



VIRGINIA: A SCHEDULED PUBLIC HEARING OF THE SURRY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HELD IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURTROOM OF THE SURRY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER ON MONDAY, MAY 16, 2023, AT 7 PM.

PRESENT: SUPERVISOR ROBERT ELLIOTT, JR.
SUPERVISOR JUDY LYTTLE
SUPERVISOR WILLIAM (TIM) CALHOUN
SUPERVISOR BREYON PIERCE

ABSENT: SUPERVISOR BRENTON BYRD

ALSO

PRESENT: MS. LOLA PERKINS, COUNTY ATTORNEY
MS. MELISSA ROLLINS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MS. DOREATHA PIERCE, COUNTY ADMINISTRATION
MR. DELON BROWN, NETWORK ADMINISTRATOR, IT DIRECTOR
MR. RAY PHELPS, CHIEF OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
MS. CAROL SWINDELL, FINANCES
MR. STEVEN MORRIS, DIRECTOR OF FINANCE
SHERIFF CARLOS TURNER, SURRY COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

CALL TO ORDER/MOMENT OF SILENCE/PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The meeting was called to order by Chair, Robert Elliott, Jr., who then asked for a moment of silence. Following the moment of silence, he asked those present to stand and recite the pledge of allegiance; thereafter, Chair Elliott asked if there were questions or corrections to the agenda as presented. There being no corrections or changes to the presented agenda, Supervisor Lyttle motioned to adopt the agenda as presented. Supervisor Pierce seconded the motion. The agenda was adopted as presented. (Approved)

Public Hearing

Proposed Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2023-24

1. Presentation by Staff – Steven Morris began the public hearing advising by the Code of Virginia, The Board is prohibited from voting on the proposed budget and the proposed tax rate tonight,



May 16th, 2023, and the voting on these items was scheduled for Thursday, May 18, 2023.

Mr. Morris, Director of Finance proceeded with providing supporting details on the proposed increase in real property tax levies for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2023, and ending June 30, 2024, by \$0.02 over the equalized rate of \$0.70. The FY23 real estate totals \$0.72 per \$100 of assessed value.

In detail, Ms. Rollins, County Administrator, explained the reassessment's limited scope.

2. Open the Floor for Public Comments – Supervisor Elliott opened the floor for public comments.

- Jeremiah Williams and Susan Moss, Dendron, and Surry District: Opposed to the Tax Increase and suggested a pause on County spending. Stated there was a signed petition and that it would be turned in at a later date.
- Nancy Rodriguez, Spring Grove: Opposed Tax Increase and summarized her findings of the Davenport presentation.
- Michael Ably, Spring Grove: Suggested the need for a Bond Rating for the County. Stated the needs of the County to be employment, something for the youth, and an extension to the current tax base.
- Mike Eggleston, Dendron District: Suggested the County needs places of employment. Commented on the sale of the Marina.
- Helen Eggleston, Dendron District: Commented on the debt of the County and more debt potentially going towards entertainment, a swimming pool, a bike trail, and an amphitheater. Stated jobs were needed for the youth, not the recreational items mentioned.
- Fenton Wyatt, Dendron District: Opposed Tax Increase, summarized what he paid in taxes over a number of years.
- Robert Chandler, Bacons Castle District: Opposed Tax Increase, Stated that retired citizens do not receive a pay raise equivalent to what they are being taxed. Stated the County needs jobs, and progress for youth, but not more debt.
- Michael Drewry, Dendron District: Shared comparison between the debt of Dinwiddie and Surry County. Stated the County does not involve the citizens in the budget process or CIP.
- Ernest Milburn, Surry District: Stated taxes and spending should be frozen. Suggested a desk audit on all employees, except for the Sheriff's Department.



- Claire Stern, Dendron District: Support of the Tax Increase. Acknowledged the needs of the County and encourages growth in the County.
- Sharna White, Carsley District: She stated she supports what is necessary to grow Surry County in all aspects. Asked the Board to consider what supports all groups of citizens.
- Abram Ketchem, Dendron District: Opposed the Tax Increase. Stated that citizens will not be able to afford to live in the County.
- Dianne Cheek, Surry District: Suggested the County needs a 24-hour Urgent Care facility, Technical Vocational Center or possibly a Recycling Center. Suggested the Planning Commission, Economic Development, Town Council, Surry Chamber of Commerce, students, and churches could be used to address the declining population in the County. Asked the Board to recognize the importance of investing in the people of the County.
- Susan Corvello, Claremont District: Opposed to Tax Increase, shared the differences between her taxes from 2020 to 2023. Suggested the County should consider reducing real estate taxes as the surrounding counties have done. Suggested the County ask for donations from the County's large locations for a new recreation center.
- Robert Weidner, Dendron District: Opposed Tax Increase, Quoted bible scriptures in comparison to debt owed by the County. Stated his wellness to lead a Boston Tea Party.
- Frances Barn, Claremont District: Stated she is grateful for the recreational activity that her children had, but this year isn't the year for a pool. Stated she's unhappy with the talk of a grocery store, but there isn't one yet. Stated the need for reliable Medical Services. Would like to see the towns cleaned up.
- Dwayne Perry, Spring Grove District: Shared examples of how he believed money was being misused. Believe Surry is becoming an eyesore because citizens have to cut their lumber to pay their taxes.
- JC Judkins, Surry District: Shared a list of facilities/structures that he believed are not utilized. Stated the County does not have the amenities to justify a tax increase.
- Kathleen Weidner, Dendron District: Stated that she believed that the tax increase would also cause an increase in homeowners' insurance and she didn't believe it was considered. Stated that there would be more signatures on the petition before the Board would receive it.
- Shanard Newby, Dendron District, and O'Brien Buford, Elberon: Provided an update on Surry Youth Sports. Spoke on what he believed to be a domino effect, stating that families having to take their kids to other localities to play sports, eventually results in the families moving to



those localities. Shared their organization has partnered with Surry Public Schools with hopes of this program influencing people to come to the County to reside.

- Bill Richardson, Surry District: Suggested the Board make cuts in their budget.

3. Close the Public Hearing – Supervisor Elliott closed the public hearing.

4. Comments from Board Members

- Supervisor Lyttle – Thanked citizens for their comments and participation.
- Supervisor Pierce – Thanked all who attended. Encouraged citizens that the Board will come together to form a decision for all the Surry residents and asked for the citizens to continue to come to meetings.
- Supervisor Calhoun = Encouraged citizens that he heard their concerns concerning the tax rate. Stated after hearing comments and taking notes, he was not prepared to vote on the Budget as it stands this coming Thursday. Motioned to have the Thursday, May 18th meeting postponed and have additional work sessions. Supervisor Elliott stated that they would get back to the motion after The Board's comments were final.
- Supervisor Elliott – Thanked all the citizens for sharing their comments and that the Board would take all comments into consideration and make a decision that would be the betterment of the county in its entirety.

5. Closing Remarks by Staff -

- Ms. Rollins, County Administrator, shared that there had been numerous Board of Supervisors meetings and work sessions as they pertain to the budget. She thanked those citizens who gave positive feedback and said she understood those who were not in favor. She acknowledged that there were great recommendations shared, but also a lot of misinformation that she proceeded to clarify.
- Ms. Swindell, Finance, elaborated on and provided details on what it means to get a bond rating.

Supervisor Elliott advised that Supervisor Calhoun's motion, which was to postpone the meeting on Thursday, May 18th to act on the proposed budget, was now on the floor for action. The motion was not seconded, therefore the motion failed.



Adjournment

There being no further business before the Board, Supervisor Elliott adjourned their meeting until Thursday, May 18, 2023, at 7 p.m. The meeting Adjourned at 8:45 pm

This meeting can be viewed in its entirety through the Surry County Government YouTube Channel: [Surry County Government - YouTube](#)