozet Library, the police firing range, and new EMS service at Pantops. Mr. Foley pointed out that all of those were core basic services that needed investment just to keep going. He also mentioned a reserve fund of \$1.5 million that was not allocated to any expenditure but was left at the Board's discretion for use in either, operations, tax relief, or another purpose but staff was encouraging investment in the capital program for some unmet needs.

Mr. Foley reviewed the three major components of the budget: the School Fund, General Fund and Capital Fund. He reported that the general fund totaled \$222 million and essentially took up the local tax revenues that comprised about 86.8% of all revenues, so all of the locally generated revenues were the predominant share of the general fund expenditures – with state revenues making up about 10% and federal sources accounting for only about 2% of the total. Mr. Foley indicated that the County was beginning to experience modest growth in many of the major sources of revenue, resulting in an improved financial picture.

Mr. Foley reported that there was a 3% increase overall in revenues in spite of the decline in property values, with other local taxes at 4% and other local sources making up about \$1 million of increase. He said that state revenues were flat and a decline in federal revenues was expected, but only because of a change in the process for funding a social services program. He emphasized that the big story in the budget related to the revenue picture was equalizing the tax rate, and explained that this was the first year in four years that the County had started at zero instead of below zero due to declining property values as a result of the Board directing staff to build the budget on an equalized rate. Mr. Foley also said that the Board had decided to proceed with charging EMS fees for emergency medical transports, noting that it was a fairly common practice across the state and the country to collect those fees. He also said that the Finance Department had looked closely at new ways of doing business and increasing collection of delinquent taxes so that number is closer to 100%, and had also begun collecting sales tax that was incorrectly sent to the City of Charlottesville. Mr. Foley said that in calendar year 2009 the average home value was about \$308,000, and that had declined over time, but so had the taxes on the average homeowner with an average \$100 drop in their tax bill.

Mr. Foley explained that the general fund was comprised of everything in the budget including the schools, although there was a separate school fund, and about half of the money generated at the local level through property taxes, sales, meals, etc. was provided to the school system as part of the general

fund. He said that 50% including debt service and operations went to the school system right off the bat, with the other half of expenditures distributed to public safety, human services, parks and recreation, community development, and general government. Mr. Foley noted that revenue sharing with the City of Charlottesville comprised about 8% of the total picture. He stated that the budget met new mandates from the state that the County, increase by 25% the cost of retirement benefits for employees, a cost of \$1.2 million in this budget. Mr. Foley said that other mandates to pay for benefits for public safety officers hurt in the line of duty had also come down from the state, at an anticipated increase this year of \$200,000 on the heels of a \$100,000 increase last year. He stated that the rest of the items were related to commitments made through contracts with agencies and other service providers such as the regional jail, the juvenile detention facility, the SPCA, etc.

Mr. Foley said that the County's commitment to the school system was that every year they are provided with 60% of revenues, with the total amount this year being \$99.5 million, a 2.3% increase in their funding. He noted that the obligation to the City of Charlottesville for revenue sharing totaled about \$17.5 million, and the last two items ensured maintenance of the County's AAA bond rating.

Mr. Foley stated that the second goal was to support continued transformation and change in County operations and to shore up core services as well as to sustain quality services going forward. He said that this budget supported public safety needs and added funding for police training as well as a reclassification of police officers and firefighters whose salaries had fallen behind comparable markets, as well as including some initiatives to try to recruit personnel to fill vacancies in those units. Mr. Foley added that the budget supported three additional positions in the Finance Department on the concern expressed for two consecutive years by the County's auditors that staffing levels were dangerously below the appropriate mark, and one of those positions would help get the delinquent taxes collected. He reported that the budget reflects a restructuring of funding to community agencies, focusing on performance standards and recommendations from a community process for specific reductions. Mr. Foley said that the last item in the budget report was a restructuring of the capital projects process in order to achieve a best practices model.

Mr. Foley said that the third goal in the budget was to invest in strategic priorities to position the County for the future, and indicated he would review the priorities the Board would set in terms of strategic direction for the next five years. He stated that the school system's \$99.5 million would continue a commitment to increase funding to the schools when revenue grows. Mr. Foley said that the budget made a commitment to opening the Crozet Library and dedicated .5 cents on the equalized rate to go strictly to the capital program to fund future needs. He stated that a diverse and vibrant economy was important in these difficult times, ensuring that the County's doors were open for good quality business to promote job growth and this budget continued participation in the Chamber of Commerce, TJPED, etc., as well as continuing investment in the Economic Opportunity Fund.

Mr. Foley said the other priority areas were protection of natural and historic resources, which did not have dramatic steps forward in this budget but were under pressure from new mandates regarding cleanup of the Chesapeake Bay. He stated that the County would need to monitor its own streams and waterways and make sure that storm water facilities were not adding to the problem, and there would be studies done in FY13 to ensure the County is doing its part in Bay protection. Mr. Foley stated that the biggest investment in this budget was in health and safety, with the Ivy Fire & Rescue Station, new EMS service on Pantops, and a Police firing range. He also noted that as staff had been reduced and required to be more efficient, this budget reflects an investment in personnel in the form of a 1% market increase in pay, assumption of the 25% increase in VRS, no increase in healthcare premium costs, a performance pool for top-performing staff, and replenishment of training and staff development funds. Mr. Foley stated that he had mentioned the \$1.5 million reserve fund the equivalent of 1 cent on the tax rate and staff believes that dedicating it to capital was a good investment in the future.

Mr. Foley reported that the Board would have a separate session with the School Board on the school budget, with the information available online providing the detail of the school proposal and what was in the County budget in terms of support. He said that the school budget based upon what was funded in his proposed budget was up \$4.5 million or 3.1%, with local support from local tax dollars up \$2.2 million or 2.3% including \$1.1 million more than the schools expected last week before the budget was initially released. Mr. Foley noted that this should help reduce the gap that started at \$4.9 million, with the School Board reducing that amount to about \$3.7 million and this funding dropping it further to a gap of about \$2.7 million. He said that it also reflected some of the federal stimulus money that had gone away and proposed some things that needed to be considered this year regarding replacement of school busses and how that would be handled, and this budget does not fully fund that. Mr. Foley explained that the schools had put about \$300,000 towards a \$1.5 million obligation, and the two boards would discuss how to best fund that going forward.

Mr. Foley said that one way to fund the school busses would be to add the expense to the capital fund, with the total capital budget at about \$21.5 million funded primarily through borrowed funds. Mr. Foley said that the County had borrowed more money over the last few years because of the revenue challenges, but had been able to keep it at a level that didn't jeopardize the AAA bond rating and this budget proposed even more investment to reduce borrowing. He stated that the capital budget continued to reflect the magnitude of reductions over the past few years, with \$118 million cut out of the CIP and a focus primarily on maintenance.

Mr. Foley said that the Board had established a strategic plan goal to provide community facilities that meet existing and future needs, and the focus on the future was not able to be met with the revenues coming in with items such as the court system, storm water facilities, and transportation requirements, which the County is probably going to meet over the next five years that are not adequately funded. He

stated that staff was proposing that in addition to the Board's initiative to put .5 cents to the CIP, the end of year monies would also be used along with undesignated funds in the school balance that had been very high for the past few years.

Mr. Foley stated that staff believes the budget accomplished a continued commitment to excellence by shoring up and investing in basic government services to ensure their quality remained high going forward, and no investment meant the County would fall behind. Mr. Foley said that the budget looked to the future by addressing those compelling needs resulting from normal growth and development of the community that can't be ignored if quality of life was to be maintained. He stated that all of this was accomplished in the proposed budget without increasing the tax burden on the average homeowner, and the budget provided the opportunity for the Board to invest further in the capital program by allocating the penny on the tax rate to capital. Mr. Foley explained that there would be a total of four Board work sessions, between March 5-14, at which time the Board would scrutinize the expenditures proposed in the budget, make changes as appropriate, and decide what to do with the penny on the tax rate along with setting the tax rate. He said that on March 28, after the Board has made changes, there would be another public hearing with budget adoption scheduled for April 4 along with finalization of the tax rate for FY13.

Ms. Mallek reviewed the guidelines for speakers and then opened the public hearing.

Ms. Carol Thorpe, speaking on behalf of the Jefferson Area Tea Party, said that the Party was opposed to the equalized tax rate, noting that the change in the County's total taxable assessed value had resulted in a lower value of existing family residential property by 3.5%, and Party believes that the decline in homeowners net worth should be relieved by the current or even lower tax rate, not by an increase. Ms. Thorpe said that what was, being equalized was the revenue and not the taxes and as the drop in property value between the six magisterial districts was unequal, the effect felt by each would also be unequal. There is no such thing as the average taxpayer. Some will gain, and some will lose. She stated that in a volatile economy, a rash of recent layoffs and skyrocketing gasoline prices made the taxpayers of the County in search of financial relief. Households throughout our community have to get by with less income and so should our government. She said that each and every line of the budget should be scrutinized to determine whether it serves a core function of County government, and if it failed the test it should be stricken from the budget. Ms. Thorpe asked the Board to begin their discussions at a tax rate of 68 cents; according to the Albemarle Truth in Taxation Alliance, which indicated that was the actual equalized rate based on the difference in real estate values and the real amount of funds needed last year. She asked the Board to discuss returning the \$11.5 million collected above last year's actual need to the taxpayers, but settled on two workable requests instead: that the Board closely examine how tax dollars were being handled by the public schools, and that they vote against the proposed equalized rate and seek ways to reduce spending to a level that was supported by the current tax rate, equally applied.

Ms. Lauren Chapin, an Earlysville resident, said that she was here with 91 other leaders from IMPACT. Ms. Chapin said that they were here as citizens who were deeply concerned about fellow community members and their access to mental health care. Ms. Chapin stated that her father was a brilliant, educated man who worked for many years to support her family despite constant struggles with bi-polar disorder and abnormal paranoia. She said that after years of inadequate treatment, he set fire to her childhood home while her mother and 17-year-old sister were sleeping inside and has been incarcerated since. Ms. Chapin stated that last year as part of IMPACT's research committee on mental health she learned of the tremendous challenges facing mentally ill ex-offenders who were released into the community. She said that last year members of IMPACT asked the County to fund a program called Health Transitions, a program run by Region Ten and District Nine Probation & Parole designed to serve ex-offenders with mental illness prior to reinstatement of their medical benefits. Ms. Chapin said that the program cost was only \$42,500 to the County but made a life-saving difference to individuals who would otherwise be without treatment, and could save hundreds of thousands to the public each year. She stated that without continual care, this population was likely to end up back in jail, on the streets, or in the ER and community based programs of this type had bipartisan support on the state and national level because they reduce recidivism rates, save communities money, increase public safety, and provide a necessary service for people suffering from mental illness. Ms. Chapin said that these are real community members with real lives that would be jeopardized without this funding.

Ms. Betty Sevachko addressed the Board, stating that she was here to plead to the Board and asking them not to raise her tax burden as a single senior citizen living on a fixed income. Ms. Sevachko said that people like her must make difficult choices with finances and live within their budgets, including eliminating some necessities. She asked where the equalized rate was when assessments were increasing by 30% a year and the County government was spending our money like drunken sailors on a shore leave and funding programs that are not the responsibility of local government. Ms. Sevachko said the increase in gas prices up to \$5.00 would affect every area of people's lives, and the County must operate with a needs-based budget. Not until government is spending every penny of our tax money effectively and efficiently should you even discuss raising the tax rate. She encouraged the Board to remember that this is our money, not yours, and said the founding fathers wanted limited government with fiscal responsibility and the Board's top priority should be a budget that met the core needs of County residents and not their personal agendas. Please let us keep our money.

Mr. Stephen Rea addressed the Board, stating that he was Executive Director for the Thomas Jefferson EMS Council, one of 11 designated regional EMS councils serving the state. Mr. Rea said that TJEMS had been mandated by state code to plan, implement, and coordinate an efficient and effective emergency medical care delivery system in Albemarle County and the rest of the planning district and Madison County. Mr. Rea stated that in one of the budget proposals sent to the Board, there was a request sent to the Agency Budget Review Team that the funding for TJEMS be eliminated. Mr. Rea said that he had sent an email to each Supervisor expressing his concern, and learned after speaking with

Chief Dan Eggelston and Mr. Ron White, that Albemarle Fire & Rescue had not responded to his inquiry for insight into the council so the fire & rescue department had not recommended defunding as originally thought. He stated that the obvious benefit to EMS providers is the local basic life support education program offered since 1989, mirroring the advanced life support training efforts of the University of Virginia pre-hospital system, and localized training was a priority for TJEMS in order to maintain the proficiency of County EMS providers. Mr. Rea said that the return on investment was the retention of EMS volunteers who might otherwise have let their certifications lapse if they had to travel far distances for training. He said that TJEMS also provided all necessary recertification through the state.

Mr. John Savage addressed the Board, stating that he had lived in western Albemarle County for the past 11 years. Mr. Savage said that his purpose was to applaud the budget for the upcoming year, which included funding for the new Crozet Library. He stated that the equalized rate would actually result in an increase in property taxes for his home, but he and his wife were glad to pay them even though they were on a fixed income. Mr. Savage said that the budget moved the community one step closer to having a new library, noting that over the past 20 years there had been tremendous growth in the Crozet area and the library was outgrown even before that boom.

Ms. Diantha McKeel addressed the Board, stating that at times it was easy for community leaders to make broad, sweeping statements when discussing issues with constituents but some of those needed to be corrected. Ms. McKeel said that one incorrect assumption was that the school division had a spending problem, but they had been cutting programs over the past four years with operational cuts exceeding \$16 million and another \$2 million in this request. She emphasized that expenditures were at pre-recession levels and taking inflation into account, the schools remain \$6 million below 2008 levels despite enrollment increases in the free and reduced lunch and ESOL populations. Ms. McKeel stated that the system had added 400 students since the recession began at the elementary school level, with students and teachers continuing to perform above state and national averages and a top 15% ranking in school divisions in Virginia. She said that in 2009, the average per-pupil allocation in the U.S. was \$10,499; in Virginia the allocation was \$10,930; in Albemarle County the allocation was \$11,045. Ms. McKeel stated that this university community expects much from its public schools and received an economic boost from high quality schools, not average schools. She said that another misconception that the schools should just make cuts to central office neglects the fact that central office represented 4.5% of the budget or 4% if school nurses were removed. Ms. McKeel stated that they had made all the central office cuts possible and still run a school division that consisted of 26 schools, 13,000 students, and over 2,000 employees. Ours is not a story about overspending, but about efficient fiscal management while delivering high-quality education.

Ms. Karen Friedlander thanked the Board members for their hard work. She said that she was a parent of a student at the community public charter school, one of four in the state, and asked them to bear in mind the excellence of the County school system. Ms. Friedlander stated that the Board had emphasized a commitment to excellence and a focus on the future, and children were that future, their success dependent upon a commitment to excellent education. She said that she appreciated the significant percentage of the budget dedicated to education but said it still fell \$3 million short of what the School Board had requested. Ms. Friedlander encouraged the Board to fully fund the schools' request so that they would not have to make impossible decisions that compromise the quality and integrity of education in this county. She asked the Board please do not balance the budget on the backs of children.

Ms. Nancy Mulrine stated that the community public charter school was an exciting and new way of teaching and her child who was thriving in school. That is one of two of the reasons she was glad to have moved to the County; the other reason being the library.

Ms. Dorothy Tompkins stated that she was here out of concern for the 17% decrease in the budget for the Extension Office in the next fiscal year. Ms. Tompkins said that for every dollar received from the County for extension, there was about \$3 received from the state. She also said that the office received significant support from Virginia Tech and from the volunteers, adding that the master gardeners last year gave over 6,500 volunteer hours with the Master Naturalists giving over 5,000. Ms. Tompkins said that much of that was for education, through efforts that addressed the Chesapeake Bay's health among other priorities.

Mr. Ed Strauss addressed the Board, stating that each Board member should call tax increases what they are --not equalized rates. Mr. Strauss said that they should also be forthright about building a municipal building in Crozet and not call it just a library, noting that the North side Library should have revitalized Albemarle Square if libraries really brought in jobs. He suggested that the community liked revolving Board Chairs, and if they couldn't figure it out they should put names in a hat and have the Clerk draw one.

Mr. Corky Shackelford said that he was present representing the Albemarle office of Virginia Cooperative Extension. He said that he respected Mr. Foley's efforts to have the County live within its means, but he still wanted to request more money. Mr. Shackelford said that last year, Extension used about \$113,000 and had requested \$206,000 for the coming year. He explained that there had been a reduction in staff and could not hire more because Virginia Tech and Virginia State could not provide matches, which is why the budget was not spent. The Extension does a lot of good, in more ways than most people recognize. People are most familiar with farm and agriculture and 4H, and it's, well worth the Boards support.

Ms. Karen Reifenberger addressed the Board, stating that she was a Crozet resident and parent of two children at Crozet Elementary. Ms. Reifenberger said she was here with her children tonight to express support for the Board to fully fund the school budget as recommended by the School Board. She

stated that they supported the equalized tax revenue or whatever's necessary to invest in our future, and asked them to fund their commitment to excellence for the core service of education which was also one of the best ways to promote economic development in the County. Ms. Reifenberger asked them to support the specific initiatives in the budget that focus on the future and recognize a time of transition, adding that Crozet Elementary was a small school in a designated growth area. She said that the school was just under the 300 enrollment mark this year, which put at risk the positions of guidance counselor and librarian.

Mr. William Reifenberger addressed the Board said that the guidance counselor at the school helped him when he was bullied on the bus. Ms. Reifenberger said that her son, Luke, wanted to express how the librarian had helped him do research on many different animals from platypuses to whales to seals to cats.

Ms. Jessica Simmons addressed the Board, stating that she was also a parent at Crozet Elementary and a resident of Crozet. Ms. Simmons thanked the Board for their work and said on February 2, a group of parents proposed an initiative where if a school's enrollment dropped below 300 but above 285 the staffing level for the librarian and guidance counselor would be maintained. She said that they also wanted to maintain positions for art, music and P.E. and gifted services, but they were not included in the FY12- FY13 budget so sacrifices are being made. Ms. Simmons stated that they would like to uphold the librarian and guidance positions, and asked the Board to pass the budget with an equalized tax rate or even raise taxes to support schools if necessary. She mentioned a program that their guidance counselor spearheaded, Character Counts, which taught children about caring, respect, trust and other qualities. If we lose our guidance counselors, we're going to lose the ability of our children to really be students and to grow.

Ms. Laura Chatterson addressed the Board, stating that she was here to support the budget as a parent, taxpayer and teacher, and indicating that she was especially concerned with the initiative that would help schools that had 285-300 students retain positions such as the librarian and guidance counselor. Ms. Chatterson said that the library position was critically important because many of the County's lifelong learner goals were taught through the library particularly the first lifelong learner goal to plan and conduct research. She stated that the guidance position was also critically important because it pertained to lifelong learner goal number nine to demonstrate ethical behavior and respect for diversity through daily actions and decision making. Ms. Chatterson stated that she supported an equalized tax rate to support schools even though property values had fallen recently, as children need the funding in order to continue being successful with SOLs, lifelong learner goals, and as citizens.

Ms. Karen Rubendall addressed the Board, stating that she was a parent at Crozet Elementary and asking the Board to fund the School Board's budget request and reinstate the positions in jeopardy at Crozet Elementary. She said that combining classes for library time wasn't helpful for students, stating that they weren't able to navigate the book selection without some assistance. Ms. Rubendall emphasized that people in Crozet loved their libraries, and said that she was thrilled her children had the opportunity to have the authentic experience of going to the library.

Mr. Robert Hogue addressed the Board, stating that recent financial problems such as those in Greece happened because the country did too much for their citizens. He said that the same thing was true in Albemarle, citing examples such as several drop-off locations to dispose of Christmas trees and dog parks. Mr. Hogue said that if people were going to use these services, they should pay and other communities used their parks to raise revenue. He stated that the future of gas prices was uncertain, and the school system should not be running busses on non-state maintained roads. Mr. Hogue stated that parents should fully cover the cost of sports, drivers Ed, art and music, and said that parents were not paying their fair share to educate their children. He said that both the school system and county government could cut spending and spend tax dollars more wisely, and asked Board members to request from our State Delegates that public libraries become self-supporting through user fees. Mr. Hogue concluded by asking the Board not to raise the tax rate.

Mr. David Oberg addressed the Board, stating that he was a parent at Crozet Elementary and noting that the parents there really care about what happens at the school. He said that his daughter was very interested in art but was now in the position of losing the art class at her school. Mr. Oberg said that Thomas Jefferson proposed the idea of public schools over 200 years ago and was opposed in the General Assembly by those who did not want tax dollars to support the system. Mr. Oberg quoted Thomas Jefferson's statement that, "If you don't agree to pay taxes to educate your children, you will pay far more in the future to tyrants and people who take over your government because you will have lost your democracy." He added that democracy does not work unless you have a very well-educated people, and urged the Board to fund the school budget.

Mr. Tim Tolson addressed the Board, stating that he was President of the Jefferson Madison Regional Library Board of Trustees. He said that JMRL staff salaries were in the lowest tier among the counties that an independent consultant studied in 2010, and nearly 2/3 of JMRL staff earned less than a living wage. Mr. Tolson stated that JMRL had decreased operating expenses in the proposed budget by nearly 7% and had reduced staffing needs by installing self checkout stations at all but one branch. He said that in the upcoming budget, they would change their retirement plan to a defined contribution plan, reducing the costs of retirement benefits. Mr. Tolson emphasized that none of the JMRL funding jurisdictions had made this move to reduce benefit costs. He stated that the consultant had determined that JMRL provided an efficient and effective library system overall when compared to other localities despite having one of the lowest per-capita funding levels and lowest number of staff per capita. Mr. Tolson noted that the library provided free internet access to those who can't get it at home and free internet services for those who can't afford it. He said that in the current budget proposal, Albemarle

County staff got a 1% pay raise this year and next year, but JMRL staff had no pay raise in the last four years. Mr. Tolson stated that the County administration budget had a 6.5% increase, with the County Executive's office having a 4.2% increase with JMRL's request including an increase of 4.3%, after having three years of no increases. He said that the County Executive's proposed funding of JMRL for FY12-FY13 would result in curtailed services, hours, and staff layoffs if it remained unchanged.

Mr. John Halliday addressed the Board, stating that he was director of the Jefferson Madison Regional Library and commenting that he and the library board had the highest regard for County Executive Tom Foley. Mr. Halliday said that they believe Mr. Foley's proposal for the library, which was 1% of the total County budget, was most likely an oversight. He stated that they don't believe Mr. Foley would have intentionally proposed pay raises and bonuses for County staff while providing nothing for library staff who, had gone since 2008 without a pay raise and had been offered a much lower retirement plan than any other jurisdictions offer. Mr. Halliday said that they hoped in the next draft of the budget this situation would be recognized.

Ms. Jean Kollar addressed the Board, stating that she was president of the board of Literacy Volunteers and asking the Board to reconsider the recommendations from ABRT to reduce the LVCA budget by about 25%. Ms. Kollar said that when the proposal was made, LVCA was in the transition phase of looking for a new executive director who had only three days to make the proposal. She also stated that Literacy Volunteers had been in the community for 25 years and was at the forefront of offering basic literacy and ESOL training. Ms. Kollar said that by 2014, the GED would be privatized and all students' scores that had not completed the GED would be void, which could impact the 400 plus students in this area who had only partially completed their work toward a GED, if we do not get these students completed by their deadline their scores would be deleted and they would have to start again, with new fees new everything. She also stated that LVCA would be moving to the Jefferson School this year, which would provide an amazing opportunity for them to network with other organizations and get more visibility and legitimacy. This is not the year for us to have a reduction in funding, when we're trying to expand and reach out more and more to the communities that need us. Ms. Kollar stated that Literacy Volunteers had always had good support from the County in the past and hoped the Board would reconsider the committee's recommendations.

Mr. Charles Battig addressed the Board, stating that each year there was a dutiful job done by the County in shaving expenses but his question was why this wasn't done several years earlier. Mr. Battig said that his property taxes had doubled since 2001, and an equalized rate wasn't considered during times of high assessments. He commented that excellence always seemed to be measured in dollars, and asked what studies existed, that linked school performance to dollars. Mr. Battig encouraged the Board to leave the one penny in the pocket of the taxpayers rather than putting \$1.5 million into a slush fund for pet projects. Do without. We have to do without.

(Note: The Board took a recess at 7:18 p.m., and reconvened the public meeting at 7:32 p.m.)

Mr. Kevin McKenna addressed the Board, stating that he was member of the Tea Party and did not want a tax increase. Mr. McKenna said the Crozet Library could wait a little while, and schools need to live within their means. He added that he would rather see the money go back into people's hands, with another review of the budget.

Mr. Michael Wells addressed the Board, stating that he was a single father and detective with Albemarle County Police Department, as well as President of the Central Chapter of the Police Benevolent Association an organization with 27,000 members including 92% of County police officers. Mr. Wells stated that the County was currently at a staffing level of 1.12 officers per thousand, and the goal initially had been 1.5 officers per thousand. We are not anywhere near that in our agency. He asked the Board to consider unfreezing some positions that were frozen, adding that the Department of Justice recommended that localities with 50,000-99,999 have 1.8 officers for every thousand people. Mr. Wells said that having 1.1 officers per thousand was horrible, and the DOJ recommended that the level be 1.9 for a community this size. He stated that the Board had to make tough choices in terms of wants versus needs, but public safety was one thing they should not skip on. He said that he feels like the County quite frankly has not shown that they're going to invest in public safety as far as police is concerned. Mr. Wells encouraged the Board to consider investing in the future so the community stayed safe and a great place for citizens to live.

Mr. Jim Thornton addressed the Board, stating that he was pastor of Ivy Creek United Methodist Church and was involved in the justice ministry with IMPACT. He said that he had served for 10 years as a Virginia state probation and parole officer, and was a federal probation officer for 15 years. Mr. Thornton stated that he had seen firsthand what happened when probationers and parolees were not given the medication they needed. It is not cost efficient and it is not humane. He said that he had personal experience with the need for medication to control mental illness, and was thankful he was able to secure it from his doctor.

Mr. Robert Butler addressed the Board, stating that everyone was doing with less and should expect less from the government. He said that the woman who had brought her kids in to speak was using them as human shields to the budget knife, and this was not the place for that. Mr. Butler stated that he wished the EMS user fee approach could be applied to schools because having a child is an elective act, and making everyone else pay for it was just not right. He said that a Western Bypass was needed for Crozet and the library was in the worst possible place as it should be located in the new Crozet area on Route 250. Mr. Butler also stated that he was against the non-allocated fund for the Board, as it

sounded like a reincarnation of the rainy day fund. He said that he was against employee raises and asked how the property owner benefits when they have to pay the salaries of people who make more than they do.

Ms. Elizabeth Breeden addressed the Board, stating that she was the president of Mental Health America Charlottesville/Albemarle. Ms. Breeden said that she was speaking on behalf of the \$42,000 request from IMPACT for the Healthy Transitions program to provide psychiatric script and medication immediately upon release of prisoners as they reenter society. She stated that IMPACT was a coalition of churches, as was PACEM which provided overnight beds and food for homeless residents. Ms. Breeden stated that about 30% of their population had a mental illness that needed to be addressed through medication and script, but had no access to that. She said that the churches also supported Oxford House, which was a transitional program for people with addiction issues; and the Alliance for Interfaith Ministry was a coalition of churches that provided cash for people who needed assistance to avoid homelessness. Every church has a mercy mission. Every church has a social justice mission, she said, and the faith community is increasingly being asked to provide for the gaps in the system which we cannot always do with psychiatric care and with medication.

Ms. Helen Swift-Dovel addressed the Board, thanking them for the work they had put into the budget. Ms. Swift-Dovel said that the issue she had with it was the language of an equalized tax rate, adding that the Constitution said that taxes should be uniform which this was not. She also stated that the budget talks about fiscal restraint and accountability, but she did not see that as far as measuring success. Ms. Swift-Dovel stated that people would not be able to buy things once gas and other prices started increasing. Ms. Swift-Dovel said that she would like the Board to look at the budget and cut more.

Mr. George Hohner addressed the Board, stating that he also had a problem with equalizing tax rates. Mr. Hohner said that his biggest issue with this was what would be done in the future, and suggested that perhaps assessments would be equalized. We already play a game between the assessments and the tax rate; the assessments go down, the tax rate goes up. He said that in private industry when there was a bad year, things got tightened up really quickly and when it became time for raises you don't get much. Mr. Hohner stated that government needed to apply the same frugal principles, and a lot of citizens felt they were taxed enough already.

Mr. Phil Best addressed the Board, stating that he was a Crozet resident and was delighted to acknowledge the Board's efforts to build the new library there. Mr. Best said that he was here to talk about IMPACT, stating that he had returned to the County after being away for 20 years and learned about IMPACT through the Westminster Presbyterian Church, and now represents the Church on the IMPACT Board. He stated that he was in awe of the programs that IMPACT had developed over the last five or six years, as they have continually proposed ways of improving the quality of life in the County, especially for those with the fewest resources. Mr. Best said that last year, after examining all the mental health issues that could be addressed, the research committee came up with a focus on a problem that for the least amount of money could be targeted. He stated that the community could save a lot of money over the next 10-15 years if they supported the transitions program, as any inmate who stayed out of jail for a year saved \$100,000. This program has been proven, has been tested has been successful in many communities and he had have personal experience with it through one of my own children, who when they left jail had this kind of a program available to them so they could return to a healthy, fulfilling life.

Ms. Jane Kulow addressed the Board, stating that she would like to mimic Mr. Phil Best IMPACT's goal is not only getting people out of jail it is educating them well so they don't go to jail in the first place. Ms. Kulow said that the school funding request presented the Governor's proposed 18% rate for the VRS, ongoing funded needed for 17 FTEs that were initially paid for with a one-time federal job subsidy, increased staffing of 7 FTEs that were required because of enrollment growth, increased costs because of utilities, fuel, dental, salary increase for classified staff and direction from the Board to build the budget using an equalized rate. She stated that the funding request contained costs, responded to the needs of students, and should be fully funded. Ms. Kulow thanked County staff for including construction of the new Crozet Library in the FY12- FY13 operating budget, and urged the Board to keep it there. This designated growth community has waited long enough. This is your opportunity to stand by your promise to the community, spur economic growth for both construction and Crozet's downtown, provide absolutely vital services for taxpayers, and to build the new library at a discount. Let's get this done. She emphasized that schools and libraries were absolutely key to the economic development and continued growth in the community.

Mr. Greg Long addressed the Board, stating that he wanted to talk about On Our Own of Charlottesville, a mental health recovery center with clients who come together and support one another in their recovery and movement into productivity and healthy living. He said that the program supported about 250 people per year, with people coming directly from jail and prison needing psychiatric services and medication essential to emotional stability and growth. Mr. Long stated that with medication needs met, they can provide the recovery support that moved people into healthy community living. He said that the City provided half of the resources for Own, and the County was being asked to provide their fair share. Mr. Long stated that he suffered from PTSD, anxiety and depression, and was incarcerated for 25 years. He said that he had served as acting director of Own, and said that miracles do happen in mental health recovery.

Ms. Laura Coombe addressed the Board, stating that she was a senior probation officer with District 9 probation and was the officer overseeing the Healthy Transitions Program. Ms. Coombe said that the individuals currently receiving assistance from the program included convicted offenses and substance abuse cases. She stated that the program was designed to address a gap in services for individuals who were released from incarceration with no funding or benefits to pay for psychiatric

medication, and said that these individuals often decompensate when they run out of medicine and don't have benefits to take care of those needs. Ms. Coombe said that their options were to get on Region Ten's waiting list, wait for benefits to be instated, or go to the ER and get on the wait list at Northridge through the University of Virginia. She stated that when medications run out, these clients experience difficulty in managing their moods and compulsive behaviors such as shoplifting, excessive spending, inappropriate sexual behaviors, paranoia, resulting in unprovoked assaults, delusional thinking, suicidal and homicidal ideation. Ms. Coombe said that it is a matter of public safety, and the point of the program was to keep people healthy.

Mr. Rooker asked if the program was designed to cover a gap period, and if that period was 90 days.

Ms. Coombe responded that the gap period was as long as it took to get off of waiting lists on programs such as that at Northridge, if they are not eligible for disability. She said that they were often waiting for the gap between release from incarceration to when their benefits were reinstated and they had a billable source.

Mr. Snow asked how many people were on the caseload, and how many cases the program helped fund each year.

Ms. Coombe responded that there were about 31 people in the program currently, and the cap on the program was 40. She said that there were at least 100 people served each year, and while people were on waiting lists for services at other agencies they continued to receive services through Healthy Transitions.

Mr. Steve Peters addressed the Board, stating that the people who wanted some of other people's money always came out in greater numbers, versus the silent majority that wanted the Board to hold the rates. Mr. Peters said that the equalization was a way for the government to collect the same amount of money regardless of the situations people found themselves in, such as upside down mortgages and job losses. He stated that he questioned why government employees should be treated better than the people out here paying the bills.

Mr. Mark Echelberger addressed the Board, stating that he was a strong advocate for quality public education and expressing concern over the lack of accountability and responsiveness of this School Board. He said that this was damaging one of our most valuable assets, and said that in a broad sense the School Board had made no substantive effort to look at or discuss cost drivers. Mr. Echelberger stated they had artfully placed a deserved pay increase in their unbalanced budget and left the Supervisors to be the bad guys if they sent it back to them. He said that at one recent meeting, the School Board voted against discussing any cost-cutting measures until the Board had taken action because they did not want to provide stakeholders with any additional time for public discourse. Mr. Echelberger pointed out that when a non-instructional public relations position opened up this year, the Superintendent and School Board rushed to fill the vacated position, and a more responsible approach would have been to hold off from filling it in light of budget concerns. He said that there were very likely more examples. Mr. Echelberger stated that the Superintendent had committed to closing the budget by approximately \$800,000, but rather than cutting costs she closed the gap by miraculously finding more money in the form of transfers from other funds. Mr. Echelberger said he wasn't asking the Board not to fund the schools, but was asking them to hold the Superintendent and School Board accountable for what and how they are using our resources before you do increase their funding.

Mr. Bill Schrader addressed the Board, stating that he was president of the Stonegate Homeowners Association and indicating that he wanted to address the trickle down that occurred with the extension service. He explained that he was able to use the extension service last year to do a detailed study of the homeowners association, and now they understand what to do to have the right plants and trees which all came from a written report from the extension office. We are starting to spend money because we know it's the right way. Mr. Schrader emphasized that their efforts were stimulating the economy through use of a tree service, purchase of new plants, and better use of ground service reaching a lot of people in the County and putting dollars in people's pockets. He stated that the same type of trickle down would occur with the new library, as there would be new businesses, new uses of the library, etc. Mr. Schrader encouraged the Board to proceed with the equalized tax rate.

Mr. Donnie Toms addressed the Board, stating that he grew up on a dairy farm in the County and felt the extension service was an important part of the community. He noted that there used to be 54 dairies in the County and now there were only 2, adding that extension was not just about agriculture, but had programs related to eating smarter, food preparation safety, etc. Mr. Toms said while there were some extension positions unfilled last year, the community needed the money this year and agriculture was a strong part of the nation. He encouraged the Board to follow their conscience when making budget decisions.

Mr. Steve Koleszar addressed the Board, stating that he was speaking as an individual and not for the School Board. Mr. Koleszar said that Dr. Kastner encouraged him not to fall into the tyranny of the 'or, but to take the best from all sides and build a budget that everyone in the County would be proud of. He stated that his children graduated in 1989 and 1993 from Albemarle High School and got great educations there, going onto Virginia Tech and becoming successful engineers. Mr. Koleszar said that when he first ran for School Board he felt there was a really good school system, but when he got on the board he found out that the graduation rate was only about 82%, and the test scores among African-American students were much less than the state average. He stated that thanks to good leadership, those things had been turned around with a 97% graduation rate last year. Mr. Koleszar said they were always looking

for ways to save money, but the budget was all about what do we value. He asked if they valued having underserved populations receiving a quality education and becoming valuable members of the community for years to come.

Ms. Mallek thanked attendees for coming and closed the public hearing.

Agenda Item No. 8. Adjourn to March 5, 2012, 9:00 a.m., Room 241.

At 8:08 p.m., Ms. Mallek **moved** to adjourn to Monday, March 5, 2012, 9:00 a.m. in Room 241 of the County Building. Mr. Rooker **seconded** the motion. Roll was called and the motion carried by the following recorded vote:

AYES: Mr. Dumler, Ms. Mallek, Mr. Rooker, Mr. Snow, Mr. Thomas and Mr. Boyd.

NAYS: None.

Chairman

Approved by Board

Date: 05/02/2012

Initials: EWJ
