

**Wicomico County Council
Open Work Session
December 17, 2013**

Work sessions require written minutes that reflect each item that the public body considered, the action that the public body took on each item and each vote that was recorded. **It should be noted that at work sessions, the Wicomico County Council does not take formal action, nor is a vote taken on any item discussed.**

Present: Matt Holloway, President; John Hall, Vice President; Bob Culver, Sheree Sample-Hughes, Gail M. Bartkovich, and Joe Holloway.

In attendance: Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator; Steve Roser, Internal Auditor, Wayne Strausburg, Director of Administration; Sharon Morris, Assistant Director of Administration; Melissa Holland, Recording Secretary.

Compensation and Allowance Discussion :

Mr. Baker said the Council and Executive salaries have to be done by legislative bill and it is a thirty day advertising period and a 60 day adoption period. Mrs. Bartkovich asked if it was legal to adjust the salaries yearly by the cost of living to which Mr. Baker said the law is based on the Maryland Constitution and is designed to avoid pressure or influence by the elected officials to raise the salary. He said that if the cost of living was used the Executive could give himself a raise then the Council could adjust that amount in the budget. It would be easier to set a dollar amount then tying it to an increase. Mrs. Sample-Hughes said that while looking at the increases and decreases in property taxes based on the audit presentation she does not feel it is a good idea to use the CPI. Mr. Joe Holloway said he is not in favor of increasing salaries of any elected officials. He said that the Council heard that the assessable base is declining and feels the County has a while to go before the economy is better. He said he would not agree with tying an increase to the CPI. Mr. Joe Holloway said the cost of living could increase but the revenues decrease. He said that when people ran for election they never asked for more money. He said he would like to see the taxpayer's of Wicomico County get a raise by not increasing taxes. Mr. Joe Holloway feels it should stay as is. He said the Council went from Executive to Legislative in 2006 and some of the burden was taken from the Council at that time. Mr. Hall thanked the Compensation and Allowance Commission and thanked them for comparing Wicomico to other counties in the state. He said the economy is not that strong but he feels it is an embarrassment that the officials in Wicomico County are paid the small amount they are. He said to attract quality people a respectable amount is needed and said it is a matter of respect. He said that he is against tying the increases to the CPI. Mrs. Bartkovich asked what Mrs. Prettyman's thoughts were and she would like to hear her thoughts. Mr. Matt Holloway asked if this should be drawn up as a legislative bill and let the citizens have a public hearing and speak their thoughts. Mr. Culver would not like the increases tied to the CPI. Mr. Matt Holloway would like this brought to a public hearing and voted on by the Council. Mrs. Bartkovich feels for fairness for the County Executive and the public this bill needs to move forward now at this time due to budgeting purposes. This will be ready for introduction at the January 7th meeting. Mrs. Bartkovich would like to use

round numbers for the Legislative Bill. Mrs. Sample-Hughes said she agrees with round numbers and said she asked for the work session because there were concerns from the Compensation and Allowance Commission regarding benefits for Council members. Mrs. Sample-Hughes said compensation is not only salary but other benefits the Council receives as well. Mr. Baker said what they suggested will be handled in the Personnel Manual and that is the process of being worked on. Mr. Joe Holloway said they have painted a picture of despair to the legislatures at several different times and then there are declining revenues. He said he didn't vote in favor of the budget due to employees receiving raises of \$5,000 and \$10,000. Mr. Matt Holloway said for the past 20 years the Council has not had an increase. Mr. Joe Holloway feels the elected officials should be the last ones to benefit until there is a clear picture of where the County is going. Mrs. Sample-Hughes said she looked at the audit presentation from a positive point of view and not a dismal point of view. She said she does know the Council is part time however it is a full time job. She said there are quality individuals that serve as Executive and Sheriff and that is their full time job. She said the Council is a supplemental job for most Council members. Mrs. Sample-Hughes does want to hear from the public and see what their thoughts are. Mr. Hall would like the bill drawn up with the recommendations of the Compensation and Allowance Commission. This bill will be at the January 7, 2014 meeting for introduction.

Board of Education :

Present: Matt Holloway, President; John Hall, Vice-President; Bob Culver, Sheree Sample-Hughes, Gail M. Bartkovich and Joe Holloway.

In attendance: Matthew E. Creamer, Council Administrator; Edgar A. Baker, Jr., County Attorney; Maureen Lanigan, Deputy County Attorney; Steve Roser, Internal Auditor; Melissa Holland, Recording Secretary; Dr. John Fredericksen, Superintendent of Schools; Brian Foret; Kim Hudson; Don Fitzgerald; Desmond Hughes; Larry Dodd; Bruce Ford; Ronald Willey; Cathy Townsend; Margo Handy, Dave Reeve and Bob Langan.

Mr. Foret, Facilities Manager, said that Bennett Middle School as of December 13th is still on schedule with anticipated construction completion being April 15th. After that time the work will begin for operations to be ready for school in FY15. There are 16 various trade contractors on site. Mr. Foret said the security/fencing; foundation walls; first floor slabs; structural steel and geothermal wells are all complete. Mr. Foret said that the second floor slabs; masonry; metal studs/ sprayed insulation; joist and decking; roofing and utility infrastructure are in progress. There are three hundred geothermal wells on the property. Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked about the fall out shelter which will now be Bennett Middle instead of Westside and wondered how it affected the process. Mr. Foret said legislation passed in the last session that required all new school facilities that are under construction or in the planning phase to meet with the with Emergency Management of the state and county with specific procedures which were adopted. He said they have done what was asked and during the meetings the state and local supported that they wanted to include much more shelter than was originally designed. It was fairly extensive. The Board of Education has asked the contractors and engineers to obtain pricing. Mr. Foret said they spoke with IAC and the Public School

Construction Program due to they were in the midst of the construction. Subsequent to the discussion there were discussions between the departments and the Board of Education has received a letter that this would not be required for this project however if the county chose to do on a local level that would be fine. Additional funds are not needed for the fall out shelter. They are maintaining the schedule they are on and they are going to obtain pricing in the event they decide to do this later down the road. Mr. Foret said the estimated price as \$450,000-500,000. Mrs. Sample-Hughes said she knows that the Capital Improvement Program has abandoned the project for Westside making it a fall out shelter and is wondering what will be done if Westside won't be completed and Bennett Middle is not being made a shelter. Mrs. Bartkovich said if Bennett Middle School is used for shelter there is limited access for residents and wanted to know if there is a school on the Westside that could accommodate these people. Mr. Foret said Emergency Management lets them know where the shelters need to be and is based on generators and then the schools are told which ones will be shelters. Mr. Foret will get the information to the Council regarding the fall out shelters. He said that Mr. Shipley, Emergency Management, had interest in Westside but he doesn't think that it met the size requirement. Mr. Culver asked when the highway work will begin. Mr. Foret said the state has approved the work but he is not sure of the state's schedule. The septic system has been completed.

Facilities Safety and Security Update :

Mr. Foret said that Phase I has been completed at all schools. He said that this is the basic video, monitored/controlled access with intercom and remote electronic latch controls. Mr. Foret said that five out of twenty eight sites have not completed Phase II but he expects this to be completed within the next two weeks. He said the complete control access (FOBS) is programmable and the normal occupants of the facility will have access to the building based on the administration programming their access rights. Mr. Foret said Phase III will not be completed until school is out for the summer. He said that Phase III will begin to modify some of the entrances for actual secure vestibules. He said that they will put sally ports or vestibules that have total locked access. Mr. Foret explained that with Phase I there is a video intercom which visitors will call the office to request entry into the school. After the visitor is in the school they must sign in to the visitor identification system and are issued a temporary ID badge. Mr. Foret said there are still separate security systems in the schools as well. However, the Board of Education feels that the extra layer of security is important as well which is why the school administrators can schedule to have door automatically unlock when busses and students arrive and then re-lock and allow employees to use their FOBS. Mr. Foret said a system will be developed so the administrators are given two basic color cards and they are the green card or the red card. He said if an event occurs then the administrator will only have to swipe the red card to lock down the school. He said that when the event is over they can then use their green card and swipe which will then mean that the school will return to normal operations. Mr. Foret said there are some older schools that have several points of access and these schools will need to be evaluated on a case by case basis. Mr. Joe Holloway said there have been some concerns at Beaver Run Elementary and the fence outside. Mr. Foret said that Beaver Run was brought to his attention and has many more points of access and he said when this project is complete they will look at the case by case basis and see what needs to

be done for security. He said that East Salisbury Elementary is another concern as well. Mr. Foret said the School Facilities Task Force has kicked off and he said it is a community based focus group and they are looking at the current issues with the school facilities. He said they will review the Master Plan and identify issues and priorities and make recommendations for future plans. He said they are having a good turn out and good discussion. These meetings are held monthly and Mr. Foret will send the schedule to Mr. Joe Holloway.

Technology Update :

Mr. Bob Langan, Director of Information Technology, said for Bennett Middle School the Board of Education is planning for 900 students and 80 classrooms. He said the SMART boards are very helpful and they are hoping to use in all classrooms at Bennett Middle School. Mr. Langan said they are considering wireless as so many students have smart phones and laptops at this time. He said they are drafting a policy regarding the use of smart phones in the classroom however the policy is still being debated. Mr. Langan said they are looking at telepresence at Bennett Middle School. He said in Calvert County telepresence is used and the students are able to see live autopsies being performed. He said that in the next five years he believes that the tablet will eliminate the laptop. Mr. Langan said that the tablets will not be used for testing. He said that the one-time non-recurring funds in the amount of \$600,000 from the County Council were used to purchase 25 laptop carts with 16 laptops per cart. He said the laptop carts are in and being used. Mr. Langan said there has been a delay in installing the Smart Interactive Boards at Mardela and Delmar High Schools. He said there was a manufacturer backlog of four months where the product was not available. All of the units have been received and the installation process is beginning. The boards will not be available for use until April of 2014. Mr. Langan said they are purchasing mice for grades 1st through 4th. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if the laptops are cleaned as different children are touching them through out the day. Mr. Langan said there is no practice of wiping the laptops after every class however Media Centers do clean the laptops. However, with the rolling carts it is hard to clean the laptops. He said that PARCC which is Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers which is a national consortium trying to set standards around the delivery of assessments. Mr. Langan said they are expecting full implementation of online testing by fall of 2015. During the months of October and November a bandwidth test was conducted and the results go to the FCC and the Governor's Office. Mr. Langan said that MSDE requested a GAP analysis and the directive was that "laptops for testing without interrupting or disrupting instruction." He said the Board of Education is approximately 1000 laptops short. Mr. Langan provided a list of how many laptops short each school was. Mrs. Sample-Hughes said she was informed of a program in New Jersey which allows citizens that are upgrading their laptops to donate the laptop to the school system as long as they met a certain standard. Mr. Langan said that support resources are needed to manage this. He said that he was contacted by Perdue as they had 2,000 computers which they no longer needed; to which Mr. Langan had to decline. The computers would not even run the current operating system. He said sometimes it is more of a hassle then it is worth. He said they have an E-cycling program where a vendor takes the equipment away and gives the Board of Education cash back. Mrs. Sample-Hughes said her concern is that the teachers are not able to use the laptops every day and the children

are using word documents. Mr. Langan said he would love for Wicomico County to be one laptop per child however that would be approximately \$5 million a year. He said to build out the network infrastructure to have Wi-Fi in all schools it will cost \$311,625.00.

School Vehicles :

Mr. Dave Reeve, Current Director of Transportation, informed everyone that as of January 1, 2014 Mr. Desmond Hughes will be the new Director of Transportation. Mr. Hughes said that the buses which the Board of Education purchased will depreciate by \$94,000 over a fifteen year period and that is an annual depreciation of \$6,266.67. He said the county owned buses are driven 57 miles per day and 180 days per year. Mr. Hughes said that mileage costs for the county is \$9,607.46 as a contractor owned bus is \$13,835.61 yearly. He also said the Board of Education was able to capture savings on fuel by forming a partnership with County roads and he said there is typically a \$.50 per gallon difference between the county and other companies. Mr. Hughes said the county uses the same companies for maintenance that the bus contractor do at a rate of \$.8170 per mile and the county's maintenance rate per mile is \$0.5134. Mr. Hughes also said they are hoping to form a partnership with County Roads for maintenance of the vehicles. Mr. Hughes stated that Roads does not have enough mechanics at this time however he is hopeful in the future they will be able to work with the Roads Division. Contractor's driver costs are calculated at 4.75 hours per day however the Board of Education uses 5.25 hours as they have to calculate for taking the children who are being dropped off at home and no one is there to take back to the school. Mr. Hughes also said they have to allow for cleaning of the buses as well as fueling. He said there is an annual savings of \$16,622.20 for county owned buses as opposed to contractor owned buses. Mr. Reeve explained the breakdown of where the five county owned buses service. Buses# 150-153 service local students to local schools however bus #154 is serving four students living in Parsonsburg and Salisbury and takes them to the Eastern Shore Adventist Behavioral Health Center in Cambridge, Maryland. Mr. Joe Holloway asked if the Board of Education plans on purchasing more buses in the future. Mr. Reeve said at the end of this school year there are 24 vehicles that have to leave the fleet. He said they plan to advertise all routes and have room for three more buses at the facility. They are possibly looking at purchasing one more bus next year. The building of Bennett Middle School will give them the opportunity at looking at new routes and different routes. Mr. Joe Holloway asked what makes the contracts less desirable at this point and have the contracts been changed to make them less desirable. Mr. Hughes said that the cost of a school bus from last year to this year have increased from \$6,000-8,000. Many contractors don't drive their own buses and have to hire someone to drive the buses. Mr. Hughes said the miles and hours have increased over the past several years. Mr. Reeve said there are ten buses that have to be replaced and they will start with the oldest buses. Mr. Hughes said as long as school bus contractors want to be contractors they will be.

Finance:

Mr. Bruce Ford, Controller, said on November 11, 2013 the budget managers turned in their worksheets. A 100% zero based budgeting model is being used this year. Mr. Ford said the base line is zero. Mr. Ford said on December 18th the Budget Development Team will review the cost of doing business projections with the

Superintendent. On January 15th the first public hearing will be held by the Board of Education and the first open budget work session with the Board of Education is on January 21, 2014.

Instruction :

Dr. Margo Handy said this is the first year of full implementation of Common Core Standards. She said this is the PILOT year for the PARCC assessment. She said that high school assessments will continue. Dr. Handy said the government HSA was dropped for several years however this year the test will be given in hopes that many students will pass the government HSA. Dr. Handy said the major change to the HSA program is the Bridge program. She said that students entering grade 9 in 2013-14 must pass the Government HSA in order to graduate. She said that Government projects will remain the same as 2010-11. Dr. Handy said that students that fail Government HSA twice could be eligible for Bridge projects. The Bridge Administrative Manual has been revised. Dr. Handy said students entering 9th grade in the 2012-2013 school year or prior do not need to pass the Government HSA for graduation but may choose to apply the score toward a combined score. Students may achieve a combined score of 1602 on the English, Algebra/Data Analysis, Biology and Government HSA or students may achieve a combined score of 1208 on the English, Algebra/Data Analysis and Biology HSA. She said that 100% of students have graduated. Dr. Handy thanked the Council for their support and funding to allow the Board of Education additional monies to hire additional Social Workers. She said there are eight Social Workers in seven schools. She said they looked at the greatest needs of the students and who would benefit from the assistance. Dr. Handy explained that in order for the Social Workers to work with the same families they have Social Workers at Beaver Run, East Salisbury, Wicomico Middle, and Wicomico High as these families attend each school. She also said there are 2 Social Workers at Choices; 1 at Bennett Middle School and 1 at James M. Bennett High School. Dr. Handy said the administrators at the school say they didn't realize how much they could accomplish with the help of the Social Workers as they provide guidance to the family. Dr. Handy said if the Council would like to have a full report on instruction she would be more than happy to present. Mrs. Sample-Hughes asked who at the Board of Education does a family contact if they become homeless or there are domestic violence issues. Dr. Handy said that is Student and Family Services and Jacqueline Deal is in charge of the program as she is the Homeless Coordinator. Mrs. Bartkovich said she appreciates the students that are ringing the bells for the Salvation Army.

Discussion of Legislative Bill 2013-11:

Mrs. Bartkovich asked how many attorneys the other counties have based on population. Mr. Baker said there is only attorney in Worcester County however they contract out Boards and Commissions. He said that the Law Department reviews any contract or document that has a legal signature. Mr. Baker said the complexity of the contracts is increasing. He feels the work load alone requires an additional attorney in order to have a quick turn around. Mr. Baker said he doesn't anticipate being with the County for another full term and government law is not taught in Law School. He feels it will take a year to 18 months before another attorney can contribute to the office. Mr. Hall asked if a clerk could do the work. Mr. Baker said no as the work is true legal work.

Mr. Strausburg said he feels if the Council could look at the legal expenses incurred by jurisdictions around the state on a per capita basis. Mr. Strausburg said there are a lot of regulatory issues which the Law Department has to review. He said there are a great deal of issues such as the Personnel Manual, FOP and Morris Mill and once these issues are gone something else will replace it. Mr. Strausburg said he feels this is an appropriate investment. Mr. Culver does feel that someone should be hired to begin training however he asked why this couldn't be done at budget time. Also, he said he would hate to bring in another attorney and then Mr. Baker not retire and have a three attorney law department. Mr. Baker feels the work justifies a three attorney office. Mr. Baker said the law schools graduate twice a year once in May and once in December. He said if they graduate from law school in May they take the BAR in July and are sworn in by December. That is a six month waiting period for them to be able to practice. Mr. Strausburg said when Mr. Baker retires there will be a differential of the attorney being brought in and Mr. Baker's salary. Mrs. Sample-Hughes feels this is an opportunity to look at people other than law school graduates and the salary may need to be increased. Mr. Baker said his office would advertise locally and with the Bar Associations and law schools. He said they have received random unsolicited resumes and the salary requested was approximately \$125,000. Ms. Lanigan was a clerk before she became an attorney. Mr. Baker said the clerks have a two year contract which ends in August. Mr. Strausburg said this action is to put the position back in the classification schedule and he has no problem seeing what is out there and then coming back to the Council with a salary request. The public hearing will be held on January 7th, 2014. Mr. Culver asked if a clause was put in that only two attorneys would be hired and no one can be hired without the approval of Council. Mrs. Bartkovich said if this moves forward the position will move forward and it is up the Council whether or not the budget is funded for the position. Mr. Culver said a lot of vacant positions are being filled to which Mrs. Sample-Hughes said the money is in the budget and that is why the positions are being filled. Mr. Culver just doesn't want to increase government. Mr. Strausburg said the Council is given salary sheets with the budget and if the Council doesn't see justification for the department they don't have to fund the position.

Open Work Session Adjourned.