

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGULAR MEETING
APRIL 8, 2014**

At the regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Floyd County, Virginia, held on Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 8:30 a.m. in the Board Room of the County Administration Building, thereof;

PRESENT: Case C. Clinger, Chairman; Virgel H. Allen, Vice Chairman; J. Fred Gerald, Joe D. Turman, Lauren D. Yoder, Board Members; Daniel J. Campbell, County Administrator; Terri W. Morris, Assistant County Administrator.

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 8:30 a.m. with the reading of the handicapping statement.

The Opening Prayer was led by Supervisor Gerald.

Chairman Clinger led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The minutes of March 11, March 19 and March 25, 2014 were presented to the Board for review and consideration.

On a motion of Supervisor Allen, seconded by Supervisor Gerald, and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the minutes of March 11, March 19 and March 25, 2014 as presented.

Supervisor Yoder – aye
Supervisor Turman – aye
Supervisor Gerald – aye
Supervisor Allen – aye
Supervisor Clinger – aye

The monthly disbursements were presented to the Board for review and approval. A list of additional disbursements was also presented for the Board's consideration. Questions and discussion followed.

On a motion of Supervisor Turman, seconded by Supervisor Yoder, and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the monthly disbursements and additions as presented.

Supervisor Yoder – aye
Supervisor Turman – aye
Supervisor Gerald – aye
Supervisor Allen – aye
Supervisor Clinger - aye

Sheriff Shannon Zeman next appeared before the Board. He reported:

- Presented copy of monthly report.
- Applied for a Federal block grant for educational purposes.
- On April 26 will be participating in a drug take back program with the DEA, which will be held at the Dispatch Office.
- On April 17, department is hosting a golf tournament for the Triad Program as a fundraiser at Great Oaks Country Club.
- Equipment received from the \$16,000 Livescan grant has been received and installed.
- Deputy car with blown motor has been repaired and is back on the road.
- Applied for a 50% Federal match grant for bulletproof vests.
- SCAT grant for reimbursement for Hispanic incarcerated immigrants was applied for.
- Work crew from Regional jail picked up 34 bags of trash along Route 750 the last time they worked in the County.
- Responded to 1284 calls for service last month.

Proposed FY15 budget – have a couple of budgetary concerns that I would like to speak about. I've been coming down here about ten years to give you reports like I reported today. But hopefully more than that, to build a working relationship with the Board. I hope I've established my honesty with you, my philosophy on how I run the office. I hate to beat an old horse to death but a couple of issues have come up since the last meeting that concerns me. The first one being, Mr. Chairman, I spoke with you about this at your business a few weeks ago. I realize that we are not in the final stages of the budget, in the early stage, but you expressed a possibility that we might get two new vehicles that we desperately need. If that happens, I appreciate it. You went on to explain the possibility that I might not receive the funds for them to be equipped. I thought long and hard about that. I realize that in last year's budget, we received two cars from the grant and one through a grant and spent over \$20,000 in drug seizure money to equip the vehicles. But I've never known the Board of Supervisors to purchase a fire truck, ambulance, trash truck or school bus that wasn't equipped to do what its intended purpose was. It bothers me that I feel like the Sheriff's Office is being treated differently than the other agencies. So I hope you're reconsidering in your budget process that if you purchase the vehicles that you will at least fund the money to equip them. The second item of interest to me is that I read the Floyd Press and several blogs, social media comments, second-hand information that our retention program has been taken out of the budget. I'll be honest, that surprised me because we've had a lot of discussion right here in this board room about that program. I was under the understanding that we all agreed that we needed to continue to work toward keeping qualified, experienced officers here in this County instead of spending our tax dollars to train them and send them to other departments. This created some debate among my employees and community. It is my understanding that it was removed because Mr. Turman doesn't feel like that I dispersed those funds in the manner that he sees fit. Not being disrespectful here but that's how it has been presented to me. I say to you that I would hope that after the discussions we've had, that if you remove those funds it would be because there is some cost effective way of trying to retain these officers in the community, we don't have the money or there is something more important. But to remove those funds just because one Board member doesn't agree on how I disperse them, I just don't think that is fair to the Sheriff's Office and my employees and the community. I'm not here to go into the retention program. We've talked about it over and over about why, even last year we talked about why we disburse the way we do. I will say that since this information came

to me that I was able to speak to Mr. Turman and explain that again. You know, the community has elected me three times and what I was told was that Mr. Turman is your expert when it comes to the Sheriff's office. I understand that Mr. Turman worked there for years and has experience in law enforcement but I thought we had built this relationship and it catches me off guard that this would be taken out just because there was some misunderstanding about how it should be disbursed. I just challenge you to reconsider that issue. I think some of my employees are here this morning and would like to make some comments during public comment period about this. One last thing. If you look at last year's budget vs. this year's budget, yes, there is an increase. If you take the vehicles that we discussed that I would purchase through drug seizure money and if you don't fund the additional manpower that we spoke about with the heroin issue. In this budget, there is a 2% increase in employee salaries that is a possibility that the State would fund. I had to incorporate that into the budget, don't know if we'll get that or not. If you remove those three things, our budget is only .96% above last year's budget. In all fairness, the only thing that wouldn't be considered in that number is some figures that Terri produces for us like the insurance and those types of things. Thank you for listening to me this morning.

Supervisor Allen – what is the cost to outfit one car?

Sheriff Zeman – ballpark is about \$7000.

Mr. Campbell – the draft document after last meeting has \$61,000 which was consistent with your request.

Sheriff Zeman – I broke those prices down to what the actual car costs and the cost to equip.

Mr. Campbell – that amount is still in there.

Sheriff Zeman – there has been so much talk from the press and social media that I feel like I didn't want to not say something and then it would be too late. I hope no one thinks I'm being disrespectful here but I've always tried to look you in the fact and be honest with you. I have these concerns.

Chairman Clinger – the budget is still in draft form. We have a budget work session at 1:00 today which you are welcome to attend. It may change 4-5 more times yet.

Agenda Item 7a – Subdivision plats as approved by Agent. Mr. Campbell presented the report in the Agent's absence and noted that it had been a slow month. He also presented the Building Official report for the Board's information.

Agenda Item 7b – Drainage issue at Floyd County Commerce Park. Mr. Campbell reported that he and Mr. Bolt, Building Official, have visited the site equipped with the E&S historical information. Have confirmed what is on the ground. Have re-scoped the magnitude of the problem. One caution is that we feel it will be more significant to repair than originally thought. We will put together some specs in-house, saving funds instead of hiring an engineer. There are two options: 1) to construct a rip rap channel above ground, down the slope into the

retention pond and 2) repair the catchment system that is there presently. At this time, we are leaning toward staying above ground with it; think it would be the most cost effective going forward. We want to put together some basic specs and talk to our local contractors that have the equipment. It will require an excavator, not a backhoe. We want to get them out there to look at it and accept some bids locally to see what we can come up with. I am concerned that the price could be higher than we anticipated. It definitely has to be fixed. As follow-up, we need to place oversight on a regular schedule.

Agenda Item 7c – Yoga Jam information – Mr. Campbell noted that he provided this information so the Board will understand the process that we use when it comes to the Music Festival Ordinance. Supervisor Yoder has asked about it recently. I gave you a copy of the ordinance as it stands. Often, we'll get this type of information. They did a very good job of presenting their request, they answered all the questions. This is their third year and they do anticipate growth. We have not had any problems. They work through the public health issues, security, safety, etc. I would think this would qualify for the exemptions through our ordinance. Because this is something that you had inquired about, I wanted you to see the process we go through. What I will do following this submittal, is follow up with them that we concur with their plans, that they have met the requirements for exemption, they've answered the questions and wish them the best of luck. If attendance goes above 2500, then it is taken to another level.

Agenda Item 7d – Pulaski County elected officials picnic – for the Board's information.

Mr. Campbell presented a road name request for the Board's review. This is a request for two private roads off of Route 681 in the Little River District. The road goes off of the public road and forks quickly. There will be two units off of each of those. Our Emergency Services coordinator was concerned about how to properly address it from a response standpoint. They were approached about suggesting two names, which they have done. It is a familial situation. We believe it would provide adequate directions to respond in case of emergency. Road #1 is Shake Down Lane, which will turn off of Route 681. Another sign will indicate Kris Lane.

On a motion of Supervisor Allen, seconded by Supervisor Yoder, and unanimously carried, it was resolved to approve the road name requests for Road #1 – Shake Down Lane and Road #2 – Kris Lane, as presented.

Supervisor Yoder – aye
Supervisor Turman – aye
Supervisor Gerald – aye
Supervisor Allen – aye
Supervisor Clinger - aye

At 9:00 a.m., the Chairman called for the Public Comment Period.

Ms. Cindy Rafe, Indian Valley District – I'm coming to you this morning to ask that you consider raising taxes in Floyd County by 2%. 1% to support the largest employer in the County, Floyd County schools. 1% to be appropriated to the Sheriff's office, EMS, Fire and other entities. If you cut the school's money, you are not just affecting the employees but you're having a huge impact on the children. Your children, your grandchildren, your nieces and

nephews. Some of the positions that are forcing the School Board to cut – let me use this VEA t-shirt as an example. You can't teach your kids unless bus drivers bring them to school, secretaries and clerks keep records, teacher assistants help us teach, nurses help them to feel better, cafeteria staff feed them, computer techs make computers work, librarians help them find books, custodians keep the schools clean and maintenance staff keeps all that running. This is also affecting the businesses here in Floyd. My husband works here, if we can't afford gas or groceries, we definitely cannot afford to eat out. Take care of your employees, make them want to stay here. Take care of your children, it takes a village to raise a child, but if the village isn't willing, our children fall behind. Get over what happened in past years and accept the clean-cut, transparent penny for penny budget that was presented to you. Be transparent yourselves. In closing, do you want your pay or benefits cut? When the citizens voted for you, you were essentially hired. Elections are coming up for some of you, do you want to be fired?

Mr. Jeff Dalton, Burks Fork District, Chief Investigator at the Sheriff's Office – Come here before the Board of Supervisors this morning on behalf of employees of the Floyd County Sheriff's Office. I come with respect and gratitude for what this board does, but I also come disappointed. We received word that the retention fund had been removed from the Sheriff's office budget for the upcoming budget year. Number one let me remind you that it was stated that this retention fund would never be removed by this Board of Supervisors. Number two, it is our understanding, and it comes from the members of this board, that it is being removed on the request of Board member Joe Turman because he doesn't like the way that Sheriff Zeman disburses it. Let me address, number one, Sheriff Zeman asked for this as a way to help retain our employees at the Sheriff's Office due to the desire and need of many to look for employment at other departments that offer better pay and benefits. It was placed in the budget by the Supervisors with the stipulation that it would remain in place. Please remember this, I believe Floyd is a place where our word is still as good as a written contract. Number two, Sheriff Zeman is the Sheriff and has been elected for three terms. He has firsthand knowledge of what our department need. Mr. Turman, we as employees appreciate all he does for us. He has a reason why he disburses the retention money the way he does and I believe it is an abuse of your power to remove it from our budget just because you may not agree with it. Does one man's opinion carry that much weight with this board? What about our opinions at the Sheriff's Office? Do you want to single-handedly destroy morale at our office and cause more employees to leave? If you do, then continue with the budget you have prepared. You say that this is just a draft of the budget but without our voice, I'm sure it will become a reality. I ask you to remember our men and women who put a badge on daily and protect this community. They protect Floyd County 24/7 52 weeks a year. We fight a drug problem daily. Our call volume increases every year. Our officers donate many hours such as when we were looking for Mr. Schmidt. We do not close our office because of weather conditions, actually we're the ones who are out rescuing people, such as the February snow, to rescue people stuck in snow drifts for as much as 14 hours and get them home safely. Who cleaned around the Courthouse? The deputies. You see, our role goes much further in this community than what you think. While the County Administration offices and Courthouse may close, we don't. We remain there for the citizens. So much that many of our employees had to walk and meet 4-wheel drive vehicles to get to work, that's dedicated employees. Don't destroy them. This doesn't affect me as much as it does the younger officers as my days at the department are numbered. But I will say, when I retire I will support them in every way possible because I will remember how it was to work hard

with low pay compared to the other departments that surround Floyd County. I hope the Board will remember this as well. On the other issue of vehicles, and I've heard that this has been addressed but I'm going to go ahead with what I had prepared. It is also said that we may get two patrol vehicles but no money to equip them. We buy ambulances, fire trucks, school buses, and not equip them? I sat on a committee for EMS and I know that we're getting two fire trucks and an ambulance and I know they are equipped. Why are we different? Our fleet is on the road approximately 25,000 miles/year/officer and our lives and public depends on that fleet. Why are we different? Sheriff Zeman even offered to purchase two vehicles from asset forfeiture money to ease the pain. And what do you do? You want more. Asset forfeiture is used to purchase many items at the Floyd Sheriff's Office that include ammunition. If we continue to drain this account, we'll require at some point for the Board to fund everything. Our budget has never been a padded budget; we submit what it takes to get by. So much so, that last year when the Sheriff presented it, you as a Board said you should just go ahead and approve it. Why? Because it was even less than the year before. This was even reported in the Floyd Press. I urge you to take a look at what you're doing, be fair, I realize the taxes are an issue but I also realize that the lives of our officers and the public depends on the equipment they have to work with. Thank you.

Ms. Faye Nichols, Locust Grove District and member of School Board, also a taxpayer – I want to thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak. At the last Board meeting I'd like to thank Mr. Yoder and Mr. Gerald who were present. Now I want to speak to the remaining three Supervisors on the possibility of a meals tax throughout Floyd County to help our schools. When I checked with surrounding localities, the meals tax ranges from 4-7.9%. We all understand that a meals tax alone will not support the entire needs of the school system but it would help take some of the burden off the taxpayers of Floyd County. Just imagine how many people come to and through Floyd each year. How many people make a destination to Chateau Morrisette, Mabry Mill, Pine Tavern, Floyd County craft show, Friday Night Jamboree and Floyd Fest? Instead of having Floyd taxpayers carrying all the burden, why aren't we looking and being more creative in getting those outside visitors to contribute to our schools so utilizing a meals tax? Floyd County is the largest employer in Floyd County. Can you imagine the rally by the PTA's to eat in Floyd first? I imagine this would be a positive campaign that would work in Floyd and it has worked well in other localities to support the schools that are struggling. A meals tax would be a win/win situation for all restaurants in Floyd County. Yes, Mr. Clinger, I bet you would see an increase in your business at the Pizza Inn. I remind you that studies have shown that areas with underfunded schools eventually become unfortunately, failing schools with poor graduation rates, increased crime, drug and alcohol use, and they have more reliance on social welfare programs. The possibility of this cost is too high for all the citizens of Floyd County. I understand that the General Assembly representatives from our area will not support asking the State for a meals tax in Floyd County unless all five of you Supervisors are behind the request. I also understand that one Supervisor has held this request up for a couple of years. I hope that all of the Supervisors will finally see the light and vote to send this request to our General Assembly representatives. The School Board and Board of Supervisors both have one important goal and that important goal is to support the education of the children in Floyd County. When we all support the future, Floyd County will remain a wonderful place for everyone to live. Thank you.

Ms. Peggy Profitt, Courthouse District – before you start my time, I’m curious, your web site said three minutes and you’re saying four minutes, so you might want to correct that on your web site because it said three minutes when I checked it. I am not here today to talk about salaries. I’m here today because I’ve watched this County’s budget process unfold over the last few years and I’ve very concerned about some things that are not happening. It seems to me that as a County that we are reactive instead of proactive. We react to things and we don’t really plan ahead for the future. I read a quote last week that applies to this way of thinking. As elected leaders of our County, I think these words apply to you. The quote said “Have the courage to act instead of react”. Right now, our County school system has an excellent reputation around the State. We are one of only thirty-six school systems in Virginia that have all of our schools accredited. We hear comments frequently from people moving into the County about the excellence of our schools. What happens if the funding continues to be cut? Positions are eliminated, class sizes increase and the much-needed vocational programs at the high school don’t get funded. What will families and businesses considering moving to our County think then? Shouldn’t a strong school system be a priority for our County? I’m also concerned about some of the school buildings in our County that are over 75 years old. Some of our school buses have over 200,000 miles on them. What happens down the road when all of these need to be replaced? Do you have plans for that? I hope that your mindset isn’t if they have to raise taxes down the road, so be it, that won’t be on me, I didn’t vote to raise taxes. That would be neither leadership nor planning ahead for the future. I agree with the question asked earlier. Why don’t we have a meals tax? Areas all around have a meals tax, even the Town has one. We have a huge number of tourists and athletic events in our County that attract large numbers of visitors. Those visitors will continue to come even if we have a meals tax. We pay when we eat out in other localities and we don’t even think about it. They may not generate a huge amount of revenue but it is definitely going to take some tax burden off of the property owners of this County. I know it is too late for it to be implemented this year but why not be proactive and implement it for next year. I also understand that the State’s budget has not been finalized for this year. You don’t know how much State funding you’re going to receive. But I challenge you to advertise the tax increase that would be needed if you don’t receive sufficient funds to meet the needs of the citizens of this county. Then, if the State provides the needed funds, you can adjust the tax rate. If the State doesn’t provide the needed funds, then you’ll have planned ahead, you won’t have to react and say sorry, we can’t do anything, it is too late to change the tax rate now. You gentlemen were elected to be leaders for all the citizens of this county. The senior citizens, the middle-aged people, the young people and the children. As leaders, you have a responsibility and I hope you have the courage to act and do what is needed to fund a budget that will move this County forward.

Ms. Emily Harman, Indian Valley District – mother of a first grader at Indian Valley Elementary and the PTA President. I’d like to thank Mr. Gerald and Mr. Yoder for coming last week. Words cannot describe the love I have for this small, sweet community school. Every day, each teacher, staff member, volunteer strives to do their best for each student. Why take the center out of a community? Saturday we had a music festival at school. I was serving food for four hours. I couldn’t tell you how many people came through, had a great time, enjoyed good music, and got to see friends. I can’t believe you would just wipe it away without even thinking about it. Why overload the classrooms and overwork the underpaid teachers? We have a solution. Why not raise the meals/lodging tax? Why not take advantage of the tourism that

comes to visit this Town and County? Why not raise the real estate and personal property taxes enough to support the schools? If you don't, the value of the land and property will plummet because the schools will plummet also. No one will want to move here. Why not give families a good reason to move here? Great schools. That's why I moved here, I moved here because of Indian Valley Elementary. I fell in love with the school and then the people and community in my life here. If closing Indian Valley is considered, have you looked at how many trailers at Willis and Floyd Elementary will cost? Because they are already overcrowded. Have you looked at how much new buses will cost for longer routes? Or laying off great teachers and staff. Is it worth it to close the newest built elementary school which we still owe money on? It doesn't make sense. I have spoken to several people in the community and their questions are this. Since the School Board has to be transparent about spending every penny, why not the Board of Supervisors? Why aren't we trying to make this a thriving community like it was 20 plus years ago? Why don't we have more industries here and try to get more people to come in this area? Why don't we do something to improve our classes and teacher pay and keep the great teachers we have? The list goes on and on. Please do the right thing and raise the meal/lodging tax to support our schools. Stop choking the life out of Floyd County. Thank you.

Ms. Mona Helms, Courthouse District – this is my first time speaking before the Board of Supervisors. I'm not here about my teaching salary. I'm here because it is time for citizens of this County to step up and be responsible citizens. I'm a life-long citizen and taxpayer of Floyd County. My family which includes farmers and landowners has also paid taxes for generations. I know they would fully support a property tax increase if it was known that it helped the schools and the future citizens of our county. You seem to be under the assumption that this County will continue to have all accredited schools even with the big budget cut. I'm here to tell you that the quality of education will be affected as personnel get cut, resulting in increased class sizes. Much of our instructional time will have to be spent managing and controlling so large a class. This will prevent us from providing the valuable educational experiences so desperately needed for our ever changing world. I would like you to come into our school buildings, look at the size of our classrooms, check out our antiquated boilers, and ride on our buses that have over 200,000 miles on them. This would provide you with first-hand knowledge before any final decision is made. If you really want insight into what we do, come and spend several hours with us and take notice of the quality of the educational experiences that will not be maintained if drastic budget cuts are made. Thank you.

Ms. Amy Baldwin, Indian Valley District – Teacher at Willis Elementary. I've said it before and I mean it whole-heartedly. I did not become a teacher to get rich or live a glamorous life style. This is something that I've wanted to do since the day I stopped crying on a daily basis in Kindergarten at the age of five. But, I, at least, thought I would have a career that would give me the satisfaction of making a difference in the kid's lives that I teach. And, at the same time, be able to raise a family of my own. However, without generous parents of my husband and myself, and Goodwill, it would be very difficult for us to make ends meet each month. My husband and I are both educated and have college degrees. My husband works hard as a carpenter but every year he makes more money and is compensated for the good work that he does. This is my 15th year teaching and if Dr. Harris hadn't found savings in our health insurance, I would be bringing home less than I made in my first year. I have had to drop my husband and my children, however, to bring home more money. Yet, we are among the group of

people saying that we support a tax increase. We are among those that have student loans, mortgages, car payments, extra-curricular activities for our children, etc. but we are the ones that wouldn't mind paying more taxes. It is not for selfish reasons so I can benefit from it but it is because my kids and our kids will benefit from it. We chose to move here because we fell in love with the area and thought it would be a great place to raise a family. But when my daughter's music teacher who has encouraged and inspired her to become a member of the elite Roanoke Valley Children's Choir decides to move on because it is just not worth it to drive this far for her. Or my son's teachers that know exactly what he needs to succeed by giving him breaks and understanding his frustrations decide to go to a County closer to where they live because they might as well save the gas money. Now my kids will be stuck with teachers that nobody else will hire or those that will settle for working for nothing, then why should any of us stay? That's my plea for consideration.

Ms. Becky Thompson, Little River District – I was born, raised and have lived in Floyd all my life along with most of my generations before me. I have taught in Floyd County for 31 years. I come here today to tell you first and foremost that we not all here because we want teacher salaries raised. Anybody who thinks so is misinformed and missing the whole point of the severity of what our County is facing. I'm here today to ask each of you personally what kind of Supervisor you intend to be as you lead our County through the next year. So far, a picture has been painted for us of leadership who made a working budget decision to reduce funds over \$100,000 below current year expenditures and had admittedly not made an effort to look at or study the budget request, who explained the reason for the reduction was for the irrigation system costs that wouldn't be needed the next year. The costs were not even locally funded to begin with. This again showed the lack of knowledge of school budget expenditures. Had no Board member who would make a motion to raise property taxes to help fund our County's needs even though property taxes in Floyd have not increased in the past five years and we have a 30-50 cent lower tax rate than our neighboring counties. And on top of that, Floyd ranks as one of the lowest counties in the State in our efforts to fund schools. The picture so far is not looking pretty. I don't think this is who you are or who you want to be. What are your motives? What are your goals for Floyd? What success as a community all boils down to is having educated, well-informed business minded leaders to take us into a successful, productive future. It takes leaders who take the time to come into the school system, make an effort to meet with and understand what is happening in the trenches where people are working. Everyone knows that you don't wait until your barn falls down and then decide it needs repairs. Our barns are crumbling. You may think people don't want their taxes raised. Well of course they don't. I don't want my taxes raised. And ten years from now when we can't transport our kids to school because we don't have safe buses or because we don't have heating systems for our schools, they are still not going to want them raised. But we all eventually have to buckle down and face the reality as to what it is going to take to keep our heads above water for the good of the community. Because that's what we do in Floyd, we contribute to take care of our community treasures, especially our children. I hope you each choose to be a Supervisor who is responsible, educated and business minded leader with no personal agendas who is willing to make regretful but necessary decisions in order to protect the quality of a productive and thriving community. Thank you.

Ms. Annie Courtney, Indian Valley District, teacher at Floyd Elementary – I'm also a life-long citizen, taxpayer and have multiple generations who have called Floyd County their home. I'm not here today to talk about my salary. I'm here to talk about the future of Floyd County Public Schools. As some of my colleagues have already stated, we are facing some serious situations in our school system. Our aging buildings and buses are not getting any younger. We have already had some issues at Floyd Elementary this year due to the decline of the buildings. We have children who are riding on buses that have 200,000 plus miles. And if we cut teaching positions and teaching aid positions, our class sizes will balloon and those children will not get the quality instruction that they need. I have a grandson who will be going to Willis Elementary in about three years. I am concerned about what his educational experience is going to be. My question to the Board of Supervisors is what are you doing to plan for the future? As citizens, leaders of Floyd County, it is our responsibility to plan for the next generation of students so that they do have a safe environment and quality education. If we don't plan, we're not going to have that. As citizens, it is our duty to be invested in our County and the school system is an integral part of our county. How can we ignore this? There have been comments in the community about whether or not to raise personal property taxes, whether or not to introduce a meals tax, tobacco tax, etc. Have you really considered what a meals tax would do for our school system? Have you truly researched the success of surrounding counties and what a meals tax has done in regards to their education system? As a taxpayer in Floyd I'm perfectly willing to pay more taxes if it will get our students what they need. Some people have a tendency to say, it is not my problem right now. It is our problem, it is everyone's problem, and somebody has to do something now. I hope you will not pass the buck to the next group of Board members. Please have the courage to do what needs to be done now to plan for our future.

Ms. Jessica Cromer, Little River District and Check Elementary School Principal – I speak to you today on behalf of the approximately 300 students and 50 staff members that are doing great work at this very moment. You've been presented with a budget that moves the school division forward and continues the strong academic traditions that have attracted many educators like myself to Floyd County. It is worth repeating that we are only one of thirty six school divisions in the State of Virginia where all of our schools are accredited. By fully funding the school budget or at the very least, preventing any cuts, you will also be continuing the strong academic traditions of Floyd County. In return, we will be able to provide you with a well educated and well trained work force that will fuel the economy for generations to come. We understand that money is limited but failure to properly fund the school system will have devastating effect upon class size, student achievement and ultimately the strong reputation that Floyd has established over the years. As fellow residents of Floyd County, I know that you have a vested interest in the students of Floyd County. I also know that there are tough decisions on the horizon. Much like you, I'm often faced with difficult decisions in my position as a school leader. Making the right decision is not always easy. But there are 300 students depending on me to do just that every day. Similarly, there are 2000 students in our community depending on you to take action in funding an educational system that prepares them for success in the 21st century and beyond. The school budget presented to you is not extravagant. The budget does move us forward. It does not ask for flashy new schools, outrageous salary increases but lays out a plan for maintaining and increasing the quality of education that will benefit our County well into the future. Please join us in preparing our children of Floyd County by making the tough, but right, decision to properly fund our budget.

Ms. Marsha Vass, Little River District and teacher at Willis Elementary for ten years – Realizing that the school budget is the majority of Floyd County’s budget, I know it is a difficult task in realizing the needs and how to apportion the available funds that you have. But there is a reason that the majority of the budget is reflected to the school system. The children of this county are the foundation of our community. Without education, there are no future firemen, police officers, business owners, store clerks, teachers, supervisors, the list goes on and on. Our County is filled with highly qualified teachers and administrators with all our schools accredited while many systems are battling the accreditation demon. I sat in Richmond over the summer and when we were told two years ago, by the way, remember that all testing goes on-line in 2013. I sat in there and listened to teachers catch their breath and say how are we going to do this? I said we’ve been doing that in Floyd County for the last five years, no problem. We’ve been very blessed to have what we have and see that our schools are recognized in the State, small Floyd County, has been recognized as one of the top schools all around. The projected cut of over \$100,000 is at least two teaching positions. Where do you want those positions to come from? The elementary school where foundations are laid or the high school, where we’re prepping students for the work force or college? As a parent, I have a junior at Floyd County High School. She and I sat down last week and the prior weeks, looking at what her schedule is going to be next year. She will graduate with an advanced diploma. My daughter lacks two classes, dual enrollment English and Honors Government to have completed her requirements for graduation. To pick the classes that she needs to take next year, we’re looking at the classes, I said well how about this class. She said I’m enrolled in that this year. How about this dual enrollment class? She said I’m taking that one this year. I was actually on the phone this morning with Dean Rowe at New River Community College, who is the liaison to the high school. He’s going to meet with my daughter this morning to work on her schedule. What is she going to take next year? Continuing cuts reflect everything, the career/technical, the advanced diploma, the standard diploma, it is affecting everyone. So we want to continue this. The elementary class size is critical. At this stage, having the over-crowded rooms is very hard. A lot of our buildings are at least 75 years old. In those 75 year old classrooms, they are small. And when you start over-crowding those, not only are you not making them conducive to learning but you’re making them over-sized and over-crowded. Not only do we need to maintain our certified teaching staff, but we need to maintain our support staff. The teaching assistants assist with special education students, small group lessons that differentiate the content to meet all the needs of a student. The task before you, I agree, is mammoth. But it is your responsibility to look at all the options for funding. As many have said earlier today, tourism taxes, meals taxes, lodging taxes. If we’re going to tout ourselves as a tourism place and we welcome everybody to such a diverse, eclectic community, then let everybody work together to support our schools. Look at all your options carefully, fund our schools, the most important staple of our community is our children.

Ms. Irena Childress, Title I Reading Specialist at Willis Elementary – I was born and raised in Grundy, Virginia and I currently own a home in Riner and commute to Willis every day. I do not have children of my own however, I would say that I consider the children I work with every day to be my own. It is because of them that I am here to speak to you today. I am beyond blessed to work in a community where our children’s education is a top priority. When I interviewed in Floyd County, I knew immediately that this was where I wanted to be, regardless

of the commute. I accepted the position without hesitation. Willis very much reflects the school that I attended from Kindergarten to eighth grade. It is because of such a tight-knit and positive learning environment that I chose to be a teacher and that I chose to work at Willis in Floyd County. My fear with the continuing budget cuts that we face every year is that we're going to lose what makes Floyd County schools so successful. The smaller class sizes, direct and differentiated instruction for all of our students at all skill levels. Our specialty teachers and classes that enhance our students creativity and encourage more physical activity, valuable resources needed for instruction and highly qualified teachers who are extremely knowledgeable in their field of study. I believe we have some of the best and brightest students. I believe we have some of the most caring and hard-working teachers and staff. I believe we have a group of administrators who would do anything they need to do to keep their schools from falling through the cracks during these tough times that we've faced and continue to face without your help. My fear as a teacher is that if things don't change, that we're going to lose all that we've stood for in Floyd County, making it such a great place for children to grow. Our children not only need a good education to make in this world, they deserve it. My personal fear is that I'm going to have to settle for a job closer to home just so I can provide for my own personal needs. Cost of living has gone up in the last six years. If we want to recruit new, highly qualified teachers, and continue to employ the ones we have, we have to find a way to support them. We are one of thirty six school division within the entire Commonwealth to have all our schools fully accredited. What an accomplishment. Our teachers and school employees sacrifice every day for our kids and making the proposed cuts are threatening the success and hard work. We have to look at each and every possibility for fully funding our schools. Our community schools are where we develop the next generation of Floyd citizens and we cannot continue to neglect that investment. You cannot put a price on your education and the children and students of Floyd County are more than just a number. So I come to you today asking you to reconsider the proposed budget cuts. I urge you to support our teachers and administrators as they continue to strive for excellence in education in Floyd County. Continue to fight for our children and for their futures. Thank you.

Ms. Pat Campbell, Locust Grove District – This is my very first meeting. I am not an educator although I do have a daughter who was a tenured math teacher at Check Elementary making \$34,000/year. She worked six days a week, every night. If you ride past our schools at night, you see these men and women and their cars in those parking lots every night and on the weekends. My daughter chose not to be as brave as the ones here and she went on to graduate school and is studying to be a hydrogeologist where she will obviously make a good living. I come to you today as a senior citizen on a fixed income, retired, living in Check, and support a tax increase. Regardless of how you choose to do it, whether it is through meals or through property tax, it is inherent that we do this to support these folks. One other thing, before coming here today, I googled board meetings, we are the only board that meets at 8:30 in the morning. Everybody else in the evening so that the community to come to support transparency and inclusion, I would ask that you consider that as well.

Chairman Clinger – we meet twice a month, we do a day and night meeting.

Ms. Campbell – so you repeat the agenda?

Chairman Clinger – we have public comment at both of them, but different business at each.

Ms. Sandy Montgomery, I commute into Floyd County every day and am the Principal at Willis Elementary School. I've proudly served the students, teachers, parents and the community there for ten years. I'm here this morning to ask that you give thoughtful consideration to the Floyd County School system's total request for funding. I cannot express easily enough the importance of appropriate class sizes, safe buildings, reliable transportation, proper equipment and modern technology. I celebrate the fact that the Floyd County School system employs highly qualified individuals, many of them like myself who have long commutes into the County. I fear every year that a lack of proper compensation for them may force our dedicated employees to seek employment in other localities. Over the years, I have seen how a classroom and students can be impacted by class sizes that are too large. I fear that cutting funding for the schools will once again result in class sizes impossible to teach, by employees inadequately compensated. Please review our budget request closely and consider the children of Floyd County when you make your decision.

Ms. Lisa Pluska, Courthouse District – I really wrestled with whether I needed to even say anything today as a school employee. However, I decided that I'm also a resident of the County and a mother and those jobs are more important. My children have attended two different school divisions. There are many things about Floyd that I love. I've lived here for 20 years. My oldest daughter actually graduated from Patrick County because they had more opportunities for her to get college credits than Floyd did. We lived here but I worked there. My son is attending Floyd and I would love for him to have as many opportunities as the surrounding counties. As a landowner, I also do not like the thought of paying more taxes especially since my husband is losing his job in May. However, I do understand investment. The school system is an investment that will more than pay for itself. We need to be able to attract young couples to this county for it to continue to thrive. Without a lot of jobs the school system is the next best thing to do that. Without serious changes in funding, Floyd County may have to close schools, redistrict and will have to eliminate the jobs of teachers and administrators across the county. We have to look at every possibility for fully funding our schools especially with regard to a tax rate increase. Our community schools are where we develop the next generation of Floyd citizens. We cannot continue to neglect that investment. I appreciate the fact that the Board of Supervisors has a tough job. I would not want to be in your shoes. I understand that you have to think of the best way to spend and spread very little money. There are no frivolous requests from any of our public entities. I am willing, even without a second income, to pay higher taxes. I would like this to be a topic discussed at your board meeting. I know there is a deadline of April 18th to print your tax tickets. But by the Virginia Code, the deadline for setting the new tax rate is before the fiscal year ends. Thank you.

Mr. Gene Bishop, newly elected School Board member representing the Indian Valley District – I would like to say that I do appreciate the board, they have a tough job and they have to spread it out and represent everybody. I know that you take that seriously. But our elementary schools are the most important schools in the county. That's where the foundation for all education is laid, that's where they learn to read, write, and do arithmetic. The class sizes and the individual attention is the most important at that level. If we drop the ball when we first

get them, you know, you're sort of building a house on sand, because that experience determines the rest of their life, really. If they learn to read well and all that, they're able to go on and do about anything. But there's a reason these schools are scattered throughout the county. They come to us at 4 or 5 years old, some still sucking their thumb. Parents don't want their kids to be bused out of the district, they want them in the community. Community schools are the heart of the community. It is the most important part of the community, it binds the community together, it keeps property taxes up, keeps revenues up. If we have strong communities then we have a strong county. The first thing that anybody asks when they move into a district is what? What about the schools, especially young parents. These schools are the most important thing we can have, it is an investment, it is not a waste of taxpayer money. It is an investment into the future and I think it is an investment worth making. Thank you all for the job that you do.

Ms. Sherry Slaughter, Burks Fork District – A lot of these things have already been mentioned. Since 2010, the following positions have been cut from the Floyd County school system. We've lost 28 support staff, 6 instructional assistants, 9 elementary teachers, 3 secondary teachers, 2 special ed teachers, music, art, PE, gifted teacher, media specialist, speech therapist and a psychologist. That's 55 positions taken away. How many others have we lost because they went to other counties who support them and paid them better? We have 42 school buses with over 100,000 miles on them, 15 of those have over 200,000 miles on them. My daughter went from a class of 14-16 students to having 32/class. Do you think her grades dropped? They did and pretty quickly. And it wasn't because of the teaching staff because they did what they could. There are 30 students in one 7th grade class now at Willis. We have one psychologist for the entire county who has to handle every crises situation in every school in this county as well as be a part of practically every special ed evaluation. And there are over 300 special ed kids in this county. Many elective classes at the high school have been cut and very few of the electives still offered are beneficial to the majority of the kids in the County any more. Neighboring high schools offer cosmetology, marketing, software development, forestry, business administration, criminal justice, sociology, psychology, sports medicine. The list goes on and on. There's no reason that we can't offer that to our kids too. I'm tired of hearing the same old excuse that there is not enough money. It is not fair to tell our kids, it is just not fair, they deserve better. And maybe this is one of the reasons that we're seeing an increase in home schoolers in this county. I'd like to commend our teachers and staff to do the amazing job that they do. Floyd, again, is only one of 36 in the entire State of Virginia with all of our schools accredited. That takes an extremely qualified, dedicated staff. But it seems like every time that we perform above and beyond we get something taken away. It is time to support them. The kids are the future of our County and we can't continue to lose the teachers to better paying counties. The lack of funding is not just going to affect the school system; it will affect public safety also. You found the means to buy the two cars for the Sheriff's Department but left it up to them to come up with the money to equip them. You took away their retention fund because somebody didn't agree with the way it was being handed out. There are ten officers who live in this County who drive to another County to work because they have to because they pay them better and support them better. I'd like to thank the Sheriff's Department and all the officers for all they do with very little support. I don't know the simple solution but it sounds like raising taxes would be a good place to start. The meals tax, the tourism, the lodging tax. Let the tourists that are coming to the county pay for this. We do it every time we go out of the county to stay

somewhere else. It is time to step up and do the right thing. I'm tired of being told no, our kids deserve better.

Ms. Lisa Duncan, Indian Valley District – I don't work but I volunteer a lot at Indian Valley. I think I spend more time there than I do at home. Because I love it out there, they are like family and they work their butts off every day. The things that they do out there to make the kids learn and achieve to go on higher is amazing. The teachers, when I drive by in the evenings, they are still there. I'm sure the rest of the teachers do the same at the other schools. If they work as hard as the teachers in the Valley do, they are great. I just care for them all.

Ms. Jeremy Yuvanavattana, Little River District – I wasn't planning on speaking today so forgive me if I ramble. Heard a lot of numbers today, let me put some faces with it. I have two daughters who attend Floyd Elementary School. We've heard a lot of negative numbers that I can attest to. We have old buildings. I have tripped on cracks at the school. My daughters have tripped on cracks at the school. My daughter has been in a classroom of 30 kids which is absolutely ridiculous in a community of this size. We have a wide spectrum of need in our schools. We do fund raisers to raise money for equipment and other needed items. At the other end of the spectrum, we have one gifted coordinator for the whole county. That is not personal attention that the kids are getting. Then in between, you have all the rest of the students there, 30 kids in one class. From one end of the spectrum to the other, what kind of education are we giving our kids. It is not from lack of effort on the school part. We have the best teachers. I'm not from Floyd, didn't go to Floyd schools. I went to Christiansburg. I would by far wish I could take my time and trade it in and come to these teachers, the most amazing people that I've ever met in my life, dedicated, supportive, passionate. Exactly what I would expect from the Board of Supervisors and this community. Gentlemen, we are spread thin, parent's patience is spread thin and we're tired of fighting the same fight every year. We want you, we beg you, take our money. Take my money and give it to these teachers. They know what to do with it. The meals tax is an excellent idea, it definitely needs to be done. Personal property tax, sure, nobody is driving a Ferrari in Floyd. Take my real estate money, take it up, appropriate it to the School Board, and by golly, I believe they are going to have my kids' best interest in mind, let them do what they need to do with it. That's all I have gentlemen, I thank you for your time.

Ms. Kay King, Courthouse District – I as well, with the intent to speak today and I am not a speaker so please forgive me but this is very near and dear to my heart. I volunteer quite often in the Floyd Elementary system. My son is in the 2nd grade, he has had 3 wonderful teachers who are here today. He struggles though and I'm going to bring this in on a personal level. You all know what we need, we need buses, we need this, we need that, we need funds. But I'm going to bring it in on a little bit more personal level. My son has to work hard in reading and writing to get where he needs to be. These teachers have worked so well with him the past three years. Title I has been a blessing. But you know, as lot of these children, they will get it in the school system but they are not going to have parents that are going to fight for them to get what they need. What they get in the school system is all that they get. So if cut these things and they don't get that, what kind of education are we offering them? That's all they are going to get, they are not going to get that at home. For my son, we're going to fight, we going to get tutors, we'll do what we have to do to get him the education or whatever he needs. But many of these children all they get is what they get at school, what the teachers offer, which is

great. What I'm saying is, if you start cutting those things, what are they left with? I'm challenging each of you, I have a great respect for each of you, I don't envy you your job whatsoever, but I do challenge you to do whatever it takes, whether it is to raise the real estate tax, the meals tax, whatever you have to do. Maybe it is not easy to get to the goal we have but you must find a way for the education for these kids. I challenge you to do that. I appreciate your time.

Ms. Lynsey Janney, Senior Class President – I am speaking on behalf of my peers and the Senior Class President of Floyd County High School. I have come to two realizations during my time in office. One, an overwhelming majority of Floyd County High School students are upset with their day-to-day lives. Every day from 8-3 I hear echoes of I hate it here or no one cares so why should I? Unfortunately the negative climate has progressively spiraled out of control since the time I started in 8th grade until now. I firmly believe that if teachers were allotted time to effectively teach and care in their classrooms, the amount of compassion from students would increase as well. While teachers try as hard as they possibly can, money and effort also play a huge role in their lives. Without the essential funding, teachers will eventually be forced to leave Floyd County High School. Even as a teenager, I know that the cost of living increases every day with the cost of gas, groceries and utility bills. Without funding for the wonderful teachers of this county, new teachers will have to leave and potential teachers will never consider Floyd as an option. Two, I have always been told that I, as well as my peers, are the future of Floyd County. Without the funding for the school system, it signals to me that apparently I don't matter to the adults that make the decisions here. I have participated actively in various activities at the high school as well as my peers. Without funding, those activities will likely be cut or ended altogether. I also have a 4.25 GPA and am ranked 15th in our class. Without the wonderful teachers I've had throughout my career, my rank and ability to get into these competitive colleges this fall would be diminished. I'm afraid that this will be the fate of my younger peers because of this potential budget cut. I firmly believe in the importance of these activities and teaching ability as well as the youth of Floyd County. I previously spoke at the School Board meeting and stated my plans for opening a youth center in Floyd County after my graduation as a potential career. For middle school students and high school age students, to serve as a safe haven for these teens. Without the encouragement from adults like you in Floyd, I will take my aspirations elsewhere. So please, before cutting the school's funding by such a significant amount as this, please consider the lives and aspirations of your future leaders of the County. Think about it, without funding for the schools, the place where futures are planted and made, the future will travel and live anywhere but here. Believe in us like we've tried to believe in you. Thank you.

Mr. Mike McCormick, Courthouse District and FCHS English teacher, resident of Floyd County for 7 years and teacher for 3 years. Insanity is defined as repeating the same behavior and activity expecting a different result. What we're doing in this community is beyond insane. We're repeatedly asked to do more with less. At the end of this year when teachers leave for better opportunities in neighboring counties, that will become more evident than ever. We are repeatedly asked to stimulate, engage, encourage, mold, model, coddle and care for the young people in this community so that one day they may become contributing members of this community and pass that learning and nurturing onto future generations. But why would they do that? What do they have to gain by staying here in this County? What are we teaching these

young people about prosperity, success in the future when those in power, like yourselves, are so resistant to change? Our students see the lack of commitment and care that is not afforded by this board. They feel the burden of us doing more with less. They hear the complaints and frustrations of the faculty and staff that are consistently putting their future in jeopardy because others tell us we are not worth the few extra dollars needed to improve their education and the schools. Raise the taxes, the property taxes, so we as community members and community contributors, community voters, can report to our students that those elected do care about them. That they are concerned about the future of this community and its citizens, that they will stop the insanity and start believing in the behaviors and activities so that we might achieve a better and brighter and more productive result. This is insane, we must change for a different result. Have a great day.

Ms. Kerry Dalton, Burks Fork District, Floyd County High School Special Ed Teacher – my husband also teaches at the high school. I like so many others, are not here to talk about teacher salaries. We live in Willis and we have three daughters attending Willis Elementary School. I'm going to tell you a story to kind of show you overcrowded classrooms, appropriate size classrooms. Last school year, my twin girls were in a 3rd grade classroom of 31 students at Willis. My girls spoke about loud the classroom was and how many distractions there were throughout the day. The teacher did a marvelous job but I want you to think about how hard it would be to keep 31 mouths to the minimum, 62 hands busy, 62 feet still and most importantly, 31 brains all on different levels, stimulated. This year, a step in the right direction was made, and that class of 31 was split. An additional 4th grade teacher was hired. The students have been challenged, enriched, and their personalities were allowed to shine. My children were seen as individuals, not as a group, and not as an SOL score and isn't that what makes Floyd County schools so special? That's why people come here. We pay attention to our students, not scores. However, in return, by paying attention to our students, our scores increase. If we cut positions by reducing the budget, our children, and especially my children, are hurt in this process. Please don't take a step back. We need to keep making steps forward to our future. I challenge you to be the leaders we need. Please be the leaders our children need you to be. Lead our next generation of children to their future. Thank you.

Ms. Senora Faulkner, live in Town of Floyd, School nurse at Floyd Elementary and the Nurse Coordinator for all of Floyd County public schools. I have two children that attend Floyd County schools and my son just graduated. I can give an example as well, of the 3rd grade. My daughter was in 3rd grade last year in a very over-crowded classroom. She had an excellent teacher. But like Kerry mentioned, how can you keep them stimulated and learning, all on the same page, with that many children. It was her first year of SOLs and grades. A lot of people felt they were behind in math going into 4th grade. If we don't do something, the same thing will happen next year. She is in 4th grade this year, there are four classes, it has been wonderful. Next year for 5th grade there are three teachers, so it is a pattern that will continue. If you get behind now, you'll be behind all through school. That's something that we really need to take seriously and think about. As far as the overcrowding and teachers, there has been talk of cutting extra-curricular activities. I can't speak to you enough about how our teachers influence the children but the coaches as well. They mold them. Can you imagine the problems we would have, an increase in drugs and alcohol use and things like that if the children are not involved in something. Have we thought about that? I just briefly wanted to tell you how important your

school nurses are. We provide all the medical care for the students, typically I see 60+ kids during a day, that is as much as a doctor's office. We are their voice if there is abuse in the home or drugs being used in the home. There is a lot of that in Floyd. We do screenings, assessments, things that are mandated by the State. I invite you, please, come visit me any time, come to the clinics, come see what we do, come in the classrooms, see what the teachers do. We are fortunate to have the teachers that we do in Floyd County. Thank you for your time. I hope that we will go forward and not take a step backward.

Mr. Mars Woddail – I'd like to start off with a question that I've spent a lot of time considering lately. What can we do? I guess you could say that's the reason that I'm here today. I looked at the story in the paper about the budget cuts and I thought what can I do? And so, here I am. We live in a world that is more vastly and extensively interconnected than ever before in history. Text messaging and Facebook keep us constantly updated on our friends' activities, instantaneous transactions have transformed the global market, international outsourcing has drastically reduced prices for the U.S. consumer while simultaneously bringing the inhumane labor standards of the early 1900's. Every second a million different things happen that never cross our minds but change the course of history nonetheless. In our global economy, even despite our increasing ability to help others and make a difference, we turn our noses up more than ever before. Why? Why when told of the countless injustices of the world that happen every day do we avert our eyes and try to just go on with our lives? Because in the information age, we don't know what to do. What can I do to change the world? What can you do? What can we do? It is an interesting concept, changing the world. We define it as a spontaneous decision made on a whim where someone goes off and joins the Peace Corps, a visible, instantaneous change that yields results up-front, makes us feel like good people up-front. I think that looking at it like this is not only wrong, it is unrealistic. We all have our parts in society. Jobs, roles that must be fulfilled. If all the school janitors took off and joined the Peace Corps, well, they'd feel like the nobler people in the situation, but back here we'd be in a bit of a fix. The best way for any of us to do our part and change the world isn't through a heroic split second change of heart. It is through a constant conscious mind-set where we all make an effort, not only to help people out now, but to look to the future and make decisions that will not only affect us and our children but our neighbor's children and the children of people who we may never meet. I read a Greek proverb the other day that really made me think about this situation, I think it applies today more than ever before. "A society grows great when old men plant trees whose shade they know they will never see". This isn't a matter of what we're doing to save money now, or to pay less taxes now, it is about something much bigger than that, much bigger than ourselves. I've heard it said many times before that education is the ultimate investment in the future. I think it is more important to remember that now than ever before. This decision that has been placed before you is one that is vastly greater and more important than you or me or anything that I can express to you. It is the future. Cutting the education budget now reflects on our priorities not only as taxpayers but as a County, a State and a Country. I find it sad but not altogether surprising, with these priorities, that the U.S. is now ninth among industrialized nations, in the percentage of students with a high school diploma. I would like to remind you that the high school is the largest employer in the County and the money that we put into this system employs teachers, gives students a chance in the global economy that we live in, and prepares the next generation of workers and employees here in Floyd County. If we choose not to offer the best head start that we can for students today, then we leave not only my generation

but future generations unprepared for joining the work force not only here, but anywhere. Money invested in schools may not be easy and may not seem easy to raise taxes, but in the long term is how we must look at it. It is your part, your responsibility, to look to the future. What can I do? I can take my education that I got here in Floyd and do the best to help those around me with what I have. What can you do? You know what to do. The only thing left to do is plant a tree.

Daniel Quesenberry, Courthouse District, History teacher at the High School, proud product of Indian Valley Elementary. I don't know if Mars said it or not, but he is one of our current students and I would personally love to have him back here in Floyd County in 5-6 years working for us. A few years back, I lived in Radford for three years. I begged my wife, she is not from Floyd, I told her this was the best place to live and raise children and I believe that with my full heart. I love this place, it means a whole lot to me. I convinced her that this was the place to be. She believed me. We got married, moved to Floyd and we have three children that we plan on going to Floyd County schools. But now we're having to have a conversation about is this really the best place to raise our children. It makes me sick. As parents, we want to give our children every opportunity that they could possibly have. Right now my children will not have the opportunities that I had sitting in Floyd County schools 12 years ago or so. We literally have to think about possibly leaving this place that means so much to me. It is not because I want to but because I have to do what is best for my children. Right now in our school system is sitting our future. Our future mechanics, farmers, nurses, teachers are sitting in our school right now. If we shortchange education, we're shortchanging them, the people that will be leaving our community in the next decade or so. The people that will fix our cars and hopefully, you know, working at the nursing home when we get older. Personally, I want to know that those people leading our community got the best possible education that they could. And they can get it in Floyd. Like I said, I am a life-long Floyd County person, my family lives here, I love this place. I'm afraid that if we shortchange education that we're shortchanging Floyd County. There is no frivolous spending in the budget. Give us what we need to do a good job. We do a good job. Right now I'm an advisor or mentor to some younger teachers that moved in here after graduating from Virginia Tech. They are not from here. They like it here but why would they stay? Our faculty is getting kind of old, I don't mean that personally, but that is the truth. Last year we lost teachers like the Bobbitts. We lost the Bobbitts. I can still remember days that I sat in Gary Bobbitt's class. I feel like he had a piece in making me who I am. We're losing those teachers. Sarah Quesenberry, Connie Quesenberry. You won't find another math teacher in this State more important than Connie Quesenberry. Who are we going to replace them with? It is either going to be the kids sitting in our building right now or people coming from somewhere else that are also good teachers but why would they stay? Would they want to raise their children here where their kids have no extracurricular activities? Or nothing pushing them to be better? Probably not. So like I said, invest in our education because it is an investment in Floyd County, an investment in our future. We're the greatest place in the world, it doesn't just happen, we make it that way. Invest in education to invest in Floyd County. Thank you.

Ms. Jennifer Sharpe, Courthouse District – I grew up here in Floyd County, I attended Willis Elementary School and Floyd County High School. I went away to college and then lived in the Midwest for a few years but I moved back to Floyd before my children started school because I wanted them to grow up in the culture and experiences that Floyd County provides.

I've been a homeowner in Floyd since 2007 and plan to stay here for at least another thirty years or so. I'm coming to you today as a Floyd County resident, a mother of children currently attending Willis Elementary and as a special education teacher at Floyd County High School. You are in the difficult position of having to examine what is truly needed in our County. I'm here today to tell you that my experience as a teacher and parent, I do not think that Floyd can afford to lose teachers. The teachers that are here now because they love Floyd and they love teaching and they love our students. But they cannot be expected to continue to hold the same love and passion for their job if resources supporting them are cut and result in larger classes. If teachers jobs are cut then the classes will be bigger. As a mother, I do not want my children sitting in elementary school classrooms that have 30 or more students. As a teacher, I do not want to be standing in front of a classroom with 30 or more students to whom I cannot give any personal attention. At the beginning of both semesters this year, I saw teachers frantically looking for extra desks because their classes were already over-full. I can't imagine what a round of personnel cuts would do. Our schools have been strength in Floyd County for decades. They are a selling point for bringing families here. My parents would not have moved here 25 years ago if the schools were not good. I would not have moved back here 7 years ago if the schools were not good. I don't think Floyd can afford to lose this strength. Please fund the school system budget that was brought before you in February. That is what the school system needs to continue to be the strength for Floyd County.

Mr. Travis Cantrell, Little River District, I'm a full-time teacher, volunteer basketball coach, 7-8th grades athletic director for the high school. I spoke last week at the school board meeting and I hope you had the opportunity to read those minutes or at least read the article in the Floyd Press. Just like today there were many students and teachers that spoke passionately about our school system. I want to talk to you today about opportunities, much like other people have. Some of you might know that I've had an opportunity to live outside this community on two separate occasions with my family. Which means that I've purposely moved back to Floyd twice in my life. The last move is our final move. My children will graduate from Floyd County High School in 2023, 2025 and 2030. There is a reason that we ultimately moved back to Floyd County. Like Daniel said, we love it here. Our family and friends are here. Our children love Floyd County even though they understand that they have fewer opportunities here. As educators we talk a lot about the opportunity to make a difference in a child's life. I feel that our school system, teachers and staff, do an unbelievable job making a difference. I know my children's teachers, many of whom have spoke this morning, have made a positive impact on their lives and will continue to do so. As Athletic Director, I also feel it is my job to provide opportunities for our athletes. The equipment improves every year for different sports, new and better uniforms are available, our facilities can constantly be improved. I feel our students deserve the best we can offer. Instead of telling our athletes and coaches, no, you can't get that or we can't do this, we sit down and try to figure out how we can make things happen. A lot of times our coaches fund-raise for the extra things that they might need. Our Boosters get involved and we talk to various community members about being possible sponsors. I feel we do a pretty good job of trying to figure out ways to make things happen instead of just saying no. As a school system we are always going to come to you to ask for more. There is no way around it. It is not because we are greedy, because we need it and our children and your children deserve it. Dr. Harris and the School Board have put together a budget that has asked for various things and none of them are items that are unnecessary. I believe that we could have even asked

for more. Just as an athletic department, we have had coaches cut for the past several years and those have not been put back in. We have coaches that are coaching for practically nothing. We have 400 students in grades 7-12 that participate in athletics or activities at the high school. They deserve to have qualified coaches that can help give them the opportunities that they deserve just to list a few. We're going to need a new track in a few years, that's another thing that's going to happen, it needs to happen. Our facilities need improvement. In a couple of years we're going to ask for that. As Board of Supervisors, just like our teachers and coaches, I believe it is your job to give our community opportunities. Our community needs a rec center, you have a student here that would love to see that happen. That is unbelievable. We need walking trails. Our community needs a school system that is fully funded to do the things we do well. I said it last week and I'll say it again. Our children are already at a disadvantage. I understand that being in two different communities before coming back to this one permanently. Why should surrounding localities have more opportunities than us? Do they deserve it more? I don't think so. Take pride in the position that you are in today and start finding ways to give our community and children more opportunities instead of less. Like someone else said today, I wouldn't want to sit in your chair. But if I were, and I listened to all these people and last week, it would be hard for me to not do something different like we mentioned earlier. We just ask that you look at doing that. Thank you very much.

Mr. Jeff Pennington, Little River District, Special Education Teacher at Floyd County High School – I want to first thank you for the time this morning and your consideration of all the things that are on the minds of the members of the community. My mind has been a little troubled lately. I'm concerned about the things that are about to happen in my adopted community. My wife and I moved here from Hampton Roads recently. In the process, we looked hard for a place that embodied the values that we held. We could have settled anywhere in the New River Valley and as educators we had opportunities just about anywhere. As educators, we understand that the first indicator of the health of a community is its school division. Knowing this and seeing this we settled here in Floyd. You know Floyd schools and you've heard today that they are some of the most successful in the Commonwealth. On just about any academic, athletic or extra-curricular benchmark that you could look at. We do it all and we do it well. The truth is, Floyd can't maintain its awesome culture, it can't sustain its great agricultural history or perpetuate its beautiful, artistic identity without doing its part to provide for its students. If the Board of Supervisors doesn't fund the school system at a level at the very least covers the unavoidable costs that the School Board has clearly identified, the division will have to cut more than \$1 million from its budget. I'm positive that you were not aware that this was a possible consequence when you recommended the reduction in funding. I know that you wouldn't intentionally put the School Board in that position. But what you need to know is that these cuts could mean closing schools, cutting sports and firing teachers, your citizens. All of these things are contrary to the ideals that make Floyd a great place. And Mr. Quesenberry said the greatest place on earth and I concur. We have great community schools, we have great athletics and extracurricular activities, small class sizes with some of the greatest teachers in the Commonwealth in front of them. I'm urging you this morning to do whatever it takes to ensure that the School Board is not in a position to have to cut deep into the soul of one of our greatest investments, our kids. Final note, I know that taxes can be a dirty word. But believe me, I have counted, it is not a four letter word. As long as our tax dollars are going to

something as vital and great as Floyd County public schools, I'd gladly pay a few dollars more every year. Thank you gentlemen.

Ms. Chris Lucas, Senior at Floyd County High School – Floyd County is my home, it is where I grew up, it is where my family grew up, but more importantly it is where I gained the education I used to write this speech and the education I'm using to give it. Isn't this what we're trying to do? To train generation after generation of informed citizens? I've never been ashamed of this County. Yes, maybe we are small and maybe we don't compete with the other communities in size. So why don't we show them what we can do when we put good books in our students hands and embrace our education system. So let's show the other communities in this area that Floyd County has pride in our education. As I said before, I love this community. This County has been my home for 18 years and I'm leaving to go to college. What happens to our County after seniors leave affects whether we come back here to start our own families? That cycle keeps repeating with every senior class. They will remember their experience in public schools. If it is not a positive one, why would they choose to return to the place that nobody even cared or respected enough to fund them a quality education. Thank you.

Mr. Tony Daibler, Principal at the High School and reside in Christiansburg – I appreciate the opportunity to speak to you today and I also appreciate the very difficult decisions that you are faced with as you try to do what is best for all the residents of Floyd County. Since the start of the recession Floyd County High School has lost teachers in math, English, multiple career and technical positions, a guidance position, at least one instructional aide, a full-time athletic director. And as Travis pointed out, multiple coaching positions. This attrition has caused a strain on class sizes and of course, offerings. I strongly believe the school system needs to be building these positions back into existence as accountability and standards increase. In order to give the students every opportunity to gain their verified credits in mathematics, for example, the high school along with many other schools in Virginia, have transitioned to offering more two-part math classes. Two part classes should be kept relatively small because these students are the ones who struggle the most. At this moment, our Geometry two-part classes average 27 students. Another math teacher is sorely needed at the high school. Another objective of Floyd County High School is to prepare students to be career ready. Our career and technical education department does a spectacular job, however, we are not able to offer enough courses to meet the demands of our students or to stay competitive with other school systems. It would be a huge boost to the educational product we provide to be able to offer a full building trades program to prepare students for successful careers. The faculty and staff at the high school do a wonderful job and genuinely convey a positive attitude. As someone who sees and works alongside them daily, I would contend that they are actually stretched very, very thin. Especially in regards to how they feel the community supports their efforts. They have not received a real compensation increase in many years despite the 1% increase this year, which barely offset the taxes on the increase that went completely and directly to the Virginia Retirement System. I believe if we do not significantly improve compensation, excellent teachers as pointed out by others, and support staff, will leave our school system as some already have. The school system should offer compensation that truly expresses an acknowledgement of the value placed on our teachers and support staff. Please consider the School Board's request to increase funding in order to provide additional teachers and to increase the compensation for all employees of the school system. Thank you.

Mr. Chris Hewitt, Indian Valley Elementary Principal and resident of Christiansburg and a proud member of Floyd County schools for the last 13 years – First of all, I would like to thank Mr. Gerald and Mr. Yoder for listening to and speaking with Floyd County educators last week at Floyd County High School. I'm here today as an advocate for all children of Floyd County. I ask that you look into and study every option in an effort to improve our school system moving forward for the sake of all children in Floyd County. Members of the Indian Valley community are extremely proud of the education that their children and grandchildren receive. Regularly, they comment and express how valuable each member of our school is to the future success of our children. It has been several years since this value has been recognized with an increase in compensation. More important than compensation, I feel that our teachers would support a budget that reduces class size and increases personnel to benefit all children. Thank you.

Ms. Heidi Hawkins, Burks Fork District – I come to you professionally but I also come to you personally. Professionally, I'm the only school psychologist for Floyd County Public Schools. One part of my many jobs is to ensure safe schools. Recently I had to buy four tires for my car. It wasn't a pleasant purchase, I cringed when I wrote the check. But it was necessary to keep my family and those I'm responsible for, safe. I encourage you to also make that decision when you raise taxes this year. Making that decision wasn't easy but it was necessary. In the same way that it was necessary in the budget that you chose to cut, an internship position for a school psychologist. That is a post-Masters degree level educated individual responsible for crises response, something that I do all the time here in our schools. I'm responsible for counseling services which prevent crises in our schools, suicide, and violence. I'm also responsible for coming to the schools and determining when a child may or may not pose a threat to our schools. I'm surprised that you made that decision so easily in light of the recent tragedies in our nation, especially in our school systems. Personally, I'm the mother of four. I have three children currently enrolled in the public education system here in Floyd. My daughter is a freshman at Floyd County High School. Her dream is to go into the medical profession, perhaps one day care for one of you individuals. Her dream college requires four years of a foreign language. Currently, in Spanish II, she's had 3-4 teachers just this semester. I struggle to even keep up. Because we lost a professional who left Floyd County for better opportunity. We've struggled to get another person to fill that role adequately. Do you think she's getting a solid education of Spanish II? Let alone, she's got to make it through four years to get to her dream college. Her dream is in jeopardy now. My son, last year, sat in an overcrowded classroom as a 3rd grader. He came home four out of five days with a migraine due to over-stimulation in that classroom. I have the medical documentation to back that up. It was heartbreaking to watch that. His teacher was phenomenal. She went above and beyond to help him, the nurses checked on him regularly. This year his whole class came in with lower achievement scores than what is typical for 4th graders due to that over-crowding effect. These are real, these aren't just numbers, these are real children you are affecting. You are affecting my family and my babies. I'm responsible for securing a safe future for them. I hold you personally accountable for ensuring their same safety and security in our schools every day and the other 2000 students that are in your crossfires right now. I need you to strongly consider what is in there and what we're asking for because these things are necessary to have a safe environment for our children and a secure future for our individuals, who will hopefully stay or come back and invest in your businesses and opportunities in this wonderful community that we've been blessed with. Thank you.

Mr. Elmer Underwood, Indian Valley District – The first thing is about the Sheriff's Department. I don't think they should have nothing. Two Saturdays ago I called them, somebody was stealing a refrigerator out of my house. They said it is civil, there ain't nothing we can do about it, let them go on home with it. This past Sunday night or Monday morning at 1:00, they broke in my house again and stole stuff. Me and my son run them down at their house, called the law, they was going to lock us up instead of them. So I think the Sheriff's Department sucks, I just don't think much about them anymore. When you try to do it yourself and then they want to lock you up because you is in the road. I was in the grass and wasn't in the road. He was sitting in the middle of the road blocking it, it wasn't me. I had enough courtesy to pull over. They got some Rambo deputies that think they can do any way, talk to you any way, they are messing with the wrong fellow on that, talking to me I can tell you. I have respect for my elders and I expect them to do the same. I was to congratulate ya'll because I think ya'll doing a good job. I usually tell it like it is, it don't matter if it hurts me or hurts ya'll. I didn't bring no rails or nothing like that for the Supervisors today. There's a lot of people here wanting a lot of stuff. I know what that wanting is going to come to, more taxes. If you want to really wake people up in Floyd County, double them. I can't pay it. But double it and you'll find out. There's a lot of people here today and I'm glad to see it. There's a lot of stuff they want, I know ya'll are in a hard bind and it is hard to figure out on a lot of this stuff. But I think ya'll are doing a good job. I think that's about all I got to say. Thank ya'll.

Ms. Angela Huff, Indian Valley District – I'm a proud product of that school system as well. I was raised in Indian Valley, lived in Floyd for one year and then I just had to go back to Indian Valley because I love it. Everybody comments what a family atmosphere it is, and it just is. It is a special place. All our schools are special. I don't think anyone should have to sacrifice anything. I think that all the children are important. I was looking at one of the police officers over here and his badge says to grow is to prosper. We just need to think about what it takes to grow. You can't have a tree and just leave it out and not water it or take care of it. The more you take care of it, the more you water it, put Miracle Grow on it, it is going to grow and prosper and do good. You can maybe leave it there and hope it grows and it might. The more you take of it, the more it will thrive. I just want to ask you, what do you think it will take for our schools to grow, for our children to grow and prosper and thrive. I just don't want to leave the schools there to just survive and just get by on the minimum. I just want to ask you to make sure they thrive, to do what it takes and do what you need to do to thrive and grow and not just get by. Thank you for listening today to all our comments. We just thank you for what you do for the schools.

Ms. Linda Wagner, Courthouse District – I appreciate each and every one of you and respect all of you. You have a hard task ahead of you. I truly love every teacher that I know and I feel their heart and passion. But I read with great sadness The Floyd Press this week. We don't allow bullying in our schools, there is zero tolerance. But I felt that meeting was a bullying session to each of you. Some of the statements were disparaging and grieved me greatly. I know the educators have every bit of love for our students and want the best opportunities for them. Their salaries are twice the median salaries in Floyd. I don't even want to go into the tax situation. I just needed to share that because I felt it was very sad.

Ms. Becky Howell, Burks Fork District – unable to attend meeting but provided written comments.

I read with interest the headline in the April 3 issue of The Floyd Press, “Speakers support tax increase”. According to the Floyd County Schools’ web site, the called meeting notice was posted on March 31 for an April 1 meeting. How many people in Floyd County, other than school personnel, knew about the meeting? The School Board learned of the Supervisors discussion about reducing their budget request through a Facebook post. That is indeed unfortunate – the budget discussion took place in a scheduled supervisors meeting that is open to the public. That is a little different than a special called meeting, announced one day prior to the meeting by a post on the school board web page. Dr. Harris stated that the current budget, if approved, would mean a \$1 million cut. As I look at the draft of the budget, the FY14 board approved amount was \$20,193,463 and the FY16 board approved amount is \$20,221,943. That looks like a small increase, not a cut. He states that the mandated increases in school expenditures and the “\$1 million cut” might have to be dealt with by: increasing class size, closing 1 or 2 schools, reducing or eliminating all extra-curricular activities, and reducing staff salaries. Dr. Harris also explained that the real estate tax rate in Floyd is lower than it is in Montgomery and Roanoke counties. According to labor market information posted on the Virginia Employment Commission web page, the following are average salaries in the three localities: Floyd County - \$26,612; Montgomery County - \$41,340; Roanoke County - \$37,024. It appears to me that citizens in those counties have more money to use for higher real estate taxes. Floyd County taxpayers are facing the same budget issues that our schools and local government are facing. Of course we want the best education possible for students in Floyd County but I wonder how many Floyd citizens have an increase in their revenue to cover rising costs. I urge you to keep in mind the financial situation of Floyd taxpayers and reject a real estate tax increase.

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

Mr. Carl Ayers, Social Services Director, next appeared before the Board. He presented a slide presentation that he had presented to the Medicaid Reform Commission in Richmond yesterday entitled “Medicaid Eligibility Processing – Local Impact”. (Document on file).

Mr. Chris Price, Assistant Residency Administrator with VDoT, next appeared before the Board. He reported that over the last month crews have:

- Graded and graveled Sandy Flats Road, worked on Haycock and Sugar Tree Roads;
- Began pothole patching with a big push over the next two months;
- Work on snow removal over the last month did take away time from maintenance
- Shoulder work completed on Indian Valley Road, Alum Ridge Road and Wills Ridge Road;
- Pipes have been cleaned out in various locations

He also noted that Route 625, Bolt Mill Road, will be closed for bridge work through April 17. The 6-year road plan public hearing is scheduled for April 22, 2014 at 7:30 p.m. for the priority list from 2015-2021. Project #1, Route 750 and Project #2 Route 635 are already fully funded. The requirement for 200 vehicles per day has been decreased to 50 vehicles per

day. Crews are also working on spot safety concerns, working on one now on Quesenberry Road, with several more spots lined up.

Supervisor Gerald – appreciate spot paving on Route 787. Road still needs more work especially along the river. Hylton Road is in very bad shape with large potholes.

Supervisor Allen – potholes need attention on lots of roads. Also was contacted by Charles Kirk on Silverleaf Road. A small section of the road is in Franklin County. During the recent snow storms, when the road was plowed, the operator would pick the blade up for about a 300' section in Franklin County and not scrape it.

Supervisor Turman – Turnip Patch Road is in very bad shape. Give the bus driver credit for being able to drive through it. Also still need signs for the curve at Route 221/Gardner Road intersection.

Supervisor Yoder – appreciate Route 221 shoulder work. Also, very large potholes on Kelly Drive that need attention.

Supervisor Clinger – nothing to report.

Mr. Price also reported that summer paving should start in 2-3 weeks, should see big improvements in the roads.

Dr. Kevin Harris, School Superintendent, next appeared before the Board. He reported that the School Board has not met yet this month so will come back to the April 22nd meeting to report to you.

On behalf of the School Board, we are always more than willing to work with you any way we can to provide information for decision making. We as a board have been looking at the State budget and waiting on it. It will put us in a little bit of a predicament with our staff. We are hearing from our side, the State Superintendent's Association that June may be our first look at the State budget. The Medicaid expansion is the sticking point we understand. That will put us in a difficult place for contracts for teachers. It will put us in a difficult place as far as any cuts we have to make with staff. We've been looking at that and trying to plan ahead. I'd just like to remind this Board that my first responsibility as School Superintendent is to make our school system the very best that it can be. My job is to walk into the schools and try to make things better. It is not to put anyone in a difficult situation but to assess where we are and where we need to be. Things are moving quickly gentlemen. If everything stays the same we fall behind. It is simply my job to make things better. If you have any questions I'll be glad to try to answer them. If I can't, I will make sure you have the answer before the end of the day as I always do.

After further discussion between Dr. Harris and the Board, the Board recessed until 1:00 p.m.

At 1:00 p.m., the Chairman called the meeting back into session and proceeded into a FY15 budget work session.

Chairman Clinger asked for any motions from the Board as far as revenue enhancement or setting of the budget public hearing. No motions were received.

Chairman Clinger noted that there is \$246,454 remaining in the Budget Stabilization Fund. He suggested that the fund be used for the FY15 budget shortages in the following way: 1) Restore \$105,000 cut from school budget plus an additional \$177,258, total \$282,258; 2) Provide \$15,000 extra to the library; 3) restore \$17,762 to the Sheriff's retention fund; 4) leave \$61,000 in the Sheriff's budget for vehicles; 5) leave \$31,200 in the Commonwealth Attorney's budget for a part-time prosecutor; 6) provide \$20,000 to the Economic Development Authority for maintenance and other costs at the Innovation Center; 7) Provide a one-time allocation of \$10,000 to New River Community Action for the building project; 8) add \$25,000 for maintenance costs of the DEX building recently purchased.

Consensus of the Board was for staff to research a referendum for next year for a meals tax.

On a motion of Supervisor Yoder, it was resolved to set the FY15 real estate tax rate at \$0.52/\$100 and the personal property tax rate at \$2.95/\$100.

Motion died due to lack of a second.

Consensus of the Board was for staff to prepare the draft budget advertisement for the next meeting; relay numbers to the School Board for their use; notify Commissioner of Revenue and Treasurer that all tax rates will remain the same.

On a motion of Supervisor Allen, seconded by Supervisor Turman, and unanimously carried, it was resolved to adjourn to Tuesday, April 22, 2014 at 7:00 p.m.

Supervisor Yoder – aye
Supervisor Turman – aye
Supervisor Gerald – aye
Supervisor Allen – aye
Supervisor Clinger – aye

Daniel J. Campbell, County Administrator

Case C. Clinger, Chairman, Board of Supervisors