

**MINUTES  
KING WILLIAM COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
MEETING OF APRIL 4, 2016**

A scheduled meeting of the Board of Supervisors of King William County, Virginia, was held on the 4<sup>th</sup> day of April, 2016, beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Board Meeting Room of the County Administration Building, with the following present:

Stephen K. Greenwood, Chairman  
Travis J. Moskalski, Vice-Chairman  
William L. Hodges  
David E. Hansen  
Robert W. Ehrhart II

K. Charles Griffin, County Administrator

**RE: CALL TO ORDER**

The Chairman called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. The members were polled:

W. L. Hodges	Aye
T. J. Moskalski	Aye
D. E. Hansen	Aye
R. W. Ehrhart II	Aye
S. K. Greenwood	Aye

**RE: PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Greenwood led the pledge of allegiance.

**RE: MOMENT OF SILENCE**

Chairman Greenwood called for a moment of silence.

**RE: PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED BUDGET FISCAL YEAR 2017**

a. Public Comments (3 minutes per individual; 5 minutes if representing an organization or group) – Chairman Greenwood read the following statement: King William County has been in existence since 1702. This Board is the governing body of the County and is here to conduct the serious business of the people of the County and to do so with dignity. This is not a sporting event therefore the behavior appropriate at a sporting event such as clapping, cheering, shouting out loud or any other distraction is not appropriate in this Board Room. He expects all to conduct themselves accordingly and if not there are officers in the room to remove those from the room, as to allow this Board to go about public business in the proper manner. He also reminded everyone to be respectful to each of the Board members that were elected by the citizens from the districts to this position. Lastly, he asked all comments

be directed to him, the Chairman of this Board. He said the elected officials before you were elected by the people of their districts.

Chairman Greenwood declared the public hearing open to receive comments on the proposed Budget FY 2017. He noted that speakers are allowed 3 minutes, those speaking on behalf of a group or organization are allowed 5 minutes, and that time will be strictly enforced. He will operate the timer and will verbally alert speakers to wrap up their comments when 30 seconds is remaining on the timer. He will sound the gavel when the time has expired and call for the next speaker.

1. Eugene Campbell, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, has reviewed the proposed budget by line item and some items stood out to him that he noticed were increased from last year. He said by adding those items to the \$50,000 for dues and subscriptions by his calculations, totals \$270,000, and feels they need to be looked at again. He feels some of the increases are justified but even if the \$270,000 was slashed in half you could realize another \$135,000 in savings, or a decrease of one cent on the tax rate. He said the proposal of eliminating the forestry use exemption by some to gain more revenue is not the road to go down. As stated by some citizens during Board meetings you need to think long and hard about the effects on this county if you do away with land use. Over two thirds of the counties of Virginia have not been wrong with land use tax exemption that has been in effect for many years. In his opinion, land use has a very useful purpose, it keeps our county rural, and supports the number one industry in King William, agricultural and forestry. He said land use postpones development, and in his opinion without land use this county will develop at a much faster rate and ultimately the tax rate will go up much quicker to help support the increase in services that housing developments bring. He does not believe for one minute that the majority of the citizens of King William want to eliminate land use taxation. He does believe that the consensus of this Board is to push this on the agenda, or go along with what some group in the county is demanding you can reduce that tax rate; the key words are working together. He invited all to come and mingle with the fine people of King William County at the 75<sup>th</sup> Annual King William Ruritan Fish Fry on April 12<sup>th</sup>.

2. Don Wagner, of the 5<sup>th</sup> District, said for the past year our citizens have been bombarded with signs claiming that our real estate taxes have increased due to the most recent reassessment adjustment in the tax rate, all should know that this is not the case. The assessment and adjustment in the real estate tax was a matter of level funding of our revenues and, in fact, most of those with property values that were less than \$200,000, actually received a decrease in their real estate taxes; as did Mr. Ehrhart who enjoyed a \$167.00, or 9% decrease in his real estate taxes.

Supervisor Ehrhart called for point of order.

Chairman Greenwood instructed Mr. Wagner not to use specific names of Board members in general and allowed him to continue.

Continuing, Mr. Wagner said he has reviewed both the County Administrator and School Board recommended budgets and believes these budgets correctly reflect the best path forward for our citizens and our schools as a result of significant cuts necessarily made during the recent recession. He feels there is no compelling reason to eliminate our land use exemptions for agriculture and forestry as the acting previous Board, in cleaning up the books and removing some of the unwarranted issues, has and will continue to produce positive results. Likewise the school budget reflects the necessary adjustments to begin to recover from the recession as the citizens of this county are likewise recovering with renewed prosperity. He said numerous cuts have also been made to programs that benefit our most vulnerable citizens and in that regard he requests that the funding be restored for Bay Transit, so they can restore services back to those most vulnerable citizens in our county. He expressed his sincere appreciation and admiration for the hard work and contributions of the County and School Board staff throughout the year.

3. Audrey Mitchell, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and serves as a trustee on the Pamunkey Regional Library Board, appeared before the Board to speak about the library. She has attended meetings and has heard discussions of the costs of the library. She hopes that the Board has the opportunity to use the libraries of the Pamunkey Regional Library system as they provide our community with priceless services; she said it is not your grandmother's library anymore. Aside from the books, they provide the community with the opportunity for learning and growing, home

schooling, teachers and school librarians, and home school librarians, with additional resources that assist with student learning. The library offers early literacy opportunities for preschoolers, summer reading programs for children of all ages, and is also a welcoming place for afterschool tutoring for students. There are many databases for research on any subject such as genealogy, health, science, business and all types of general knowledge. Many community members use the libraries for newspapers, magazines, e-books, audiobooks, and DVD's, but for some of us book lovers it is all about the books. The library is a great equalizer in our community, not everyone can afford to have internet services and for some parts of this county the internet service is almost impossible, people rely on the library for the opportunity to utilize the internet to gain knowledge. The library staff is very knowledgeable in helping patrons use their online resources assisting community members in things like job searches. In today's society over 80% of job applications are now required to be filed electronically, our library fills that role for many people. The library has offered workshops on subjects from computer skills to taxes to arts and crafts. As any passionate librarian will tell you, librarians are committed to promoting lifelong learning and literacy. As many of you are aware the library meeting space is utilized heavily for all types of activities, both for library programs, as well as community organizations, a place to get together for informational programs to social activities and gatherings for book clubs and offered programs. We are now in the information age and no one in our entity serves the needs of our citizens in that respect in our public library. We are fortunate to be a part of a very strong regional system. The number of resources available at any time is overwhelming and if our branch does not have it they can get it to you in a day or two, we are all about serving the public. In closing, she said when the question rises again about what our tax dollars are used for, for a public library the answer is access, access to ideas, information, literature, and to growing a stronger King William community.

4. Brad Ashley, of the 5<sup>th</sup> District, spoke about the forestry tax exemption. He and his wife moved here eight years ago, sold everything they owned and purchased 200 acres and built a modest home here in King William. They have experienced nothing but courteous, professional and efficient service from all

members of our local government, you should be proud of your people, as they have been very responsive and very kind. He does not currently have children in school but he is very proud and takes great pride in the efficiency and the reputation of the school system here in King William. He performed his due diligence and a primary part of his decision to move to King William was the forestry tax exemption; this allowed him to have the opportunity to have a modest amount of land and stay within a fixed budget as he is retired. Essentially the elimination of the forestry tax exemption will not allow him to keep his property. He is on a fixed budget and cannot afford an increase on the taxes on his land. He said essentially if three Board members make that decision you are taking his property from him, the very reason of the essence why he moved here. He strongly feels the removal of this tax is disproportionate, unfair, may even be immoral, but it is certainly wrong. His taxes would be increased well over 40%, and he wonders how anyone could justify a 40% tax increase. He agrees with the prior speakers this would be a bad decision for long term for the County, because it will cause people like him to divide property and sell homes giving a much bigger headache. He suggested if you have to do something, at least be courteous enough to grandfather the people that came here with the understanding and the due diligence to purchase property in King William, so that they can maintain their property on the fixed budget that he is sure many of us have. He said if you have that route, grandfathering would at least allow the people that are here to come under the rules that they understood the taxation to be and as people purchase new property or those people pass on then that would be eliminated. The forestry program is essential and he does not see much difference in growing pine trees to growing corn or growing soy beans. He said King William is a great place to live and he urged the Board not take his property from him, he is a real person and wants this for his family. He asked the Board to please take that into consideration.

5. Stacy Johnson, Interim Superintendent King William County Public Schools, appreciates the time the Board took on February 23<sup>rd</sup> for the School Board to present the FY17 budget. She encouraged the Board to level fund the King William Public Schools for 2016/2017 school year. She noted the circumstances with State funding have changed since their budget presentation to the Board. The most

recent correspondence from the Virginia Department of Education indicates that the increase in State funding is approximately \$250,000 less than what was presented. Please know that any additional cuts to local funding will inhibit their ability to continue to restore instructional positions and well deserved raises that were cut in past years. Their goal is to remain fiscally responsible while providing students with the programs and assistance that enable them to be safe and to achieve academic success. The support of our community and or our Board of Supervisors is greatly appreciated. She hopes that the Board continues to value a quality school system and that they see the return on their investment.

6. Dan Jones, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, appeared before the Board to ask that they continue level funding for the schools. He is a parent with two children that went through King William schools and said he purposely moved here for that reason. He has a son that will be graduating from William and Mary with honors, as a valedictorian at King William and feels without the teachers he would not have had those opportunities. He said we need to keep quality instructors in this community. If we start cutting things that we cannot keep or attract our good young staff and faculty we will go the wrong way and spiral down. He said the thing that brought us here was rural and land use tax and asked why change that, he does not understand.

Supervisor Ehrhart called for point of order and stated the speaker should be talking about the budget.

Chairman Greenwood said the speaker is speaking of the topic and instructed Mr. Jones to continue.

Continuing, Mr. Jones implored the Board to think about what the shining stars are of this county, they are the young people that we are placing in colleges, which we talk to every year about going out and furthering their education and then coming back to this county and making it even better. People ask him how they can get where King William is, he answers that you have to have a supportive School Board and a supportive Board of Supervisors, that understand what the quality of education means to a county. He urged the Board to please level fund the schools.

7. Whitney Lipscomb, of the 3<sup>rd</sup> District and speaking on behalf of Citizens for a Better King William, explained they are a group of concerned citizens

with a focus on the infrastructure of the County and was started with the primary concern for our schools and keeping them level funding. She feels there is no need to cut the school budget to give tax payers a small tax break. In her opinion she, as well as many people in King William, would rather spend that money on children's growth. She feels schools equal families, county growth, new businesses, a thriving community and an educated youth. She referred to the February 22<sup>nd</sup> Board of Supervisors meeting and in her opinion it showed how many citizens back and love what we have in our schools; over 30 people spoke and tons of people were here to show their support. She feels those numbers speak volumes and that actions speak louder than words. She said the words of Bob Shannon were acknowledged in an email to Supervisors' Greenwood, Ehrhart and Hansen and quoted "these citizens confidence in me and respect for my opinion isn't shallow" and then 2 paragraphs down calls "our teachers glorified baby sitters"; she considers that pretty shallow.

Supervisor Hansen called for point of order. He feels these are attacks against 3 Supervisors' and these types of statements cannot be accepted in this type of a meeting.

Chairman Greenwood asked the speaker to limit her comments to specific items with the budget please.

Ms. Lipscomb continued and said that these assistant teachers that were referred to have and continue to work very hard. She questions where all of these citizens that are behind Mr. Shannon's ideas.

Supervisor Hansen called for point of order.

In conclusion, Ms. Lipscomb said they have faith the Board will make the right decisions for our county. She reminded them we are all your constituents and we hope you take our views into deep consideration when finalizing the budget. She does not feel this is about the money, this is about the future of our children and our community.

8. Edwin Moren, of the 5<sup>th</sup> District, did not wish to speak at this time.

9. Ann Kloeckner, Executive Director with Rappahannock Legal Services, Inc., which has been serving King William County since 1999, said she really appreciates the opportunity to speak. She wants to sincerely thank the Board for their

previous support, they are grateful for the level funding of \$4,000. The number of clients who need their services has increased while donations have decreased, all due to the difficult economy, they understand all too well the tough times that currently cut into all county budgets. She said their one attorney office covers 7 counties representing low income people who need an attorney in civil legal matters. They represent victims in domestic violence, helping people obtain unemployment benefits, and resolving landlord/tenant and foreclosure matters, they are the only agency providing this service. She said there is absolutely no right to a free lawyer when you are poor and have a civil legal problem. In King William County there are 1,470 eligible low income persons who would qualify for our services. As an outside agency they behave like an inside agency by helping county governments in two important ways. First, they take the strain off of the social services safety net by lifting clients out of poverty with enforceable court orders or child and spousal support as well as unemployment benefits and social security benefits that the clients would not otherwise have won without their intervention. Secondly, they help the county court system run efficiently by helping those that cannot afford an attorney, pro se litigants who represent themselves slows the system down considerably. They leverage financial support to provide legal services that benefit citizens. In the last fiscal year 34 of King William citizens were assisted by their one attorney, we obtained over \$7,500 in disability benefits for King William residents. When you total the real amount of measurable financial help they give residents of King William County compared to the amount of funding given to them, which is an excellent return. King William County poor citizens received more than \$7,500 in enforceable court orders and in the last fiscal year the 3 offices of their agency obtained nearly \$2 million for clients throughout the 17 counties that they serve.

10. J. N. Mills, Jr., of the 5<sup>th</sup> District, spoke about the elimination of land use. The land use program was enacted by the State of Virginia in 1972, and there are currently 69 counties and 18 cities in the State that are using land use. There is some form of land valuation program in all 50 states designed to preserve farmland, forestry and open spaces; this adjustment is necessary because all land is assessed at market value which is development prices. He said land, crops, pasture



and timber cannot support taxes at that level based on the pure economics of agricultural and forestry. So when the taxes go up to the point that the land is sold land development and more houses burdens the county even more. He said currently in King William County there is 766 parcels in land use, 354 are in forestry only, 264 are combined agricultural and forestry, for a total of 618 parcels that are involved with forestry. He said some campaigned on reducing taxes and that was a great promise, but now they have been elected they find out there are no cuts to be made to fulfill those promises. So now you just want to cut blindly. He said he heard one Supervisor make a statement during some comments made that he didn't care about the future of the county when he was discussing eliminating forestry use. He feels every decision made by this Board impacts the future of this county and to not consider the future is ludicrous. He said King William is where Hanover was about 40 years ago, he grew up in Hanover, moved to King William and still has ties in both counties. He said Hanover had to learn how to control growth and they did it with a comprehensive plan with building and housing restrictions, proffers on new houses and of course they still continued with land use. He said this is planning for the future and that is what needs to be done in King William County now. He said he had a copy of the information from Virginia Tech on land use available.

11. Charles Piersa, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and President of the Farm Bureau, addressed the Board.

Supervisor Hansen called for point of order because the speaker was wearing a hat.

Chairman Greenwood noted the rules of the Board Room, during meetings of the Board of Supervisors, does not allow for hats to be worn. He asked the speaker to remove his hat.

Mr. Piersa apologized and removed his hat. He spoke about the funding for the schools and said he agrees with Ms. Johnson that they need level funding. He feels that is our future. He graduated from King William schools and chose to stay in the county, including generations of his family behind him; many have gone on to college and to pursue other career paths. He stressed that these people received their education in King William County. He does not feel any funding should be cut from the

schools as they bring the future to the County. In his opinion, the quality of education received from King William schools is outstanding. His son participated in the dual enrollment program and received an associate degree from RCC upon graduating from King William High School, and is continuing his studies to receive his masters. He feels we need to look to the future, not right in front of us. He also spoke about the forestry land use taxation. He is a farmer in King William County and feels land use is very important to farmers, as well as citizens who own just land. Many farmers rent the land that is owned by these citizens, which includes forestry and farmland. He noted that forestry and agriculture is the number one and number two in industry in the State of Virginia. Everyone benefits from the food they eat because of farmers. Anytime change takes place it affects the future. He wonders if forestry land use is eliminated what will be next, could it be agriculture. He said timber will never be grown to maturity and sawmills, loggers, and truckers will go out of business. He feels it is important to keep land use exemption in order to control development of homes in place of the timber. He noted housing developments cost more than keeping the land rural because of the added services. He suggested all of this be looked at before making a decision to eliminate exemptions. He said if land is put in conservation easements then they can never be touched. Continuing, he also spoke about fire and rescue noting that Farm Bureau is an insurance company. He said there was an opportunity to fix the issues, with regards to the missed calls, had the real estate tax rate be left at 94 cents. He said the citizens want fire and rescue services. He noted he has not heard one person stand up and speak about lowering taxes. He does not like having to pay taxes but when it comes to the services provided by the Sheriff's department, fire and rescue, and the schools, these are needed and citizens are willing to pay for what we need.

12. Ann Garner, of 8071 Dabney's Mill Road in Manquin, spoke of the importance of having a library available to citizens, not only for adults but also for the children, who are our future. Children are able to go there after school to be tutored and to use the computer services that are available. She is a former teacher, of 32 years for King William Schools, and said that many children do not have access to a computer at home, and a majority of homework assignments are required to be done

using a computer. She said due to poor internet service in parts of the County many adults resort to the library for that use in order to apply for jobs, pay bills, etc. She urged to Board to level fund the library, who has not increased their budget for the past four years, and is a very important service for many citizens. She also urged the Board to level fund the School Board budget. She came to this County 43 years ago when she had small children that were not of school age. In researching the public schools in King William they were so bad that she made the decision that if they did not improve she would resort to working two jobs to send her children to a better school system. Fortunately, the schools here started to improve and have continued to do so steadily. She always encouraged her students to do the work that the good teachers, of King William schools, give them and then they will be prepared for any college of their choice, and many of them have gone on to some prestigious colleges. She has witnessed parents who have enrolled their children in King William schools, coming from other public schools systems, and some of the reasons for many is the small classroom size and the wonderful programs offered.

13. Bob Shannon, of 5672 Richmond Tappahannock Hwy and speaking on behalf of the King William T.E.A. Party, addressed the Board and asked the Chairman to allow him five minutes afforded to groups. He said we as advocates as non-profits and agencies of non-profits seeking tax payer money. The questions are and the points being raised all seem slanted towards justifying the money that is being asked for. There seems to be a lack of curiosity or specific suggestions on what could be cut, he questioned why that is. More teachers require, or should, a modicum of evidence to support they are needed, thirteen more students over a six year period would suggest that is not the case. Claims and those that advocate for local level funding are ignoring the impeded increase in state funding and fully examining the facts and the conclusions to the contrary. Classroom teachers and school employees in King William County in 2013 and 2014 received some of the most generous increases in their compensation of any county school system in all of Virginia's 95 counties. He has examined what is posted on the Virginia Department of Education's website and that information as stated is supplied by the county schools themselves. He has not heard, as example, does the school system with four schools require a

superintendent and an assistant superintendent, he thinks that is a fair question. Does a system with four schools require a financial director? Does a system with four schools, in an already stressed tax base, need to be adding new programs that are not core curriculum requirements? Nice to add a security program and the point was stressed that only one other county in the state has such a program, Loudon County. Has anyone compared King William County with Loudon County? Is this yet another example of failing to determine this programs necessity before adding it, and at what expense? We have been told for the last six to seven years how the schools are running on a tight budget. How do you add programs on such a tight budget? If phonics taught five generations of American kids to read do we need a master reading teacher or is that just another education fad? Why isn't spending 3 or 5 thousand dollars to replace a transmission or motor in a county vehicle an alternative to asking for \$35,000 for a new vehicle? Citizens are familiar with these costs because they regularly replace transmissions and motors in personal vehicles they own. Vehicles 15 or more years old that are still perfectly serviceable. Tax payers often keep older vehicles of their own on the road out of necessity, but yet they are asked to buy shiny new things for government use. It wasn't that long ago that former sheriff, Wayne Healey, would visit local junk yards to salvage parts for deputy vehicles. He is not suggesting that Sheriff Walton's deputies start repairing the vehicles. What he is pointing out is what has changed besides attitudes towards frugality. Could Bay Transit vehicles, often seen riding around the county empty, be used to carry social service patrons where they need to go in return for the tax payer money that we give them? He said these vehicles run all over the county empty. Why is the assumption that we need to spend \$35 thousand dollars, or more, for a new van almost automatic? Why is no consideration given to economizing and using the empty Bay Transit vans that we are already paying for? What is the problem with examining efficiencies in the current system before spending tens of thousands of tax dollars? Why have we not heard anything about conversion to the New Kent model of the dog pound that would save us \$75,000 a year by the new Board? Why are we even debating additional paid personnel for fire and rescue? Just last year in this room we were told it was a daytime problem, he asked if the remember that? Now we need 24/7 paid personnel.

Chairman Greenwood stated the speakers' time was up.

Mr. Shannon continued and said he has been in this room when others were permitted to stand up here and ramble on for five minutes or more at a time. He said thank you for your time.

Chairman Greenwood instructed the audience members to settle down. He agreed that in the past there has been overages, we have to be strict with everyone, and everybody is equal.

14. Earl Berkley, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, has been following the budget process for the last couple of years in the paper and he wonders how the cutting process works. He said it is odd to him that you have a county of 16,000 that is supporting two school systems. He said if you divide the 16,000 residents into the money that West Point is putting into their system, or operating budget, and the King William operating budget you come up with \$900 of revenue. New Kent only spends \$650 a resident, King and Queen only spends \$560 a resident; Hanover, they have a 100,000 people and they only have four high schools, one high school for every 25,000 people. King William has 16,000 people trying to support two complete school systems. In his opinion, you would want to possibly work with West Point and combine the systems to save some money for the residents of King William.

15. Dylan DeHart, teacher and Football Coach for King William County Public Schools, spoke on behalf of the children of King William County and support of level funding for the School Board budget. He said we are all here for the same reason, we all care about King William County and want the best for the County, whether you are on this side of the fence or that side of the fence. He thinks we need to trust our School Board, the experts. He said deciding where all this money has to go is tough. The schools are asking for the Board continue level funding as they have in the past. He feels the School Board has done well, they work hard and they love the children. He said as soon as you stop focusing on education you are going to see a decline in civilization; the best part of this community is the future. He works with the future every day at this county and he loves working at King William High School. He is not from King William County but wants to be here and stay for a long time. He

asked the Board to please work with the School Board and trust their knowledge of what the schools need.

There being no other persons to appear for or against this matter Chairman Greenwood closed the proposed Budget FY 2017 public.

**RE: PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED TAX LEVIES FOR CALENDAR YEAR 2016**

a. Public Comments (3 minutes per individual; 5 minutes if representing an organization or group) – Chairman Greenwood declared the public hearing open to receive comments on the proposed Tax Levies for Calendar Year 2016.

1. J. N. Mills, Jr., of the 5<sup>th</sup> District, would like to talk about the tax rate, currently at 94 cents. He said during the campaign one candidate used an example of two houses that contained the same square footage, one in Hanover County and one in King William County, that the construction cost being the same and the two tax rates, 81 cents for Hanover, and 94 cents for King William, that the house in King William would cost more, and would have had a higher tax rate. He said the reality is, he knows these actual comparisons because he owns a house in King William and his bother owns one in Hanover, of relatively comparable size. The square footage of the Hanover house equals 3,080, with a 140 sq ft deck, with 2 acres and is assessed at \$231,900; built in 1984. The King William house equals 3,013 sq ft, has a 2 car garage attached, 2 car carport attached, a storage shed, an above ground swimming pool, on 2.2 acres, built in 1994, and the assessed value is \$192,400. Take those two values and the taxes for the Hanover house is \$1,871 at a tax rate of 81 cents; and the King William house is \$1,808 at a tax rate of 94 cents; now whose rate is too high. He feels everyone that moved to King William County came here for what we have, the quality of our schools, the rural life we have because of land use, fire and rescue, and Sheriff's department, so he asked why make cuts. He grew up in Hanover and graduated from Lee Davis High School, he moved to King William and his children graduated from King William schools and his grandchildren are now attending King William schools. He doesn't want to see these funds cut in this budget. He wants to see the all the children in the county get the same quality education that they deserve and have gotten in the past.

2. Bill Latane, of the 5<sup>th</sup> District, thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak tonight. He is a tax payer in the county, and he is also an employee of Virginia Farm Bureau, however his comments tonight are as a tax payer. The budget is a large document and one that requires hundreds of decisions, large and small, schools, pay and benefits for employees, and public safety must be balanced against the real need to tax only what is necessary, taxes are a way of paying for the real needs you have individually and collectively identified. He does not like paying taxes, he bets nobody in the room likes to pay taxes. It is not enough to say what we are against, he thinks we have to say what we are for as well. With that in mind, he read a statement of what he is for. He is for civil discourse on issues without anyone calling names or using four letter words. He is for long term solutions not short term fixes. He believes Dr. William Denning was correct when he said that profound knowledge is needed to make improvements, he was speaking of manufacturing but the same is true with government, unless you really understand the system changing it is just as likely to make it worse as to make it better. He knows that both common sense and academic studies point out that agricultural and forestry land pay much more in taxes than they receive in services. He is okay with paying his share of taxes and even a bit more, but he also believe that people who demand services should be willing to pay as well. He knows that agriculture and forestry are strong stable industries that provide jobs and economic activity and paying much of the taxes in the county, they are here and they don't need to be recruited to be brought into the county. He knows that governments can tax people and businesses out of existence. He knows that King William makes as much off his property as he does and most of the time a little bit more. He also knows that he assumes all the risk and does all the work while all King William does is send him a bill twice a year. He knows that his taxes pay for people who don't pay nearly as much but use far more in services, yet some of those same people think that he needs to be taxed more. He knows that without land use assessment most of those people cannot afford forestry land in King William and it will be virtually impossible to retain forestry as a business. He knows that without a base of forestry in the county many jobs will disappear while the calls for government services will increase, this will drive taxes even higher. He

knows that people who believe forest landowners will pay any tax and not sell out for residential development are wrong, landowners will be forced to sell and it will go to residential development.

Chairman Greenwood stated that the speaker's time was up.

3. Charles Piersa, of the 2<sup>nd</sup> District and speaking on behalf of the Farm Bureau, feels the real estate tax rates should be left at 94 cents, but he can live with 93 cents, as long as we can figure out how everything can be funded. He said that means the schools, Sheriff's department, fire and rescue, and not destroy land use taxation. He said once you put a home on open land it is gone forever, you also have to look at what this does for the environment, these are very important issues. You also have to look at the largest industry in King William, the paper mill, if you do away with forestry exemption and homes start coming in he wonders what is going to happen to the paper mill, which was the founder of this county from the start. We need to look at the future for this county, the people that are employed at the paper mill, and what will happen to them if the paper mill goes down.

4. Bill Hughes, of the 5<sup>th</sup> District, wants to consider the consequence of eliminating the land use tax exemption. According to the article from Virginia Tech, land use exemptions was allowed by the State to be implemented by individual counties in according with their community wishes. As he read the article land use tax exemptions serve two purposes, many have already stated this, allowed for the farming and forestry industries to stay competitive with the surrounding states and keep the individual counties rural. He said put yourself in the land owner's shoes, if the Board of Supervisors eliminates land use exemption then those who use land for income will incur greater expenses and a lowered income. Some of those land owners will be forced to sell some of their land to recover their lost income. Due to the nature of supply and demand more land that is for sale then lower in value all of them will be, that means lower assessments. In turn, the county to maintain services will need to increase the tax rate, not the direction you want to go in. He feels this is why last year's tax rate increased to offset the lower real estate values that occurred with the last assessment. He personally likes the rural nature of the county and that is why he moved here, and as a home owner in the county he wants the value of his home to



increase and not decrease. The value of land has decreased since he moved here four years ago, but he believes that was due to the weak national economy and higher fuel costs we had a few years ago, not the mismanagement of previous Boards. In his opinion, to keep the county attractive to people, which keeps people from leaving the county, we need to have exceptional schools and services. Combine this with keeping the county rural he believes this will keep the values of our homes from falling. He does not think that we want the value of our assets, which is our homes, to fall. He feels that the new Board is pushing too hard to reduce taxes and not thinking of the long term consequences of the perceived short term needs.

5. Wilson Sprenkle, property owner in the 2<sup>nd</sup> District, his first time attending a meeting of this Board was last week. He was pretty impressed with the Board in that they are interested in doing the right thing for the county. He said it was his understanding from the information he received from the meeting last week that farm land contributes to a lot more taxes relative to the resources used from the county, as opposed to residential property. He feels one problem in King William is the amount of poverty; people in poverty cannot afford valuable residential land and therefore are unable to contribute as much to the tax base. He said the best defense against poverty is education and bringing jobs to the county to those educated young people so they do not leave the county, or at least return to the county. He is all for doing what is necessary to improve the education system as long as the Board of Supervisors makes sure that there is no waste and the money is used to sustain and improve our education system. He owns residential, farm, and forestry land and since farm and forestry land require much less resources from the county it seems more logical that the tax increase, if needed, would go to the residential properties. He feels King William County is a very desirable place to live because of the rural nature and the lack of urban sprawl. He prefers not to live in a crowded and congested area such as Richmond, or goodness forbid Northern Virginia. He is afraid if we tax farm and forestry land out of existence that is exactly what will eventually happen. He said it would be nice if we could concentrate on educating our young people and keep them in the county to contribute to the tax base, we could then plan and control residential development to prevent urban sprawl.

There being no other persons to appear for or against this matter Chairman Greenwood closed the proposed Tax Levies for Calendar Year 2016 public hearing.

Chairman Greenwood thanked everyone for coming and the valuable input received from the many speakers.

**RE: ADJOURNMENT**

There being no other business to come before this Board, Chairman Greenwood adjourned the meeting at 8:05 p.m.

COPY TESTE:

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Stephen K. Greenwood, Chairman  
Board of Supervisors

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Bobbi L. Langston  
Deputy Clerk to the Board