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The Carroll County Board of Supervisors held a meeting on, March 24, 2014 in the Board Meeting Room of the Carroll County Governmental Center.

Present were:           David V. Hutchins  
                              W.S. "Sam" Dickson  
                              Dr. Tom Littrell  
                              Joshua A. Hendrick  
                              Phil D. McCraw  
                              Bob Martin  
                              Gary Larrowe, County Administrator  
                              Nikki Cannon, Assistant County Administrator

Mr. Hutchins called the meeting to order at 6:30 p.m. and told that we will be receiving the School Budget presentation.

Mr. Dickson led in invocation and pledge.

Mr. Hutchins thanked each one for being out tonight and it is good that we are doing this today instead of tomorrow because we may have a miniscule of snow or a lot.

**BUDGET CALENDAR**

Upon motion by Mr. Hendrick, seconded by Mr. Dickson and passing, the Board approved the updated Budget Calendar.

VOTES

Mr. Hendrick	Yes
Mr. McCraw	Yes
Mr. Hutchins	Yes
Mr. Dickson	Yes
Dr. Littrell	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes

(Order)

**SCHOOL BUDGET PRESENTATION**

Dr. Blankenship thanked the Board for the opportunity to present the School Board Budget. He told that they always start with the goals and those really have not changed and are to promote student achievement in a safe learning environment, maintain quality of instruction, provide open lines of communication and maintain salaries, benefits, incentives and positions to ensure a quality school system. He thanked the Board again for the security they helped put into the building. He told that he would like to start by talking about some of the challenges; they did have a decrease in federal funding, they will have a loss of enrollment and their next budget will be based on 3820 and that is about a 45 student drop, health care increase of 5.7%, VRS increase of about 24%,

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increase in group life, and mandated VRS employee contribution with offsetting salary increase. He told that they did have a decrease in the composite index. He told that they have asked for an EMT/Firefighter position, a full time gifted teacher which basically doesn't require new personnel to do that, a technology/media position and increase the nurse days from 182 to 185 and the reason for that is the nurses have to get into the building to prepare their clinics and compile all of the data throughout the year. He told that the annual revenue projections shows that State revenue is up, Federal is down and they are asking for level funding from last year so they are not asking for any new money. He told that personnel costs are by far their largest expense because they are a people business so salaries are about 60% of their budget and about 83% of the entire budget deals with personnel. He told that on the expenditure projections, operations is where most of the expense is and administration, attendance and health have a small increase as well as pupil transportation. He told that the food service operation is a flow through fund. He told that there is an increase in the budget. He told that you have a copy of the school food budget and the text book budget. He told that the issues they see with this budget is they are asking for no new local dollars, it is the first year of the biennium and he wants to be upfront and clear with you that since this is the first year there is some new money. He told that there will not be any new monies or very little next year. He told that they already know that they have to give another 1% increase next year and if they have health, energy or other costs that go up they will have to ask for those next year with an increase in local funds and if they get a salary increase next year it will have to come from local funds. He told that they have lost a large number of staff in the last six years due to budgetary issues and they do evaluate every retirement and vacancy to determine if it needs to be filled. He told that this is a needs based budget and this is the tightest budget that he has ever been associated with. He told that if they have unexpected costs they may have to come back to you. He thanked the Board for all of the capital improvements that they had in the past two years and he will also tell you that on their capital improvements they have five buses listed and they are in dire need of buses. He told that they have 12 that are 18 years old, 3 that are 17 years old, 11 that are 16 years old and 7 buses that are 15 years old. He told that the state does not recommend that you use buses over 15 years old and they have 33 buses over that mark. He told in order for them to replace buses and have a replacement that make sense is about five per year. He told that it is in the capital improvement budget and he wants to be very clear about that.

Mr. Hutchins asked how many total buses they have.

Dr. Blankenship replied about 78. He told that they have a few that they use for parts.

Mr. Dickson told that the last time we bought buses it was through the IDA and asked how many years do we have to pay on them.

Dr. Blankenship replied 4 more years.

Mr. Dickson asked how many we bought.

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Dr. Blankenship replied seven.

Mr. Dickson told that was three years ago and we haven't bought any since then.

Dr. Blankenship told that they have bought used buses and the state just recently came in and told bus companies that unless they would certify their buses that they could not sell them. He told that the companies will not certify their buses so they can't purchase used buses any more.

Dr. Littrell asked on a typical day how many buses do you need to run the routes.

Dr. Blankenship replied about 75 to 78. He told that they have 78 on a regular route and they do have some spares.

Dr. Littrell asked how many total buses they have.

Dr. Blankenship replied 84. He told that some of those are being junked for parts.

Mr. Martin told that he thinks the bus garage does an excellent job of keeping the buses on the road and in a safe manner but he also knows that within the last few weeks there were two buses at the high school that would not start. He told that he is concerned that you can only patch so long.

Dr. Blankenship told that they average a little less than a million miles a year so it is not like they are not being used. He told that the drivers and mechanics are very professional. He told that closed one day because they could not get enough buses started.

Mr. McCraw asked how much a bus costs.

Dr. Blankenship replied that they put \$88,000 but he knows that Wythe County went out this year and they got them for \$82,000.

Mr. McCraw told that if we are talking about five buses it would be over \$400,000 which is in essence it is part of the CIP but if we do fund it is not level funding so to speak.

Dr. Blankenship replied yes.

Mr. McCraw told that they have the 40 year, \$310,000 to pay back on the HVAC system. He told that is something to keep in mind.

Mr. Martin told a problem that is not anybody's fault, certainly not the counties but they go everywhere now to play sports and probably half of it is in the Roanoke area. He told that a big concern that he hears is the drivers saying the bus won't run 55 on the interstate.

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Dr. Blankenship told that they have put it to 65 mph on the interstate.

Mr. Dickson told that where we are on the buses is that is the place that most of the time if we needed money to balance the budget we left the buses off and sooner or later you have to pay the piper and it is getting close and he knows that because he drives a bus. He told that he also reads the paper and has seen where Roanoke and different ones have the same problem. He told the Roanoke bid theirs out and he doesn't think that would work for us. He told that he commends you and the School Board on the fact that you didn't take the VRS and the package that goes with it from the bus drivers for the ones that are eligible for it. He told that he appreciates it and knows that it is a cost saver that you can take. He told that Roanoke talked about hiring a consulting firm to come in and look at their routes and the efficiency. He asked if we had thought about that and our bus routes now are overlapping if you listen to the radio in the morning you will hear if one bus goes by and the kids are not out they call for the next one to get them. He told that we are duplicating a lot of runs and he knows why we did it, the idea was to pick up elementary on one bus, intermediate on one and high school on one. He told that works good until a high school kid gets on first and the elementary is left by themselves and then the parent is calling.

Dr. Blankenship told that they have thought about lots of things but they have not thought about hiring a consultant but they are looking at a computer program.

Mr. Dickson told that they tried it years ago and it didn't work.

Dr. Blankenship told that it has been revised.

Mr. Dickson told that he talked to Justin about that and he said that there is so many variables like if you take your kid somewhere else to get picked up.

Dr. Blankenship told that it does create problems. He told that Henry County is using the program very effectively.

Mr. Dickson told that they tried it 5 years ago.

Dr. Blankenship told that he thinks it was about 7 or 8 years.

Mr. Dickson told that they also have a plan that is going to come into effect this year on substitutes.

Dr. Blankenship told that is still coming.

Mr. Martin asked how long are the longest routes. He told that there are kids that go towards Vaughan.

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Dr. Blankenship told that they have children that are picked up at 6:45 and they are on the bus an hour and 15 minutes sometimes longer. He told that is part of the problem when you get into some of the routing, you either have an unfull bus or you have to start so early to get them in.

Mr. Martin told that gets into do you extend the day to make up time when some of the kids are on the bus for two and a half hours.

Mr. Dickson told that he doesn't know all the details but we need to take a strong hard look at it. He told that he realizes why because school administration knows most of the drivers and it is hard to say your route only lasts 25 minutes so your going to be doing this now.

Dr. Blankenship told that there is an issue of that. He told that we have some drivers driving very small amounts of time compared to the person that is driving an hour and a half.

Mr. Dickson told that most in his area start around 6:50 but they are on their way home by 7:30. He asked what time does school start.

Dr. Blankenship told that it depends on the building. He told that some start at 8:30 and some start at 8:15 depending on when they can get the kids there.

Mr. Dickson told that Oakland works very well but some of the schools won't open the doors to let the kids in until 7:45 and that causes a big problem if you still have to go to the high school. He told that it might be something that we need to look at.

Dr. Blankenship replied absolutely.

Mr. Hutchins thanked Dr. Blankenship for it being simple and straightforward. He told that he would much rather have a presentation that is easy to follow and makes since than to go from here around to Wythe County and come back around. He told that he knows the budget is lean and we are in the same situation so he would say he doesn't know of anywhere else we can cut and we were blessed last year to be able to have a few dollars to do the security with. He told that for about every \$200,000 is about one cent on the tax levy and as you look it we reach a point where you can't do more than you can do with what you have. He told that he is not saying that you don't need it he is saying as we look at it we need to be realizing the revenue has to come from somewhere and the sad part is they probably still export more really bright kids than we employ within the county.

Dr. Blankenship told that he would agree with that.

Mr. Hutchins told that the great thing about living in rural Virginia is you can live 50 miles from school and still go there, the bad part is it takes you 2 hours to get there.

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Mr. Dickson told that most kids don't complain, they are content.

Dr. Blankenship told that the parents tend to complain more than the kids.

Mr. Dickson told that about putting the buses on the CIP he heard about that earlier and he thinks Tammy was one of the authors of that and he thinks it is a great idea.

Dr. Blankenship told that the reason is exactly what you said earlier, if it is in the budget that is the first thing to that goes.

Mr. Martin told that looking back over a lot of Boards it tickles him to death and he is very pleased with the relationship that this Board has with the School Board and that we can sit down and talk to them and try to understand a way of working through things. He told that he has seen a lot of Boards that he couldn't say that and he appreciates it.

(Order)

**ADVERTISE PUBLIC HEARING**

Upon motion by Dr. Littrell, seconded by Mr. Hendrick and passing, the Board authorized advertising the proposed School Budget and to hold a Public Hearing on April 14<sup>th</sup> for that.

VOTES

Mr. Hendrick	Yes
Mr. McCraw	Yes
Mr. Hutchins	Yes
Mr. Dickson	Yes
Dr. Littrell	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes

(Order)

**AUTHORIZE COUNTY BUDGET AND TAX RATES**

Upon motion by Dr. Littrell, seconded by Mr. McCraw and passing, the Board authorized the proposed County Budget and the tax rates and to hold a Public Hearing on April 21<sup>th</sup>

VOTES

Mr. Hendrick	Yes
Mr. McCraw	Yes
Mr. Hutchins	Yes
Mr. Dickson	Yes
Dr. Littrell	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes

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(Order)

**ADJOURNMENT**

Upon motion by Mr. McCraw, seconded by Mr. Hendrick and passing, the Board adjourned.

VOTES

Mr. Hendrick	Yes
Mr. McCraw	Yes
Mr. Hutchins	Yes
Mr. Dickson	Yes
Dr. Littrell	Yes
Mr. Martin	Yes

(Order)

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Chairman

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Clerk

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