

An adjourned meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Albemarle County, Virginia, was held on March 22, 2006, at 1:00 p.m., Room 235, County Office Building on McIntire Road, Charlottesville, Virginia. This meeting was adjourned from March 20, 2006.

PRESENT: Mr. Ken C. Boyd, Mr. Lindsay G. Dorrier, Jr., Mr. Dennis S. Rooker, Mr. David Slutzky, Ms. Sally H. Thomas and Mr. David C. Wyant.

ABSENT: None.

OFFICERS PRESENT: County Executive, Robert W. Tucker, Jr., County Attorney, Larry W. Davis, and Diane Mullins from the County Executive's Office.

Agenda Item No. 1. The meeting was called to order at 1:00 p.m., by the Chairman, Mr. Rooker.

Agenda Item No. 2. Work Session: FY 2006-07 County Budget.

Mr. Rooker asked Mr. Tucker to pick up where the discussion ended on Monday.

Mr. Tucker reminded the Board that each item on the list of unfunded initiatives was to be considered individually and voted on so staff would understand which items are to be included in the budget, if any. He said these budget work sessions have to be completed today in order to meet the legal requirement for advertising a public hearing on the budget on April 5.

Mr. Boyd said before starting he needs to ask a question. He said there is a placeholder in the budget for supplemental money for VERIP (Voluntary Early Retirement Incentive Program). He asked if this is an appropriate time to discuss this subject (this request came about because some retired employees asked for help with payment of their health insurance premiums).

Mr. Tucker said money is available for this purpose if the Board decides to approve the request. It is set aside in the budget awaiting a report from Human Resources. He said they are going to compare a typical classified employee, a law enforcement employee and a school employee who made the same amount of money, and show how their retirement benefits may or may not differ.

Mr. Rooker said he thought the Board had decided to just give a flat amount to existing retirees and not establish any program. He remembers that the Board was going to look at the IRA concept for current employees going forward into the future. Even if there is some money in the budget, he thinks the Board needs the report on this subject at a regular meeting. The Board cannot make a decision today because it does not have the information needed.

Mr. Boyd said he only remembers the Board asked for a comparison between classes of employees. Mr. Tucker said that is what he understood.

Mr. Rooker said he thinks the Board needs this information as quickly as possible. For those members of the audience present today who are interested in this subject, he will say that there is money set aside in this proposed budget to implement something.

Mr. Dorrier said he has a study given to him by Mr. Dan Blake, former president of the Virginia Fraternal Order of Police. The study was done by FOP nationwide regarding mortality rates of the police – which are greater than regular government employees.

Mr. Tucker reported that there is a Net Reserve in this budget of \$1.981 million. There are also various items the Board may consider for possible funding. The first such item reflects the cost of hiring EMS staffing for the Northern Fire Station one month sooner than anticipated. The plan was to hire these employees in October, but at Mr. Slutzky's request staff looked at the cost of hiring them earlier. The cost would be about \$50,000 for each month moved forward – or it would be \$150,000 to hire them in July. He said Mr. Eggleston has told him that hiring them in July could be managed.

Mr. Dan Eggleston, Director of Fire/Rescue, said they are presently working on a recruitment process that has an end date of July 1. These people would need to be trained, and it is his hope that they could start work within 30 days.

Mr. Wyant asked about moving volunteers over to the Airport to have a better response time. If people are in the wrong location, that does not help the response time.

Mr. Eggleston said that is the reason staff has been working with the people at Earlysville and CARS. They wanted to explore all those possibilities before coming forward with a recommendation for additional personnel. He said a good job has been done by the volunteers in the way of recruitment and retention. It is above the national average, but calls are still outpacing the amount of people available.

Mr. Wyant said there are not enough volunteers to cover that northern area of the County.

Mr. Boyd asked if \$50,000 is the total expense for doing this. What about the cost of a vehicle, etc? Mr. Eggleston said the cost for vehicles is already built into the budget for the Northern Station.

Mr. Wyant asked if the vehicle would be available when the new people get their training. Mr. Eggleston said it is likely it would not be available, but CARS has agreed to loan an ambulance.

Mr. Slutzky asked if the County has permission to use the Airport as a staging area until the station is completed. Mr. Eggleston said there are a couple of options being explored now.

Mr. Wyant asked if there is any space available on Route 29. Mr. Eggleston said there are some possibilities on Route 29, but there are a lot of options on Airport Road. Mr. Tucker said it had been agreed that the County can use the Airport site in October. He does not know if can be used prior to that time. Mr. Eggleston said it might be possible to use the Airport site, adding that there are a couple people who are willing to work with the County on the leasing of space.

Mr. Boyd said he thought that at one time an ambulance was housed at Seminole Square. Mr. Eggleston said it is at the Seminole Trail Station on Berkmar Drive. That location is about five miles from the intersection of Route 29 and Airport Road. An ambulance there would not give the response time wanted.

Mr. Boyd said he doesn't want to set up a false sense of security. Someone in Forest Lakes told him it took 45 minutes recently to get an ambulance to respond there. He does not want anyone to think that by spending this additional money it will guarantee them a response in five or seven minutes.

Mr. Slutzky said the average response time to Forest Lakes has been about 13 minutes as compared with 10 minutes in the southern rural area. That was such a big disconnect that he was concerned. Because the County has a plan in place for the new fire station, he thought it might be moved forward if possible.

Mr. Boyd said he is not opposed but he does not want those people to think it will absolutely shorten the response time.

Mr. Rooker asked if it is realistic to move this forward three months. Mr. Eggleston said it can be moved up three months.

Mr. Rooker asked if any of the Board members oppose doing this for three months. No one dissented.

Ms. Thomas said that item competes with adding \$50,000 for the request from JABA for Mountainside. She is withholding her judgment until it is seen that there is enough money to do this.

Mr. Tucker said he thought the Board had agreed to hold some funds in reserve. Then, after the Mountainside Senior Living business plan was received, the Board would decide whether or not to spend some of that money.

Mr. Tucker said the next item is funding for a sixth additional police officer, rather than the five additional personnel previously discussed. He said this position would cost \$60,661 plus \$35,333 in one-time costs.

Mr. Rooker said he does not support the request. Five officers are being added in the budget. If the Board continues adding one or more officers year by year over and above the population demand requirement, the County will work its way to its goal. The Police Department was one of the highest rated services in the County on the recent Citizen Survey. If they have a problem, it is in handling the growth equation in the County. He said the five officers were requested by the department and that is the number recommended by staff. He asked if the Board members wanted to vote on this item. He personally does not support the request.

Mr. Boyd said he does not support the request.

Mr. Wyant said he does not support the request.

Ms. Thomas did not support the request.

Mr. Slutzky said he supports the request.

Mr. Tucker said the next item to be discussed is the value of one cent on the tax rate being dedicated to the ACE program which would be \$1,387,000. He said \$1.0 million is already a part of next year's budget, so all that is needed is an additional \$387,000. He understands that in the future the Board wants that indexed so that every year the value of a penny would be put into the ACE program.

Mr. Rooker said that it would be indexed to property values, but is a policy that would not be binding on the Board.

Mr. Boyd said that up until now ACE has been funded using one-time dollars. He has talked with Mr. Breeden and is not convinced the ACE program can spend the money no matter what amount is put into the program. He understands there are enough funds set aside now and that it normally takes from six months to a year to get projects to the point of actually paying out the cash. He is in favor of leaving

that money in the Reserve and making it available to them at a later time, rather than making a policy decision at this time.

Ms. Thomas said she has talked to Mr. Breeden and Mr. Ches Goodall in the last 24 hours about this program. If this money is added there will be enough to cover the FY 2005-06 applications which are presently being considered. The applications for FY 2006-07 are due in October. If the Board adopts a policy to put in the penny there would probably be enough to cover the cost of about 400 acres. The Board's original goal was to get easements for about 1000 acres. Even with the addition of the extra \$387,000, it would not cover the cost of 1000 acres. It may be a semantics issue of whether to put the money into the budget now or whether to hold it, but she thinks semantics are important. Over the last four or five years people have asked that ACE be a stable item in the budget as opposed to something that is funded when one-time moneys are available. She thinks having it as a line item in the budget is a good idea and having it linked to the penny is a good idea.

Mr. Wyant said it takes 12 to 18 months to finalize payment for the easements. He thinks there should be more publicity for ACE as many people are not aware of what the program can do for them. He asked that the process be accelerated.

Ms. Thomas noted that the ACE Committee has hired a different appraiser in the hopes of speeding up the process.

Mr. Rooker said the Board adopted a goal to increase conservation easements in the County by 50 percent over the next four years. However, the County cannot get the same number of acres into the program as it did five years ago because the Board has not increased its commitment to the program and property values have increased dramatically. If the Board makes this commitment to keep the program indexed to inflation, even if all of the money is not spent in the next 12 months it will still be set aside. He thinks it is important for the Board to make the statement that it will try to keep up with inflation with this program.

Mr. Boyd said the real question is whether the Board wants to set a policy that it will dedicate one-cent of the tax rate. He agrees with Mr. Rooker that it makes no matter which "pot" the money is in.

Mr. Rooker said the Board can always change a policy. This would send a signal to the people working with the ACE Program and to the community that the Board is serious about trying to at least keep pace with inflation in the program.

Mr. Boyd said people in the designated growth areas are asking when the County will come up with money for transportation needs and infrastructure needs. Whether the Board likes it or not, that is a competing thing. But, he has no problem with setting aside the money for ACE.

Mr. Rooker asked if anybody was opposed.

Mr. Wyant said he is not at all opposed.

Mr. Tucker said this would be a policy to add this money to ACE for next year and staff would index the uses as a value of a penny each year until the policy was changed.

Mr. Slutzky said if a previous Board made a commitment to add 1,000 acres each year, this one cent will not even keep up with what the Board has committed to doing. To choose not to set aside that one cent sends a confusing signal to the marketplace.

Mr. Davis said that so far the County has been able to keep up with all of the applications that have qualified. No one has been turned away yet because of funding.

Mr. Rooker said the money will stay in the Fund Balance. The Board is saying it is committed to making this program work and to keeping up with inflation. Hopefully, the publicity will increase the applications received. The program may need to be adjusted to make it more workable for more applicants. That is another possibility. However, the question is whether the Board is going to make the financial commitment to keep pace with inflation.

Mr. Boyd said that right now there is \$2.9 million just sitting in the bank for this program not including the money for FY 2006-07, there is a three-year backlog getting the money spent.

Mr. Rooker said he understands there are enough pending applications that the ACE Program will use that money before the end of this year. The money going into the 2006-07 will fund the next round of applicants.

Mr. Tucker asked if next year (2007-08) the Board would like to take the amount needed, other than the Tourism dollars, "off the top" before calculating the split in new revenues with the Schools or take it all from the CIP Fund Balance.

Mr. Dorrier responded that because it benefits the whole community, it should be taken off the top.

Mr. Boyd asked if Mr. Tucker was suggesting that this money be a CIP expenditure. Mr. Tucker said "yes." He suggests moving the money to the CIP but taking the money "off the top." That would affect the amount to be split between Local Government and the Schools.

Mr. Tucker said the next item to be discussed is \$5,000 which was put on the list for publicity of the ACE program.

Mr. Wyant said the Board made a commitment to conservation easements in general. There are other programs concerned with this matter, not just ACE. He would like for the Board to combine these programs and let it be publicity on all types of easements. He knows there are many people in the County who do not know about these options.

Ms. Thomas said this fits with the next item on the list, \$17,000 for Conservation Easement Promotion.

Mr. Slutzky said there are people in the County who do not have land to put in conservation easements, but it is good for them to know the County has been proactive trying to preserve the rural areas so they will appreciate where their tax dollars are being spent.

Mr. Tom Foley, Assistant County Executive, said that based on language in the Strategic Plan it is clear the goal cannot be achieved without using other programs.

Mr. Boyd asked what type of publicity is being considered. Mr. Tucker said staff is looking at a lot of options.

Ms. Lee Catlin, Community Resources Manager, said every dollar in the ACE Program needs to be spent to property purchase. That has limited the Committee's ability to produce materials, and even publish deadlines in the newspapers. The public relations piece has not had a budget of its own. Every year there is a mail out to every person who owns the amount of property needed to qualify for the program.

Mr. Dorrier commented that his mother recently put her property into a conservation easement, but it was difficult to comprehend the tax implications of the arrangement, but it is something that has a significant value to the property owner. Mr. Tucker said most people do not know about this value.

Ms. Catlin said in the first few years of the program the County was able to obtain some of the easier "gets." Now the County needs to be more convincing and market some of the more appealing benefits of the program.

Mr. Wyant said the County has been pushing the ACE Program, but there are also other programs concerning conservation easements. He thinks the County needs to look at the broader picture.

Ms. Thomas said that is why she has suggested that the next item, conversation easement promotion, ties into this. She talked with the person at PEC who does promotions for conservation easements and he suggested that the PEC and Nature Conservancy get together with other organizations (Ms. Thomas suggested the Rivanna Soil & Water Conservation District and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation) and decide what they might do to get more conservation easements. She said \$17,000 would create an incentive and provide a good starting point for marketing efforts.

Mr. Wyant said the ACE Committee would need to be a part of this effort.

Mr. Slutzky asked if Ms. Thomas was suggesting that the County invest \$22,000 in a collaborative marketing effort for these various programs.

Mr. Tucker said they are two separate issues but this would be coordination of the advertising.

Mr. Boyd said he is concerned about the \$17,000 and the way it was recommended. He said it was not just a number taken out of the air, but a number to offset what the Board was going to spend on TJPED. That does not sit well with him. He said there are four members of this Board who during the last two campaign cycles felt it was important to promote career ladder jobs in this area, and they felt TJPED was the way to do it. At this point, to say that because that was passed by a majority of the Board there has to be a "tit for tat or worse" and the Board has to atone for what it did by putting a similar amount into this thing is insulting to him. He cannot support the \$17,000 the way it was put on the list. If that amount were put into the ACE publicity line item making a total of \$22,000 he could support it.

Mr. Rooker said the money was not characterized that way. It was not to offset what the Board did wrong. It was presented as being the first time the County was spending money for a nonprofit advocacy group. He thinks that is fine and the Board should try to get the most out that group for the money spent with them. Once the Board decided to do that, there was nothing wrong with making a decision to give some money to environmental groups who are pursuing another goal of the Board. Career ladder jobs are a goal as is increasing land in conservation easements by 50 percent over the next four years. He said the Board would only be putting some money with some private groups to help them. Of the 60,000 acres in conservation easements now, 57,000 were done by the private groups. They think that with some additional financial help they can increase their efforts. He would be comfortable with increasing that number to \$24,000. He said it is not a way to atone for a wrong, but a way to try and

achieve the goal relating to conservation easements. That is the spirit in which it was offered. He suggested this amount because it was the amount given to TJPED so he suggested the same amount be given for that purpose.

Mr. Boyd said that is not the underlying tone.

Mr. Rooker said he thinks it is a question of whether the Board members support this program. It is not a comment on TJPED.

Mr. Boyd said this money was not requested by these organizations to help them with this program.

Mr. Rooker said he thinks several Board members support this item. It is being requested by members of the Board in order to help achieve conservation goals.

Mr. Dorrier suggested bringing it back before the Board when there is more information available.

Mr. Rooker said it is before the Board now so it can decide whether it is willing to commit to spending \$17,000 to help groups like PEC, the Nature Conservancy and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation achieve the County's conservation goals.

Mr. Dorrier said all those groups have different purposes. They need to come up with a group plan to educate the public about these easements.

Ms. Thomas said she agrees with Mr. Dorrier because the Board is not saying it will give this money to any particular group at this point. They would need to come up with a group plan to spend no more than this amount.

Mr. Boyd asked if these groups are not already represented on the ACE Committee. He would feel more comfortable having ACE be the lead "agency" setting aside the money for its use.

Mr. Wyant responded that he would rather have one budget line item for conservation easements, whether ACE is leading it or not. He thinks all those groups need to work together to publicize this effort.

Mr. Davis said the ACE easement is a category of easement to use when it is not advantageous for people to make a donated easement. He said ACE is used by a separate class of people. As a service to people who want to put their land in conservation easements, the Board needs to make sure it is not better served by having easements donated as opposed to paying for them. He said PEC and the Virginia Outdoors Foundation are useful for that purpose, but there are better ways to coordinate and provide additional information to the applicant pool to make sure the County gets the most for the dollar spent.

Mr. Rooker said if this money is just listed as a category for publicity and coordination for conservation easements, he agrees with that. He wants to make certain these private groups understand they can participate and present a good plan to the Board. He said 90 percent of the easements in the County are now being obtained by private organizations.

Mr. Dorrier said the problem is that every landowner who wants to participate in the program has to hire their own lawyer and pay their own expenses. That is a burden on the average person who participates. Maybe some assistance could be provided to help the average citizen who wants to get into the program.

Ms. Catlin said staff can take the responsibility for getting these groups together. There are common themes among them that everyone could benefit from.

Mr. Rooker said these two items will be linked together if the Board members agree. He said that would be \$22,000 and the Board needs to tell staff it wants the private groups and ACE to work together to come up with something that will help the Board pursue its conservation easement goals – both public and private.

Mr. Tucker said the next item to be discussed is the ArtinPlace Program which is shown for \$13,100 in the General Services budget. This contribution has been reduced to cover only landscaping projects, not sculptures. He said this is an ongoing cost if the program is continued. The landscaping would take place primarily in Entrance Corridors. The County would consider other locations as well.

Ms. Thomas said she had encouraged them to do landscaping, maybe using the expertise of people from the Garden Clubs. She thinks that is a way to leverage the money.

Mr. Rooker said the Garden Club people have already talked with VDOT about appropriate plantings.

Mr. Tucker said this money will be used for the actual plant material; there is also a maintenance cost beyond that initial cost. He said they will use architects and garden clubs to consult on the landscape design.

Ms. Thomas said there is a statewide movement to get communities to plant red, white and blue for the 2007 Jamestown celebration. There is some funding available for that.

The Board members agreed with the ArtinPlace budget item.

Mr. Tucker reported that \$10,000 is listed for "Save the Fireworks", which duplicates the amount donated in the past.

Ms. Thomas said she loves fireworks but does not feel it is a good use of taxpayer dollars. This year's show was much too long.

Mr. Slutzky said Mr. Dave Phillips acknowledged that last July's program was too long, but also said the County benefits from the fireworks display. If it is managed in the future as they plan doing, it will be a sustainable event the shared communities can enjoy. He is supportive because it shows to the City that the County is willing to carry its share of the cost.

There was a general consensus to support the request for the fireworks display.

For the Virginia Film Festival, Mr. Tucker reported that the County funds this event with the same amount as provided for the Virginia Book Festival. This time they have requested a \$15,000 contribution. Staff has recommended a six percent increase over the current year's request. In order to fully fund the \$15,000, it will take another \$3,127.

Mr. Dorrier said this money is from the Tourism Fund. He thinks an increase has already been paid for by the film made in Crozet. He then presented information about the amount of money the film "Hannibal" brought in when it was filmed in Richmond, noting that what the County contributes is more than offset by the revenues received in the community.

Mr. Rooker said Charlottesville is becoming known as an arts center. Events like the Film Festival contribute to that reputation.

Mr. Tucker reported that Social Services is currently short five Adult Protective Service Worker positions. The cost of one worker has been included on the list at a cost of \$41,902 plus \$4,070 in one-time costs.

Ms. Kathy Ralston, Director of Social Services, confirmed that there are two employees being added – one Adult Protective Service worker and one Child Protective Service worker. They are short five Adult Protective Service workers and five in Child Welfare.

Ms. Thomas said she supports the additional position.

Mr. Rooker said when he looked at the Strategic Initiative requests in the budget, the third initiative was to add three eligibility workers. The fifth initiative was for Protective Services and there are two new positions there. That is a total of five people being added.

Mr. Tucker said he believes the salaries for those employees are reimbursed by the State. Ms. Ralston said on the eligibility side, 50 percent of the additional positions are reimbursed by the State, while on the Child Welfare and APS side only 25 percent is reimbursed.

Mr. Rooker said he does not support the request because he does not see any justification for it. The County is funding everything that was requested – which is adding five more people to the department – and he thinks it would be wise for the department to see how it functions with five additional employees. Mr. Tucker said this was added during the last work session when staff showed the Board where the gap existed.

Mr. Rooker said he had talked with someone about the concept of a "gap." In the first place, these positions are supposed to be funded by the State. Now it is down to where only a percentage is funded by the State, so every locality has what is defined as a gap. He thinks the addition of five people is a significant commitment to Social Services.

Mr. Wyant asked about the performance targets. He said that last year the target was 80 percent and the County got 100 percent. He was looking for something that did not meet the target. Ms. Ralston said eligibility has not been meeting targets. Some of the targets are based on Federal and State standards – particularly for child welfare.

Ms. Thomas said the Strategic Initiatives for that office listed on Page C-28 are the Office Associate III and the Companion Services funding. She asked if these were the higher priorities. Ms. Ralston said that every time staff positions are added, it adds work for the existing office associates. It was thought that position might be needed more at this time to help balance out the new staffing. Also, the person in the reception area was lacking in language capabilities.

Ms. Thomas asked which position on the list would be the most useful addition to deal with the gap. She was responding to a dramatic slide presentation which showed a gap. The Board did not ask the most useful way to deal with this issue, but just added a person to fill the gap. Ms. Ralston said there

is a big gap when it comes to the Office Associate position. But, she thinks a social worker in the field is of a higher importance to the department. They will find a way to deal with the office associate position; they can contract to bring in an interpreter.

Mr. Rooker said the department has been doing a good job of meeting its goals. Five more people will improve that situation. He does not feel more staff should be added until those staff members are integrated. Mr. Tucker said the County just went into the new building on Fifth Street. That building is supposed to cover twenty years in growth. When adding staff is accelerated, the faster that space will be used.

Mr. Slutzky said because the County is growing a lot of people are requesting infrastructure. He said this is infrastructure of a sort. The Board can acknowledge gaps between services and the ability to provide those services, but not try to fill in those gaps all at once. While saying it will not fill the gap now it is still acknowledging that it is under serving constituents and the demand for these services is actually disproportionately growing because demographics are shifting.

Mr. Rooker said that argument can be made for everything on the list. It is up to the Board at some point to say this is a reasonable amount of money. He said five people were requested, and he does not know how the sixth person was added to the list.

Mr. Slutzky said he thinks the Board members were all shocked at the degree to which the gap continued to persist even with the five, and so that's why it was brought to the Board.

Mr. Rooker said he is shocked that the State does not fund what they're supposed to fund.

Mr. Slutzky said he was not shocked, but appalled.

Mr. Rooker said this sixth person was much lower on the list than many of things which are not being funded. If the Board wants to spend more money on personnel, he would suggest it go back to the Strategic Initiative list for priorities.

Mr. Foley said he and Mr. Tucker have encouraged staff to request additional positions as needed.

Mr. Dorrier asked how many new workers were hired in Social Services in the current year. Ms. Ralston said there were none. This is the first time she has ever asked for five additional staff members at one time.

Mr. Boyd said he agrees with Mr. Rooker that what has been funded is enough for now, noting that the Social Services budget increased 12.2 percent when the population increased by only 1.5 to 1.8 percent and the CPI increased by only 3.2 percent. He thinks the County is doing a lot to fund the overall budget.

Mr. Slutzky said he does not think Mr. Rooker and Mr. Boyd are wrong. He was only saying that the 1.5 percent increase in population gives rise to more than a 1.5 percent need in these kinds of services. He said the County's demographic is becoming more urbanized, and the need for social services is probably accelerating more rapidly. He just wanted to acknowledge that over time there is going to be an increasing challenge for the Board to fulfill social service needs. He is not saying the Board would be wrong to satisfy the request for five employees and recognize it is a significant increase. The Board needs to recognize that the demand for those services will probably increase more rapidly than the population numbers. The Board should not lose sight of the need to fill the gap.

Mr. Boyd said given the demographics of this area and its wealth, why is that?

Mr. Rooker said the Board has agreed to add the five employees. If the department has problems during the year, the Board can discuss adding an additional person.

Mr. Slutzky said he agrees with what the Board is doing, but wants everyone to remember that it is not solving the problem, only making an attempt to do so.

Mr. Boyd said there is a theory that the more social services provided the more the expense will grow. He is concerned about possible duplication of services from all the different agencies. He is anxious to see the report the Commission on Children & Families is working on now. It should show how much money from the community as a whole goes into social services. This community characterizes itself as being very affluent.

Mr. Slutzky said it has a lot of affluence but 20 percent of the population is at or below 200 percent of the poverty line. He is not interested in attracting indigents to the community as part of the Board's growth strategy. When he was living in Evanston, Illinois, they made the mistake of making an extraordinary effort toward the homeless. Within a year the streets were covered with homeless people. They actually had to rescind their generosity because people from the Chicago metropolitan area moved to Evanston.

Mr. Rooker said adding the five employees to the Social Services Department will help with some of the workload in that department.

Mr. Tucker said it was suggested that a seventh Bright Stars Program be added to the list. It would cost about \$154,426, with Cale Elementary School being the most likely location for the program.

Mr. Boyd asked the population in Cale which takes advantage of the free and reduced lunch program. He thinks it is a high number. Ms. White said it is high. Cale actually has a waiting list of kids wanting to get into that school. That is a demographic area of the County that needs support. They cannot serve all of the kids now who need to be in that program, as there is a limit of 16 children per program.

Mr. Rooker said the Board, at a previous work session, talked about how this program is more of a school program than a General Government program. He thinks any decision about adding a seventh program should be a school decision. Ms. White replied that the decision to recommend a seventh program was made jointly with Schools; they provide funding for Bright Stars as well.

Mr. Tucker said the Board has said that previously, but the program can't be changed today. In fairness to staff, General Government initiated the Bright Stars Program years ago and it has been very successful. He said Social Services and members of his staff thought it was important to encourage the program. The Schools were not going to propose it so the County stepped in and has been working in coordination with the Schools since then. Now that the program is up and running, maybe it should be a school initiative managed by them in the future. Staff can look at that idea.

Mr. Dorrier asked how many children are involved in the program. Ms. White said there are 16 children in each program for a total of 96.

Ms. Thomas said she thinks the whole community is interested in the "achievement gap" which has been mentioned. She said it was the conviction of General Government that preventive and pre-school programs were the most effective way to go about having achievement by kids who otherwise have several strikes against them before they step into a school the first time. She said the program has done many good things. Deciding whether it should be picked up by the School System and using that as a reason not to fund the seventh Bright Stars Program this year would be a disservice to many. She thinks the seventh program should be added.

Mr. Boyd said one of the Governor's initiatives was a statewide preschool program. He asked if anything has happened with that on the State level. Ms. White responded that there is a budget amendment proposed by the Senate but not by the House to increase the amount of money per child from \$5,400 to \$5,700 going up to \$6,000 later.

Mr. Boyd feels this is an educational initiative. He agrees with Mr. Rooker. Maybe this was something the County felt was needed and the School System was not willing to pick up on it. He said Bright Stars is basically a pre-school program. Ms. White said when it began staff saw that CSA costs were escalating; many kids were having problems with delinquency, with teen pregnancy and other crisis issues. These were things on which the County was spending a lot of money. Staff developed a prevention strategy including early home visiting programs, the Bright Stars Program and the Family Support program. Those were the three anchors staff felt were needed. Recognizing what happens before a kid gets to kindergarten is probably as important, or more important, than what happens before they get into K-5.

Mr. Rooker said he does not believe any Board member disagrees with that. He thinks it is important to have the seventh program, but the question is whether it is appropriately a school program. He thinks it is. He would be in favor of supporting this request if there had been discussions with the School System about how they might participate in its funding. If they don't think it is a program worth funding, he would like to understand why. Mr. Tucker said the Schools understand the benefit of the program. Initially, that was not the case and that is why his staff pushed the program. Maybe over the next year, staff can discuss it with them.

Mr. Slutzky asked if the Board could choose to fund the seventh program and then over the next year convince the Schools to share the cost. Mr. Tucker said if the Schools are willing to do it, he thinks they would make a request to the Board for the total amount. He thinks the Board is saying the program should be managed by the Schools.

Mr. Dorrier said he was involved with the Saint John Foundation with Patricia Kluge. Out of her generosity and concern Ms. Kluge put money into Yancey Elementary School. After a year or so, it was found to be making a substantial difference. Yancey did not pass the SOLs three years ago, but this year they did. He said that program came from an outside source. He said that sometimes the School System does not do everything it can do to initiate new programs. He would be in favor of this seventh program because of what he has seen with the program at Yancey.

Mr. Wyant said he thinks everybody sees the benefit of that program and does not realize how it came about.

Mr. Rooker said to him it is not just funding. He thinks the Schools should make a judgment about whether the Bright Stars Program should be funded. If needed, the Board could participate in a meaningful way in funding the program if the amounts allocated to the Schools were not adequate to fund the service. He thinks it is a school decision about whether Bright Stars should continue. To him, having a seventh program is a decision for the Schools not for General Government.

Ms. Thomas said General Government started the program. Not adding a seventh program today because the Schools have not requested it from the Board seems to be demanding something that was not "on the plate."

Mr. Rooker said it is primarily a school function and he thinks the School Board knows more about education than this Board does. How their money is allocated for education in the community should be left to them. If the Board is going to add an additional \$154,000 expense in the Schools next year, would that program be the best place to spend the money? He cannot say so. The Board does not need to decide today to fund this program. Money can be set aside in the Reserve and a decision made later. This was not in the staff's recommended budget. Ms. White confirmed that the Schools do have funding for the seventh program in their budget; they agreed that the seventh program would be at Cale Elementary and they would fund \$60,000 for the program.

Mr. Slutzky said if the Schools included funding in their budget for a seventh program they have already spoken in support of it and operated under the assumption that the Board would do its share of the funding.

Mr. Rooker said he does not know how the Schools got that impression.

Mr. Slutzky asked why they put the money in their budget.

Ms. White said staff met with the School Division ahead of time and talked about the program. It was determined that there would be money from the State to have the seventh program. They discussed where that program might be located and determined jointly that the need is at Cale. Staff determined that it would forward with a request for a seventh Bright Stars Program. It went into the School budget for \$60,000, and then it went into General Government's request. However, it did not come out of the Leadership Council as a higher priority than other requests.

Mr. Boyd said to go back to what Mr. Rooker has been saying, if it had been a much larger expense, would the School System have thought the program was important?

Ms. Thomas said she thinks it is easier for the Supervisors to fund a Social Services Program than it is for the School System to start a program for four-year olds in just a few of its schools. At one time the School System decided to do some "differential staffing" placing more staff at the schools which had a greater use of reduced lunch fees. The outcry from schools in her district was deafening because they did not have a great number of children on the reduced lunch fees, but they wanted to have the same thing that the other schools had. She thinks Local Government took leadership on this program because it was possible for it to do so. The politics of the School System made it more difficult for them to do it.

Ms. Ralston said the Schools are finally beginning to understand that they are not an island in the community. They have to depend on the assistance of the human service agencies to educate these children. A preschool program had not historically been an educational program. It was a collaborate effort to work with the parents before the kids got to kindergarten. The program was not seen by the schools until just recently as a school program. They saw it as a human services program. She thinks they are close to taking on the program and supporting it. She said preschool still has a strong component in the way of the Family Support Program, and the schools do not have such a program. That is not their business and they should be able to rely on Social Services for that work. There needs to be coordination between the Schools and Social Services to make it a good school program and a good social services program.

Mr. Rooker asked how that is done. The class meets at a certain time with a teacher, so how is that augmented by Social Services. Ms. Ralston said the coordinator of the Bright Stars program meets with all of the teachers on a regular basis to review the curriculum and to determine if any changes are needed in that curriculum. She also helps with training. The role of Social Services comes in the way of family coordination.

Mr. Boyd asked how the children are chosen for the program. Ms. Ralston said several criteria are used, some having to do with economics, some having to do with developmental delays, spousal abuse, education of parents, etc.

Mr. Boyd asked if the department goes out and finds these children, or do they come to the department. Ms. Ralston said it happens in both ways. As the program becomes more popular and people hear about it, they come to the department. They also solicit by having their caseworkers go door-to-door, they distribute flyers and hold meetings in the community.

Mr. Boyd asked how that overlaps with Community Outreach in the Schools. Ms. Ralston said she does not know enough about that program to comment.

Mr. Wyant asked why it was said the preschool program was directed more toward the family. Ms. Ralston said it is not directed more toward the family, but this is a good way to get the family involved in the schools. Most of these parents are intimidated by the schools. Most were not successful in school themselves.

Mr. Wyant asked why this could not be taken care of in other ways. He thinks it would be better to get the family more involved and embrace the program. This should build families and not build a

government social program. Ms. Ralston said this program is all about engaging the families and empowering the families to make better choices for their kids.

Mr. Rooker asked how much of the funding being discussed goes to the Social Service employee. He asked if an employee would be added in Social Services for this program. Ms. Ralston said a Family Coordinator would be added for 16 families, and they would also follow up with those families through kindergarten and grade one. It funds a coordinator for the seventh program.

Mr. Rooker said there are two social services employees included in this budget, plus a teacher's aide and supplies. Ms. Ralston said there are expenses involved in getting the classroom ready for use. She said the coordinator supports all of the programs.

Mr. Rooker said the amount proposed for the General Government budget is \$154,000. He said there are State revenues in addition to that, so he would like to know the total cost of the program for 16 kids. Ms. Ralston said the total cost of adding a seventh classroom is estimated to be \$253,256.

Mr. Boyd said when he was a member of the School Board he was very interested in the Bright Stars Program and its impact. They tracked the children through the second grade, but never were told how they did on their first SOLs which started in the first grade. Ms. Ralston said those things are being tracked now.

Mr. Boyd said the children need to be tracked beyond that point to be sure the program is working, and that they actually graduate. Ms. Ralston said that is part of the continuum which was set up.

Mr. Boyd asked if a lot of these students are non-English speaking. Ms. Ralston said some are.

Mr. Rooker said based on what he is hearing, he would support the program conditioned upon the Schools being brought into an active discussion between now and next year about them making a more meaningful contribution to the program. Perhaps they could take over more of the administrative component of the program. It sounds like a program that is evenly divided between Social Services and the Schools.

Mr. Dorrier asked if these children are tracked through high school. Ms. Ralston said they are tracking these children through fifth grade, but there are challenges in tracking in terms of confidentiality.

Mr. Boyd said the School System should be able to track these children without that issue. Ms. Ralston acknowledged that a lot of the participants are transient, so are hard to track.

Mr. Rooker said he thinks everybody recognizes the importance of preschool education. He said the State has proposed doing a better job in this area, but nothing has come about yet. He supports the program this year for the seventh Bright Stars program, but requests that the School Board, between now and next year, understand that it needs to take a more meaningful role.

Ms. Thomas said she would also like to have the Social Services Department have an active role. This program should not be damaged in any way by having it taken over by the Schools.

Mr. Wyant and Mr. Slutzky both agreed with having a seventh program.

Mr. Boyd said he supports it, but he asked if staff had looked at the possibility of using a voucher system. Ms. Ralston said staff looked into that last year, but preschool programs in the area do not meet the Bright Stars standard.

Mr. Tucker said the Board has \$1.24 million left in its Reserve. He said if the Board wants to include the additional \$50,000 contribution to JABA for the Mountainside Senior Living facility that could be done, or it can wait and deal with the question after viewing JABA's business plan.

Mr. Boyd said he does not want to include anything until he sees the business plan.

Mr. Slutzky said he would rather put it in. He wants to see the business plan in terms of figuring out how to fulfill the County's 10-year commitment in a realistic way.

Mr. Boyd said the County did not have a commitment to JABA; it is the other way around.

Mr. Rooker said in the original plan, the County was to get the one-time money it gave them back over a period of time. Now, it appears that they will not become self-sufficient so will not be able to repay the money and will need governmental support from now on.

Mr. Boyd said that changes the premise of the whole deal from the beginning. That sets a precedent because what would the Board tell the next person requesting similar help.

Mr. Rooker said there was debate in the first place about whether to do this or not. It was somewhat precedent setting for the Board to invest money in this area. The proposal presented was an inducement for the Board to approval the request.

Mr. Slutzky said he understands that, and might be the only one of six to vote in favor of it now, but he feels the Board was right when it entered into this unique role although it was an unprecedented

arrangement. This is a critical service and it sounds like JABA has done a tremendous job with Mountainside by taking the facility and turning it into a valuable community asset providing a valuable service. Yet after three years of experience their projected revenue streams are not quite as they hoped. That is probably more a function of the nature of the need for that service. He is openly committed to providing those services. He thinks it is an important social services project. He thinks the Board wants JABA to have a realistic view of how this will operate over the next eight or more years. After talking with Gordon Walker he understands JABA is subsidizing the scholarships for a significant number of the beds that are not eligible for the auxiliary grants. That has a lot to do with why they are not self-sufficient. That is because there is a need for beds for those people who are in the "middle zone." From a social services standpoint, he thinks it is important for the County to step up.

Mr. Rooker said he was in favor of funding this the first time around. He may be in favor of funding it the second time around, but he would like to see what has happened to the business plan between the time the Board saw it the first time, and today.

Mr. Slutzky said he would too, but is still prepared to spend the \$50,000 they have asked for in the near term. There is nothing likely to appear in that business plan that would persuade him otherwise. He suggested the Board make the commitment now. He was surprised at the number of people who appeared at the first public hearing on the budget commending JABA for its work at this institution and pleading that the Board make sure it can survive.

Mr. Boyd disagreed. He said just by nature of his personal business he has talked with a number of wealthy people who want to hide assets so they can qualify for government subsidized programs. He thinks the Board would be enhancing this a bit more because the County would be jumping in to supplement people in long-term care and assisted living facilities. He said the County cannot do this.

Mr. Rooker said Medicare and Medicaid were formed to partially help with long-term care assistance. Those are now unfunded, and the question is whether it is proper to fund these services at the local level with property taxes. He said the Board is committed to the \$12,500, but JABA is asking for an additional \$50,000.

Mr. Tucker said this was added to the list because at the time it was not known how much money would be left in the Reserve. It appears now that there will be money available. An e-mail was received today from JABA saying they would try to have their business plan available by the end of next week. Staff told them it would not be reviewed before the Board adopted the budget because there is money available if the Board chooses to fund the request.

Mr. Slutzky said that is fine with him. He just wanted to make his position known. It is a niche, having experienced it first hand, that is critical in the community and has a lot of implications for families. He just wants everyone to know he is committed to Mountainside. He thinks that after looking at the business plan the rest of the Board members will also agree it is a priority.

Mr. Boyd said if the Board sets a precedent, he thinks it will start dealing with social issues.

Ms. Thomas said some of the money put into Mountainside was because the District Home in the Valley closed. The Board had been funding a portion of that operation for many years. Mountainside itself is new, but having a County commitment to housing the indigent elderly is not new.

Mr. Boyd said he did not know that. By the same token he does not like the concept of requesting funds from the County if a facility cannot make it.

Ms. Thomas said she is in favor of the Board supporting Mountainside but would rather have the money set aside. She is not happy with the report the Board got indicating that if some other social agency had not made its quarterly projections the Board would also not be supporting them. She wants the Board to hold the money aside and also be committed to supporting others. She would like to see that this request is supported.

Mr. Wyant added that he supports Mountainside, but he thinks support of the volunteer fire companies is also very important. He hopes someone will take responsibility and present a working plan for Mountainside.

Mr. Rooker said he thinks it would be fiscally irresponsible to say it will be funded without understanding what their business plan is going forward.

Mr. Wyant said he has one thing to mention. He got a call about the Air Force ROTC Program at Monticello High School; it's the only such program in the County schools. He understands that program is being closed down and he believes it is because the program does not have the number of participants the Air Force wants. The program is still on probation and is still funded, but he understands the School Board is not willing to fund its share. This comes before the School Board tomorrow night.

Mr. Boyd said it was an initiative of Harry Gross to seek out that program. There is quite a competition in order to get the program approved by the military. It bothers him that the School Board is dropping it because they went through years of applying for it and going through the process.

Mr. Dorrier asked if it is that they don't have the number of people they want in the program.

Mr. Wyant said there are about 40 in the program now, and they have picked up another 20 for next year but they had hoped for 100.

Mr. Boyd said they were to maintain a certain number in the program but they were given a number of years to reach that goal.

Mr. Wyant said the program pays for one-half of a FTE salary through the School System. He just wanted the Board to know there is another program that if dropped there would be trouble getting it back.

Mr. Rooker suggested Mr. Wyant talk to the White Hall representative on the School Board about this.

Mr. Rooker asked what the Board should do at this time.

Mr. Boyd said he remembers that Mr. Tucker wanted to be sure the Board was prudent in what it left in the Reserve Fund. He asked how comfortable Mr. Tucker is with the remaining number.

Mr. Tucker said in FY 2008, the County will be faced with a full year of costs for the new Fire/Rescue employees. Some of them are to be hired in October, 2006, but the majority will not be hired until March, 2007 if the building is completed and ready for occupancy at that time. Next year the Board will be faced with funding \$1.6 million for that operation for a full year.

Mr. Slutzky asked if the FY '08 projections cover that expense based on the reassessment. Mr. Tucker it would, but taking away the two cents for capital, and the adjustments the Board made in this budget, there is barely enough money to cover that expenditure.

Mr. Rooker said Mr. Breeden told him staff had not made a revenue adjustment in the five-year projections to the annual assessment. Since the increased revenues were not shown, it would be a "wash." That is good to hear. He said it would be fiscally imprudent to not leave some reasonable amount on the positive side.

Mr. Boyd said he had asked for a history over the last couple of years of how far off the assessments are from the projections. Mr. Tucker said it varies from year to year. It is not a large percentage. He drew the Board's attention to the \$4,038,691 shown on the list as being one-time funds which will be transferred directly to the CIP. He said that at the end of the current fiscal year, there will probably be some savings on the expenditure side of the budget that will also go to capital.

Mr. Rooker said there will be a new CIP next year, and there will probably be significant increases in the cost of the projects on that list. Mr. Tucker said that is true. He was told recently that the Cale Elementary construction project was re-bid and it came back 26 percent over the original estimate.

Mr. Boyd asked if the School System ever does value engineering on their projects. Mr. Tucker said Mr. Al Reaser is usually competent in that area.

Mr. Slutzky said he is the new guy on the Board, so wonders at what point the Board makes a decision about the tax rate.

Mr. Tucker said if the Board wants to maintain the current tax rates they need to vote to set a public hearing on those rates.

Mr. Davis stated the Board needs to adopt a motion to set a public hearing on the budget as it has been adjusted, as well as to advertise the tax rate for real property at \$0.74/\$100 of assessed value and for a personal property tax rate at \$4.28/\$100 of assessed value.

Mr. Slutzky asked when the real estate rate was dropped from \$0.76 cents. Mr. Tucker said that was done last year.

Mr. Slutzky asked on what that decision was based. Was the decision to do it permanently? Mr. Tucker said a tax rate is set every year.

Mr. Slutzky asked how long the rate was at \$0.76. Mr. Tucker said it was at that rate for several years.

Ms. Thomas said the tax rate was raised to \$0.76 when it was decided to put two cents into the CIP.

Mr. Slutzky said he is nervous about maintaining the rate at \$0.74 knowing what is on the County's plate in terms of deferred infrastructure. He would be sympathetic to the argument that because of the unfunded mandates and because of the catch-up in infrastructure that the Board would revisit changing the rate back to \$0.76.

Mr. Boyd asked if Mr. Slutzky was talking about this year.

Mr. Slutzky said he does not know how the other Board members feel about the tax rate. He is concerned there is a very narrow cushion and the County has some seriously under-funded obligations. Also, there is a lot of uncertainty in the real estate market.

Mr. Boyd said the rate cannot be considered alone. The amount of additional revenues brought in each year must also be taken into consideration. It has been about eight percent a year.

Mr. Slutzky said expenses are going up.

Mr. Rooker said there was about an 18 percent increase in the last real estate appraisal. Mr. Tucker said last year it was about 27 percent; an average of about 13.5 percent a year.

Mr. Slutzky said if the two cents going into the CIP cannot be maintained because of the demands of the budget going forward, the Board will just be further behind. He is nervous about that.

Mr. Rooker said this year the Board is going from one cent to two cents for the CIP. He emphasized that it appears that this year the Board will be able to fund everything in the budget, plus the two cents of the tax rate going to the CIP, plus putting most of that \$4.038 million in one-time funds into the CIP. The things mentioned are future things. They can be addressed next year if there are adequate funds in the budget. Next year there will be a revised CIP, and that CIP will probably show that projects are more expensive than it was thought they would be.

Ms. Thomas said it would make more sense to consider it this year because next year people will get an increased tax bill because of the reassessment. She hates the real estate tax because it hits people who have not budgeted for the increase, and the amount keeps going up without their doing anything to their property.

Mr. Rooker asked for a motion to set a public hearing on the budget.

Mr. Wyant offered **motion** to set a public hearing on the 2006-07 County Budget for April 5, 2006, in Room 241 of the County Office Building (Monticello High School was not available for this meeting). Mr. Boyd **seconded** the motion, which carried by the following recorded vote:

AYES: Mr. Rooker, Mr. Slutzky, Ms. Thomas, Mr. Wyant, Mr. Boyd and Mr. Dorrier.
NAYS: None.

Mr. Dorrier offered **motion** to set a public hearing on the following tax rates for April 5, 2006: For real property \$0.74/\$100 of assessed value; for personal property \$4.28/\$100 of assessed value. Mr. Boyd **seconded** the motion, which carried by the following recorded vote:

AYES: Mr. Rooker, Mr. Slutzky, Ms. Thomas, Mr. Wyant, Mr. Boyd and Mr. Dorrier.
NAYS: None.

Mr. Boyd asked if the public hearing on the North Pointe petition will be held in May. Mr. Davis replied that he is not sure, as the applicant has not resubmitted the proffers at this time.

Mr. Boyd said that he would like to have the public hearing held at a facility in that area of the County, perhaps at Sutherland Middle School or Hollymead Elementary.

Mr. Wyant thanked the staff for the tremendous amount of work they had done on the proposed budget. Other Board members agreed and thanked them for their work.

Agenda Item No. 3. Adjourn. There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 3:18 p.m.

Chairman

Approved by the
Board of County
Supervisors

Date: 12/06/2006

Initials: EWC