SCOTT

VIRGINIA

At an adjourned budget workshop of the Scott County Board of Supervisors begun and held in the Supervisors' meeting room located at the Community Services Building in Gate City, Virginia on Wednesday the 7th day of May, 2025 at 2:00 p.m.

PRESENT: Darrel W. Jeter
L. Michele Glover – Vice-Chairman
Eddie N. Skeen
Michael K. Brickey
Danny M. Casteel
Christopher S. Maness – Chairman
Stefanie C. Addington

ABSENT: None.

Chairman Chris Maness called the meeting to order.

On a motion by Michael K. Brickey, duly seconded by L. Michele Glover, this Board hereby approves the agenda.

Voting aye: Darrel W. Jeter, L. Michele Glover, Eddie N. Skeen, Michael K. Brickey
Danny M. Casteel, Christopher S. Maness, and Stefanie C. Addington.

Voting nay: None.

Acting County Administrator Bill Dingus recapped the budget. He went on to say that the personal property estimate reduced by a couple hundred thousand dollars, and the Regional Jail cost for FY26 is $138,000. In the original budget, the Regional Jail cost was $145,000. Mr. Dingus pointed out that the budget has been reduced by $350,000, and the deficit is now $850,713 with the rate increase of four cents. He added that does not include new increased estimates of casino funds.

Supervisor Skeen reported that he spoke with Treasurer Kevin Helms, and he is confident with a 98 percent collection rate. In addition, the Commissioner of the Revenue is considering to go back three years on collections.

The Board discussed delinquent taxes and pointed out that there is 2.8 million dollars to be collected. In addition, the board looked at different revenue sources.

Superintendent of Schools John Ferguson and the Board of Supervisors discussed the school budget.

Supervisor Eddie Skeen inquired about long-term plans for the next ten years that would affect the county budget.

Mr. Ferguson replied that he would prefer keeping the status of the schools as they are currently. He went on to say that he has never mentioned consolidation and knows the importance of schools in communities. Furthermore, Mr. Ferguson stated that that he has seen what that has done to neighboring counties, and it will not necessarily save money. Mr. Ferguson noted that he asked for a grant match for federal funds at one time. Outside of that, he has never asked for additional funding.

Supervisor Eddie Skeen pointed out that Wise County has the same budget as Scott County with 2,000 more students. The cost per student in Wise County is $3,000 and the cost per student in Scott County is $20,000.

Mr. Ferguson replied that Scott County receives more state funding than Wise County. He went on to say that he cannot comment on Wise County. He can only say what Scott County is doing.

Supervisor Eddie Skeen addressed the number of Tennessee students attending school in Scott County, the cost of that, and tuition charged in Tennessee for out-of-state students.

Mr. Ferguson pointed out that Scott County has mixed families, teachers who bring their children to schools in Scott County, and people who own property in Scott County. He added that there are a variety of living conditions with mom and dad living separately in Tennessee and Virginia. In addition, grandparents care for children as well. Mr. Ferguson noted that those who bring their children here to attend school also spend money while they are here. He added that the Scott County School system employs 83 percent of employees from Scott County. There would be a significant amount of those people who could lose their jobs and have to relocate. The county would lose those tax dollars as well.

Supervisor Skeen inquired about the additions to Weber City and Yuma and why that is needed.

Mr. Ferguson replied that more office space and classrooms are needed. He added that there are spaces being shared currently.

Supervisor Skeen pointed out that the financial consultant suggested that Scott County look at school consolidation.

Mr. Ferguson noted the extreme cost of that. He pointed out that land, infrastructure, and access would be needed. He went on to say that the status of the schools would remain as long as he can pay the bills.

There was discussion as to possibly more housing in Scott County and handling more students.

Mr. Ferguson replied that school revenue is based on student population, and the county would have to prepare for more students as well as the school system.

There was discussion as to virtual students, dual enrollment students, and discretionary items.

Supervisor Eddie Skeen mentioned three findings in the school audit.

Mr. Ferguson replied that it was recommended that more people be hired and reimbursements be made monthly.

Supervisor Danny Casteel noted that the Board of Supervisors were advised that Scott County had the oldest schools and would have to build new ones within the next ten years.

Mr. Ferguson replied that the schools have good bones; however, the electricity not so much.

There was some discussion as to the composite index, and Mr. Ferguson stated that he would have a budget for the Board of Supervisors to consider and hopefully approve.

Chairman Maness thanked Mr. Ferguson for attending.

Supervisor Eddie Skeen stated that he has a list of questions pertaining to the budget for Bart Shelton.

Chairman Maness directed that Supervisor Skeen email that list to Mr. Shelton along with the members of the Board.

There was discussion among the Board as to a fire tax.

After much discussion, Supervisor Michael Brickey pointed out that the financial consultant advised that seven million dollars in the rainy-day fund is sufficient. He suggested taking $1,495,400 from the $11,304,000 rainy-day fund and do away with the fire tax and deficit. Supervisor Brickey pointed out that regional projects and casino funds could add more revenue. In addition, the Regional Jail cost reduced from what was in the first draft of the budget.

There was discussion as to state funding for fire and rescue in the future, and Terry Kilgore and Todd Pillion helping with that effort.

Supervisor Michael Brickey inquired about a reimbursement resolution.

Mr. Dingus replied that he could get an explanation from David Rose.

The Board discussed the proposed machinery and tools tax and the affect an increase would have on businesses. In addition, the board discussed the fire tax and the long-term affects if not implemented.

Supervisor Danny Casteel was excused from the meeting.

There was discussion as to the importance of funding fire and rescue, call volume, and funding each fire department equally or as needed.

Mr. Dingus pointed out that all fire departments need the same fire equipment and vehicles no matter how many calls they have.

It was the consensus of the Board to present Cole Burke, Josh Burleson, Roger Carter, Wendall Burke and Laura Bowen with a plaque of recognition.

It was the consensus of the Board to make the adjustments as discussed for consideration at the next budget workshop on June 4, 2025.

Chairman Chris Maness adjourned the meeting to June 4, 2025 at 9:00 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK