

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA )  
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COUNTY OF STOKES )  
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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS  
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA  
JUNE 10, 2014

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a Public Hearing in Courtroom "A" of the Governmental Complex located in Danbury, North Carolina on Tuesday, June 10, 2014, at 7:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman James D. Booth  
Vice Chairman Ronda Jones  
Commissioner J. Leon Inman  
Commissioner Jimmy Walker  
Commissioner Ernest Lankford

County Personnel in Attendance:  
County Manager Richard D. Morris  
Clerk to the Board Darlene M. Bullins  
Finance Director Julia Edwards

Chairman James Booth called the Public Hearing to order and welcomed those in attendance.

Commissioner Lankford delivered the invocation.

**GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Booth opened the meeting by inviting the citizens in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

**Public Hearing**

Chairman Booth opened the Public Hearing for the Proposed Fiscal Year 2014-15 County Budget.

Chairman Booth reminded those in attendance that the Board does not reply to Public Comments.

Chairman Booth also reminded those speaking that there was a three (3) minute time limit.

The following spoke during the Public Hearing regarding the proposed Fiscal Year 2014-15

County Budget:

**Debra Hennelly**  
441 Oak Street  
Walnut Cove, NC 27052

Ms. Hennelly presented the following comments:

- Several years ago, I stood before the county commissioners asking for support for construction and renovations to Southeastern Stokes Middle School
- I stand before you tonight, not only as a teacher of 26 years in Stokes County and a former Stokes County Teacher of the Year, but also as a parent and a member of the Walnut Cove community
- Southeastern Stokes Middle School has been blessed with a new “B” building, as well as, renovations to the other buildings including the exterior to create a safe, learning environment for our students and staff
- I would personally like to thank you for your support
- When I taught in the old “B” building, my daily routine included checking and emptying the mouse traps, cleaning up water from the leaking roofs, taking medication for the mold in the carpets, and other tasks to try to maintain a safe, learning classroom for my students
- My world is so much better these days, for now I am able to focus on the students at Southeastern and how I can meet their needs with emphasis on the curriculum
- Stokes County Schools are a major selling point for many people, not only as employment in our County, but also as a draw for families to educate their children
- As many of us know, our personal children are our first priority in life
- I currently have several students who moved to Stokes County for our quality of education
- I currently know of a parent who recently inquired about the tuition to attend Southeastern for their daughter who lives in another county
- Stokes County Schools can attract many families to our County if our schools are well maintained
- If we as Stokes County citizens put money into our schools, then we will attract people to our area and that will increase tax revenue
- Limiting the school budget will decrease jobs in our area, so people from other counties or states will not relocate here for employment
- As you look at your budget, I would like to ask you to consider money for the Stokes County Schools so that other students in our County can have the safe, learning environment that you were able to give to Southeastern Stokes Middle School students
- If you have not visited our new “B” building, we would like to invite you to come for a visit as we now have a facility to educate the students in our community to be proficient 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners and productive Stokes County residents in the future
- Thank you for your time and your work in educating the students of Stokes County

**Nolan Lawson**  
1015 Sandy Lane  
Sandy Ridge, NC 27046

Mr. Lawson presented the following comments:

- Would like to start off by saying thank you to each one of the Board members
- One of the reasons I can say thank you is that my daughter has gotten a top flight education in the schools in Stokes County
- I can say that having two daughters that have graduated – one already in college and my second daughter who has received a partial scholarship to NC State where she will attend in the Fall
- I have no complaints about the education she have received
- Since I have worked with county government, in this county and other counties for some time, there is one thing I am absolutely certain of – you can find many trues in the Bible even if you don't believe in everything it says
- One of those trues is that he would be a master of many, shall be a servant to all
- I understand that one of your requirements now is having to listen to me and everyone else that approaches you in this County, I thank you for that service as well
- I point part of these things out because I have long believed that it is very difficult for you to take me seriously when I am coming to ask you something that I would receive a benefit for
- Since both of my daughters have completed their education, it is very unlikely that they will come back to Stokes County to live
- I can honestly say that there is not much benefit that I will receive from the taxes that go to the county schools from this point forward, at least not personally
- But I would also like to say that each one of us knows that we invest in what we find to be valuable
- When I look at the members of this Board, I would consider each and everyone one of you probably to have a lot of conservative principles in the way you would invest your own money
- When I look around, I suspect you invest money in your own building and your own vehicles so that you would not lose a \$2,000 engine in a car for failure to change the oil
- When I look at the schools in this County and compare them to the schools in Forsyth and other counties, I find that our school buildings are in much better shape
- They are very well respected by the community and I will just ask that you continue to make the investment that you have already made on behalf of the citizens of this County

**Janis Henderson-Hunsucker**  
PO Box 396  
Danbury, NC 27016

Ms. Henderson-Hunsucker presented the following comments:

- I know this is a budget hearing, but if I am in front of you I can't stop myself from thanking you for working behind the scenes with Senator Randleman and Representative Holloway to save Camp Sertoma, we almost have a victory

- I am a parent of a rising third grader at Lawsonville Elementary School and the Art Teacher at North Stokes High School
- Here today to ask you for money for Stokes County Schools
- Money so that my daughter can have the same opportunities as students in Forsyth and Surry Counties
- I would like for my daughter to be able to take Spanish and Art classes at Lawsonville Elementary School
- I am also here to ask you for money for “B” building at North Stokes High School
- I have a confession to make – on Wednesday, May 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:30 am, I caused the fire alarm to go off in the middle of breakfast causing several dozen students to stand in the parking lot while eating their “super doughnuts”
- I did not pull the fire alarm, as you may think, rather I opened the lid to my ceramic kiln (an oven for clay); it gets very hot and the lid opens up
- As I opened the lid up (kiln gets very hot), a blast of 250 degree hot air triggered the sensor in the ceiling; found out it is triggered any time heats reaches over 180 degrees
- Why does my school need money?
- Need money so that the school can install a fan that can vent the heat in my storage room ensuring that the students can eat their breakfast in peace
- It is not just my art room that needs fixing in “B” building, we have serious electrical problems whenever lightning strikes near the school, speakers make really loud noises and computers blink on and off
- You can say to me and everyone else here today that you have no money which the County often struggles with that problem
- Would encourage you to go after delinquent property taxpayers by partnering with Jake Oakley, the Sheriff’s Department, and the county attorney
- Publish a list in the paper or seize the property and auction it off
- If you are in an aggressive mood today, change the allowable delinquency period from 7 years to something like 2 like other counties have
- Because as citizens of Stokes County, everyone needs to help support Stokes County Schools by paying their taxes

**Ashley Johnson**

1221 Capella School Road  
King, NC 27021

Ms. Johnson presented the following comments:

- I own a farm near Quaker Gap in Stokes County where I live with my family
- I work in the Stokes County School System
- My request is for more money to find its way to Stokes County Schools
- Our facilities are falling down around us, crumbling and in some cases contaminated
- Our schools are in need of major renovations; we do not need more band-aids and duct tape
- We need to fix our hundreds of minor problems before they again become major and costly repairs
- We need the funds to make our campuses not only sturdy and leak proof, but beautiful and functional

- We need our schools to look like places where parents want their kids to be for 7 hours each day
- As you may have guessed, I did not grow up in Stokes County, I did not graduate from South Stokes High School, my mother was not a Saura, but I chose to live here
- South Stokes High School and many other schools in the County don't fill me with nostalgic happiness but they make me feel sad that the facilities have been neglected for so long
- I think that part of what we need to do is to be able to send a message to students, perspective students, and perspective parents that education is important and that we need well equipped facilities, functional school laboratories, art studios and other rooms within our schools
- I moved here almost ten years ago for my husband's job as a professor at Wake Forest University
- We could have chosen anywhere within 30 miles of where to plant our roots, but we chose Stokes County
- We chose it for the parks, the Dan River, mountain range, farmlands and for our small local schools
- We chose it for the Arts Council
- Additionally, what I would like to ask for is for more money so that we can have more art, languages, and AIG programs within all of our elementary schools
- I hope the county commissioners will do everything in their power to keep our land and water clean and unpolluted and that we will continue to entice people to move to Stokes County to attend our schools and pay property taxes to help fund what the County needs
- The County needs to track down all unpaid property taxes
- The County needs to also consider possibly raising property taxes by a small portion
- We will continue to lose students and their per pupil funding to charter schools in other counties if we can't make our schools more attractive academically and structurally
- Thank you to each one of you for your dedication to Stokes County and for what you do for us all

**Andrew Wiener**

7908 Daltonshire Drive  
Oak Ridge, NC 27310

Mr. Wiener presented the following comments:

- This evening, I am talking to you as a Guilford County resident who makes a choice to come to Stokes County to work
- I do this because I believe Stokes County has an excellent school system that provides an excellent education to our children
- I could decide to work in Guilford County and earn a great deal more money, but I do want to stay in Stokes County and help make it one of the top school systems in the State
- My concern is the lack of funding at either the state or the county level or both will hurt the quality education that we provide
- Pine Hall is a small community that does not ask for much and often does not receive a great deal of attention

- In the past two years, Pine Hall Elementary School has been forced to spend our own money to support two important projects – one was a necessity for the safety of our students and the other allowed us to pay tribute to a strong community leader and a county servant
- Pine Hall Elementary School’s playground was deteriorating and was not safe for our students and the community
- The playground had to be closed down in October of 2012
- Stokes County was not able to provide funds to support buying new playground equipment so the school had to raise its own money
- Pine Hall Elementary was able to raise and pay \$30,000 for a new playground that was installed in June of 2013
- This new playground was essential, not only for the safety and health of our students, but also as a town park for the Pine Hall community
- That money could have been used to help support instructional material or other areas of the school if it had not had to be spent for the playground
- The second big project that Pine Hall Elementary School completed was a memorial to the late Sheriff Mike Joyce
- Sheriff Joyce was a loyal, dedicated servant to Stokes County and a huge supporter of the Pine Hall community
- We felt the need to pay tribute to this hero
- Pine Hall Elementary School raised the money to build a memorial to Mike Joyce which was dedicated in October of 2013
- Each school brings a large list of needs for our children
- Our school families can’t simply raise the money they need without the backing from the County
- I am asking you, our county commissioners, to help provide the appropriate tools and resources for our children and to recognize those who have worked hard to make this community the great Stokes County that we are
- Please help us find a way to fund at least some of the projects that the school system needs to complete this upcoming school year
- The bottom line is that school system needs the support of our county commissioners

**Doug Rose**

1130 Cedar Oaks Drive  
 Germanton, NC 27019

Mr. Rose presented the following comments:

- Here in support of our school system’s budget request
- Appreciate the opportunity to speak with you this evening
- I know that we are all facing tough budgets and decisions
- I am a Stokes County taxpayer with two children who will be attending our schools
- I am beginning to enter my 12<sup>th</sup> year as an educator in Stokes County
- I currently have the pleasure of serving as principal at Sandy Ridge Elementary School
- Our communities take a great deal of pride in our schools
- Many of our schools are in need of renovations
- We must maintain our schools to keep them as a point of pride for our taxpayers

- I want to encourage you to come to our schools and look at the capital outlay projects that have been requested
- The amount of capital outlay money recommended in the 2014-15 budget is \$600,000
- The priority project for the school system is the roofing project at North Stokes High School will cost \$460,000
- We have many other roofs that also need replacing
- For the upcoming year, roofing projects at Chestnut Grove Middle School and Germanton Elementary School were also requested
- If we only take care of those roofing needs, our capital outlay has a shortfall of over \$1 million
- We have safety issues on our campuses that need addressing
- We need secured entrances to keep people away that would harm our students out of the building
- I want to be able to prevent someone with ill intentions from accessing my students
- It breaks my heart to think or see about the tragedies that have happened in schools around our country and our state
- Let's be as preventive as possible by securing our buildings and keeping our children safe
- We are working with our communities to meet as many needs as possible
- I personally have seen our community step up to fill school needs
- When I got to Sandy Ridge, the main piece of playground equipment had caution tape on it
- The bridge and one side was hanging by one rusty bolt
- The slide was busted and jagged edges that could cut students who used it
- The PTA President remembered playing on this piece of playground equipment as a girl
- We pulled together to do this for our kids or they would have to do without
- We had multiple fundraisers with our school along with PTA and local business donations
- We will be replacing this piece of playground equipment this summer
- Invite you to come to the grand opening
- You will or have heard about other areas of need
- We have areas of broken pavement, areas with 40-year old carpet, building entrances without cover that handicap students must access, playgrounds without proper fall protection and many others
- As a parent, taxpayer, and an employee of this County, I want to see our students be the top priority
- Our schools need your help
- I invite each of you to come and visit me at Sandy Ridge Elementary School and walk the campus
- I would love to show you the needs and I am sure the other principals would be glad to give you a tour as well
- Thank you for hearing my concerns
- I do look forward to continuing to improve the education that we offer to the families of our County
- Our school system is in need of these repairs and I just encourage you to revisit the request from the Board of Education and the recommended budget
- We need your help to make the required repairs to our schools

**David Durham**  
102 Bradberry Court  
King, NC 27021

Mr. Durham presented the following comments:

- I currently serve as the principal of King Elementary School and also a parent of two children in the Stokes County School System
- I wanted to come tonight to discuss some of the needs that I feel are of importance for the safety for the young students at King Elementary School
- In my two years as principal, we have had two sink holes where the water continues to run beneath our school
- One was actually found by a parent who fell through the hole
- Some of the water is from a reported spring that is under our land but some of the causes have been from water leaks from the old pipes or worn out drainage pipes
- Our water had to be turned off today actually to repair a leak in a portion of a pipe that has already been repaired in numerous places over the years
- We also have drainage issues and at some point, our parking lot will have to be cut up in some areas to replace old drainage pipes
- At times, I joke with folks that maybe having these issues would help us get our parking lot repaved one piece at a time which is something that has been requested several times over the past years but was always cut during the budget process
- We were fortunate to get new windows a couple of years ago in one of our buildings that houses our PreK Program
- It is unbelievable how much better newer windows not only makes a place look but also helps with heating and cooling
- I have requested over the past couple of years to replace the windows in our oldest two buildings which were built in the 1950s
- The windows are difficult to lock
- You can feel the cold air coming in around the edges in the winter
- At the beginning of this year in our office area, we moved some bigger pieces of furniture that had been blocking some windows in the office
- When we could finally see the window frames, we noticed how badly rusted they were
- Before our maintenance staff could put up a metal façade over the frames to help the appearance, they had to knock off the rust
- The pile that fell came out from the top of the ceiling all the way down to the window sill
- I am hoping this is a budget item that does not have to be cut again this year
- Finally, I want to share my request that concerns me most, I want you to think of what happened at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut last school year
- We had a lock down drill shortly after that tragic event at our school as did many schools across the country
- I invited officers from both the King Police Department and the Stokes County Sheriff's Department to assist us



- As we entered our “A” building, which houses our kindergarten, first and second grade students, many of them could not believe what they saw
- Some of them had never been in this building before
- This building was built in the 1970s with an open concept meaning that walls were not built between the classrooms
- Sometime since then, walls have been installed; however, the building is still very much open with no doors to the classrooms
- I hope that we never have an emergency that would require a true lockdown, but if anyone that meant to cause harm to our children ever found a way to enter this building, we don’t have any means to slow them down by locking interior classroom doors
- I have requested over the past two years to finish placing walls and doors in this building for the safety of our students

**Rick Menear**

4133 Tudor Orchard Road  
Stuart, VA 24171

Mr. Menear presented the following comments:

- I live in Virginia, but I chose to work in Stokes County as does my wife
- We have done so for the last 15 years
- First of all, I want you to know that I thank you for the job that you do
- I learned a long time ago not to claim to know what a person’s job entails until you actually do that job
- I come before you asking for you to please seriously consider the budget request being made by our school leaders
- I want to talk to you this evening concerning the students and staff of Stokes County Schools and how funding greatly effects both
- As I talk to you tonight, I want you to compare our students’ lives to that of a puzzle
- There is nothing more frustrating than spending hours, weeks, days, even months putting together a puzzle just to get to the end and realize there are missing pieces and it can’t be completed
- Now the life of a child is very similar
- Their parents, their grandparents, family and friends are a huge component of the puzzle
- Nourishment, clothing, safety, and shelter make up another large part of the puzzle
- Then when they get to the age of five through eighteen years old, another major element of the puzzle becomes evident – teachers, teachers’ assistants, coaches, administrators, support staff, bus drivers, nurses, cafeteria workers and custodians all become pieces of the child’s puzzle that are vital towards their completion
- Let us not forget the materials necessary to help the teachers, the teachers’ assistants and support staff keep the children engaged and actively learning
- Presently, most schools do not have enough money for textbooks for every student to use through the school year
- Some schools have to limit their staff and the number of copies that they are allowed to make for their students on top of not already having enough textbooks
- Now what happens to this puzzle, to this child’s life, when just one of these pieces become missing

- Ask yourselves, what about your life?
- What teacher had a huge part in your life?
- Who helped piece you together and complete you?
- Do you remember that teacher or that coach or that principal who helped make you what you are today?
- Can you imagine what your life might be like right now if one of those pieces were missing
- You sitting before me today are all a part of the puzzle too
- You have control of how it is constructed
- You have control of how well the puzzle could be formed
- We, as Stokes County Educators, have the utmost confidence in you as county commissioners to make decisions that are best for our educators and our students
- We appreciate the job you do
- We ask that you please accept the budget placed before you by our school administrative team and rest easy knowing that the students of Stokes County are and will be complete with your help

**Amy Musten**

2030 NC 772 HWY  
Pine Hall, NC 27042

Ms. Musten presented the following comments:

- I am the principal at Mt. Olive Elementary School
- Would like to talk to you about budget issues with the school system
- I am going to start off with a “little walk down memory lane”
- In 1926, an 18-year old graduate from Madison College got off the train at the depot in Pine Hall, NC to begin her first teaching position
- This lady ended up marrying a Stokes County resident and settling there, having children who attended Stokes County Schools
- Her grandchildren, her great-grandchildren and now her great-great-grandchildren are attending Stokes County Schools
- She is now today 105 years old and she is my grandmother
- I am her legacy and I believe in these schools
- The schools in Stokes County are the “hubs” of the community
- They are not just where we educate our children, they are where people live, breath and carry on all types of activity
- But unfortunately, we are in need of desperate repairs in many areas
- I have carpet in my building that has been there since the 70s; it really is in need of changing
- I have a partition between the gym and cafeteria that is in ill repair and it needs to be replaced as well
- Both have been on our budget request for several years, but our capital projects have to take a backseat because we have other issues that are in need
- Must prioritize the needs
- If you could consider the requests in the school budget, we would not have to do without some of these much needed repairs and continue to put band-aids on leaky faucets and duct tape like Ms. Johnson stated

- We really, really need to consider investing in our future so that people will want to come to our County and continue using our schools
- My grandmother, who came here in 1926, believed in our schools as much as I do just like I hope my grandchildren do who attended here and their grandchildren
- Please consider our budget

**Frank James**

PO Box 549

Rural Hall, NC 27045

Mr. James presented the following comments:

- Before I begin, I listen to the comments being made here tonight regarding the schools
- I am a product of South Stokes High School, graduation class of 1966
- I got my foundation here and that began the course that I am on now
- Here before you this evening to represent the elected officials of the Town of Rural Hall
- Fire Chief Eddie Horn and Councilman John McDermon, who is over our Public Safety Committee, are in attendance tonight for the public hearing
- We annually submit a budget to Stokes County for funding request
- We presently have a Class 5 insurance rating
- We are working to lower that rating to a Class 4
- I have the opportunity to attend one of your work sessions
- I am extremely impressed with your sincere thoughts that go into that process
- I have seen the sincerity that you are expressing
- One of the things that I heard very clear in one of your work sessions is to build economic development
- If we had trillion dollar business here this evening, we would not be having all this conversation
- We would have the monies to go forward
- I say that for this reason, when a business starts looking for locating within an area, they already know more about that area than probably we do at times
- When they walk into my office, they begin to tell me things about our community that I haven't thought about
- But as we talk about economic development, one thing that they look at among many, is the ability to provide fire protection and rescue protection
- The Rural Hall Fire Department serves a portion of Stokes County
- We are very honored to serve Stokes County
- We are very proud to serve Stokes County
- They are Stokes County citizens, but they are our citizens as well
- We have made a pledge to get our equipment out of our station in one minute on the street, not to just answer that call, but have that equipment in the street ready to go
- The last work session I attended, we had an alarm in Stokes County and left the session to respond and was glad to do so
- But I plead to you this evening to remember our request
- It is certainly something that we need
- The Forsyth County Commissioners have already adopted their portion of our budget

- Our elected officials adopted our portion of the budget this past evening
- The only piece that is left is Stokes County
- We urge you to seriously consider our request
- Because without all the pieces becoming together, we have some tough decisions that have to be made
- We have a contract with you folks
- We are glad to honor that contract, but on the other hand, we have to have cooperation
- I believe that government working together can accomplish many things
- “I” alone can do nothing
- “I” can’t even stand alone by itself
- Everyone think about that
- Let’s work together to make not only the Rural Hall Fire Department what it needs to be and should be
- I believe in Stokes County
- I am from Stokes County
- I have family here in Stokes County
- I own property here in Stokes County
- As we go forward, wish you all the best

**Eddie Horn**

PO Box 550

Rural Hall, NC 27045

Mr. Horn presented the following comments:

- I am the Fire Chief for the Town of Rural Hall
- I would like to mimic what Mr. James just said
- We do carry the Class 5 ISO rating into Stokes County
- When the alarm goes off and it is in Stokes County, your citizens are getting the same protection as the house across from the fire department
- There is no delay in response
- We are fully staffed, supplemented by volunteers
- We held a public hearing in the first of May, we filled the room up, had no opposition from anyone
- We actually had folks speak in favor of it
- Just mimic what my boss said, we need the funds
- There is no “fat” in our budget
- We have some tough decisions to make if we don’t get the funds
- We are urging for the funds that we need

**Jeff Freeman**

1600 Sam Moir Road  
Westfield, NC 27053

Mr. Freeman presented the following comments:

- I have two children in Stokes County Schools and have had two that have passed through Stokes County Schools
- I am originally from Dodson in Surry County, but I am proud to live in Francisco
- I am proud to live in Stokes County
- I know you guys have a little bit to do with and a whole lot to with it
- If we could just invest every dime that you possibly can in the school system
- I am the Director of Facilities at the YMCA in King
- The YMCA is nonprofit so I have to make a little bit go a long way; I know how hard it is
- The school system is such a good investment; an investment for the future
- These kids go through the system in Stokes which is “top-notch”
- They go to college and hopefully come back with a good job and increase the tax base
- Thank you for everything you have done
- Thank you for all your consideration
- Every bit you can squeeze out, please send to the school system
- I know we can use it in Francisco

**Kevin Spainhour**

8725 Jefferson Church Road  
Rural Hall, NC 27045

Mr. Spainhour presented the following comments:

- I am right across the line from Stokes County in Rural Hall
- Obviously, Spainhour is a “King” name
- It is a Stokes County name, grew up here
- All my family live here
- Came back to work in Stokes County a year ago
- This is my 15<sup>th</sup> year in education, spent 10 years of it in Mount Airy City Schools
- Had the great fortune of being able to return back home to Stokes County a year ago as the assistant principal at West Stokes High School and now am currently serving as the principal of West Stokes High School
- Last day of school was today
- A week ago right before exams, I had a mother and her son walk into my office at West Stokes High School, (McDaniel Family which I did not know) had never seen this family before
- They were interested in enrolling at West Stokes
- Said that they lived in Kernersville, son was getting ready to be a 9th grader and had heard really good things about Stokes County Schools
- Her husband was going to look at possibly relocating and selling their home because basically, their only child had a choice of going to a Forsyth County High School that they were unhappy of how crowded it was, over 1600 kids at the school

- They were very concerned about the academic structure and the future that their son was going to have
- I walked them through the process of what they needed to do and they left my office telling me that they would be seeing me in August
- My wife works in Stokes County Schools now
- We have four children that three years ago were attending Forsyth County Schools at Rural Hall Elementary
- When we got in the school system here at Stokes, our four children came with us and we are very pleased
- All four children attend Mt. Olive Elementary School
- I have kids that are in our school system and they have loved the transition
- We are all very passionate about our school system
- You can see how passionate Stokes County is about the school system
- The educators that work in our schools are passionate about what they do in our schools along with the administrators all the way up to the county office
- The landscape is changing in education, whether we like it are not
- Education is becoming a marketplace
- It is becoming competition
- You have private schools that take out full page ads in the Winston Salem Journal to announce their graduates and where they are going to attend college and how much money they are receiving in scholarships
- They are not doing that so that their graduating class of 47 kids can get in the newspaper, they are doing it so that the next generation of high school students will come to them possibly
- They are advertising
- You have charter schools, one about 25 miles away from the King (HWY #52) exit that is getting ready to institute a high school
- Stokes County is already divvying up a very large chunk of our money, of our ADM dollars, to charter schools
- That is going to continue
- We are in competition
- What I urge you and what I think a lot of us in here speak to is what we do have
- We are all responsible for that, you guys, as Mr. Menear stated, play a huge piece of that puzzle too
- We have a very good school system with 20 very good schools being led by leaders that are in the best interest and have the students in the forefront
- What I want to come to you tonight is to say, revisit it, open it back up and look at it from a competition aspect
- Be fiscally responsible
- Economic development is big
- Be fiscally responsible for what our school system can mean to Stokes County

**Misti Holloway**  
1165 Sterling Pointe Drive  
King, NC 27021

Ms. Holloway presented the following comments:

- Would like to thank you for your service to the County
- I know the kind of courage it takes to be an elected official
- Thank you for your willingness to serve
- I also understand looking at budgets and line items versus available funds can be very difficult at times
- I come to you as a product of Stokes County Schools and as someone who works in the school system
- I have spent my entire career at West Stokes High School as a teacher and now as an assistant principal
- I am very passionate about being an advocate for West Stokes, but tonight, I am speaking to you on behalf of all of our Stokes County Schools
- I love and value our County and our school system
- I know you all do too, otherwise, you would not be serving in the role that you are in
- What my colleagues and I are respectfully asking for you to reconsider a possible increase to the local allotment for our school system
- We realize in the face of difficult economic times, everyone is asking for increase funding, but our school system is our most efficient tool for attracting industry and for retaining the population of Stokes County
- We want our students to come back, live here, and work here; both of these elements would benefit our County in the not so distance future
- Respectfully asking that you consider increasing the local funding for our school system
- Again, I thank you for your service

**Micki Morgan**  
1950 Mountain View Church Road  
King, NC 27021

Ms. Morgan presented the following comments:

- I am the PTO President at Poplar Springs Elementary School
- I will be speaking on behalf of that school in particular
- I would like for you to please approve funding to keep our teacher coaches, our teacher assistants, and to keep the class sizes down at Poplar Springs
- Teacher coaches are an invaluable part of our school because teachers rely totally on these coaches to assist in attaining resources for their classroom
- They conduct professional development activities for our teachers and they assist teachers with all the demands related to the common core curriculum and assessments
- Teacher assistants are also an integral part of our school
- My daughter is moving from kindergarten to the first grade and she would not been able to accomplish as much as she did without that second adult in her classroom this year
- For perspective, this year, each of the four kindergarten classes at Poplar Springs had on average 22 students

- Imagine with me for a moment, trying to keep the attention of 22 (5 and 6 year old ) students for six hours a day by yourself
- Difficult job is saying it lightly
- Then imagine how difficult it would be even to give them just a smidgen of single individual of attention during that time
- The role of our teacher assistants is absolutely critical and the success of our K-1<sup>st</sup> grade students
- And finally class sizes, at Poplar Springs Elementary School, class sizes have been low this year in the upper grades which have directly resulted in an impressive growth in our EOG scores over last year
- Third grade scores improved 18% over last year
- Fourth grade scores improved 20% over last year
- Fifth grade scores improved an impressive 35% over last year
- This growth is tremendous
- Continued improvement will only be possible if we can keep these class sizes down
- In conclusion, please approve funding to keep our teacher assistants, our teacher coaches, and our class sizes down at Poplar Springs Elementary School
- Thank you again for your ongoing support to our school

**Kim Lawson**

1015 Sandy Lane  
Sandy Ridge, NC 27046

Ms. Lawson presented the following comments:

- I too, like a lot of these folks, are a product of this county's school system
- As we were preparing to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary at North Stokes High School (South Stokes High School is also in its 50<sup>th</sup> year), it was kind of interesting setting there and looking at the school buildings and realizing that not a lot had changed
- A lot of things are in disrepair as I am sure you know
- I will encourage you, like a lot of the folks have, visit the schools
- My husband and I are about to have both of our children out of the school system for a while
- Hope we are fortunate someday to have grandchildren here
- But at the moment, the schools are in desperate need
- We do need to invest in our children
- We need to let industries see that we are investing in our future
- As a CPA, I see that quite often that is where industry looks, is where they see the funding going and where they see we are investing in our future of children
- I asked my daughter while we were sitting here and she gave me quite an extensive list of what she could see as a senior at North Stokes that needed a change
- Things from the ceiling falling out of the library
- I was jealous when I was sitting here listening about Southeastern and they do have a beautiful school
- Every child in this County deserves the ability to be in a classroom setting like that
- I ask you to reconsider and push as much as you possibly can toward the school system



**Michael Boyles**  
1201 Mazie's Lane  
Pinnacle, NC 27043

Mr. Boyles presented the following comments:

- I have a kindergarten student at Pinnacle Elementary who will be going to the first grade next year
- I am concerned about the lack of funding for personnel during the next school year
- Teacher assistants play a vital role in helping mold and shape our students into lifelong learners
- My child's teacher was supported through the school year by a wonderful teacher assistant
- She was able to teach small guided reading groups, remediate students in areas where they needed some extra practice and encourage students to excel in areas where they were out performing their peers
- My child made amazing progress this school year in reading, particularly in other areas because of the individual attention provided by his teacher and the teacher assistant
- It concerns me that without the proper funding, our school system will have to pull money areas such as personnel
- If the current proposed budgets are accepted, our County could stand to lose over half the teacher assistants that work in our kindergarten and first grade classrooms
- We will also be hard hit in the funding that is used to provide tutoring for at-risk students
- Students entering first grade are expected to read at a Level "D"
- During first grade, my child is expected to grow 6 reading levels and leave first grade reading at Level "J"
- This is a very difficult task for a single teacher to do in the classroom with 20 or more first graders all reading at different levels
- The children will need individual help and support at school from a certified teacher and a teacher assistant
- My wife and I are familiar with the expectations that our child will face over the next few years and throughout his time in public school
- It is extremely important that we provide him and all students with a solid foundation necessary for him to succeed
- I realize the many different people who come to you asking for support, but I truly believe that the majority of taxpaying citizens expect you to support our schools with the financial backing needed to provide the best education and learning environment for our students

**Misty Cook**  
1125 Foxhills Road  
Pinnacle, NC 27043

Ms. Cook presented the following comments:

- I am a resident of Pinnacle
- I have two boys, a kindergartner and a third grader
- I own a business in King
- As a business owner, I am concerned about recruiting families to Stokes County

- I feel we are not portraying the image of a growing economic powerhouse if we are not invested in our school system
- Families do not want to move into a community where the schools look like the oldest building in town
- Families do not want to send their kids to schools where the roofs are leaking
- They do not want to send their kids to schools that have 40 year old carpet
- Forty year old carpet, the same carpet that I walked on, laid on, played on when I was in that school 20 years ago
- My children are now walking on, laying on and playing on that carpet
- I respectfully ask that you take my tax dollars and invest them in the schools
- Lets build a community that draws in others and in turn grows our businesses

**Jessica Gwyn**

1906 Osborne Joyce Road  
Pilot Mountain, NC 27041

Ms. Gwyn presented the following comments:

- My son is a preK student at Pinnacle Elementary
- This year, his classroom was in the POD behind the main building
- Throughout the year, my constant concern was regarding his safety and the safety of others
- The current phone system does not allow the teachers in the POD to call into the main building of the school without dialing the school's direct phone number and waiting for a secretary to pick up the phone
- If an emergency occurred that needed immediate attention, I am worried that there would be no way to communicate with the office
- When I call the school, I have a hard time hearing the secretary because of the static on the line
- While volunteering at the school, I have heard the secretary multiple times ask the person to repeat themselves for lack of hearing them or asking them to call back
- It makes it difficult to conduct business over the phone with a parent
- It also makes the parents and the secretary frustrated to have to use the phone system
- There are no phones in the classrooms throughout the main building and the intercom system is very outdated
- Throughout the year, repairs have been made to fix problems for a short period of time
- These repairs are paid by the school from their general fund, money raised by students that should be used for other things or for the students
- The gentlemen making the repairs have commented that some of the parts needed to repair the intercom and phone systems are becoming obsolete
- Sadly, school shootings and other emergencies are becoming more and more frequent
- I hope that you will make safety and funding capital projects a top priority for schools in this year's budget

**Zachary Posey**  
1283 East Old Phillips Road  
Pinnacle, NC 27043

Mr. Posey presented the following comments:

- I have a kindergarten student at Pinnacle Elementary
- The carpet in his classroom and other rooms in the building are 9 years older than I am
- I was born in 1983 and the carpet at Pinnacle Elementary is 40 years old
- The same carpet that was there when I was in school at Pinnacle Elementary
- I am very concerned about my student's health while at school
- He missed 18 days of school this year because of illness
- He has had many cold like symptoms and sinus issues most of the year
- A friend of mine exactly had her child transferred this year from Pinnacle to Poplar Springs Elementary because of continuous respiratory illnesses
- Since the move to the newer carpet free environment, her asthmatic symptoms have significantly decreased
- I am not sure if you have seen what 22 kindergarten students can do to carpet in 180 days of school
- I am sure there have been multiple spills, accidents, and ill children
- Picture a child entering kindergarten, you visualize them sitting in a circle in the floor working with puzzles and blocks and other activities
- In a second grade classroom, there is major safety issue where the carpet is pulled away from the wall and causes there to be humps in the floor
- As you enter the door, you have to immediately step over one of these humps
- The teacher reports that there are trips in the classroom several times each month
- The kindergarten students also rest for a short time on this floor with 40-year old carpet
- I am appalled to the thought of any child laying or sitting on these carpets
- Our custodian does a wonderful job keeping the carpets vacuumed and cleaning them throughout the school year, but you can only do so much with 40-year old carpet
- I am here to request that you provide the school system with the necessary funding to keep our schools safe, clean and comfortable for all our students

**Robin Layman**  
105 Ellington Road  
King, NC 27021

Ms. Layman presented the following comments:

- I know most of you
- I am a native of Stokes County Schools and graduated in 1989
- I have a son who graduated from West Stokes High School last year who attends Western Carolina and a daughter who graduated today from Poplar Springs Elementary and will attend Chestnut Grove Middle School
- Like many of the people who have spoken tonight, I hope to see my future family attend Stokes County Schools
- I feel very loyal to Stokes County

- I left Forsyth County as an assistant principal to come to Stokes County to be a principal and took a \$2,000 cut in pay
- I did that because I wanted to be in Stokes County and in Stokes County Schools
- First tonight, I would like to thank you the opportunity to speak and thank you for listening regarding the current budget 2014-15 school year
- I am the principal at Pinnacle Elementary School
- I have been an administrator in Stokes County for 12 years
- During this time, I have completed numerous requests for funding that have been denied especially in the area of capital outlay
- I would like to share with you some of the requests that I have made beginning in 2009 and update you on those requests
  - Maintain part time office support – not only was this part time position eliminated, the full time office secretary has been cut to 11 months
  - Hire additional teacher assistants to be shared in the second grade classrooms – not only was this request not funded, I no longer have full time teacher assistants in my first grade classrooms
  - New flooring to replace the older carpets – not funded
  - Repair or replace the radiators in the classrooms – they leak and make loud noises that distracts students and teachers – not funded – still distracting students 6 years later
  - Reinstate the general grounds allotment – not funded
  - Replace the roof over the media center and main hallway – not funded
- I think what frustrates me the most that these requests are repeatedly denied and brushed aside by some as unnecessary
- My requests and the requests of other schools are not unreasonable
- We should be able to provide our students with a safe, clean, efficient learning environment
- We should not even be having a discussion about whether or not to replace carpet and roofs that are nearly 40 years old
- We certainly should not have to beg for a working phone system and security cameras necessary to make sure our students and staff are safe when they are in our facilities
- Each year, I have worked with my students' PTO and local community to improve our school campus and building
- We have paid to have the hallways painted, the main hallways tiled, mulch, landscaping, rock and most recently painted the gymnasium
- While I am very proud of each of these accomplishments, I am frustrated that they were paid for by student fundraising
- Our students should not bear the burden of improving our schools
- I realize there may be disagreements over funding and who should fund what requests; however, I am here tonight to plead with you to put these differences aside and look at how we can all come together
- Listen to each other and try to understand the reasoning behind what you are requesting and what the school system is requesting
- I know that each of you on this Board wants what is best for Stokes County
- I promise you that a strong, effective, well-funded and supported school system is a must if you want to see our County thrive and its citizens lead full, successful lives

- Lastly, I want to appeal to you as parent, my daughter will be entering Chestnut Grove Middle School in the fall next year
- She will most likely attend the remainder of her schooling in Stokes County
- Please make sure that you are working with our Board of Education and our superintendent to help provide her and all other students with the facilities, technology, instructional materials, personnel and other support necessary to be a productive member of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century
- We must make education funding a priority
- The stakes are high and we have an obligation to put our differences and philosophy aside and work together for these precious children

**Nathan Rasey**

1592 Flat Shoals Road  
King, NC 27021

Mr. Rasey presented the following comments:

- I am the principal at North Stokes High School
- Five years ago, I came to North Stokes High School to work
- One of the first things that I was made aware of was the “A” building roof and the severity of the leaks and damage that was taken place there
- “A” building is what covers the offices, cafeteria, lobby, gym, weight room, locker rooms, etc.
- It was put on capital outlay request that year, but it also came with \$450,000+ price tag; therefore, it was not replaced that year, nor the next, nor the next, nor the next
- During that time, significant damage was taking place
- Provided pictures to illustrate the damage that has occurred from the leaks, plaster that has come down after a rainstorm
- The sanitation rating from the Health Department has gone down every year because of the leaks in the cafeteria
- As time went on, there have been leaks in the library
- Sad to say that our library is not in “A” building
- The damage that has been taken place in “A” building has not been corrected and now it has spread to other buildings
- Ceiling is coming down in the library – there has been damage to books and to the carpet along with water resting in the light fixtures (electricity and water is not a good mix)
- I preach to our students constantly at North, it is not the buildings that makes North Stokes, it is the people and I believe that
- But the bottom line is, the facilities are crucial and they are literally falling in around us
- The foreman of the roofing company that comes to patch these places told me that there are several sections that he would not allow men to go on the roof for fear that portion of the roof will collapse
- That is what we are looking at
- Couple of months ago, I attended a meeting at Central Office with commissioners and the school board and I heard several times in that meeting the phrase used “we are saving for a rainy day”
- The rainy day is here and every time it rains, it rains in my building

- I would appreciate your consideration for funding

**LeeAnn Sostaita**

1001 West Dalton Road  
King, NC 27021

Ms. Sostaita presented the following comments:

- Would like to say hello first and foremost to our county commissioners and congratulations on being blessed to have the opportunity to serve the community
- I am a parent of Stokes County students and a former student of Stokes County Schools
- I am also a parent advocator
- I am here today, of course, to ask you to increase the county budget for our schools
- In a time when our state has abandoned our future, I am asking our county not to do the same
- This year, "Times News" announced 50 cities in North Carolina to be the safest to live, King NC happened to be on that list; yes a small part of Stokes County was represented
- All credit can't just go to our public safety, as a large credit has to go to some of our educational system
- There are large amounts of articles and research on the links between education and crime or the lack of education and crime
- In that very article, the city is also full of pride when it comes to educating even the youngest members
- In addition to focus on education, friendlier folks and a decidedly peaceful vibe, you will also be pleased about King's safe streets
- There are many articles, one coming from the Justice Policy Institute Website, graduation rates were associated with a positive, public safety outcomes
- Five percent increase in male high school graduation rates will produce an annual savings of almost five billion dollars in crime-related expenses
- Now we can't wait on our state to care about Stokes County and our future here
- This is our county
- We must take care of our own
- Our schools are doing their job
- Our dropout rates reduce every year and as you have seen, we have much repairs, need to keep some of our tutors, do not need to lose any teachers or teacher assistants
- I also have the opportunity to advocate here and other counties for people with special needs
- When I go to other counties, it makes me appreciate our county, not just cause I went to school here
- I have to fight much harder in other counties that have much bigger budgets and are right next door, but I don't have to fight here, as a matter fact, they give me suggestions
- Our teachers, our directors, and our superintendents don't sit here worry about the money, they worry about the students first
- I have witnessed students who have all faculties here, but don't have physical capacity to do things
- We have come up with the equipment, it is a much bigger fight to get something done for a student in other counties, but not here

- I have seen a young lady be able to use her mouth to compete with her classmates in a standard classroom, not in a self-contained classroom and take the same test
- We were not concerned about that here, we were concerned about educating her
- I would like to say this, we have 7,000 future adult Stokes County citizens to think about
- I have a dream as a parent, as a resident, as an advocator that one day Stokes County will be that County that other counties aspire to be like, they will educate like us, they will have values and principles like us
- It is said that it takes a village to raise a child, well these children will grow up one day and they will be like me and many of you who went to school here
- They may be standing up here speaking to you or serving on our board

**Bridgette Johnson**

1184 Jimmie Bullins Road  
Walnut Cove, NC 27052

Ms. Johnson presented the following comments:

- I am here as an advocate to propose for the increased budget for the upcoming school year
- I have two children, my son just graduated from the Stokes Early High School with also his two year degree and will be attending UNCharlotte this fall in engineering with a minor in business
- My daughter is an upcoming sophomore at South Stokes High School
- As of this fall, I am choosing to send my daughter to South Stokes High School
- I work in Stokes County, I drive over 100 miles every single day within Stokes County to patients' homes
- I see homes that people live and I see the schools everyday driving through the County
- I am a physical therapist
- When I go out to a home, I look at the patient's home
- When I go out to see a patient with a broken hip, I am not just looking at that hip, I am looking at that total picture of that patient
- What kind of living conditions do they live in?
- Do they have a safe home?
- Do they have a ramp, if a ramp is needed to get in and out of their home?
- If not, it is my ethical duty to reach out to those patients and look at support agencies, volunteer organizations, that will reach out and help these people
- Our kids, our parents, and our teachers, also deserve the same thing in their school system
- We have talked about mold in the schools, we have talked about leaky buildings that people have an increased risk of falls, these are the people that I see, I see these people with broken hips, I see these people with broken arms
- To me, it is our right to look out after our kids, it could be our grandparent, it could be our mother walking down the hallway with a slippery floor and they fall
- It hits home, if it is your family
- It is a little bit easier to sit back if it is not your family, but it could be your grandson or your granddaughter
- These kids deserve a physical environment that is safe for them not only at home, from infancy all the way up, but also in the school system

- I am asking that you consider that total picture when you look and reach out to this budget for the year
- As I just mentioned, it could be someone in your family that I am seeing in their home that fell at the school or their child is exposed to allergens every day from carpet that has been there for years
- I see these people with bronchial irritations
- This is a total picture of what we are looking at
- We are looking at the total picture from beginning to end and the long term effects of these kids being exposed to these allergens, being exposed to wet floors
- It is just not safe
- I really feel that these kids need to be safe at school, there are more crimes in the schools
- Things continue to rise
- We need to take that positive step to make that happen
- Asking that you look at a total picture for our Stokes County School System and think about that in the upcoming years
- I am reaching out to you, not only on a personal level for my kids, but also on a professional level

Chairman Booth expressed the Board's appreciation for the comments provided at tonight's

Public Hearing.

### **Adjournment**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Booth entertained a motion to adjourn the Public Hearing.

Commissioner Lankford moved to adjourn the Public Hearing. Vice Chairman Jones seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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**Darlene M. Bullins**  
Clerk to the Board

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**James D. Booth**  
Chairman