At a reconvened meeting of the Buckingham County Board of Supervisors held on Wednesday, March 22, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. at the Peter Francisco Auditorium of the Buckingham County Administration Complex; the following members were present: Joe N. Chambers, Jr., Chairman; Dennis Davis, Jr., Vice-Chairman; Cameron Gilliam; Don Matthews Jr.; T. Jordan Miles III; Harry W. Bryant, Jr.; and Danny R. Allen. Also present were Karl Carter, County Administrator; Kevin Hickman, Finance; Jamie Shumaker, IT Manager; and E.M. Wright, Jr., County Attorney. The Buckingham School Board were also in attendance. Those present for Buckingham County Schools were Theresa Bryant, Chairman; Pamela Morris, Vice-Chairman; Joii Goodman; Rachel Castello-Dunn; Jacqueline Newton; Sherry Ragland; Michelle Ford; Dr. John Keeler, Superintendent; Wendy Oliver, Clerk of the School Board; J.B. Heslip, Director of Facilities; and Ronnie Palmore, Director of Transportation.

Re: Chairman of Board of Supervisors Calls Meeting to Order

Chairman Chambers called the March 22, 2023 Board of Supervisors reconvened meeting to order.

Re: Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Chambers certified there was a quorum. Seven of seven members were present.

Re: Chairman Bryant of School Board Calls Meeting to Order

Chairman Bryant called the March 22, 2023 School Board meeting to order.

Re: Establishment of a Quorum

Chairman Bryant certified there was a quorum. Seven of seven members were present.

Re: Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Chambers gave the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance was said by all who were in attendance.
Re: Budget Work Session: Dr. John Keeler, Superintendent Presents the Y23-24 School Budget and Discussion regarding the requested budget

Keeler: Thank you, sir and good evening everyone. We thank you for the opportunity to speak on behalf of the School Board and the 23-24 School Year. We’d like to give you budget updates in 3 areas tonight. First one is Capital Projects that are either already completed or will be in near future and also an update on our health insurance with the new carrier and how it works and finally give you a 23-34 Budget Proposal. JB will start with a run down on the total funded, completed projects within the school division for $4.6 million. Then give you an update of work to be completed with this upcoming. There are some projects that will need our attention in the near future.

Heslip: First I’d like to say thank you so much for allowing me to be here and thank you so much for partnering with us on some past projects. We got to install a chiller at the middle school, very thankful for that. Also at the high school and we are thankful for that. And the roof project. We wouldn’t have been able to do that without the combined forces of our board and your board. We really do appreciate that.

First on the list is the high school roof project. As you know we’ve completed that. That was $1.4 million. I would like to show you, I know going by the high school gets to look at it, but I wanted to show you the before and after, pardon my hands are a little nervous right now so may take me a little while to get this going. This is the new roof. I’m impressed by it. I know people don’t like to look at rooves but I do. That’s a fresh color. The snow guards are in place all the way around. We’ve got warranties. That’s a nice job right there. I really appreciate that. I’ll show you the before picture a little bit. This is after they pressure washed it and we had our flat roof done, so the drone came in. This is the old metal. The color there was fading bad and it was leaking. This is after they power washed it so you can see the work being done. I’ll take you on down a little bit. That’s one of the old flat rooves. So really appreciate all you’ve done and supported us on that roof project. So thank you.

Moving on, we a $1.5 million HVAC upgrade throughout the county. Over spring break we are planning another phase of that putting in some rooftop units at the CTE building. We will also be taking out one of the old chillers that we have. We have 2 chillers at the middle school. We will have a redundant system there now so we will be good to go. We are very blessed to have that work done. We are also doing some control work at all schools and hopefully switching us over real soon to an EBI system which allows us better control so we’ll be able to handle the temperatures in the building better as well as hopefully some energy savings in there as well. We also have a $465,000 green house project that is currently waiting on start documents from the architect. That has been visioned out using Mr. Kyle at the CTE and also Mrs. Davis who handles the horticulture department there and our facilities committee. That’s going to be a very nice project that’s going to start soon. We also have a $75,000 wheelchair lift that helps us with our disabled students. It helps us with getting them from one level to another. That was an old
and antiquated system so we’ve been able to do that. We are very blessed to be able to help our wheelchair students as well.

I have a deeper PowerPoint if you’d like to see it on any of these. If you’d like to go a little bit further that’s fine, I’ve got it and we can touch that. If not, I’ll give you the birdseye view of everything. You can stop me or slow me down if you want to.

We also have in the works PRE completed and we are scheduling with the roof coat on the CTE building for $250,000. That will give us a nice 15-year warranty there. So we should have our rooftop units completed and also out roof recoated. We should be good to go up there for quite a while.

We also have our $450,000 middle school bathroom project. That is a week away from bid documents going out. We are ready to go on that. Completion date on that is hopefully in fall. That’s a long time coming and I’m really excited about getting that project completed.

We also have, just completed today, the middle school roof. The flat section has been redone and we have a 15-year warranty on that. It’s really looking good. I’ll show you pictures. I love to look at rooves but I know everybody doesn’t so I don’t want to bore everybody.

We also have coming up in the near future our elementary school roof recoat. That’s $118,000.

We have our primary school roof recoat. That’s $200,000.

We also have some work being done over spring break. We’ve had some issues with siding at the Carter G. Woodson Educational Complex and we are working on those over spring break. All of those are funded. PO’d, ready to go. We are in the scheduling phase for each one before we are concluded with the project.

Any questions on that top section for me? All the work we’ve been blessed enough to do.

Part of the facilities committee, their vision is to set the vision for the County and also to look forward 10-15 years down the road and figure out major things that are going to need to be addressed in the future. Some of those things we’ve visioned out are what you see here, those four projects. First one being the auditorium. There is a lot of history there but is showing signs of wear and tear. I’m going to show you a couple pictures. As we know that is a very historical place. A lot of folks have walked down there and walked across the stage and handed their diploma over the years and it is showing some signs of wear and tear. That’s one of the side walls where the water is actually coming in through the old windows, the caulking, the brick. It’s making its way down. We have since tried to put a band aid on that. It looks better than that but it’s still a lot of work that needs to be done. As you can see the water is coming down through the windows. A lot of solutions have been tried over the years, unsuccessfully. So this is one of those projects that is unfunded but is needed. And we have it phased out in different
phases, 1,2,3. You can look at that. It’s anywhere from $2.5-3 million total project. These numbers also do not include the architectural or the ANE fees which is usually 10% over the overall project.

The Berryman property. Again we were blessed to get that. We had a big plan for that one and we looked at that and the budget numbers were too high so the facilities committee and Dr. Keeler gave me permission to sort of build a smaller scope of work which we’ve been working on with Mr. Tommy Ranson and also some local vendors. I’m blessed enough to have that conversation and be able to pull those guys in for these. Just give you the vision for that real quick. It still has to go back to the architect one more time but this is a basic scope of work. As you come in the Berryman property you take a right and a classroom setting potentially for Alternative Education. We’d have to do some renovations in there. I would say extensive but some pretty good work needs to take place in there.

Keeler: Those are cubbies beside there.

Heslip: Yes, sir. 10 cubbies fit in that space. Also 2 teacher desk. We just need a little something with the wall in the middle. Again, I’m working with Tommy, Mr. Ranson on that. He is a blessing to the county to have him. He’s very smart. Anyway 2 ADA bathrooms need to be put in there as well. That will be some additional construction. As you go into the door to the left as you walk through, there is yet to be determined classroom space. All of this we think we can get done, the numbers are still not quite in, but $70,000. Any questions on that one?

Building scope, that includes painting, we have some that volunteered to come help paint, so we’ll get them some smocks and they’ll go at it. That includes all that work. Again, I’ve got a few more numbers to come in before that is final. But it’s close.

The complex parking lot. We’ve done extensive work on that since we purchased that. When I say extensive work, a lot of envisioning, and back and forth numerous times. What you see is finished visioning product. Four stages that I can show you if you’d like but one is $748,000 for a 90,000 sq. ft. asphalt parking lot. That will hold 10 buses and 150 cars. That’s all 3 tiers. Option 2, $740,000, the same 90,000 sq. ft. but only gravel this time. Gives you 10 buses, and 150 cars. Option 3, $223,000 that is 32,000 sq. ft. gravel and gives you 10 bus spaces. That helps us get the buses out of the front of the school and help us with better flow of traffic. Option 4, $668,000. That gives us 43,000 sq. ft. and gives us asphalt top, tier 1 for 10 buses and 60 cars. I can show you photos if you want if you’d like to see it. A lot of work that needs to be done. There’s a lot of work for the retention pond and the run off plans have to be put into place. Each of these 1,2,3,4 has that in it already. So if we wanted to build tier 2, or 3 in the future, we are able to do so without modifications to the retention pond. Any questions for me?

Then the slate roof part. Phase 1 was the metal; Phase 2 was the flat. We did both of those. We came out really nice. Phase 3 would be the slate roof if we chose to do it. It’s historical slate. It’s held up a long time. It’s Buckingham Slate. It is showing some signs of deterioration. Some snow guards have sort of rusted off and some of the older gutters are showing signs of
failure. So it is in the scope to potentially do in the future. It’s $360,000 to have that reconditioned. It’s not going to be torn off, it will just be 3 layers pulled off, reconditioned and put a nice snow melt underneath and then put the slate back on.

That concludes this part of it. Are there any questions that you would have for me on that? Okay, I alluded to it earlier, I just wanted to touch base with you. Again, part of the facilities committee’s job and what we do is we vision out different things and try to put it out there on the CPP plan. This is as far as we’ve done. It’s really hard to scope out 15 years of HVAC and when it will fail, but everything has a life expectancy so we sort of use this time and document to place those things out in the future so that they are not a surprise for us and we walk in one day and the boiler that we knew was going to fail is dead. We try to do that. That is what this document is. I have a brief summary of each one of those just for the next 3 years. There are upcoming projects on that. I don’t know if you wanted to touch base with that or talk about it at a later time.

That concludes my part unless you have any questions for me?

Keeler: Anyone have questions for JB?

Chambers: Does any Board member have any questions? Thank you.

Heslip: Thank you very much. I appreciate it.

Keeler: Before we move on to the health insurance, I would like to give you an Alternative Ed report because you guys were very good about helping me get that program started. So I asked Mike Sutton to give me a report on how we are doing. 15 students have been placed in Alternative Ed program throughout the school year with potential of 5 more being currently added. Of the 15 students, 60% were returned to the high school and have not returned back to Al. Ed. They have maintained proper behavior while being back in school. The remaining 40% started the semester and are doing exceptionally well. 1 student completed his GED while being with us on his first attempt and is currently applying for jobs. We had a little graduation ceremony for him this week. Good guy. We’ve had 3 students this semester or as many as 4 or 5 additional credits towards their graduation requirements. 3 out of the 15, 20% were temporarily assigned here at Al. Ed for 10 days or less and have not returned. I don’t think they will. We currently have 5 students that are working hard towards completing their course work requirements and grasping important facets of life. Team work, respect, kindness, and pure support through the efforts of our team. Mrs. Lang, Mr. Jones, and myself, a sense of family has been established here in the Alternative Education Program where the students can get their work done without distractions and make strides in their academic performances and grow and learn from their past mistakes. That’s one of the best things I’ve heard in a long time and I thank you all for working with me in the beginning to get it started. This is exactly what we wanted. Kids mess up sometimes. Give them a second chance right now they are coming back.
Now, to go on and give you a health insurance update. Health insurance is a major benefit that we provide for our employees. Last year we had health insurance with Anthem. This time last year we were facing a 54.5% increase for the 24-25 school year. I never heard of one that high. That was an additional $1.5 million added on to what we are already paying. We tried to negotiate with them and get it down. It came in late. They said they would accept 34% which was about $985,388 more on top of what we had. Wendy and I decided that we were going to go out and seek another carrier. We spoke to Benefit Plan Administrator’s which is a Cigna network. A company called Jefferson Insurance company. They are out of Ohio and do business in Virginia and 6 other states. They were started because of teachers. Especially in Ohio. We are now part of a consortium. Fluvanna, Patrick County, Buena Vista, a number of schools have gone into this. The reason is it’s a self-funded model. We use the Cigna scale. We go to the hospital; we have somebody that goes to the hospital we get a 60% discount. What we do we are paying for their discount. Insurance is through Jefferson Health. The way it works, we are responsible for the first $125,000 of what we pay. The next from $125,000 up to $500,000 Jefferson takes care of that. We pay them to take care of it. We’ve got everything covered. We don’t have people called lazers with a bad illness or something in the middle of the policy, they say well we’re not going to cover you for $125,000, we are going to make you pay the first $250,000. They don’t do that. The good thing, the thing that really convinced us, we have a guarantee that they can’t raise our insurance for 1 year but more than 20%. Honestly when you are looking at 54.5%, 20% looks pretty good. We’ve got our renewal. We started with them and I guess October was the 1st and we pay our premium and if we have…if we pay our premium we get a monthly statement that shows everybody that turned in a claim, how much it was and everything, if we’ve paid in more than the claims, that’s our money. Right now we are running about $338,000 to the good.

Matthews: How does that come back to you?

Keeler: When you get to the end, we are going to renew in July, that money we can use, it’s ours, we can use it toward the bills for the next one…

Matthews: Insurance for the next year?

Keeler: Also, we get at least twice a year a rebate on all the prescription drugs that our people use. A 35% rebate. We are projecting somewhere between $150-200,000. So you see we’ve got something that I think is good insurance but it’s bringing money back to us to keep us away from them high things. The thing too that they have, Fluvanna has had it for two years. Fluvanna really helped us. Every time you change carriers, you always worry about is my doctor on it, is my specialist on it, am I going to have trouble with drugs. Fluvanna paved the way for us. We use the same doctors primarily that they do. In doing so, they also offer, if I get a physical every year, I don’t smoke, if I walk 6000 steps per day and you get a little fit bit thing, they’ll cut your deductible. If your deductible is $1000 you can cut it down to maybe $500. They keep track of that. You know, I had that in Buena Vista and the women were notorious for that. Every month we gave a $50 thing to whoever had the most steps, and honest to goodness, I
don’t know how they did it or if they were cheating or what, but they had more steps than anybody. So you see how it works? So now with it, I like it. I like it a lot. I don’t think that in our renewal 7.6%. You have never seen a renewal under 20%. We are proud of that and hopefully if it goes bad, I’ll probably be leaving town but I tell you I think it’s good.

Then, we get into the budget. I’ve been doing this for…this is my 13th budget which started off looking really good and then went south. I’ll tell you where we are at and I’ll be honest with you, it could change. The Governor has a meeting on Monday on HB1400 what’s called the skinny budget because we couldn’t get an agreement. Remember they said by the 25th of February which was on a Saturday they said they were going to have a budget between the House and Senate that didn’t happen. It blew up on I think Friday so now we’ve got the skinny and in a second we are going to show you the differences about it but it’s a great deal of difference. First of all, the Governor’s budget came out December 16th. Honestly, he had a 5% raise in it and decent stuff. I thought that was a good sign but then you remember about the middle of the month they started talking about 7% raises. 7% raises from the House and Senate. Well, you know, that’s great news but when ½ of your employees are SOQ’s, the other half we’ve got to make up for, local or grant or something. I worried about that. That’s a stretch. It’s nice but honestly 5% is a lot easier for us to handle. That’s one thing that right now, we are stuck with the skinny budget and that’s from the Governor. Until that changes, that’s where we got. We build it on an ADM of 1845. You say, how do you do that? Well, I just guess. Okay. I’m not going to lie and tell you I’ve got a formula or anything like that. You guess. Last year we billed it on 1817 because coming out the pandemic, I didn’t know, but we had a…we were well above our…we’ve increased in the enrollment of 117 kids from primary up to high school. That’s not bad. We’ve got to keep that going. Sometimes, when I got here I thought enrollment stopped in September, but we must have a neon sign up on the roof of the place because we’ve got enrollment going on all year. Now sometimes it’s coming and going. You know, right now we are ahead of it and hope it continues.

I’ll give you some hi-ights of these budgets. The Governor’s budget was put out the 16th of December. 5% compensation supplement, SOQ positions, $553,325. He also put in some money for the SOQ programs, $54,777. He had his what I call Christmas Bonus which was 1% which was $84,770. Other programs we have $134,276. That was not a bad, looking bad, that’s not a bad budget especially when you look at where we are going. Then the Senate on the 15th of February along with the House, the Senate came out with a 7% compensation. 7% raise for SOQ funded positions. That was $822,000. The SOQ programs where the Governor had $54,777, this was $299,660. Incentive programs, that’s what I call the Christmas Bonus, it was $231,900. I didn’t really have to give it at Christmas, I could give it at any time. We usually had to add some to it because we like to give it to everybody, but it you divided this up amongst everybody, you are looking at least $600. At Christmas time that’s a big deal. Other support, other program support cap is $350,000. The total additional funding was $1,703,957 compared to the Governors $827,148. The House’s budget which usually go head to head but the House said okay we are going to do the 7% compensation for SOQ funded positions, like the Senate, that’s about it. That’s additional funding, you see down there it says $687,873. So on the 25th of
February, when there was no budget compromise that’s when the Governor stepped in and said okay we are going to have this budget. HB1400, and we are going to use the 2nd year of the biennium which the 2nd year of the biennium says 5%. So that’s why this. Additional funding for that is $502,846. This is what we built a budget on that we are going to share with you tonight because that’s what we’ve been told to do. This may be changed, because he’s calling the General Assembly back on April 12th but right now this is what we got.

Matthews: Is that 50/50? Is that all local funding or is the state taking care of half of that or what? What’s the deal on that?

Oliver: The $502 is additional state funds.

Matthews: Additional state funds only?

Miles: Chairman Chambers, so if I may ask, so we are in the second year of the biennium, and you all are basing your budget off of the skinny budget. HB1400, is there a reason why yall didn’t pick either the Senate or House because I know tons of more money would come in if they reached a conclusion to actually amend the budget.

Keeler: If I was allowed to pick, I would have picked the senate. That’s where it is. I would press that button real early.

Miles: I’m with you. The second question would be, and I asked this earlier, the Department of Education miscalculated some of the state basic aid for all the school divisions and we were owed the upcoming fiscal year roughly $200,000, is that part or backfilling any of that money part of this budget?

Keeler: The first year of it…this year was $117,000 that we were going to get. The other part of it was like $300,000 which we’ll talk about. I’m hoping, maybe that is something they are going to…I hope so because when you talk…you are right. Together that’s about $200,000,000 when you take all the school divisions. That’s the one thing if you talk to Superintendents and School Boards that’s the one thing they are really upset about because they have nothing into that it was just…

Miles: Thank you Mr. Chairman.

Chambers: Any board member have any questions for Dr. Keeler?

Oliver: Jordan the House and Senate did include a hold harmless that they would give those funds back but however when the skinny budget came out that was removed at this time.

I’m going to go over more detail of the four versions and how we came about our proposed expenditures and what that looks like cost wise.
This sheet is a comparison of all the 4 state budgets proposed for 2023-2024 and the School Board’s originally proposed expenditures and the cost associated with each. As Dr. Keeler said we are using an ADM of 1845 in all the comparisons. Starting with the top left with the current years Governor’s Budget state total revenues were $19,180,107. We have adjusted out the one-time construction grant that we received along with cafeteria grants to make this an even comparison for each version. With these adjustments the remaining state funds current year are $17,674,566. The Governor’s budget for 23/24 after adjustments was $18,501,714 which is additional funding of $827,148. Then Senate’s budget after adjustments is a total of $19,378,523 which is additional funding of $1,703,957. The House after adjustments is $18,362,439, additional funding $687,873. The most recent version which Dr. Keeler spoke about and the one we built this on, the House’s substitute budget, after adjustments $18,177,412 additional revenue $502,846. Each version of the state budget has different funding requirements when it comes to salary. The Governor and the House 1400 Substitute budget includes the 5% salary increase. The cost associated for that for Buckingham would be $931,375. The Senate and the House includes 7% salary increase. The cost for Buckingham would be $1,318,284. The Senate included a bonus payment of 1% which would cost $350,939. Also enclosed in additional expenditures is a Special Education teacher in order to reduce caseloads, $72,000; increase in substitute bus driver daily rate from $60 to $80 cost of $25,000; hourly wage increase for our non-contracted employees from $13.00 to $14.00 a cost of $53,000; increase in insurance premiums that Dr. Keeler spoke of, 7.64%, employer portion only is $299,308. We proposed to start back an after school activity bus run at a projected cost of $40,000; as well as add a band/chorus teacher for the high school. Currently the teacher is being split between middle school and high school. That cost is $72,000. Our custodial ground service, ABM requested a 22% increase over their current contract at a cost of $132,000. At the bottom you will see a projection for each total versus each version.

At the end of the fiscal year, we are having several positions and services that will no longer be funded to the end of federal grant terms. The positions include an attendance aid, math interventionist teacher; a special education teacher; reading specialist; English as a second language teacher; and a school counselor. Services that will no longer be funded is Nursing-2 staff members and the Virtual Virginia program. The total cost of federal funded positions that are ending is $629,000.

Based on the last two slides for proposed expenditures, we made the following internal adjustments: for the originally proposed expenditures we will be moving the Special Education teacher and the Band Teacher to the ESSER III grant. We will be reducing the cost of the insurance premiums from originally $299 to 104,376 by increasing the Employee’s portion of the premiums. Federally funded positions and services are also being moved to ESSER III with elimination of the reading specialist position and ending the services we had with Virtual Virginia.
Miles: So these are cuts you made in the budget using the one time federal funds, is that right? Okay.

Matthews: But you are making these cuts, not… the state’s not making them, right?

Oliver: A summary of our final expenditures/revenues using the most current version of the State’s budget, the House 1400 Substitute, increased our state revenues by $502,846. We originally had $2,253,683 in additional expenditures. $1,624,683 were nonfederal expenditures and $629,000 were from federal grants that were ending. We then made internal adjustments of $877,376 by moving $606,000 to grants, increasing the employee portion of health insurance at $104,376, removing positions of 107,000; and ending services of $60,000. We’ve also eliminated $250,000 of expenditures by removing the bus driver rate increase, the hourly wage increase, the activity bus run; and the custodial grounds contract. This gives us a revenue shortfall of $623,461 which we are requesting the Board of Supervisors to fully fund the salary increase and the employer portion of the health insurance. You have in front of you a lined detailed budget of our revenues and expenditures if you have any questions.

Miles: Mr. Chairman, so Mrs. Oliver, just so I’m clear the $623,461 would be local money with the 5% proposed salary increase and the 7. whatever it was employer insurance premiums after the roughly $900,000 cuts in y’alls internal adjustments and eliminated expenditures of those positions. Is that right? Now, the Senate or House if they are able to get their acts together and come up with something greater obviously you all would come back and we can amend the budget. Are there school buses in this budget?

Oliver: Yes, the current budget does include the current appropriation of the budget.

Miles: 3?

Chambers: We give them 3 a year.

Miles: So that is in here?

Oliver: The 623,000 is above the current allotment that you all have given us.

Miles: Then the $40,000 for the after school, that’s just personnel I would assume? The activity bus I mean.

Oliver: It’s the cost of the activity buses, the fuel and the personnel.

Miles: Okay. Thank you Mr. Chairman.
Chambers: On the buses, I think the buses went up a little bit due to putting air conditioners of there, correct? Which makes a lot of good sense to me. If you buying them, better off to get it with air conditioning rather than putting it up later on. I can understand that.

Gilliam: How many miles does an average run, does a bus last for?

Ronnie Palmore: Currently peaking, somewhere between 170,000 to 175,000.

Gilliam: All of them diesel?

Palmore: Yes. The bus usually travels between 750-800,000 a year. Usually lasts about 15 years.

Gilliam: So a bus lasts that long?

Palmore: When we started losing buses back when we had that big budget cut we used to get do 10 year rotations and then all the counties and the state had this cutback, we had to go 15 years. So we have 15-year-old school buses on the road.

Gilliam: I guess buses are like vehicles, prices have gone up.

Palmore: Another thing to is every two years they change the emissions on a school bus. Like a vehicle, when you change emissions on it all it’s going to do is jack the price up more. I’m thinking the buses this year around July are going to be $110,000 with air conditions.

Gilliam: So the 3 buses we provide is going to be around $330,000.

Palmore: Like I say, we paid close to 90,000 each, we thank God that you had and we really appreciate that too. We went like 3 years without any buses. We started back with 1 or 2 and we are back up to 3. It really helped us. It had gotten to where with the summers like they are, for the children of the county we started getting air conditioning on the bus. That is out next step trying to make it better/

Allen: So $100,000 for a bus?

Miles: $110,000.

Allen: They are $10,000 more and we are already doing 90,000.

Palmore: I think the buses we purchased last year were like $106,000. We paid the difference. Yall gave us the $90,000 per bus.
Miles: How’s the rotation going now with us giving you 3 or the Board incorporating into its budget 3 a year?

Palmore: 3 a year put you right on the 15-year rotation. Things were good back 11 years ago, when we were getting 4. We would surplus after 10 but now we are stretching it out to 15.

Chambers: How did you do on your fuel last year? I know sometimes fuel is up sometimes it down. It’s hard to predict how it’s going to be.

Palmore: We went to bid the fuel back in June, the diesel fuel was $5.00 a gallon at that time. So there was no way I could see that we could bid that fuel for the year. You wouldn’t believe it, all year we’ve been bidding fuel per load as needed and I think the last load we got was like $2.62 a gallon for diesel. So, it was way up when I bid it for the year so we bid it…and its kind of leveled out right now. It’s tricky to bid that fuel for a year. You are stuck with that price. You can’t bid it when it’s $5.00 a gallon. We would have really been under the gun if we kept that $5 so we bid it per load.

Chambers: I was just wondering because its’ like a yoyo, up and down. Any more questions for the school board? They have about a $600,000 and some increase.

Carter: Dr. Keeler, you said you would have your estimate from the state in April, is that right? Your new budget estimates in April of what they are going to give you.

Oliver: They told us June for the final budget.

T. Bryant: They are supposed to reconvene April 12th but we don’t know when they will decide so.

Matthews: Have you done an estimation of your end of year money that you will have coming in?

Oliver: We do, but the state budget will effect that so we don’t have a figure because we don’t know what the state budget is going to do?

Matthews: What is that figure, do you know?

Oliver: We have several vacancies so those will be our end of year.

Chambers: Any more questions for the school board? Alright thank you.

T. Bryant: Thank you all for the opportunity to come before you and we would like to go into closed session right now if you all don’t mind. So can someone take us into closed session.
Newton: Madam Chairman, I recommend we go into closed session under Item A.1 of Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia for discussion or appointment of specific employees.

T. Bryant: A motion’s been made by Mrs. Newton and seconded by Mrs. Morris to go into closed session under A.1. Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia. Are there any questions on the motion? All those in favor raise your hand. It’s unanimous. We are in closed session. Thank you very much.

Chairman Chambers called for a five-minute recess.

Re: Karl Carter, County Administrator: Presentation of the County Administrator’s Recommended FY2023-24 Budget and Tax Rates

Carter: Mr. Chairman, you should have before you guys tonight a packet with a cheat book that looks like this. Previous County Administrator Mrs. Carter came up with a good thing so you guys don’t have to go through this whole big thick binder. So we will stick with that tradition and hopefully it will help you guys out tonight to go through this budget.

I don’t know if you guys want me to go through everything page by page or hit some highlights. How do you guys want to do that?

Chambers: I don’t see going page by page. Everybody has it. Just hit the highlights.

Miles: I agree Mr. Chairman.

Matthews: I have questions on some of the stuff.

Carter: I’ll go through the highlights, and whatever page you get to feel free to stop me. I’ll go over the highlights of what I’ve presented to you guys tonight. Unfortunately, in this proposed budget tonight I’ve got a 3¢ tax increase and once again this is my recommendation for you guys. You guys don’t have to stick with that. But I have to give you guys a balanced budget so you guys can decide on how you want to take the balance out of budget and compensate for that. So we will go from 52¢ to 55¢ and same thing with Public Service Corporation and Air Craft Tax.

The budget you have before you tonight is for $70,651,653. This will change with the school’s numbers. We got those tonight and their request was for an additional $623,461 in local funds. This budget tonight represents an increase from last year’s budget of about $1.3 million increase. These are coming from reserves. So those reserves are $500,000 additional for Gene Dixon Park. Another $200,000 for the Animal Control Facility.

The proposed budget also includes a 7% pay increase for employees. As the school mentioned the State is talking about doing an additional 5-7% for employees. I decided to ask for the 7%
tonight in case the state decides to do the 7%. If the State decides to do 5%, we’ll be good with the 5%. I thought I’d ask for the 7% that way we don’t have to come back to you guys to ask for more money if they State does 7%. We will do what the State does. If the State does 5% we won’t give our employees 7%. So like the school said, once we get their final numbers, we’ll know what the percent increase will be.

Also in this budget tonight, there is an increase in Health Insurance of 9% so that’s kind of standard for us. We didn’t get double digits so we are thankful for that. You have the 7% salary increases and once again, if the State does 5% we will go with 5%.

Also in this budget tonight I removed vehicle purchases once again. You may want to use ARPA funds for that again. I think Kevin, Mr. Hickman told me we still have about $800,000 in ARPA funds. One thing we need to start doing though is start building up for purchases. The County vehicles are around $30,000 but we need to start looking at buying EMS vehicles and Solid Waste trucks. Those are your big ticket items when it comes to vehicles.

So right now, I didn’t know at the time what the school wanted so I don’t have those in the budget for right now, but if you guys want to put them back in there or go with ARPA money, we can talk to the Finance Committee about that.

As of right now, your Unassigned Fund Balance is $192,937. That is what you have after everything is spent in the budget. If we spend all of our revenues and all of our reserves, we would be left with that amount of money. So with $70 million budget it’s not that much but it’s still something that you will have to play with. But unfortunately, based on the school’s request if you grant that request, that will eat up that whole $192,000 and you will still be stuck with a $400,000 deficit.

This budget also includes tonight two more dispatch positions. It was the recommendation of the Finance Committee to fund them 6 positions. We did 2 last year. This budget does include 2 more this year.

It also includes extra funding for the library. As you remember, Mr. Ewing came to you last year and needed increase to get the minimum wage up and we told him we would do some of it this year and not all last year. So, that’s a $10,000 increase for Mr. Ewing for the Library.

Good news, the debt service decreased $170,000 so that helped with some savings and extra spending money.

Also, you all know the Dominion Grant they gave us to EMS is all gone now. So, that’s the reason the tax increase is being presented to you guys tonight. We were lucky that grant lasted for two years and I think as Mr. Gilliam said, we are now going to be paying our own bills. There is no other funding to fund EMS other than local tax dollars.
You have some new requests that came to you last week. One was Warriors First for $5,000 and Flipp Inc. for $40,000. As we get to department and agencies you can talk about that later on.

I’ve already gone over the new dispatch positions.

**Buckingham County**

**Recommended Operating Budget**

**Guide Book**

**2023-2024**

**Recommended 2023-2024 Budget**

This recommended budget is based on a 3 cent tax increase on real estate. This is my recommendation to the Board and you as the Board have the ability to change this budget as you see fit but it is my job to present you with a balanced budget.

Current tax rates, per $100 of value:

- **Real Estate:** $.55
- **Public Service Corporation:** $.55
- **State Corporation Commission PP:** $4.05
- **Personal Property:** $4.05
- **Machinery & Tools:** $2.90
- **Merchants Capital:** $1.00
- **Air Craft:** $.55

The total budget presented to you now is $70,651,653. This total will change once we get the School’s new numbers. The School will give you their budget request at our work session Wednesday evening.

This recommended budget represents an increase in last year’s budget of about $1.3 million. The increase is due to increased reserves of $500,000 for Gene Dixon Park expansion and more funding for the Animal Control facility. This proposed budget also includes a 7% pay increase. The State is mentioning giving a 7% increase but so far the Compensation Board is only putting on paper a 5% increase. When the State makes their final budget and if they decide on 5% then of course that is what I would recommend. I just wanted to include the higher amount now so that we don’t have to come back to you in case a 7% is approved at the State. This recommended budget also represents an increase of 9% in health insurance costs.

**Highlights:**

- Proposed tax increases of $.03
- Increase in health insurance costs of 9%
- 7% proposed salary increases, but will match what the State is doing
- Removed vehicle purchases. We may want to use ARPA funds to stay on rotation with vehicles. We have funds right now in this budget, but without knowing the School’s request, I left vehicles out for now.
- Unassigned fund balance $192,937. This is what you have left after balancing the budget. You may choose to fund some of the new requests or positions that I did not include in my recommended budget as you the Board decide on new funding and positions.
- Includes two more dispatch positions
- Includes the extra funding for the Library that Mr. Ewing said he would need this year.
- Debt decreased about $170,000
- The Dominion Grant is spent, so the need for the General Fund to supplement EMS is now happening. There is an approximate $800,000 deficit that the General Fund needs to make up and that is the main reason for the tax increase. But we knew when we took over EMS that it was not a self-sustaining business and taxes would have to be increased to cover the deficit.

New Requests to Consider:
- Warriors First - $5,000
- Flipp, Inc. - $40,000

New Positions to Consider:
- Dispatch – asked the Finance Committee for 8 new positions last year to help with new regulations, that require a dispatcher to stay on a call when certain emergencies occur. If that dispatcher has to stay on the phone with that one call, more dispatchers will be needed to answer the other incoming calls. The Sheriff asked for 8 dispatchers last year and last year’s budget we included two new dispatchers and this proposed budget includes two more dispatch positions.

The next page, page 4 of 4 at the bottom, you will see when we get to revenues, how Real Estate revenue is $9,050,000. This is an increase of $450,000 and this comes from an increase in the Real Estate rate tax increase. I’ve proposed 3¢. For every penny you guys increase the Real Estate, you get $150,000. That’s why the $450,000. For each penny we get $150,000.

Revenues
Page 1. Real Estate: $9,050,000. Increase of $450,000. This is the result of my proposed $.03 tax increase. For every penny of real estate, we get about $150,000 and that’s the math on the increase.
I put a chart there to show the comparison. You will see if you have $100,000 in value, currently that person is paying $520 in taxes. If we went to 55¢, that amount will go up to $550. So there’s only a $30 difference in their taxes. If a person has $400,000 in values at the current rate of 52¢, they will be paying $2080. If we went to 55¢ they will be paying $2200 which is $120 increase. So, those percentages don’t affect the taxpayer as much as you think they would but when you total all the citizens in the county, it really affects the county’s budget a lot. When you look at 16,000 people, those $100 and $90 add up a lot money in additional revenue for the County.

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Public Service is another thing that goes with the Real Estate rate. I have in here $3,583,000. That’s an increase of $133,000. Those are the agencies that don’t pay real estate taxes so they pay public service. That’s based on the Real Estate Rate so whatever we get in that, that’s an extra $61,000 as well when you raise the Real Estate Rate.

Page 2. Public Service Tax: $3,583,000. Increase of $133,000. For every penny increase on real estate, public service increases $61,000. There is a decrease on $50,000 based on collection history then an increase of $183,000 for the increase in the real estate rate.

Personal Property, I have that as an increase of $350,000 for $3,700,000. As you all heard this current year, we tried to reduce the value column in the tax book to lower the amount of increase in taxes that the tax payer had to pay due to increase in value of vehicles. Eventually at some point, we are going to want to take that column back to the middle because right now all the vehicles in the county are being valued at just above the poor value in that column. So we know that people got vehicles that are not poor in the county. At some point you are going to want to take that back up.
**Page 3. Personal Property Tax**: $3,700,000. Increase of $350,000. I don’t need to remind you how much the value in personal property increased in the last year. You all did your part by allowing the Commissioner of Revenue to use a much lower value column in the tax book. We are currently still using that column but eventually we will want to go back to a column that is more in the middle because right now we are pretty close to valuing vehicles as “poor”. So after the values come down and get out of this spike, we will need to look at going back to our normal valuation.

**Re: School Board Return to Regular Session**

The School System came back from closed session at this point.

**T. Bryant**: We need to return from closed session.

**Morris**: Madam Chair, I certify that to the best of my knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion to go into executive session were heard, discussed or considered in executive session.

**T. Bryant**: Motion has been made by Mrs. Morris and seconded by Mrs. Newton to return from closed session. Roll call vote:

Goodman: Aye  
Castello-Dunn: Aye  
Ford: Aye  
Morris: Aye  
Ragland: Aye  
Newton: Aye  
Bryant: Aye

**T. Bryant**: We are back in session. Now we would like to take certificate of action that was taken in closed session.

**Morris**: Madam Chair; I move that we accept the Personnel Agenda as presented.

**T. Bryant**: A motion was made by Mrs. Morris, second by Mrs. Newton to accept the Personnel Agenda as presented. Are there any questions on the motion? All those in favor please raise your hand. That’s unanimous, the motion carries. Now we’d like to adjourn and thank you all for having us today.
**Page 4. Mobile Home Taxes**: $50,000. No change.

**Page 5. Machinery & Tools Tax**: $330,000. Increase of $40,000. Increase due to past collection history.

**Page 6. Merchants Capital Tax**: $210,000. No change.

**Page 7. Aircraft Tax**: $900. No change.

**Page 8. Penalties & Interest**: $380,000. Increase of $20,000. Increase based on collection history.

**Re: Return to Karl Carter, Presentation of the County Administrator Recommended Budget**

**Carter**: I’ll pick back up. On page 5 of 14, Local Sales Tax, I have that as $1,091,000. That’s an increase of $157,000. That’s based on our sales tax history and also, with the hotel and solar farm starting up, hopefully we’ll see that increased sales tax come to the county.

**Page 9. Local Sales & Use Tax**: $1,091,000. Increase of $157,000. Increase based in the increase on sales tax history and with the hotel and solar farm starting construction, we hope to capture some of those increase equipment and construction sales.

**Page 10. Consumer Utility Tax**: $370,000. Small increase of $10,000 based on collections

**Page 11. Franchise License Tax**: $47,000. Small increase of $1,000

**Page 12. Motor Vehicle License (County Stickers)**: $355,000. Increase of $5,000. Collection history shows county sticker purchases have hovered around this amount for years, so it’s pretty consistent.

**Page 13. Bank Stock Taxes**: $58,000. Small increase of $3,000.

**Page 14. Taxes on Recordation and Wills**: $125,000. $31,000 increase based on collection history.

**Page 15. Animal License**: $4,000. No change. This number seems to consistently hit $4,000.

**Page 16. Permits & Other Licenses**: $105,600. Decrease of $3,400. Last year we started charging for solid waste stickers for the first time. The estimate we used maybe a little high so I decreased that number for this upcoming year. I am hoping this will be the second year and it
will become common and more people will get their solid waste stickers. Last year was the first year and so it was a shock to some citizens and I thing some “resisted”.

**Page 17. Fines & Forfeitures:** $31,400. Small decrease of $3,800.

**Carter:** On page 18, Revenue from Use of Money. I have that as $120,000. That increase is a big increase of $110,000. If you look at that binder book, you will see for the past two years the interest rates plummeted and we weren’t getting earnings on our money at all so this is a good thing that you know the rates are going up and we are started to earn money so we are going from a big increase of $110,000 to $120,000. Hopefully we can keep that going as some of you might remember that was a common thing in the past. We used to get hundreds of thousands and then COVID hit and the economy dropped we dropped as well. So hopefully that would keep going.

**Page 18. Revenue from Use of Money:** $120,000. Big increase of $110,000. This is great news. Before Covid hit, we were constantly earning over $100k on interest earnings. During Covid we dropped to earning only about $7,000 for the entire year just two years ago. So this is a large increase but I hope this will be our new normal again.

**Carter:** Revenue from Use of Property page 19 of the revenue book is $85,000. That’s an increase of $5,200. Our social services and health department rent are fixed so those are about $79,000. I put an additional $5200 for the community center. So far people are starting to use that facility like we wanted and I think if you look at your budget book, the first six months of this year we were already at $12,000. It’s a good thing that people in the community are using that and it’s helping us out as well.

**Page 19. Revenue from Use of Property:** $85,049. Increase of $5,200. This is our rent from social services, health department and the new fees we are getting from the community center. More citizens are using the building which is great, in the current budget year we have collected $12k and that is just thru six months.

**Page 20. Court Costs:** $13,916. Small decrease of $800

**Page 21. Commonwealth Attorney Fees:** $1,500. No change.

**Page 22. Waste Collection & Disposal Fees:** $14,800. No change.

**Page 23. Miscellaneous:** $17,015,000. Small decrease of $2,000 due to a decrease in service charges. This has our projected ending year balance as well, which is unchanged.

**Page 24. Non-categorical Aid:** $1,590,314. Decrease of $16,000. This is due to the collection history in recordation taxes.
Carter: When you get to page 6 of 14, it references pages 25-30 in the big book, those are your constitutional officers so as the school said once again we don’t have a final state budget as well. We got those reimbursements from the Compensation Board website. So currently in their estimates, there is an increase of 5% for the 5% pay increases. As you all know, when the comp board gives their people a 5% increase they are just doing the comp board funded positions. So you can have a deputy working side by side and one is State funded position and the other is not, so the one that is not state funded does not get the pay increase. So it’s been the Board’s history to give everybody that same pay increase. I think the school has that issue. They are only paying for certain positions and they have to come up with the difference. So we are in that same boat as well.

Page 25. Commonwealth Attorney Fees: $353,357. Increase of $33,240. This amount comes directly from the Compensation Board website. The State has not finalized their budget and so this amount could change. Also as I mentioned in the beginning, there is still talk about a 7% pay increase but these numbers only include a 5%. We will adjust our numbers accordingly if the State gives more of an increase. The same can be said for all the Constitutional Officers that follow.

Carter: So the Sheriff’s office, you have them as $1,049,546. That’s an increase of $77,000 and once again that’s is straight off the comp board website. Hopefully when the state finalizes their budget we’ll get some more revenue from that.

Page 26. Sheriff: $1,049,546. Increase of $77,735 for now. Numbers are off the Compensation Board website. Will adjust when the State budget is finalized.

Page 27. Commissioner of Revenue: $97,159 for now. Numbers are off the Compensation Board website. Will adjust when the State budget is finalized.

Page 28. Treasurer: $114,995. $13,312 for now. Numbers are off the Compensation Board website. Will adjust when the State budget is finalized.


Page 30. Clerk of the Circuit Court: $293,222. Increase of $20,378 for now. Numbers are off the Compensation Board website. Will adjust when the State budget is finalized.

Carter: Other Categorical Aid, I have an increase of $56,695. That increase is from State grants. Now we have another full time E911 Director again, I’m going to lean on him to give us more and more grant opportunities because there are a lot of grants for E911 and we need to make sure we take advantage of when they are available. We want to make sure we get all the grant money we can to help with those expenses.
**Page 31. Other Categorical Aid:** $205,151. Increase of $56,695. The increase here is in State Grants. Now that we have a full time E911 Director again, I will depend on him to keep us in the grant rotation and apply for all and any grants that become available that will help offset costs.

*Carter:* Federal Funds, reference to page 32. That’s a small increase of $3,883. The reason I bring that up is as you approved at our last meeting, we are starting to get money from that Opioid settlement. That’s a good thing as well. We are starting to get money from federal government. It’s not a big thing but every little drop helps. We have a schedule to get $7000 this current year but as we just signed our new agreement last meeting, we are hoping to get a little more than that.

**Page 32. Federal Funds:** $56,885. Small increase of $3,883. This increase is due to the opioid funds that we are starting to receive. We received approximately $5k last year and we have received $26k thru the first six months of the current fiscal year. These funds are on a schedule similar to a debt service schedule allowing us to see what we will be receiving.

*Carter:* Sale of Property. Unfortunately, that went away in the upcoming budget as the Gold Hill School has been paid off totally and of course the Atlantic Investment project is done.

**Page 33. Sale of Property:** None. The Gold Hill School property is now paid off and of course the Atlantic Investment purchase is done.

*Carter:* Transfer to General Fund. That’s $200,000 and no change. I just point that out because that is what we charge the water system and sewer system for preparation of bills and keeping their system up here so they pay us for those services.

**Page 34. Transfers to General Funds:** $200,000. No change.

**Page 35. Courthouse Security Fees:** $30,000. Small decrease of $1,000 due to collection history.

*Carter:* Department of Social Services. I won’t get to much in that because their budget is based on their calculations. They asked for an $11,000 increase and that’s for their pay increase. With the number of employees they have over there, that’s a pretty low number and they can deal with all those pay increased for only $11,000.

**Page 36-39. Department of Social Services:** $2,323,332. This is the total budget for DSS. The state and federal amount is $1,771,259 and the local amount is $552,073. This local increase is $11,026. With cuts in other areas, DSS feels they can give their employees the 7% pay increase with this additional $11,000.

**Page 40. Selective Enforcement Grant:** $20,000. No change.


**Page 41. Comprehensive Services Act:** $2,042,000. *This is the total budget for CSA.* State and Federal monies are $1,722,000 and the local amount is $320,000. *A small increase in local funds of $2,083.*

**Carter:** I’ll go straight down to page 7 of 14; page 42. This is the one you can put the star beside. Emergency Services. We have that budgeted at $1,839,752. This is a decrease of $101,000 and the reason why is we had that Dominion money for the last two years so we had more revenue than expenses so we had a reserve for contingency. Now that we are paying for that directly out of county funds their reserve for contingency is no longer available. We are aggressively going to try to get $1 million in cost recovery and we have a state grant that we get for each year for 4 for Life funds that we get that goes toward that budget as well. As you can see that is where we are getting our tax increase from. That budget is 1.8 million and we are only getting $1 million in cost recovery. That’s an $800,000 difference. Unfortunately, we knew this was coming when we took over EMS because we knew that budget would not be self-supporting. It’s a shame its coming at this time but we knew it was coming. I think everybody would agree that the service that Cody is providing is a lot better than the volunteers were. We are very appreciative of what the volunteers were doing but I think we are another level than we were before. I think the tax payments and citizens will benefit from this service but there is a cost to it. That $800,000 difference that we will have to make up I’ve proposed a 3¢ tax increase but we are doing good in other areas so the 3¢ is only $450,000 so it’s still not covering that whole $800,000. So we’ve done good in the past, and doing good now, we don’t necessarily need the whole $800,000 right now, but if you do do a tax increase, you want to do an increase to adjust for future growth so you don’t have to keep going back to the taxpayer saying you know nickel and diming and saying we increased your taxes last year but we need more this year. As you all know, nothing is getting cheaper. Our last reassessment was 2019 and went into effect in 2020 so we don’t have another reassessment scheduled until 2026. That’s 3 years away so I don’t think you are going to make it using your reserves until that time. Another thing we may want to look at as far as reassessment, other localities are doing this for the same reason we are looking at it now, we might want to go to 4-year reassessment instead of 6 years. Because going 6 years without any new money coming in is a long time so you might want to shorten that time and do it every 4 years. Historically that’s when we got our tax increase, at reassessment time. I’ll leave that up to you guys to doing that, doing 4 years, but I can tell you surrounding counties are doing exactly that because of this reason.

**Miles:** May I ask a question, Mr. Chairman. Mr. Carter, if I may, so what you are saying is if we have to we can get by with the 3 penny real estate tax increase and fund emergency services and then the next fiscal year do another 3 and that would get us through to the two years with EMS.

**Carter:** Yes sir. Because as you can see, I based my budget on 3¢ increase. I didn’t base it on 6¢ and still came up with $192,000 to the good. But that was before tonight. Before the school’s request.
Davis: I’ve got a question too, Mr. Chairman. We haven’t gotten the numbers lately, as far as the revenue recovery for the paid squad, what are those numbers looking like?

Matthews: Mr. Hickman can probably give you that.

Hickman: If you give me a minute of two I’ll get those.

Chambers: Karl, we dropped the taxes back, what year?

Carter: It was the last reassessment, 2020.

Chambers: 2020 we dropped it back to…

Carter: We dropped it 3¢.

Chambers: We should have left it alone.

Carter: It was at 55¢ and we cut it back. When we did that, we put money in for growth because we knew 6 years was a long time to go without new money coming in.

Chambers: It shouldn’t be no problem putting it back now.

Carter: It’s funny how those same numbers keep coming back around.

Hickman: Mr. Davis to answer your question, year to date we have $625,000. That’s actually behind a few months because as the insurance claims come through they are usually a month or two behind. So we can $625,000 as of January.

Carter: Like our real estate and other taxes, we keep our books open for 60 days so when we get to August, we’ll put that money back into last fiscal year so basically it runs to August to those collections. That’s what Keven means by we are behind. We are in this month but we are really 2 months behind. That million-dollar number, $800,000, that’s kind of what we talked about a couple years ago so it hasn’t changed much from what we estimated when Mrs. Carter was here. We estimated those costs and its kind of stayed consistent.

**Page 42. Emergency Services:** $1,839,752. Decrease of $101,248. This is the big ticket item this year. The Dominion Grant money is gone so now to make up the difference between expenses and revenues, the general fund will have to start supplementing this budget and the way I have to come up with this money is a tax increase. We are going to aggressively try to get cost recovery up to $1 million with $20,000 in State funds which leaves a transfer from the general fund of $819,752. We knew that EMS can’t support itself, and we knew in order to keep it running a tax increase would be in the future. As I mentioned earlier I have proposed only a $.03 cent tax increase and that is because we are doing great in other areas and that is evident.
by coming up with $800k, which is about five and a half cents ($150,00 per penny). Normally we wait for tax increases when we do reassessment, but we just did reassessment in 2019 that went into effect in 2020, so we are not scheduled for another to start until 2026 that will go into effect in 2027. I recommend we do the three cents now and maybe more next year because $.03 cents may get you through this year but it will not get you to FY2027. Also, we will learn what the School’s needs are on Wednesday, so we may have to do more than $.03, we will learn more at our budget work session.

Carter: Page 43-51 is the School System. I have those numbers in there but they don’t mean anything right now. The local number you see is $7,598,316. Their request tonight was an additional $623,000 so if you grant your request, that will put you up to $8.2.

Chambers: Let me ask a question. We can, I’m not saying fund it right now, but we can put it in reserves until they need it right?

Carter: Yes. Wait, say it again, Joe?

Chambers: We can put it in reserve in case they need it because I know they haven’t gotten the state budget.

Carter: Right. So, yes you can use your reserves to cover that until they come back with their final number.

Chambers: Okay.

Carter: I’m hoping that number they gave is their worst case scenario. I’m hoping there will be some kind of increase in their state budget. School Cafeteria goes along with the School System. Our debt service had a decrease of $169,000. So that helped with tax increase for lack of going to the whole 6¢ Jordan. We get some revenue from that, believe it or not, we get $44,000 from the state. We also with the middle school we get this money called Qualified School Construction Bond so they actually pay our interest back on that loan. So when we got that loan set up we did a great job with that. So we pay the principal and interest and they send us a check back for the interest. So that’s about $430,000.

Pages 43-51. School System: $34,549,929. Just to have a budget done for comparison, I have used the same numbers as last year for the School. They will be giving you their request on Wednesday. So for now, the local amount is level funded at $7,598,316.

Page 52. School Cafeteria: $1,471,789. This will be presented at the work session. There are currently no local funds for the cafeteria fund so the local amount will stay unchanged at zero dollars.
Page53. **Debt Service Fund**: $3,491,628. Decrease of $169,684. We are fortunate that we do receive some refunds towards our debt payments. The three categories that make up this fund are as follows:

1. $44,813. State funds: we are currently getting this from two school loans
2. $430,000. Federal funds: we get this from QSCB (qualified school construction bonds)
3. $3,016,815. General fund or local funds that need to be transferred to balance the fund.

That brings this fund’s total to $3,491,628 which balances the total expenses for the fund.

Carter: Sewer System, they have a small increase of $8,749. I will just point to the water system. Those don’t effect the tax payer. Those are enterprise funds so those budgets are paid by their customers, utility customers. So they are self-supporting.

Page 54. **Sewer Fund**: $485,063. Increase of $8,749. These funds are collected from customers of the sewer system and balances with total sewer expenses. No general funds are used to fund the sewer system.

Page 55. **Water Fund**: $1,462,323. Increase of $45,532. These funds are also collected from the customers of the water system and balances with total water expenses.

Carter: IDA fund. Those funds come in at $181,000. That’s a decrease of $12,751 and that was because when the Gold Hill School was purchased from us, we were rebating their taxes, since that is paid off now, we don’t have that anymore so only thing left in there is the $181,000 which is the new sewer plant.

Page 56. **IDA Fund**: $181,176. Decrease of $12,751. The decrease is because we were rebating the RE taxes on the Gold Hill School. Because this is paid off now, the reimbursement is no longer necessary. The $181,176 is the IDA making payments for the new sewer plant. This is all local funds from the general fund.

Carter: That is it for the revenues. I think you guys are more interested in the expense side.

If I get to a page and you have a question, please stop me with any individual questions you may want to talk about.
Carter: As you go through each of these departments, I’m not going to hit all of them, but you are going to see the 9% increase in health insurance is the main thing. We had a couple departments where people changed health insurance plans, like I’ll go to finance/data processing. They had an employee that went to a higher insurance plan. Also as you remember we moved our Accounts Payable person from part time to full time. So when we did that that reduced the part time money but increased the salary and benefits.

**Expenditures**

**Page 1. Board of Supervisors:** $150,107. Increase of $42,160 dollars. This is due to another Board member on the insurance and to the proposed pay increase to Board members starting January 1, 2024. It was the recommendation of the Finance Committee to increase the pay of Board members to $12,000 annually and increase the Chairman to $15,000 annually. This is all local funds.

**Page 2. County Administrator:** $256,959. Increase of $5,386. Increase is due to increased cost in health insurance. This is all local funding.

**Page 3. County Attorney:** $189,600. Increase of $4,600. Increase is due to contractual agreement. This is all local funds.

**Page 4. Independent Auditor:** $64,000. Increase of $10,000. Our current auditing contract will expire in 2022 and it’s been seven years. This is just an estimate on what a new contract could cost.

**Page 5. Commissioner of Revenue:** $315,924. Decrease of $3,545. This is an increase in health insurance and in the current year budget we had funds in for the purchase of a new copier. The copier has been purchased and those one-time funds are not needed this year. $218,765 is local and $97,159 is state.

**Page 6. Treasurer:** $383,614 increase of $19,537. Increase is due to an employee choosing a higher health care plan and a $7,000 increase in the printing of tax tickets. $268,619 is local and the state portion is $114,995.

**Page 7. Finance / Data Processing:** $268,644. Increase of $50,804. Increase is due to moving our accounts payable position from part-time to full time and the benefits and an employee moving up to a higher health insurance plan. This is all local funds.

**Page 8. Information Technology:** $159,759. Increase of $3,400. Due to higher health insurance and a small increase in telecommunications. This is all local money.
Carter: You’ve got your Electoral Board in there. $124,058. The request we got was basically level funding. It was only an increase of $43. Only $2600 is state money. So they only pay a certain percent of the Registrar’s salary and Electoral Board salary. On top of that they only pay like 70% of it so according to Mrs. Taylor it depends on the budget that was adopted. We pay it all and she submits a reimbursement request to the State to get reimbursed. So it’s not like that money comes to us first. She has to do a request for it.

Miles: The way things are going they are not going to have anybody over there to reimburse anybody.

Allen: They are all gone.

Bryant: I wouldn’t pay them nothing.

Page 9. Electoral Board: $124,068. Increase of $43 so basically level funding. Only $2,689 is State with the remaining $121,379 being local.

Carter: Right behind them is the Registrar and her total budget was $190,000 and $128,000 is local money and $61,925 is state portion. Once again they pay for her salary.

Page 10. Registrar: $190,287. Increase of $239 so level funding for our budget purposes. $128,362 is local and $61,925 is the state portion.

Page 11. Circuit Court: $22,300. Small increase of $1,000. This increase is based on last year billings history on the office costs. This is all local money.

Page 12. General District Court: $8,100. No change. This is all local money.

Page 13. Special Magistrates: $2,475. This is level funding and all local money.

Carter: Clerk of Court there is a decrease of $11,000. In this case they had an employee who left the health insurance plan so we benefited from that. So we got lucky with that one because most people, it’s an increase.

Page 14. Clerk of the Court: $460,377. This is a decrease of $11,452. Decrease is due to an employee leaving our health insurance. $167,155 is local and $293,222 is state.

Page 15. Victim Witness Assistance: $73,778. This is a decrease of $7,624. Most of this funding is from state and federal funds. State funding is $21,201, federal funding is $49,468 and local funding is $3,109. This department was completely funded thru state and federal revenues until this current fiscal year.
Carter: Commonwealth Attorney, increase in $15,000. Once again they had an employee participating in our health insurance that wasn’t last year. That is $80,000 of their budget is local. $353,357 is state.

**Page 16. Commonwealth Attorney:** $433,833. This is an increase of $15,116. The increase is due to an employee participating in our health insurance. $80,476 is local and $353,357 is state.

**Page 17. Sheriff / Law Enforcement:** $2,751,184. This is an increase of $114,359. This request does include funds for two more new dispatch positions as recommended by the Finance Committee to help with the implementation of Emergency Medical Dispatching. We funded two in this current fiscal year as well. $1,701,638 is local and $1,049,546 is State.

Carter: We funded two last year and two in this budget so if this is something you want to adjust we can look into that as well.

Chambers: These are new positions?

Carter: Yes they are. Remember they went to the Finance Committee wanting 6 or maybe 8 and we did 2 each year.

**Page 18. Emergency Services:** $224,848. This is a decrease due the health insurance going down to a cheaper plan. $164,848 is local and the remaining $60,000 is State.

**Page 19. Volunteer Fire Departments:** $524,566. This is level funding for the volunteers as all the requests were returned to us without any increases.

**Page 20. Forest Fire Prevention:** $27,601. This is based on past expense which has stayed consistent the last few years. This is all local money.

Carter: Regional Jail increase of $40,000. That’s one of those things we’ve got to pay for our per diem depending on how many inmates are in there. There is no way to estimate that amount of money. As that amount goes up I can tell you that our juvenile detention facility a couple pages down, has been going down. There are not many kids in the facility so they are scrambling trying to get more money to fund that facility.

**Page 21. Regional Jail:** $549,930. This is an increase of $40,000. This is increase is based on the expense history. The amount for this account can be less or more depending on the number of Buckingham citizens that are incarcerated, but recent history suggests this number will continue to climb. This is all local money.

**Page 22. Building Inspections:** $172,716. This is an increase of $7,331. The increase is due to an employee going up on health care plans. This is all local money.
Carter: Animal Control. Increase of $26,615. This is ones we hate doing but I think we need to do it. If you look at their budget you will see an increase in veterinary services. To euthanize animals, either you have to pay somebody which we are doing, we are paying the Vet to do it. Or we have to train our officers to administer that drug. So once you do that, then you are treated like a medical facility. You have to keep those drugs under so many locks and keys. You have to train and on top of that when they come and audit, they are auditing those drugs too. There might be a cost to paying to get out of that but if they come in and audit us and we are doing something wrong with those drugs, we could be in big trouble.

Page 23. Animal Control: $276,142. This is an increase of $26,615. The increase is due to increasing the line for veterinarian care. We have had some big animal seizures this year and a lot of those animals have to be put down due to their health. The catch is we can train our ACO officers on euthanasia but then that opens up an entire new level of inspections. Because we would have to keep those drugs on the premises and staff would have to get continuing education on how to perform the euthanasia, its inspection that we don’t think we want to start. The alternative is paying the vet to perform these services for us while we do not handle any drugs. All local money.

Page 24. Medical Examiner: $200. Level funding and all local money

Page 25. Street Lights: $4,900. Increase of $100 based on the expense history. All local money.

Page 26. Solid Waste: $970,503. Increase of $18,261. This increase is in the costs of the roll offs. We did have a decrease in roll off costs last year but I still need to increase the budget to get in line with actual costs. Because of the gated system we have, monitor costs are continuing to decrease as we are not rehiring once a monitor resigns. All local money.

Page 27. Anti-litter: $3,700. Level funding and these funds are totally comprised of grant funds. All state funding.

Page 28. General Properties: $813,309. This is an increase of $13,628. The increase is due to increased cost of health insurance for the department. All local funding.

Page 29. Health Department: $132,899. This represents an increase of $3,819. The increase is for our portion of salary increases. It is also good to know that the Health Department returns any unspent funds back to the County.

Page 30. Juvenile Detention: $30,000. Level funding and is all local funds. This agency has had significantly less children from Buckingham and it’s something we are seeing from all the surrounding Counties. Left at level funding in case the trend starts to go back to normal levels.
**Carter:** Contribution to Colleges and Other Agencies. This is one you will probably want to talk about. Crossroads…

**Miles:** Before we go on to the next page, can I ask a question? On page 10 of 14, Mr. Carter, with Sheriff and Law Enforcement, that doesn’t include I assume the 7%?

**Carter:** We have that later on in the budget under fixed costs. So it’s not in their budget right now, but if you approve it we’ll move it from Fixed costs to their budget.

**Miles:** Thank you.

**Carter:** I have it in there but not in their budget.

**Miles:** I do have a statement I’ve got to read. I'm advising that I have sought an opinion from the Commonwealth's Attorney covering any conflict I may have in participating in discussions and voting on the county's budget because I'm an employee of Piedmont Senior Resources. I have received a written opinion from Mr. Wright, that I can participate in the discussions and vote on budget matters. The Code of Virginia requires that I make a statement concerning my situation. Accordingly, I make the following statement for the record. I will participate in the discussions and vote on matters relating to the adoption of the 2023-2024 Board of Supervisors budget for the county. I am an employee of Piedmont Senior Resources, which is funded in part by allocations from the Buckingham County Board of Supervisors. I am a member of a group of employees of Piedmont Senior Resources, that group being more than three which are affected by the transaction and I am able to participate in the transaction fairly, objectively, and in the public interest. I do not set the budget nor authorize the expenditures of Piedmont Senior Resources. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

**Page 31. Contributions to Colleges and Other Agencies:** increase of $10,775.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agency</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Crossroads</td>
<td>$32,471</td>
<td>decrease of $7,529</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont Senior Resources on Aging</td>
<td>$18,000</td>
<td>decrease of $353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Triad</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>level funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CADRE</td>
<td>$2,500</td>
<td>level funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peter Francisco Water and Soil Conservation</td>
<td>$12,000</td>
<td>increase of $120</td>
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<tr>
<td>VA Retreat</td>
<td>$4,500</td>
<td>level funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis Acres Park</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>level funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Buckingham County Active Seniors</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>level funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habitat for Humanities</td>
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<td>level funding</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Outreach</td>
<td>$3,000</td>
<td>level funding</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foothills Child Advocacy Center</td>
<td>$4,000</td>
<td>increase of $1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Piedmont Veteran’s Council</td>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>level funding</td>
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Chambers: Mr. Carter, that is one I’d like to make an increase. They do a lot to help the people of Buckingham County. Not only the veterans but the widows also of veterans. Me and Donnie Bryan talked about it last year, I got confused, I thought we gave $10,000.

Carter: We looked at the minutes, we did, we took money from Hatton Ferry and moved it to the Boys and Girls Club.

Chambers: Yeah, but see the Piedmont Veterans didn’t get anything. I thought they did but they didn’t. So I’d like to see the Board go to $10,000.

13. Southside Community College: $7,450 – decrease of $128. This is based on the number of Buckingham residents that are enrolled.

14. Buckingham County After Prom: $4,000 – increase of $1,000

15. Piedmont Virginia Community College: $1,252 – increase of $31. Like Southside Community College this is a formula based on the number of Buckingham students that are enrolled.

16. Boys & Girls Club: $12,000 – increase of $2,000.

Carter: Jaunt was a big increase this year. The guy came to the last Board meeting to talk to you guys about them having access funds to help lower those costs. Next year they are going to be asking the County to put in a large amount of money. Kevin is on that Board, he may be able to tell you more than I can but at some point I think as you all remember, years ago they used to pay fares. It was like a small amount but you had to pay something to ride the bus. COVID came and they got a lot of money like we did and they went fare free. They are still doing that. So I think at some point you are going to have to say you know your riders need to pay some at least to help to cut down on cost that we have to contribute.

Chambers: That’s only fair.

Matthews: How much usage are they…do you know what the average daily usage of that bus is over there? How many people ride it?

Hickman: I know right now their buses are full. There are 2 buses and both routes are full.

Chambers: I don’t think at one time they were paying but $5 a day.

Carter: I think so. It was a small amount but they paid something.

Chambers: They were fussing about that. You can’t buy gas for $5.

Carter: That may be something you want to look at.
Chambers: Okay, we need to take a look at that.

17. JAUNT: $60,817 – increase of $20,320. This is a large increase and from what I am understanding they will be asking for another large increase next year. We may have to ask JAUNT to start charging fares again because we can’t get to the increased costs they are suggesting.

18. Blackstone Area Bus System: $10,600 – level funding
19. STEPS: $28,165 – level funding
20. Virginia Legal Aid: $8,300 – increase of $314
21. Longwood Small Business Center: $5,849 – level funding
22. Longwood Center for the Visual Arts: $1,063 – level funding
23. Southside Center for Violence Prevention: no funding. They closed their doors this year and STEPS has filled the void for the region on a temporary basis. This will be deleted next year when the history goes away.
24. Pregnancy Support Center: $3,000 – level funding

Carter: The last two are your two new requests so I guess we need to talk about those.

25. Warriors First: requesting $5,000 - new request and usually the Board discusses new request. They came and spoke at our March meeting.
26. Flipp Inc.: requesting $40,000 – new request and usually the Board discusses new request. They came and spoke at our March meeting.

They came and talked at the meeting for their request for $5000. I think based on what we saw from them, they are early on in the game and I think they probably need to have some planning because my only fear is you guys give them that money and they decide they can’t make it and you’ve lost that money.

Chambers: I think we need to wait on both of those requests.

Miles: I agree Mr. Chairman, I think we need to omit 25 and 26 out of the budget.

Matthews: Why don’t we put them in contact with the Veterans here.

Chambers: They don’t want no parts of them. They put up on that screen the other night that they were supported by the Piedmont Veterans and I asked that lady and she said no. Her name is Sara Maddox.

Miles: So leave those out Mr. Chairman?

Chambers: At this time I think we should leave it out. We need more information. I can’t come up here and tell you I’m going to start a business and never start it.
Miles: I agree.

Matthews: If we want to make a change, wait to the end?

Carter: You want to give it to me now Don? I’m just making notes so we can give you a…

Matthews: I think we need to take Jaunt back to the what we were originally paying those people.

Chambers: Pay to ride the bus?

Matthews: I think we need to go back to the original funding amount was, I can’t remember. I’m sure I’ve got that down somewhere.

Carter: I’m pulling that up now.

Hickman: I will say the stance they are at right now they do not want to do fares because that’s the only thing separating them from Charlottesville Area Transit. I’m not speaking on behalf of their Board, I’m just a member but that is the repeated stance that has been brought up at meetings is that they only thing that separates them from Charlottesville Area Transit and they would like to keep it with no fares. Other localities are in the same position as Buckingham where it’s massive increases. Really Jaunt has done a good job with Buckingham of lowering the initial increase. It was $120,000 and they were able to bring it down to $60,000 for this year.

Chambers: I see what you are saying, but a person riding to Charlottesville for $5, how can they complain about that?

Miles: They can’t.

Chambers: You see what I’m saying. I think we need to take a look at it. I appreciate the information but $35 a week to ride to Charlottesville, well $25, five days. 5 x 5 is 25.

Carter: Mr. Matthews, we currently fund them $40,497.

Miles: Sounds good.

Carter: So it’s the consensus of the Board to take it down to that?

Davis: I think we should leave #16, Boys and Girls Club at 10,000 and not give them the $2,000 increase.

Miles: Mr. Chairman, why did they want the $2,000, Mr. Carter, the extra $2,000?
Chambers: A bus or something.

Matthews: That’s a question I have for the school division too. It used to, the school division furnished transportation for the students to the Boys and Girls Program and somehow it got eliminated from the budget but its helping your students with an after school program. I was just curious if there is a way you all can work with those people about…

Gilliam: The lady who gave that presentation said she had the ultimate desire I think she said she had 12 and was even more than 12 that wanted to go so if there is any way we could make that possible to help the kids of the county, that would be a great idea.

Dr. Keeler spoke in audience and was not picked up on the recording. He stated that they could buy a surplus bus. But they did not have enough drivers.

Matthews: At your auction? Your end of the year auction? You want to sell it straight out, is that what you want to do?

Keeler/Oliver: Inaudible.

Gilliam: Is there any way you can see about selling the bus outright? Because they are not allowing you anything for it to start with. They are just raising the asking price like they are giving you a lot for it like any care dealer would do. Is there any way you can sell them the bus straight out without having to trade it and then without Sonny Merriman or whoever getting the profit off the Boys and Girls Club? Any way we can look into that possibly?

Keeler: inaudible

Gilliam: I understand.

Matthews: Are you going to have an end of the year auction this year? Did you say?

Oliver stated they just had one in the fall so wouldn’t have one this year.

Carter: I’m sorry, wasn’t something, Wendy, yall were having issues with a driver for the bus wasn’t it?

Oliver: Inaudible.

Chambers: How long did they have to stay over there? I know it’s an after school program.

Oliver stated they didn’t stay, they just dropped them off and parents picked them up.
Hickman: To go back to the question on the Boys and Girls Club, the additional $2,000 is reflecting the growing costs of across staffing, transportation, and other program expenses. Support of $12,000 for 20 Buckingham youth which is the number they gave us that they are serving right now, brings the cost down from $2,000 to $600 per Buckingham child. So that’s the reasoning of their $12,000. $2,000 is the average cost for the boys and girls but they are saying that our $12,000 support or $10,000 we were giving, the proposed $12,000 would bring the cost down to $600 per child.

Chambers: Okay.

Miles: Are we going to leave it alone or remove it?

Chambers: They are saying they are good with it.

Davis: I’m good with it. I thought it was 10 students, I didn’t know it was 20.

Miles: I agree.

Chambers: I think we are in agreement, Mr. Carter, you can move on.

Carter: So are there any other agencies you want to talk about before we move on?

Chambers: Any other agency, Board members? I don’t hear none, so move on Mr. Carter.

Page 32. Recreation Department: $232,549. Increase of $7,480. Increase due to increased health insurance and personnel. All local funding.

Page 33. Buckingham County Arts Council: $9,000. This is level funding and this is split 50% matching grant. $4,500 local and $4,500 state.

Page 34. The Library: $301,049. This is an increase of $7,265. Mr. Ewing spoke to you last year stating that he would need additional funding for his employees to meet minimum wage. Last year we only funded half the request. This should be the remaining funding the Library needs. This is all local funding.

Page 35. Planning and Zoning: $162,641. This is an increase of $41,941. This increase is due to increase salaries for the planning commissioners. It is the recommendation of the finance committee to increase the commissioners pay to $6,000 per year and the planning commission chairman to $8,000 per year. This is all local money.

Miles: I think that is much needed Mr. Chairman. Those Planning Commissioners are now meeting twice a month and get paid very little money and they are doing a good job.
Carter: They’ve had a lot more meetings with the Solar Farm.

Page 36. Commonwealth Regional Council: $19,000. Level funding and CRC is another organization that will give leftover funds back to the County. Local funding.

Page 37. Extension Office: $111,311. Increase of $10,000. I only increased this to $10k as we gave them a significant increase last year as well. Their request was for an increase of $15,000. I will leave that up to the Board if you want to increase their budget further.

Carter: She came before you guys as well. I think her increase was additional $15,000 and I only put in here $10,000. The reason she gave at the Board meeting is she said they did a salary study and they proposed salary increases. I was of the opinion you know, you guys did not authorize that salary study and we don’t know what those numbers were. It’s hard to give everybody a salary increase because of the study and we don’t know what the merits of that study were. We don’t know if they based it on years of service, or performance or anything.

Chambers: Leave it alone.

Miles: I agree.

Carter: I put in $10,000 but feel free to adjust it how you want. I know they will get an increase like everybody else but I don’t know about the whole $15,000.

Chambers: Don’t the state give them an increase too?

Carter: The state is giving them an increase but most of that money if from local.

Chambers: What’s your pleasure?

Miles: I’d say leave it in there, Mr. Chairman but that’s just me.

Carter: Then we have page 38 our Fixed Charges. If you go over to page 13, there’s the proposed salary increase Mr. Miles, you were talking about. Where we put the salary increases. We put it in that line because it’s easier to change that line instead of putting it in everybody’s budget and then when you want to change it you have to change every department at one time. It’s just easier to take it from that one line.

Page 38. Fixed Charges: $452,000. This is an increase of $48,760.

1. General Liability Insurance: increase of $6,760
2. Line of Duty Act Insurance: increase of $1,000, this is the additional insurance we pay for hazardous positions such as Sheriff’s deputies, EMS and firefighters
3. Unemployment Insurance: increase of $1,000
4. **Workers Compensation:** level funding

5. **Proposed Salary Increase:** increase of $40,000. The increase is for a potential across the board pay increase of 7% IF the State goes in that direction. If the State only does 5% as they said last year then, the County will only do 5%. Once again I feel it’s better to ask for the 7% and drop down to 5% than to do 5% and have to come back to you.

6. **School Sewer Contract:** level funding

**Carter:** Our unassigned Fund Balance of $7,000,000. Our policy says to keep 10% of our budget so we are still right on that. We have a 70,000,000 budget and we have 7,000,000 left. So we are still on track with that.

**Page 39. Unassigned Fund Balance:** $7,000,000. This is the approximate balance we are starting with after you subtract all of the commitments.

**Page 40. Transfers:** These are the local transfer amounts to other funds. These will be discussed in the department that is affected.

**Carter:** Commitments to Fund Balance, these are the things you are going to pay out of your fund balance like the Courthouse General Properties project. That’s being partially paid in this fiscal year hopefully. We have fire/rescue training, $20,000. Gene Dixon Park $1,500,000. There’s your Contingency of $192,000. Economic Development money you got from land sales of 776,000. And Animal Control facility 1.3 million. Once again, I know we are trying to cut pennies and get things down as far as we need to but other than item #2, all of those come out of your reserves. That Fire/Rescue Training we put in of $20,000, that’s something you can take out if you want it and set it up as needed so if somebody needed some training for fire departments they can come ask you for it instead of putting it in the budget. So if you guys want to take that out it would be fine with me.

**Matthews:** Don’t we also have some funding in EMS Cody’s department for some training. So we can utilize that also, right?

**Carter:** Yes sir. But we put this here when we had the volunteers it was for EMS and Fire so we split the difference so that $20,000, $10,000 was for EMS and $10,000 for Fire Departments.

**Matthews:** I think we should take it out. That’s a little bit of money we could save.

**Carter:** And do it as needed so when someone needs training they can come to you guys. Okay.

**Page 41. Commitments to Fund Balance:** $4,689,322 – increase of $407,716

1. Courthouse / General Properties: $900,000
2. Fire/Rescue Training: $20,000
3. Gene Dixon Park Reserve: $1,500,000
4. Contingency: $192,937 – This is your reserve for contingency or funds you have to cover the additional requests or to use during the year for unexpected expenses.

5. Economic Development: $776,385

6. Animal Control Facility: $1,300,000. T

**Pages 42-44. Department of Social Services (DSS):** $2,323,332. This is an increase of $73,035 but only an increase of local funds of $11,206. Local is $552,073 and State and Federal $1,771,259.

Carter: Comprehensive Services, that’s the one, you know, if anyone serves on that Board, I think Mr. Gilliam serves on it now. It’s one of those expensive things that are mandatory services we have to provide for the children. Mr. Gilliam, I’m sure can tell you it’s not cheap. Most of that stuff is all mandated and a lot of those kids need those services. I increased the local budget to $320,000 which an increase of $2083. For each amount of local dollars, we contribute the state gives more money so by us having that small increase we should get more state money for that increase.

Gilliam: That is one of the sadder committees you can be on. It’s very sad.

Carter: Unfortunately most all of those cases are mandatory. They are not optional so you have to pay it.

**Page 45. Comprehensive Services Act (CSA):** $2,042,000. This is an increase of $264,083 but only a local increase of $2,083. The local amount is $320,000 and the state and federal amount is $1,722,000.

Carter: Emergency Services once again, there’s a decrease of $147,187. That’s with that Dominion grant fully funded, we’re paying that on our own so there is no reserve for contingency amount. I mentioned on the revenue side, the difference is $819,000 is what I’ve got the County transferring to make that fund balance. That’s the biggest part of your tax increase. If we didn’t have that we’d be in pretty good shape. But once again, that is something that was planned and we knew it was coming.

**Page 46. Emergency Services:** $1,839,752. This is a decrease of $147,187. The decrease is due to the Dominion Grant being fully expended. When we had that grant we had a reserve for contingency because we had more revenue than expenses. The grant is now gone so the only pieces that are funding this department is insurance payment collections and a transfer from the general fund. As I mentioned in the revenues and in the beginning the transfer amount is $819,752. That is the biggest part of why I am proposing the tax increase.

**Pages 47-53. The School System:** Their budget will be presented to you during the work session.
Page 54. The School Cafeteria: This budget will also be presented to you during the work session.

Page 55. Debt Service: $3,491,628. Decrease of $169,684. These numbers are all from debt service schedules and are actual numbers. $3,016,815 is local and $474,813 is from State and Federal money that we get as subsidies for three of our loans.

Pages 56-58. Sewer Fund: $485,063. The sewer and water plant are our proprietary funds, meaning they are like a business and are operated on fees collected from customers and not normal taxes that are collected by the County.

Pages 59-62. Water Fund: $1,462,323. The sewer and water plant are our proprietary funds, meaning they are like a business and are operated on fees collected from customers and not normal taxes that are collected by the County.

Page 63. Industrial Development Authority (IDA): $181,176. Decrease of $12,751. This is the IDA paying on the new sewer plant ($15,098 x 12).

Carter: That’s all I have. I’ll be glad to go back and answer any questions or make any adjustments you guys want to make. I’ll just say again; this is just to advertise. We are not officially doing anything but putting something in the paper to advertise.

Chambers: I guess we need to make a motion to make the changes then don’t we?

Carter: Yes, sir.

Miles: I so move, Mr. Chairman with the changes that were made to the proposed budget.

Davis: Piedmont Veterans Council we added to that.

Miles: Right, $5000. I’ll make that motion Mr. Chairman.

Chambers: Is there a second?

Gilliam: Second.

Chambers: We have a motion and a second to add the items to the budget that we discussed. Piedmont Veterans and what else?

Miles: It was 3 things I thought.

Carter: Piedmont Veterans, reduced Jaunt down,
Miles: We left Boys and Girls Club alone, we excluded 25 and 26 as new requests.

Mathews: Fire training.

Carter: Took out the $20,000 for fire training.

Miles: Completely?

Carter: We can do it as an as needed basis.

Matthews: We have some in the EMS budget for training too.

Miles: Okay.

Chambers: Okay, we have a motion by Supervisor Miles,

Carter: Before you vote, Mr. Chairman, you want to discuss the schools request?

Miles: I have a question. So, Mr. Chairman and Mr. Carter, just so we are on the same page, most likely when the House and the Senate get together the budget will improve. Most likely, because it does every year. Is that your estimation Dr. Keeler?

Keeler: I hope so. (inaudible)

Miles: So Mr. Chairman, just remind me it’s 4 pennies. Is that right Mr. Carter?

Carter: Yes, $150,000 per penny so you are looking at roughly 4 for $600,000. You can make your motion now to vote on the budget but we need a separate motion to vote on tax rate.

Miles: So do you have a recommendation Mr. Carter?

Carter: I put in the budget before you 3¢.

Miles: Right. Then another 4 if we go that direction.

Carter: If we go that route. Now…

Miles: We can pull money out of reserves?

Carter: You can pull money out of reserves…

Chambers: There’s $7 million in there. Ain’t that right, $7 million?
Carter: Yes. Also, I haven’t added my sheets up yet but your reserve for contingency is $192,000. So that’s a penny right there. If you want to take that down to the bare minimum, you can take that penny out.

Miles: $7 million is in the reserves?

Carter: Yes, but your reserve for contingency on your budget sheet is $192,000 and if you take every penny of that, that could take that down as well.

Miles: So, if we took perhaps $623,000 for the schools out of our reserves and then went up 3¢ to fund the EMS, perhaps? Otherwise it will be 7¢?

Gilliam: Basically all you are doing is robbing Peter to pay Paul. You take the money out of your savings account to do it next year you are probably looking at another 2 to 3¢.

Carter: Remember that $800,000 is for EMS so the 3¢ will make it through now, and you will probably need some next year as well.

Miles: In other words, Mr. Carter, 7¢ would balance that advertised budget if we include the $623,000 for the schools?

Davis: 7¢ all of our asses will be run out of Dodge. I tell you.

Miles: I’m asking a question. I’m not making a statement.

Chambers: I thought he said raise it 3¢, not 7¢.

Matthews: I think really what should happen is we should go back and ask our department heads that deal with the county here and see if there is any way they can adjust their budget, go back through their budget and see if there is any money they can save. Sometimes you have to make tough decisions and we are putting a pretty big burden on the taxpayers. That’s the people who are going to be voting for you come November. Not you necessarily but some of the other people on this Board and you know, we did a great thing here about 3 years ago when we reduced the tax rate during the pandemic which I don’t know of any other locality in the State of Virginia that did that, you know, I think those people appreciated that but you know we are still not out of the woods. There are still people who are not working and out of a job so I think there are other ways for us to approach this thing and I’m going to go ahead and step out there and ask for the help of the school division. We are almost $700,000 additional funding over what you asked for last year, okay, I want you to get everything you need and sometimes we have to make decisions here at the Board of Supervisors and me in my personal like, there are things that I may not can have right now so you know we need to save some money this year any way we can do it. I want the teachers to get their raises. That’s priority to me and the staff but some of the other stuff that we can control a little bit better as far as buses. We’ve had buses in our budget for at
least 12 years since before I was on the Board. That’s something I really believe should be in the school budget. If you want to ask for that money, that’s fine, we’ll probably give it to you but I don’t want that to affect our budget every year at the end of the day. So, I think that’s something we need to look at Karl moving forward. Our departments need to in house but I’m also asking for the school divisions help in this matter too. I’m going to give you my promise, I want the staff to get what’s coming to them and you are doing the right thing with your insurance. You are saving money, trying to help the county but there are other areas that we need help also. We’ve stepped up to the plate in years past for you guys and I’d like for you to help in this matter. I’m speaking for Don Matthews here. I’m not speaking for the rest of this Board. But you know, this is a taxpayer issue. They are the people that pay the bills. Don Matthews and these other six guys don’t pay the bills. We do because we are taxpayers but majority of that money is paid by taxpayers. Anyway, I’d appreciate your help.

Chambers: I think the Board needs to do something. I see what you are saying to take some fat out the budget but sometimes you can’t take out too much fat. Buckingham probably has the cheapest tax rate of any county around. No county I know is paying 52¢. I think Charlottesville is close to a $1. You are going to have to raise the taxes some. You can’t just stay at 52¢. Like you said we cut it back in 2020, I don’t know if it was a mistake or not. I wonder if we did the right thing. You are going to have to raise it. I can go 3¢ but I can’t do, like Mr. Davis said raising 7¢ during an election is not a wise thing to do. Nobody wants to pay more taxes. We want to fund our school system. You know, we don’t want them to have to suffer.

Davis: You know it’s near and dear to me and it’s a thing, Aircraft Tax. It needs to be raised. That’s another one. We don’t have but one airplane in the county but it’s crazy to own a vehicle in Buckingham County personal property is $4.05 and I can own an airplane for 55¢.

Gilliam: I definitely agree to that.

Davis: I think we double it. Machinery and Tools, $2.90. 55¢ on an airplane.

Miles: That would be $1.10 if anybody is asking.

Chambers: For airplane tax?

Miles: If you want to, double it. Mr. Chairman, I know I stated this earlier, as a compromise, Supervisor Matthews, could we perhaps pull the $623,000 for the schools out of our reserve for contingency and only go 3¢ to help offset the EMS department as a compromise?

Chambers: That’s what I was saying. We’ve got $7 million in there see.

Miles: How does the Board feel about that instead of threading the needle to 7¢, huge sticker shock, I understand that.
Gilliam: My concern is what are we going to do when it comes around next year. Karl was already talking about we are going to have to go up next year. All you are doing is pushing the can down the road.

Matthews: The other thing too, the school division already knows they are going to get some type of end of the year money based on their daily attendance. They don’t know what that figure is but you should have a pretty good idea of that. All I’m asking is for the taxpayers, you know, we need your help to use that, I know you like to use that on Capital Projects and we’ve helped you do that in the past and I want to continue to help you do that but sometimes you’ve got to prioritize your budget. So, are those Capital Projects important? Yes, they are. But are these school buses important? Yes, they are. I feel like they are more important. In my opinion that is what you should use your end of the year money to some extent.

Davis: I’ve got a question Mr. Chairman. Can we to get our budget done, to get the school board thing, can we appropriate this $623,000 and put it in a contingency fund until they get the numbers from the state saying what the state is going to give them. That way they’ve got a budget to work off of and we’ve got numbers to go off of.

Matthews: I don’t have a problem doing that.

Miles: Where’s the money going to come from?

Matthews: I’m a man of my word and I want to help them any way we can but you know we are in a tight spot right now throughout the county, including the Board of Supervisors. We have to look out for 17,000 individuals that pay taxes in this county. I want to do what’s fair for everybody. I’m not trying to be hard to get along with the school division. I want what’s right for all the folks in this county.

Miles: Mr. Chairman, I’d agree with that but I ask where is the money going to come from to put in the contingency? Reserves?

Chambers: We’ve got $7 million.

Davis: Get it from reserves until they get numbers from the Senate and the House…

Miles: I can live with that.

Gilliam: Is there also something we can do, sorry Mr. Chairman, is there also something we can do while Karl is in the process, we asked him to go back and get the department heads to see if we can save any money with the Board of Supervisors, ask the school board if they can go back and look at it and help us to cut anything possible while Karl does it with us, to see if we can save anything once we do that?
Miles: I agree with that.

Chambers: That’s a good idea. You said 17,000, there’s 2,000 you don’t have to worry about at the prison. They don’t pay no taxes. I’m serious.

Gilliam: If we can both go back and work on it and give them the money they need and put it in a contingency and let everybody go back and sharpen their pencils and get everybody to see how much we can save.

Davis: If it ain’t but 1%, 1% will make a dent.

Matthews: If every department would cut 1%, somehow someway.

Davis: Employees need to get their raises. Everybody wants a raise.

Gilliam: To be honest with you, without the teachers, you don’t have anything. Faculty and teachers so I believe they need to get it but we have a tremendous amount of departments under the Board of Supervisors. I assume the school board has a tremendous amount of departments. If we can go there and say hey, where can we save a few bucks at? See what we can do because we are in a bind. All of us are in a bind.

Chambers: I just want to see the Board work with the School Board. They do a good job and we don’t want to cut their funds to where they can’t operate. Times are tight and they are getting tighter but still, the schools, we’ve got to fund the schools enough to operate.

Miles: Absolutely.

Chambers: Now getting back to the tax increase.

Miles: What I would propose sir, is that we advertise the 55¢ real estate tax increased, and the public service corporation and the $1.10 aircraft. That’s an increase in terms of tax rate and put in reserve for contingency the $623,000 and pull that from our reserves.

Chambers: That’s a motion by Supervisor Miles, do we have a second?

Gilliam: Before we take it to a motion, can I ask a question to make sure I understand. What we are doing is going with a 3¢ tax increase, and then robbing $623,000 from the fund and that’s gone. It’s gone because whatever portion they use is gone.

Miles: Unless anyone has an alternative.

Gilliam: It’s going to be gone. It’s like using what you got in your savings account, whatever portion the school board uses, and it’s not just the school board, it could have been our budget,
but whatever we put out there we are taking out of savings. Not only are we doing a tax increase but we are taking the money out the savings account too. Is that true?

**Miles:** Yes, sir.

**Chambers:** What do you suggest Supervisor Gilliam?

**Gilliam:** I don’t know what I’m suggesting. I just want to make sure what we are saying because what I’m worried about is Mr. Carter said that he already knows it’s going to be again next year, so when we go in front of the taxpayers, we went up 3¢ this year, we robbed almost $700,000 from the slush fund is what I call it, and then we’ve got to turn around and ask for a tax increase again next year. I wonder if Mr. Carter thinks we can take some out of the slush fund, and do for the school and do more tax increase this year and not do anything next year? When we go to the taxpayers and tell them that we are raising their taxes 2 years in a row, they are not going to think how many pennies it is, they are going to look at they raised it on us last year and now again this year.

**Chambers:** I suggest you get a bulletproof vest.

**Matthews:** How much of the $623,000 additional money, how much of that is the raise for the teachers?

**Oliver:** (did not pick up from audience)

**Carter:** So what Mr. Gilliam is saying I think, is a good discussion point. If we do 3¢, I guess it needs to be made sure or pretty clear, that next year is going to be more too. What he’s saying is it better to take all your medicine at one time or…

**Allen:** You don’t know what’s going to change between now and next year. Might go up a whole lot and might not.

**Chambers:** What he’s saying don’t want to raise taxes during an election year, next year the election will be over so we’ll be here four more years before…something to look at too.

**Allen:** To me take the $600,000 and say it’s okay if they need it. But if they don’t need it and after June when they find out what they got, they might get more than $600,000 after and we won’t have to worry about it. It’s there if they have to have it and if they don’t have to have it it’s okay. We won’t find out until after June.

**Chambers:** That’s what I was thinking.
Davis: Mr. Chairman, if I could ask a question, if we go back to 55¢ we are putting the real estate level back to where it was before the pandemic in 2020 right? So all we are doing is returning the tax rate back to pre-pandemic levels?

Miles: Mr. Chairman, to play devil’s advocate with my dear friend, Supervisor Gilliam, in all seriousness, there’s a reason we’ve been putting all that money away and it’s grown to $7 million for a rainy day.

Gilliam: It’s definitely raining.

Chambers: It ain’t raining, it’s flooding. That’s different than raining. You can get by with the rain, but that flooding is what you got to watch.

Carter: I’ll make this point too as well, so you can advertise, I don’t know, you can advertise 57¢ and then at the public hearing you can take it down. Whatever you do tonight, I wouldn’t try to do it low because you can’t increase it.

Chambers: You can bring it down but you can’t go up. That’s right.

Carter: If you guys want more time to think about it more, you can say 57¢ and then bring it back down to 55¢. You can’t go the other way and say 55¢ tonight and at the public hearing say 57¢.

Matthews: You guys better think hard if you’ve got competition. I’m telling you.

Chambers: Everybody will probably have competition before it’s over with.

Miles: Mr. Chairman, has anybody seconded my motion just out of curiosity?

Davis: Let me get Jordan’s motion straight. Your motion is we return to 55¢, pre-pandemic level, and we put the $623,000, we put that in a reserve fund for the school if they need it. Come June and they don’t need it we put the money back.

Miles: Exactly right, Mr. Chairman, the intent of my motion would be when the State, the House and the Senate, make their final decision whether less and I think the schools I would hope and pray the schools won’t get less money than that, but then and only then, once the budget is set by the legislature and signed by the Governor, that that is when that money will come out of contingency, our reserve.

Chambers: Okay what about the 57¢?

Davis: I second that motion.
Miles: I’m sticking to 55¢ right now.

Chambers: As long as we are clear.

Miles: If that’s the will of the Board.

Chambers: Are you ready Sister, ready to vote?

Lann: We’ll have to vote by raising hands.

Chambers: Motion by Supervisor Miles, seconded by Supervisor Davis, that we raise it to 55¢.

Allen: 3¢ raise.

Matthews: What about airplanes?

Miles: $1.10.

Chambers: $1.10 for airplanes and put $600,000 some in reserve if they need it and if they don’t need the funds, it comes back to the Treasury. Everybody clear on that? Everybody in favor raise your right hand. 6-1.

Supervisor Miles moved, Vice Chairman Davis seconded to adopt the following tax rates for advertisement for public hearing: Real Estate: 55¢; Public Service Corporation: 55¢; SCC Personal Property: $4.05; Personal Property: $4.05; Machinery and Tools: $2.90; Merchant’s Capital: $1.00; and Aircraft: $1.10 and to move the $623,461 into a contingency from Ending Year Balance to be distributed if needed after the State Budget comes in. This motion passed with a 6-1 vote with Supervisor Matthews opposing.

Carter: You do need one for advertising the actual budget. You just did the tax rates. Make your motion to advertise the changes that were proposed tonight.

Chambers: We need a motion to advertise the changes made tonight. Motion by Supervisor Bryant, seconded by Supervisor Miles to advertise the changes. All in favor of the motion hand raise. All opposed? 6-1

Supervisor Bryant moved, Supervisor Miles seconded to advertise the FY23/24 Operating Budget with the following changes for public hearing on April 17, 2023: Jaunt take out the increase and leave level funding for a decrease of $20,320; Piedmont Veterans Council give them $10,000 for an increase of $5,000; and cut out the Fire/EMS Training funds for a decrease of $20,000. This motion passed with a 6-1 vote with Supervisor Matthews opposing.
Chambers: Are there any other matters to come before the Board?

Re: Executive Closed Session

Miles: Mr. Chairman, I would move that we enter into Executive Closed Session for the following purpose: Discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body. Code of Virginia §2.2-3711. A.3

Chambers: Can I get a second?

Davis: I second.

Chambers: We have a motion and a second to go into Executive Closed session under the code read by Supervisor Miles. All in favor. 7 yes.

Supervisor Miles moved, Vice Chairman Davis seconded and was unanimously carried by the Board to enter into Executive Closed Session under the above stated Code of Virginia.

Re: Return to Regular Session and Certification

Miles: Mr. Chairman, I move that we return to regular session and certification that to the best of each Board member’s knowledge only business matters related to the codes of which the executive meeting was convened was discussed or considered in the closed executive session.

Allen: Second.

Chambers: Motion by Supervisor Miles, second by Supervisor Allen that the only thing we discussed was identified in the motion before we went in executive session. All in favor? Hand raised. 7 yes.

Supervisor Miles moved, Supervisor Allen seconded and was unanimously carried by the Board to return to regular session and certify that to the best of each Board member’s knowledge only business matters related to the codes of which the executive meeting was convened was discussed or considered in the closed executive session.

Re: Action as a result of Executive Closed Session

Miles: I want to offer a motion that we send a proposal regarding the Industrial Park for study and a recommendation along with an analysis to the Economic Development Committee.

Matthews: Second.
Chambers: Motion by Supervisor Miles, second by Supervisor Matthews that we send this on to the Economic Development Committee to study this and report back to the Board. All in favor?

Supervisor Miles moved, Supervisor Matthews seconded and was unanimously carried by the Board to send a proposal regarding the Industrial Park for study and recommendation along with an analysis to the Economic Development Committee and report back to the Board.

Re: Executive Closed Session

Miles: I would offer a motion that we go into Executive Closed Session regarding Section 2.2-3711-A.7 of the Code of Virginia regarding Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members or consultants pertaining to actual or probable litigation, where such consultation or briefing in open meeting would adversely affect the negotiating or litigating posture of the public body; and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

Allen: Second.

Chambers: Motion by Supervisor Miles, second by Supervisor Allen to go into Executive Closed Session under the Code. All in favor?

Supervisor Miles moved, Supervisor Allen seconded and was unanimously carried by the Board to enter into Executive Closed Session under the above stated Code of Virginia.

Re: Return to Regular Session and Certification

Miles: Mr. Chairman, I move that we return to regular session and certification that to the best of each Board member’s knowledge only business matters related to the codes of which the executive meeting was convened was discussed or considered in the closed executive session.

Allen: Second.

Chambers: Motion by Supervisor Miles, second by Supervisor Allen that the only thing we discussed was identified in the motion before we went in executive session. All in favor? Hand raised. 7 yes.

Supervisor Miles moved, Supervisor Allen seconded and was unanimously carried by the Board to return to regular session and certify that to the best of each Board member’s knowledge only business matters related to the codes of which the executive meeting was convened was discussed or considered in the closed executive session.
**Re: Action as a Result of Executive Closed Session**

There was no action taken.

**Re: Other Board Matters**

**Chambers:** Anything else need to come before the Board?

**Carter:** Just a reminder that your April meeting will be the 3rd Monday, April 17th.

**Re: Adjournment**

There being no further business to discuss, Chairman Chambers declared the meeting adjourned.

ATTEST:

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Karl Carter                                  Joe N. Chambers, Jr.
County Administrator                        Chairman