

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
ADJOURNED MEETING  
APRIL 3, 2007**

At an adjourned meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Floyd County, Virginia, held on Tuesday, April 3, 2007 at 7:00 p.m., in the auditorium of the Floyd County High School, thereof;

PRESENT: David W. Ingram, Chairman; Jerry W. Boothe, Vice Chairman; Diane B. Belcher, J. Fred Gerald, Kerry W. Whitlock, Board Members; Daniel J. Campbell, County Administrator; Terri W. Morris, Assistant County Administrator.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. with the reading of the handicapping statement.

The Chairman called for the public hearing on the proposed FY08 budget and proposed FY08 tax rates as advertised.

The County Administrator read the call for the public hearing.

The County Administrator gave the following synopsis of the proposed budget and tax rates:

Mr. Campbell - As Chairman Ingram has requested, I would like to provide a brief overview of the draft fiscal year 2007-08 Floyd County budget, as proposed. It should be noted that the budget information provided in recent advertisements is for discussion purposes only. The Board of Supervisors has not approved the overall budget. Final approval will take place during an upcoming meeting of the Board of Supervisors. The upcoming year's budget will begin on July 1, 2007 and run thru June 30, 2008. Prior to any actual expenditures, the Board of Supervisors will have to formally appropriate the funding needed for the expenditures anticipated. Following this public hearing, the Board of Supervisors will consider your comments and have the option of making additional changes to the proposed budget. Initially, I would like to indicate that the budget being proposed contains an 8 cent increase in the real estate tax levy. The levy is proposed to increase from fifty-two (52) cents per \$100 valuation up to sixty (60) cents. At the present time, Floyd County is operating with no unencumbered (or unrestricted) fund balance. In other words, the County has no funding available for emergencies or unexpected expenses. Floyd County is currently facing a significant cash-flow crunch where it is challenged to meet day-to-day obligations. It is estimated that the proposed increase in the real estate tax levy will result in an improvement in the County's financial position over a period of two to three years, if this increase is accompanied by little or no increase in expenditure levels. It can be estimated that the County's current cash flow difficulty is primarily attributable to recently incurred debt service. The largest piece of this annual debt, which must be

considered by the County, has resulted from the improvements to our school facilities. On a favorable note, and moving forward, our school facilities are now in very good shape; thus, unlike some of our neighboring jurisdictions, we will not be faced in the foreseeable future, with large capital improvement projects and the associated expense. From an operational standpoint, I will also note that the County is facing increasing costs within its solid waste collection and disposal system. Simply stated, our County seems to be generating more refuse and this occurrence is costing us more to process, transport and dispose of solid waste. State and Federal regulatory requirements are also driving up the expenses associated with our solid waste program. The County's higher long-term debt and our increasing cost for solid waste are, as you are aware, paid for by the amount of funds generated from the real estate tax levy. Thus, given the absence of any unrestricted fund balance available to the County, recent increases in long-term debt and certain operational increases, it is necessary that the Board of Supervisors consider an increase in the real estate tax levy. It should be noted that the draft budget being proposed by the Board of Supervisors has attempted to maintain the current funding levels for departments or agencies. In some cases, funding amounts have been decreased. In terms of employee costs, a three percent increase in compensation is being proposed. This amount of increase should be consistent with the adjustments being proposed by the State for Constitutional Offices and other State supported positions. During the past year, increases in health insurance expenses were passed on to employees. There are two capital construction projects incorporated into the budget proposal. Architectural design and construction for an E-911 dispatch center expansion is being proposed. This project must be undertaken due to the fact that there are numerous space and operational deficiencies associated with the current location. The County is working to ensure that we are able to handle day-to-day operations, as well as the emergency communications necessary to safeguard citizens. Also, as most of you are aware, the County's library facility is targeted for an expansion. This project has been underway for a while and in addition to the County's financial contribution, a significant amount of private funding has been raised for the project. The Board of Supervisors has indicated that following the completion of these two projects, it is very doubtful that there will be any room for further construction projects or large acquisitions. Moving forward into the next several years, the County will not be looking at any major new initiatives or construction improvements. The Board of Supervisors will be working to improve the annual cash flow situation currently being confronted by the County. In doing so, the Board really has to consider a tax increase for the upcoming year; and they will also have to limit future expenditure growth. In closing, I thank you for listening to this brief overview.

The Chairman next called for comments from the audience.

Mrs. Debbie Snellings, Courthouse District, President of Floyd County Education Association. (Recognized members of audience who were teachers). Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak to you tonight. In the present decade, Floyd has wisely invested in teacher compensation. This was the right thing to do. Teachers no longer think of Floyd as one of the lowest paying localities in the New River area. For many reasons, these improvements are worth preserving. Better salaries attract and keep better teachers. Better schools, in turn, attract better quality business investment. Better business investment adds value and prestige to our

community. However, if the upcoming budget doesn't provide enough new funding, even for a moderate cost of living increase, the value of one of our most important investments will be diminished. In all honesty, it came as a shock to our association and the employees of this school division, to hear that the School Board had made the decision to cut our proposed salary increase from the original rate of 3% recommended by the Governor, to a minimum allowed of 1.75%. I guess what was shocking was that the School Board and Superintendent, to their credit, have been able to operate the schools over the past two years, and give our personnel an annual pay increase, while failing to receive any increase in financial support from the County and this Board. But now the School Board has exhausted its ability to carry the burden on its own. Due to a decrease in enrollment and increase in the cost of operations, they were faced with the choice of terminating positions, positions that we have worked to acquire, for the benefit of our children, to reduce the salary increase proposed for the teachers. So here we are again being asked to pick up the tab for a local government that fails to appreciate the importance of our schools and our children. It may have been less of a shock if you could point to the problems and failures of our school division and our schools. But you can't. Our schools and our teachers and our students have performed at a level that is one of the highest in this part of the State, the response of this Board to this achievement is to support us by allowing no new funds for our schools, and guaranteeing that the teachers in this County take in effect a pay cut? Not that this is a new idea. In the past two years, at the national level, the average annual salary increase for teacher salaries were 2.1%, while the general rate of inflation has been 3.1%. In the last decade, teacher salaries, teacher salaries have increased 2/10ths%. In a recent report from the NEA based on the US Census Bureau data, the annual pay for teachers in the past sixty years, has fallen sharply in relation to the annual pay of other workers with college degrees. The average earnings of workers with at least four years of college are now over 50% higher than the average earnings for our teachers. Low teacher pay leads to high teacher turnover and a constant revolving door of new teachers in the classroom. This can't help but hurt student learning. NEA President Reg Weaver has stated that, every student has the right to attend a quality public school staffed by experienced, caring professionals who are compensated fairly for the work they do. Attracting high-qualified, enthusiastic individuals to the teaching profession is a challenge when teacher salaries lag behind comparable professions, and retaining new teachers is equally hard. More than half of all new teachers are currently leaving the profession within the first five years of work. In the end, it's the students who pay the price for low teacher salaries. If we are going to close the student achievement gap and reduce student dropouts, we need a stable crop of skilled teachers in our public schools. When teachers struggle to make ends meet, schools struggle to keep jobs filled, and ultimately students bear the cost of losing good teachers to other school divisions or from the profession itself. Research shows that the quality of a child's teacher is the key factor in attaining the highest level of achievement in the classroom and assuring that students are prepared for success in the workplace and life. A career in teaching offers many intrinsic rewards, but as teachers we should never have to choose between doing what we love and supporting our families. You cannot continue to ask us to fulfill such an important role in our society without providing the support we deserve and need. We are like no other profession in such regard. Due to low pay, new teachers are often unable to pay off student loans or ever have the hope of owning their own home. Teachers and support professionals often are forced to work 2-3 jobs simply to make ends meet. The stress and exhaustion from the

increased demands imposed by the bureaucracy, all in the name of teacher accountability, is often unbearable. These factors are forcing more and more quality, trained professional educators to leave the profession. What is the most frustrating of all, when asked to deal with these increased demands, the teachers of Floyd County have done so and more. We have done all that has been asked of us. We're one of the few school districts in the region that has met both State and National requirements for accreditation at all our schools. You've asked us to be accountable for our work, and we have. Our reward for hard work and dedication is the message sent by this Board that we are unappreciated and unimportant. By doing so, you are sending the message that the children and the education of children in this County is unimportant. We ask this Board to accept the primary responsibility of the elected government of this County and provide the schools of this County the funds that they need to be successful. All we are asking for is what is fair. All we're asking that you do right by us, as we in good faith, have done right by you and the citizens of this County. Thank you for your time.

Mr. Jim Kline - resident of Montgomery County, 24 years teaching veteran at FCHS - I'm very proud of my school and I feel I have an interest in this hearing. I do love FCHS, it's a great place to work. Our newly renovated, fully accredited schools are among the best in Virginia. However, while the quality of our schools ranks very high among Virginia schools, the quality of our compensation ranks much lower. This disparity creates a risky imbalance. When employees see no connection between the success and status of their work, and they compensation they receive for doing it, they're sure to feel under-valued and naturally tempted to seek greener pastures. Every great and worthwhile enterprise is costly, whether it is traveling to the moon, protecting our national security, or building highways, if the goal is extraordinary, so are the costs. Our school system promises to prepare 2000 students for a prosperous and productive adult life. That's an extraordinary goal. No matter disabilities the children bring to the classroom, no matter what disadvantages those students face, Floyd County school employees continue to meet and accept that challenge. There is no enterprise more worthwhile than the future of our children. This goal is worthy of our extraordinary investment. Three years ago we learned that the budget surplus had dwindled to a dangerously low level. We were told to expect no funding increases for two years. During those two years, the State share of school funding improved and compensation improved as well. Those years have passed. The State share has again dwindled and now its time for the locality, Floyd County, to renew its commitment to our children and restore its investment in our school personnel. I ask this Board to find the means to do that. Thank you for your attention.

Mrs. Reba Goff, live in the Little River District and I'm a teacher at Check Elementary School. Mr. Campbell and members of the Board of Supervisors, I want to share with you tonight a poem entitled "The Creating of a Teacher". The Good Lord has created teachers within six days of overtime, and he knew that this would be a tremendous responsibility for teachers that touch the lives of so many impressionable young children. An Angel appeared to him and said, you're taking a long time to figure this one out. Yes, said the Lord, but have you read the specs on this order? A teacher must stand above all students, but be on their level. A teacher must be able to do 180 things, not connected to the subject being taught. A teacher must run on coffee and leftovers. A teacher must communicate vital knowledge to all students daily, and be

right most of the time. A teacher must have more time for others than for herself or himself. A teacher must have a smile that must endure through budget cuts, problematic children, and worried parents. A teacher must go on teaching when parents question every move and others are not supporting them. A teacher must have six pairs of hands. Six pairs of hands, said the Angel, that's impossible? Well, said the Lord, its not the hands that are the problem, it's the three pairs of eyes that are presenting the most difficulty. The Angel looked questionable, three pairs of eyes on the standard model? The Lord nodded his head, one pair can see a student for what he is, and not what others have labeled him as. Another pair of eyes in the back of the teacher's head to see what should not be seen, but what must be known. The eyes in the front are only to look at a child only if he acts out in order to reflect that I understand and I still believe in you. Without so much as saying a word to the child. Mercy, said the Angel, this is a very large project, and I think you should work on it tomorrow. I can't, said the Lord, for I have come very close to creating something much like myself. I have created one that comes to work, teaches a class of children that do not want to learn, has a special place in her heart for children that are not her own, understands the struggles of those that have difficulties, never takes the students for granted. The Angel looked closely at the model the Lord was creating. Its too softhearted, said the Angel. Yes, said the Lord, but also tough. You can't imagine what these teachers can endure or do if necessary. Can this teacher think, said the Angel? Not only think, said the Lord, but reason, and compromise. The Angel stepped closer to have a better look at the model and ran his finger over the teacher's cheek. Well Lord, said the Angel, your job looks fine but there's a leak. I told you that you were putting too much in this model. You cannot imagine the stress that will be placed upon the teachers. The Lord moved closer and removed the drop of moisture from the teacher's cheek. It shone and glistened in the night. Its not a leak, said the Lord, it's a tear. A tear, what is that, what is it for, asked the Angel? The Lord replied with great thought, its for the pride and joy of seeing a child accomplish every small task. Its for the loneliness of children who have a hard time fitting in and its for the compassion for the feeling of a parent. Its comes from the pain of not being able to reach some children, and the disappointment those children feel in themselves. It comes often when a teacher has been with a class for a year and say goodbye to those students and welcome a new class. My, said the Angel, the tear thing was a great idea, you're a genius! The Lord looked somber, it's a perfect job. This poem is from an unknown source, however, the teacher that was being described was your teachers, your children's teachers, or your grandchildren's teachers here in Floyd County. My colleagues and I are asking you as members of the Board of Supervisors, to make the tough decisions, to fully fund the School Board's request so that we can have the tools and compensation that we need for this perfect job. Thank you.

Ms. Tamara Lemons, Courthouse District, Area Office Director for New River Community Action. I'm not a teacher but I do have the utmost respect for them, I'm a graduate of this high school. I'm here on behalf of New River Community Action. I am here to speak just briefly about our programs and how important it is for us to maintain a level of funding in order to serve the people of Floyd County. As you well know, New River Community Action was established in 1965 as part of Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty. We have served in many capacities and have many programs throughout the New River Valley. We serve approximately 12,000 individuals a year. In Floyd County alone, last year we served over 1200 individuals.

This is financial assistance only. This is actually paying out for electric bills, for rent, for clothing, for other assistance. We also served 603 individuals with just food, so that's a separate figure there. With the rising cost of electricity and gas, we have really been on the ropes this year. We have faced many obstacles and as of yet, have not had to turn anyone away for services, but we've come close. We've had to reduce the amount of rent and mortgage assistance that we do give clients, which has put more of a burden on them when they're already stretched to the limit. The electric bills have doubled and tripled, as everyone here well knows. Our average amount that we spend on electric bills used to be \$100, but that will hardly make a dent anyone, so we ended up having to double that figure. With assistance from local churches and other areas, we've been able to keep most people in electricity and food. As of March 31, 2007, we had already served in this office, 812 individuals through emergency assistance. That is strictly the financial piece. We have surpassed our previous numbers in the food bank, serving 653 individuals. I do see this as a trend, and of course it is not looking to get any better in the foreseeable future. I think we provide an invaluable service for this community and we work well with other programs to see that people in Floyd County are taken care of, are warm and are fed, and to the best of our ability, we try to help the people have a better way of life. We think that when you do look at your budget, please consider us because we are a valuable piece of the community. We work as a liaison between Social Services and other agencies. We help people that fall through the cracks a lot of times. We never know when you may get in a position where you have to come, or you have a relative or friend, who may need our assistance. It would be a shame if we have to say that we don't have the funds to help you. We do thank you for everything that you do as a Board to help us and we do appreciate all your support. We just ask for consideration when the time does come. We're all here for the same thing and that's to help the people of Floyd County. Thank you and have a good evening.

Mr. Dan Snellings - I've had the privilege to teach at this high school for the past 27 years. I was talking to Mr. Boothe before the meeting tonight and he was saying how disheartening it was that we didn't have more people, and I couldn't agree with you more. Evidently, a lot of my colleagues must have had the same economics teacher that this Board did. They must not understand that unless your income or revenue exceeds the general rate of inflation, that your standard of living is going to go down. Evidently this Board doesn't understand this as well. It begs the question, how long do you think you can continue to fund the schools at the same level of compensation without it materially impacting the children in the schools in this County? I could speak to you on a number of other things. Mr. Campbell paints a very bleak picture of the economic situation here in Floyd County. I want to share something that maybe you don't understand. I probably won't feel the effects or benefits of this, but I'm very close to retirement, as are most of the teachers in this County. We have almost half of the teachers in this County who are very close to retirement age. Within the next five years or so, you're going to see a massive turnover of quality, experienced, dedicated teachers in this County, and you're going to have to replace them. At the same time, you have to understand that a lot of the younger teachers that teach at the school are actively looking for other positions. They talk to me, they come to me and ask for letters of recommendation. They always say that they love teaching in Floyd County, they love the students, we love the community, but when we look right over the hill here at other Counties, where there are plenty of jobs available, and they

can get \$5-7,000 more per year, who can blame them? At some point they have to look out for what is in the best interest of their family and themselves. When you couple that with the fact, as what Debbie said, 50% of all new teachers in the profession leave within the first five years, you're going to get to a point where its going to be very difficult to find teachers to teach in this County. You're going to have to go out and beg people to teach here. It's a circumstance where you may not face it as well, you may not have to deal with this as well. You may take the same approach as a lot of people in Washington are taking in the fact that we're going to make the decision now but we're going to expect someone in the future to have to clean up the mess. You have to understand that some point in the future, the people sitting in those chairs are going to have a very difficult decision. They're going to have to make the decision, are we going to pony up and pay the people to come and teach in this County and provide the students, schools, parents, education at the level that they've come to expect. You're going to have to understand that when you go out looking for these teachers in the future, you'd better take your checkbook because they're going to be able to demand to be paid what they're worth. And so they're going to have to make a decision, are we going to continue or are we going to fund the schools adequately to provide that level of education, or are we going to accept a level of mediocracy that we're not used to in this County? Are we going to become some of these other communities? We all know, we've all watched other school divisions where circumstances and situations are such where its caused us to say to ourselves, I'm sure glad my kids don't go to that school. So far, we haven't had to worry about that in this County. We've been very fortunate in this County. The question is, what do you foresee in the future for the children in this County? What basically we're asking is, do you think that good schools and good teachers are important? I'm certain that you do, and I'm certain that this Board will find ways to fund the schools adequately in a way that teachers will be paid fairly and the children will be provided with the education that they deserve. I want to thank you for your time. I know it's a difficult decision. I teach government and I know how difficult your jobs are. But I have to also say that when people talk to me and I say that teaching is not a very easy job. A lot of the responses are, well nobody ever told you it would be easy. Thank you very much.

Mr. Winfred Beale, Courthouse District - I'm like Dan, I've spent my life in Floyd County, working in the school system as a coach and teacher. Debbie said one thing that made me want to stand up and speak to you on behalf of the school budget. She said, the right thing. The right thing is for me to stand up and talk to you. I believe that I speak, not only for myself, but for a lot of people that aren't here. Like that silent majority that we are frustrated, disappointed, hurt by the action that the Board is proposing. Because we know that we'll never get what we deserve. We don't have to prove to you what we do, not speaking egotistically, but you know how hard the people in this system work, from teachers to bus drivers, to custodians. Its time, as Dan said, that all of us need to stand up and do the right thing. Sometimes the right thing is not easy, the decisions that you all have to make are not easy. Hopefully, you'll leave a legacy that your grandchildren, your great grandchildren, will receive the education that your children received, or some of you received, that you'll get that quality education. Its not going to happen by accident, you get what you pay for. The old saying goes, you can either pay me now or pay me later. I think if the County doesn't pay now, they're going to pay dearly later. Like Dan said, I appreciate you, we're friends on a personal level, a lot of you, but its time for all of

us to step up to the plate, and let the public know where we stand on education. Thank you.

Mr. Gary Bobbitt, I live in Montgomery County - as I look across here, I've taught several children. I've taught a couple of children sitting up there, and I've worked with a sister that I don't know how you grew up with (to Supervisor Whitlock). My statement here is that I'm not from Floyd, I live across the road, all my neighbors live in Floyd. I have worked with the children in Floyd. And as all of these people that spoke to you, the one who's been here the least was 24 years. They are speaking from the heart and saying that they like you guys, they've taught you guys, they like to work with you, and they're fellow members. Have we done a good job? The School Board says 1.75%. I don't know if that's what they have decided, or if it's the direct result of the money that they're getting from you guys. I'm not sure, I'm not on the money management side. But I understand, you've got to work the budget. The State says that we're going to give you the money for a 3% raise for these people. Do you think we deserve it? Thank you very much.

Mr. Mike Maslaney, Courthouse District - I just wanted to say that being on the Electoral Board for past five years, I've found you guys to be extremely conservative, with respect to the expenditures of the County, and irrespective of what you do with the budget, I understand the situation that we're in, that you have to take into account those who are on fixed budgets and those who are less fortunate within the County. I just wanted to say that I'll support any decisions that you make.

After no further comments from the audience, the Chairman declared the Public Hearing closed.

On a motion of Supervisor Whitlock, seconded by Supervisor Gerald, and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn.

Supervisor Belcher - aye  
Supervisor Whitlock - aye  
Supervisor Gerald - aye  
Supervisor Boothe - aye  
Supervisor Ingram - aye