

Virginia: At the regular work session meeting of the Essex County Board of Supervisors held on Tuesday, October 11, 2022, at 5:00 p.m. in the School Board Meeting Room, at 109 S. Cross St., Tappahannock, Virginia:

Board of Supervisors Present: Robert Akers, Jr., Chairman
Ronnie G. Gill, Vice Chairman – arrived at 5:39 PM
Edwin E. Smith, Jr., Supervisor
Sidney N. Johnson, Supervisor
John C. Magruder, Supervisor – on phone

County Administration Present: April Rounds, Assistant County Administrator, Deputy Clerk
Attorney Andrew McRoberts, legal counsel

Absent: Michael Lombardo, County Administrator

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Akers called the Regular Board of Supervisors Work Session of October 11, 2022, to order.

ROLL CALL

The Deputy Clerk called out the roll for the Board of Supervisors; a quorum was met.

AGENDA

No changes.

DISCUSSION

Habitat for Humanity for Essex County – Jason Tickle, President and CEO with Habitat for Humanity of Caroline County

Mr. Tickle is discussing what Habitat for Humanity does for Essex County. They have 5 localities that they serve now; Caroline County, Richmond County, Westmoreland County, King and Queen County. They are one of two groups that are recognized by USDA for the Self-Help housing. There are two pathways for home ownership using the 502 direct loan. They provide workforce housing.

The traditional model is where they help to build a home. It is not a given it is a hand-up not a hand-out. The household would have to put in about 24-30 hours a week in sweat equity.

They can also help with community development. They can help to get grants for a mixed use area.

Chairman Akers asked if there is anything that the County needs to do to help them get started? Mr. Tickle stated that inviting them down here is a good first step. They are always willing to partner with people and other communities.

Chairman Akers talked about updating our comprehensive plan and the ability for affordable housing. He would like to get Mr. Tickle in front of the Planning Commission as well.

Supervisor Johnson asked how they determine the housing? Is it existing housing that needs refurbishing or is it a piece of land that is built on? How would someone go about applying? Mr. Tickle we are the third step in the ladder. They have to have stable, dependable income. The self-help portion

usually takes about a year to build. They determine where the house goes it is determined by the market.

They five-year goal is to have a self-help group as well as a Restore which helps keep trash out of the dump.

Supervisor Smith asked if Mr. Tickle was a builder. Mr. Tickle stated that they are class A contractors but do hire subcontractors.

Broadband Update with September Inquires of the Board of Supervisors Answered

Mr. Hodges stated that there has been no news right now. If there are any challenges we would here about that later this week. There were 35 VATTY grant applications submitted with a request for over \$300 million dollars in funds. The awards will go out in December. Essex County requested a little over 8.7 million dollars.

Supervisor Smith asked if there was a chance we got part of the \$8,000,000. Mr. Hodges stated he was not sure how they would award it but that could happen then we could apply for the Federal grant.

CSA Discussion

Chairman Akers read a letter from Social Services stating that the Board of Supervisors allocated \$1.5 million for Essex County Children's Services Act for fiscal year '23. The CSA expenditures are forecasted to total more \$2.1 million. A large amount of the projected CSA Budget is necessary to fund Essex County School Placements. The Essex County Social Services Board respectfully requests that Essex County Schools be required to monitor, report on, and request additional funding for school cases. Essex County Social Services Director manages the CSA budget but does not have control over policies and procedures that result in children placed in private day schools. The Social Services Board recommends that it is more appropriate for the Essex County School Board to monitor a separate CSA allocation for Essex County Public School placements.

Chairman Akers stated that he has met with the school board and will meet again on Friday. He stated that we will have to reappropriate funds but agrees that the school should be more involved. He asked Dr. Thomas what revenue from the state we are losing by sending kids to other schools and he stated it was about \$200,000. The state has removed the CAP from a private day school.

Supervisor Magruder asked if other counties separate out CSA funds for school. Chairman Akers believes that there are.

Candace Mickelborough arrived and stated that they noticed that around August or September that their expenditures were already around \$800,000 and the number of school cases had also increased. They broke it down by Foster Care, Chen's Cases, and Private Day School to see where the majority was going.

- Foster Care - \$564,000
- Chen's Cases - \$337,000
- Private Day School – over \$1.1 million

We compared the past 5 years:

- FY18 - \$829,000

- FY19 - \$622,000
- FY20 - \$626,000
- FY21 - \$640,000
- FY22 - \$722,000

The rates at private day school have increased as well as the number of cases that we have. They have begun discussing with the school in regards to how can they give the students what they need while being cost effective.

Chairman Akers asked Mrs. Mickelborough the question again from Supervisor Magruder about other counties separate out CSA funds for school? Mrs. Mickelborough stated that there are several counties that do that.

Chairman Akers stated that when they met with Dr. Thomas and Dr. Temple they had brought in a group that told them for \$350,000 you could get a social worker, special education teacher, 2 paraprofessionals and that gave you 10 seats. You had to do that per school. Although it is expensive in the schools eyes Chairman Akers said it would be better to pay \$1,000,000 as opposed to \$1,400,000.

Mrs. Mickelborough said that they had also discussed the amount of money the schools would save by keeping the children at the school.

Vice Chairman Gill Arrived.

Chairman Akers reminded Vice Chairman Gill of their finance meeting at the end of the week and that they would probably be having more discussion about this with the school.

Mrs. Mickelborough stated that they could still handle all of the work but the accountability and reporting would come through the school.

Supervisor Smith asked who makes the decision to do this? Chairman Akers stated that Social Services is making the request and we can make the same request to the School Board and they would have to make that decision.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if the School Board had ever done this before? Mrs. Mickelborough said she does not believe it has ever been done in Essex County. Chairman Akers stated that they are probably unaware of the numbers and the impact that it has.

Chairman Akers asked the Board if this is something they want to pass on to the School Board? Vice Chairman Gill asked if the school took control would it delay the children being served? Mrs. Mickelborough stated that it would not delay services.

Supervisor Johnson asked if by making the switch the school would then be coming to ask for additional money as opposed to Social Services asking for the money? Mrs. Mickelborough said that she would still come asking for additional funds for the foster cases and chens cases but not the school cases.

Chairman Akers asked what is the cost per child? Mrs. Mickelborough stated that it can be as high as \$500 per day per child.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if Mrs. Mickelborough sat in on the IEP meetings now and she responded she does not. Chairman Akers stated they had discussed that but a parent has to approve for social services

to sit in on that meeting and most would not. The school does have alternative ways that they are trying to help students before they are sent to an alternative school.

Supervisor Johnson agrees that we need to do whatever it takes to keep our students in house and that the schools do need to be involved to see the numbers.

Vice Chairman Gill thinks that this is the most logical plan.

Chairman Akers stated that next month they will discuss the taxes as well as the Elderly and Disabled tax credit.

ADJOURN

Having no further discussion, Chairman Akers adjourned the Work Session meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

Chairman

Clerk of the Board