

*POWHATAN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND
POWHATAN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD JOINT MEETING
MARCH 8th, 2023*



**AT A BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND POWHATAN COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD
JOINT MEETING HELD IN THE VILLAGE BUILDING AUDITORIUM, AT 3910 OLD
BUCKINGHAM ROAD IN POWHATAN COUNTY, VIRGINIA, AND REMOTELY BY
ELECTRONIC MEANS ON MARCH 8th 2023, AT 6:30 PM.**

Board of Supervisors Present: David T. Williams, District 1,
Steve W. McClung, District 2, Vice-Chair
Mike W. Byerly, District 3, Chair
Bill L. Cox, District 4,
Karin M. Carmack, District 5,

Board of Supervisors Absent: None

County Staff Present: Bret Schardein, County Administrator

Constitutional Officers Present:

Guests Present: Vicki Hurt, District 1,
Susan Smith, District 2, Chair
Valerie C. Ayers, District 3,
James Taylor, District 4, Vice Chair
Kim Drew Hymel, District 5
Beth Teigen, Superintendent

1. Call to Order

Chairman Byerly called the meeting to order at approximately 6:30 PM.

2. Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Byerly led the pledge of allegiance.

3. Invocation

Ms. Smith led the invocation.

**4. Requests to Postpone Agenda Items and Additions, Deletions, or Changes in the Order
of Presentation**

5. Formal Approval of Agenda



Ms. Carmack motioned to **approve** the agenda as presented.

Mr. McClung seconded the motion.

Chairman Byerly, Chairman Smith, Ms. Carmack, Mr. McClung, Mr. Williams, Mr. Cox voted AYE.

VOTE 5-0

MOTION PASSED

6. **Public Comment** (time limit 3 minutes per individual/5 minutes per group, 30 minutes total time limit that can be extended by the Board)

Chairman Byerly opened the public comment period.

[Harry Marklin, 3701 Hope Meadow Road](#), urged the Board of Supervisors to cut the school budget. He expressed concerns about explicit reading materials.

[Keith Dearing, 2713 Sherwood Ridge Terrace](#), spoke against the idea of adding more administrators to solve existing issues. He urged the county to educate its teachers on handling behavioral problems.

[Chris Copeland, 2200 Cedarwood Road](#), expressed concerns about the economic efficiency of the school system. He listed several increases to the budget that he disagreed with.

[Stephen Barham, 3492 Richard's Run](#), stated that there is room to cut the school's budget. He also expressed concerns about the school system.

Not seeing anyone else wishing to speak, Chairman Byerly closed the public comment period.



7. New Business

a. Schools Financial Plan Presentation

The School Board presented its proposed financial plan, which included academic highlights, average class sizes, enrollment history, ADM, comparisons of per pupil costs, a revenue and expenditure summary, FY2024 revenue summaries, FY2024 expenditure breakdowns, budget initiatives, health insurance rates, salary rates, and retiree healthcare benefits.

Mr. Williams asked how the schools are doing with SOLs, and Dr. Teigen explained that SOL scores declined throughout the pandemic, but the schools are working to close those gaps. She noted that Powhatan County Schools were doing very well before the pandemic but slipped one to two places over that time period. Ms. Hurt pointed out that 30% of students at the elementary are reading below grade level, and Dr. Teigen added that they are also behind in mathematics. Chairman Byerly asked what the schools are doing to fix this issue, and Dr. Teigen stated that they are targeting individual needs through small-group instruction. Chairman Byerly asked when those students would be up to grade level. Dr. Teigen said that the goal is typically by third grade, but in this situation, they hope to have students caught up by the time they transition to secondary school.

b. Discussion of FY24 Budget

Mr. Williams asked how the pandemic affected government funding, and Dr. Teigen explained that the government did not change its funding. Mr. Williams asked the superintendent to comment on legal expenses. Dr. Teigen stated that the schools do

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not have an attorney that works for them, and therefore, the schools have to hire attorneys for various reasons throughout the year. Mr. Williams asked about the contractor services, and Dr. Teigen explained that they include custodians, food services, groundskeepers, etc. Mr. Williams pointed out that the numbers on the presentation do not match those given to the Board members.

Mr. Williams spoke in favor of equalizing healthcare rates across the county. He asked why health care and retirement have yet to be a priority in the School Board's budget. Dr. Teigen explained that the School Board had eliminated the eligibility criteria for previous employees.

Ms. Carmack asked how the schools measure success outside of state test scores. Dr. Teigen explained that success is measured using AP exams, dual enrollment credits, and technical education programs.

Mr. Williams clarified that the School Board is asking for the money in the budget and an additional \$1 million. Mr. Cox reviewed past student enrollment numbers. He noted that the School Board is looking for a significant escalation in money, and financial models show that this is not sustainable.

Chairman Byerly spoke in support of equalizing healthcare rates throughout the county and expressed concerns about the education setbacks the schools are experiencing. He asked for insight on how the \$2 million is being used. He also stated that certain books should not be in schools. Dr. Teigen explained that the money is used for classroom instruction, school counseling, social worker services, homebound services, instructional support, and library services. She noted that inflation had

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increased the cost of maintaining the school system. Chairman Byerly pointed out that the composite index significantly impacted state funding.

Ms. Carmack stated that she believes access to phones and vaping are also significant issues.

Mr. Williams asked if the county had to make up the entire amount of the composite index when it changed last year. Dr. Teigen explained that the composite index is partitioned over a two-year budget period. Mr. Williams pointed out that the Board of Supervisors gets many calls regarding issues that are the School Board's responsibility, such as their use of funding.

Mr. Cox noted that the county added nineteen teachers in 2022. He said that despite the issues with the composite index, the schools received a \$2 million increase over last year from the state. He also stated that equalizing healthcare is critical for the school system's well-being. Dr. Teigen pointed out that state funding is based on standards of quality, and there is no school in Virginia that staffs at the standards of quality level. Mr. Cox asked about the electric buses and suggested that the CIP funding plan must be revisited. Ms. Hurt asked why radios would not count as a capital expense. Mr. Williams clarified that the CIP funds do not transfer over to be used in the expenditure budget. Ms. Schubert explained that the buses have been cash funded for the FY23 CIP.

Ms. Hurt expressed concerns about the unfunded mandates. She noted that the state had increased the number of counselors required per student and that the issue is with the Virginia Department of Education. Dr. Taylor asked how much the county's



budget has increased over the past decade. He stated that the School Board does not want to add to the real estate tax burden. He also mentioned that the schools are just trying to address the learning gap created by the pandemic. Ms. Ayers pointed out that unfunded mandates directly affect the county's children. Ms. Hymel stressed the importance of valuing teachers and thanked the Board for helping with insurance costs.

8. Public Comment (time limit 3 minutes per individual/5 minutes per group, 30 minutes total time limit that can be extended by the Board)

Chairman Byerly opened the public comment period.

[Harry Marklin, 3701 Hope Meadow Road](#), expressed his support for Dr. Teigen. He expressed concerns about inappropriate materials and said that the citizens would be watching the School Board's votes.

[Fran Carlton, 2219 Rosson Road](#), stated that she left Powhatan County schools in 2002 because of the health insurance. She noted that the taxpayers need a break and agreed that cell phones interfere with learning.

[Sarah Taylor, 2987 Huguenot Road](#), supported raising taxes to support a better education system. She added that inappropriate texts do not provide any value to a student's education.

[Amanda Kozak, 3378 Manor Oaks Drive](#), spoke on behalf of Powhatan First. She asked the county to consider social-emotional learning, DEI, and sexual identity. She suggested that the county reevaluate social-emotional learning versus academic instruction because reading levels are down and behavioral issues have increased. She added that the schools must stop



using the pandemic as an excuse. She urged the School Board to create stricter policies to protect children and parental rights.

[Mike Chris, 3801 Arrow Drive](#), agreed with the Board of Supervisors' comments as well as Ms. Kozak's.

Seeing no one else wishing to speak, Chairman Byerly closed the public comment period.

9. Superintendent Comments

Dr. Teigen said she was happy to answer any questions as the Board of Supervisors reviews the budget. She invited the Board members to walk through the schools. She promised to work towards presenting a multi-year budget next year.

10. County Administrator Comments

Mr. Schardein stated that there had been a lot of communication and collaboration from the School Board throughout this process.

11. School Board Comments

Ms. Hurt stated that the School Board is very transparent and looks to the future. She urged citizens to attend School Board meetings and review their policies. She also said that she understands the burden of paying more taxes. She thanked the Board of Supervisors for their hard work and insight.

Dr. Taylor stated that the School Board's budget addresses the learning gap caused by the pandemic and behavioral issues. He also pointed out the School Board's goal to support teachers. He stated that he is not asking for a sales tax increase but rather an expansion of funds in Powhatan County.

Ms. Ayers thanked the Board of Supervisors and citizens for their attendance.



Ms. Hymel expressed her appreciation for the teachers, staff, and superintendent.

Ms. Smith stated that now would be an excellent time to speak with candidates running for office about their approach to funding **SOQ** positions and unfunded mandates. She explained that School Board is working to find and remove the inappropriate books currently in the schools. She pointed out that the School Board has installed vaping and noise detectors in the schools and has increased counselor positions.

12. Board of Supervisors Comments


Mr. McClung expressed concerns about the math, reading, and writing learning gap. He asked how inappropriate books are getting into the schools.

Mr. Cox stated that both the School Board and the county have asked for a significant increase in funds due to the financial landscape. He said he was in awe of the societal and systemic problems Dr. Teigen and her staff are trying to combat.

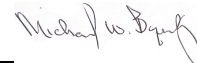
Ms. Carmack addressed allegations that she does not reside in the district she was elected to represent. She explained that an investigation was done by the Caroline County Commonwealth's Attorney and state police, which suggested that her seat be deemed vacant. She then explained the events regarding this allegation and noted that the investigation findings were retracted. She stated that she would not be seeking re-election this November.

13. Adjournment

Chairman Byerly adjourned the meeting at approximately 9:20 PM.



Bret Schardein, County Administrator
Powhatan County Board of Supervisors



Michael W. Byerly, Chairman
Powhatan County Board of Supervisors

Recorded Vote:

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<i>David T. Williams</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Steve W. McClung</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Michael W. Byerly</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Bill L. Cox</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Karin M. Carmack</i>	<i>Aye</i>

**Bret Schardein, County Administrator
Powhatan County Board of Supervisors**