

AT A BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OF GLOUCESTER COUNTY, VIRGINIA, HELD ON THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2009, AT 7:00 P. M., IN THE AUDITORIUM OF PAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL, 5628 GEORGE WASHINGTON MEMORIAL HIGHWAY, GLOUCESTER, VIRGINIA:

THERE WERE PRESENT: Michelle R. Ressler, Chair
Gregory Woodard, Vice Chair
Charles R. Allen, Jr.
Teresa L. Altemus
Robert A. Crewe
Christian D. Rilee
Louise D. Theberge
Brenda G. Garton, County Administrator
Edwin "Ted" Wilmot, County Attorney

IN RE: CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL

Mrs. Ressler, Chair, called the public hearing to order and Ms. Dale Burrell, Acting Deputy Clerk, took roll call.

IN RE: INVOCATION & PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

An invocation was given by Mr. Allen and the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America was recited by all in attendance.

IN RE: INTRODUCTORY COMMENTS – MICHELLE RESSLER, CHAIR

Mrs. Ressler gave the following introductory comments.

"On behalf of the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors, I would like to welcome each of you to our public hearings on the FY 2010 Proposed County Budget and the CY 2009 Property Tax Rates needed to support that budget. We appreciate your attendance tonight, and we are looking forward to hearing your comments and suggestions.

I would like to take a few minutes to review the agenda and the procedures under which we will operate tonight.

Ms. Brenda G. Garton, our County Administrator, will briefly review her budget proposal. We will then have two separate public hearings.

The first public hearing will allow public comment on the proposed budget. Immediately following will be a second public hearing to hear public comment on the proposed tax rates necessary to support the proposed budget.

We ask that you limit your comments to the public hearing which we are having.

As you came into the auditorium, I am sure you noticed the sign-up table for speakers. Speakers will be called upon in the order in which they signed up to speak. If you wish to speak and have not signed up to do so, I would like to encourage you to sign up at the table directly outside.

I would like to request that when you address the Board, you state your name, and your magisterial district or area of the County in which you reside. Please limit your comments to five minutes so that everyone wishing to speak will be able to do so. The County Attorney will be our timekeeper.

Immediately following the public hearing on the proposed budget, we will open the second public hearing to allow public comment on the property tax rates.

Board members will not entertain questions regarding the proposed budget or proposed property tax rates during the public hearings. Board members will have the opportunity to make individual comments at the end of the public comment period.

We will take no action on the budget or the proposed property tax rates tonight.

We have scheduled additional meetings for:

Tuesday, April 21st beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Colonial Courthouse

Thursday, April 23rd beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Colonial Courthouse

Tuesday, April 28th beginning at 7:00 p.m. in the Colonial Courthouse

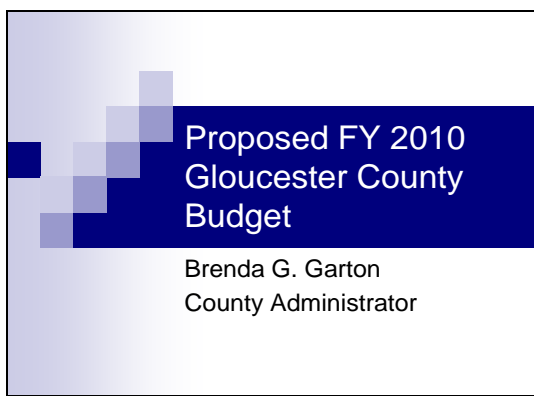
Subject to change at the desire of the Board.

It is the intent of the Board to adopt a FY 2010 budget and set the 2009 property tax rates at the April 28th meeting.

Once again, I thank you for attending this evening and we look forward to hearing from you.”

IN RE: PROPOSED TAX RATES AND BUDGET SYNOPSIS – BRENDA GARTON, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

At this time, Ms. Garton presented the proposed tax rates and budget synopsis in the following power point presentation.

 <p>Proposed FY 2010 Gloucester County Budget Brenda G. Garton County Administrator</p>	<p>Economic Trends</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ System-wide credit crisis ■ Unstable real estate and stock markets ■ Employment concerns ■ Reduced personal and business spending ■ Rising health care costs ■ Volatile energy prices ■ Lower assessed value of vehicles
<p>Effects on Local Governments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Economic trends limit resources available to finance expected services ■ Economic trends increase the demand and need for expected services 	<p>Budget Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Present balanced budget ■ Incorporate no tax rate increase per Board guidance ■ Use no fund balance to balance operating budgets ■ Support Board initiatives, priorities, program directives, and prior capital approvals ■ Maintain services to citizens

Ms. Garton advised that when she first started looking at the budget for next year, they were facing a deficit of \$3.7 million dollars between the requests to fund various items and the amount of funds available to fund these items.

<p>Budget Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maintain fairness in expected cuts between the School Division and County budgets ■ Make Enterprise operations more or fully self-sufficient (Utility Fund) ■ Protect funding to public organizations ■ Establish a reasonable contingency amount for emergencies 	<p>Budget Principles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Preserve employee morale ■ Leave vacant positions unfilled and unfunded ■ Incorporate little or no furlough days ■ Incorporate the smallest possible number of actual layoffs ■ Protect training and professional growth for existing employees
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Fairness with Schools		FY 2010 Proposed Budget	
Projected Revenue Reduction over FY 09	-\$4.42 mil	General Fund	\$ 23,554,405
School share of FY 09 funding	40.20%	Education Funds	\$ 57,547,494
School share of FY 10 revenue reduction	-\$1.78 mil	Social Services Funds	\$ 4,098,717
		Capital Funds	\$ 8,097,300
		Debt Fund	\$ 5,209,651
		Enterprise Funds	\$ 5,509,387
			\$ 104,016,954

Ms. Garton advised that in total the proposed FY 2009-2010 budget is 14.6% less than the current adopted FY 2008-2009 budget.

General Fund Revenue Loss		General Fund Revenue Loss	
Property Taxes	\$ (1,784,051)		
Local Taxes	(1,230,276)		
Other Local Revenue	(379,397)		
Change in Local Revenue	\$ (3,393,724)		
State Revenue	(157,350)		
Federal Revenue	(50,500)		
Use of Fund Balance	(813,969)		
Change in General Fund Revenue	\$ (4,415,543)		

Ms. Garton advised that the property taxes figure includes approximately \$1.6 million less in property tax revenue collections projected for next year on vehicles. She noted that the Board has advertised a tax rate, which is the same as the current year, and therefore if the Board adopts the proposed tax rates this represents a tax cut to citizens of \$1.6 million dollars. Further, Ms. Garton advised that not all citizens would receive the tax break because it depends on whether you own a vehicle with a loss in the assessed value.

General Fund Changes		Personnel Actions	
Compensation and benefits	\$ (668,281)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No general salary increases or merit increases Eliminate the equivalent of 6.7 FTE's Leave vacant the equivalent of 8.9 FTE's 2 furlough days for all employees Eliminate all overtime except in Public Safety Reduce health benefits Eliminated on call part time and eliminated or reduced some regular part time positions 	
Contingency	146,139		
Contracted services	88,591		
Other charges	(47,622)		
Materials and supplies	(178,084)		
Capital outlay	(182,599)		
Transfer to School Fund	(1,778,375)		
Transfer to Social Services Fund	50,000		
Transfer to CSA Fund	8,160		
Transfer to Capital Fund	(992,985)		
Transfer to Debt Fund	(180,487)		
Transfer to Utility Fund	(680,000)		
Total changes to General Fund	(4,415,543)		

Eliminated Positions			Position Changes		
Department	Position		Department	Position	
Treasurer	Deputy Treasurer I	PT 24 hr/wk	Commonwealth Attorney	Legal Assistant	FT to PT 20 hr/wk
Registrar	Assistant Registrar	PT 16 hr/wk			
Sheriff	Investigator	Fulltime			
Sheriff	Investigator	Fulltime			
Sheriff	Project Director	Fulltime			
Sheriff	System & Network Admin	Fulltime			
Codes Compliance	Permit Technician	PT 24 hr/wk			
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Vacant Positions		
Department	Position	
County Attorney	Assistant County Attorney	Fulltime
Commissioner of Revenue	Revenue Technician	Fulltime
Sheriff	Dispatcher	Fulltime
E-911	Dispatcher	PT 20 hr/wk
Emergency Services	Admin Assistant III	Fulltime
Public Works	Engineer	Fulltime
Buildings & Grounds	Custodian	Fulltime
Tourism	Office Assistant	PT 16 hr/wk
Public Utilities	Asst Director	Fulltime
Public Utilities	Utility Worker I	Fulltime

School Operating Fund

- Reduce local transfer by \$1,778,375
- Expected stimulus funds are \$2,004,627, which are not included in the proposed budget
- School Board's Recommended budget is down by \$1,454,059 over FY 09
- School Board's Recommended budget reflects no employee raises and equivalent reduction of 36.6 positions

Ms. Garton advised that since she made her budget presentation on March 17th, the County has had a resignation in another department; she has frozen that position and has authorized the Sheriff to fill the dispatcher position because this was the most important vacancy we have at the present time.

Ms. Garton advised that they asked the school system to calculate the number of positions they were eliminating in terms of full time equivalents (FTE's) in order to do a comparison with the County. Further, she advised that the School Board's recommended budget request included a reduction of 36.6 positions which represents a 4.2% reduction of their overall workforce and the County's reduction of 15.6 FTE's represents a 4.3% reduction in our overall workforce.

School Operating Fund				
	FY 09	SB Recommended*	\$ Change	% Change
Local	121,118	124,559	3,441	2.8%
Transfer	21,984,025	20,205,650	(1,778,375)	-8.1%
State	33,953,376	30,905,090	(3,048,286)	-9.0%
Federal	3,131,799	6,014,493	2,882,694	92.0%
	59,190,318	57,249,792	(1,940,526)	-3.3%

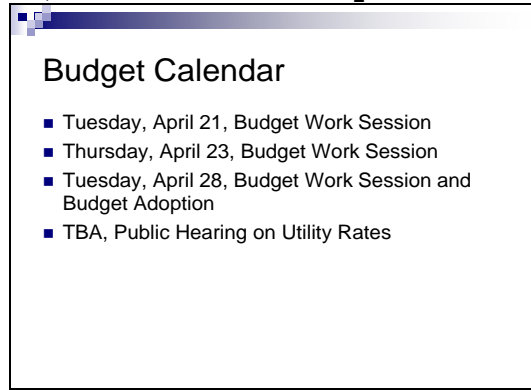
*School Board Recommended FY 10 Budget of March 10th

Social Service Funds

- Caseloads have increased 72% in last 12 months
- Recommending small cut in transfer to Social Service Fund for employee furlough days and changes in employee health insurance
- Recommending full funding for transfer to CSA Fund

Capital Fund	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Continues Emergency Communications Project ■ Continues FEMA Hazard Mitigation Grant program, which requires no local funding ■ Contains \$97,300 for support of County projects that cannot be delayed further 	<p>Utility Fund</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Eliminate local transfer from General Fund of \$680,000 ■ Consent Special Order requires \$186,500 to continue work ■ Water Treatment Plant repairs require \$130,000 ■ Water and sewer rates to increase approximately 35% ■ Leave vacant and unfunded 2 positions

Property Tax Rates																	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ No increase in real estate tax rate of \$.61 ■ No increase in personal property tax rate of \$2.60 ■ No increase in the boat tax rate of \$1.00 ■ No increase in the ad valorem tax rates of \$.01 	<p>Latest Information</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Net Increase in General Fund Revenue</td> <td>\$ 123,679</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Net Decrease in General Fund Expenditures</td> <td>\$ (96,432)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Net Change in General Fund</td> <td>\$ 220,111</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">County Administrator Recommendations:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Employee Health Insurance</td> <td>\$ 84,691</td> </tr> <tr> <td>County Administrator's Contingency</td> <td>\$ 78,346</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transfer to School Operating Fund</td> <td>\$ 49,719</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transfer to Social Services Fund (Health Ins)</td> <td>\$ 7,355</td> </tr> </table>	Net Increase in General Fund Revenue	\$ 123,679	Net Decrease in General Fund Expenditures	\$ (96,432)	Net Change in General Fund	\$ 220,111	County Administrator Recommendations:		Employee Health Insurance	\$ 84,691	County Administrator's Contingency	\$ 78,346	Transfer to School Operating Fund	\$ 49,719	Transfer to Social Services Fund (Health Ins)	\$ 7,355
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IN RE: PROPOSED FY 2009-2010 BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING

Mrs. Ressler asked Ms. Garton if the two public hearings had been duly advertised.

Ms. Garton advised that the public hearings had been duly advertised.

Mrs. Ressler then opened the public hearing to receive comments from the public.

Mr. J. D. Clements, Abingdon District – Mr. Clements addressed the Board and advised that he is the Chief of the Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad. He stated he was here tonight to thank Board and most especially the citizens of Gloucester County for their support. Mr. Clements advised that in the past the Board has funded them and also in the present, and he encouraged them to continue in this direction. He indicated that the citizen’s demands on their services are rising daily and without the Board’s and citizens’ support they could not continue to provide these services. He noted that speaking for the Gloucester and Abingdon Volunteer Fire & Rescue Squads it means a great deal to them to know that they have the support of the citizens and the local government so that they do not have to solicit funds to operate in addition to providing services. Mr. Clements stated that it is getting more costly for their organization to operate because they have several mandated state and federal requirements that they must meet that are not funded. He stated that without the County’s support they could not meet these objectives and continue to provide the services of their organization.

Again, he thanked the Board for their support.

Ms. Ellen Thacker, Robins Neck Area – Ms. Thacker addressed the Board and advised that she is the Executive Director of the Gloucester Mathews Humane Society and she was representing the staff and more than 200 volunteers that work on behalf of our community’s homeless companion animals. She gave the following prepared comments.

“We appreciate the continued support of Gloucester County. In these difficult times the Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society like all non-profit groups is facing the reality of fewer donations and rising operational costs. More and more people are struggling with the economy and being displaced from their homes. In turn, their companion animals are also being displaced and owners and their pets are facing the pain of this separation and lost.

Approximately 70% of the animals that came to their shelter in 2008 came from Gloucester County. We are dedicated to growing in our role as a resource for the citizens of our community, together with Gloucester Animal Control, so that not merely serving as a shelter we can assist our citizens in finding ways to be able to keep

their animals. This can be done with behavior counseling for some animals, with assistance for finding food and mental care options for others, and the location of rescue groups for some so that alternative homes can be found. Ultimately, helping to keep more animals in their homes with their owners is the best result for pets and owners alike.

In 2009 for instance we have been able to provide animal food for distribution to the Gloucester Meals-on-Wheels Program in partnership with the Farm Fresh Foundation.

In 2008 due to increased focus on our outreach programs, transfer programs and adoption opportunities, we were able to increase our total adoptions by 12% over the prior year.

Our new shelter currently under construction will be a necessary asset for the citizens of this community as Gloucester County continues to grow and look to its future. We anticipate many more opportunities for partnership between the Gloucester-Mathews Humane Society and Gloucester County as the new shelter grows with the maturity and promise of our joint missions.

We appreciate the difficulty of the decisions that are being made for this budget year. We also appreciate the county's recognition of the importance of a welcoming and humane community and its continuing support of our goals in 2009 as we work together to strengthen our operating efficiencies and maintain our high standards of care.

Thank you very much for this opportunity to address the Board of Supervisors."

Ms. Olivia K. Torain, Gloucester Point District – Ms. Torain addressed the Board and gave the following prepared statement.

"Good evening. My name is Olivia Torain. I live in the Hayes Precinct of the Gloucester Point District. This evening I come to represent and speak on behalf of the Library Board of Trustees.

The Library Board of Trustees would like to thank the County and the citizens for their financial support of the local library and their patronage during the past year.

This week the library system celebrates National Libraries Week. As many people already know, the library is an epicenter for learning, relaxing, and socializing. The County Library staff are exceptional in their dedication, knowledge, talent, and customer service to citizens. Their program delivery to children and teens is especially well prepared and received.

In addition to children and youth programming, the library serves as a gathering place for many groups and clubs and provides many learning tools to include books, CDs, DVDs, historical information, computer access, searchable online databases, and additional online educational links. The library supplies a varied collection of materials appropriate for the young, the elderly, and all in between. If the library does not have what someone is looking for, it has an interlibrary loan cooperation with other libraries in the region to help fulfill the need. Outreach is a necessary component of any library system, and outreach is fulfilled through the bookmobile service to area neighborhoods, preschools, and convalescent facilities. It is with all of these services in mind that the Library Board of Trustees recommends approval of the proposed budget

as presented by the County Administrator. We would like to thank the Board of Supervisors, the County, and the local citizens for their continued support and patronage of the Gloucester County Library System.”

Mr. Kim McManus, Rappahannock Community College – Mr. McManus addressed the Board and thank them for their continued support. He indicated that they understand budget cuts because they too have had to endure budget cuts even though they have had some state stimulus money that is only for this year. He indicated that the contribution that they receive from the County is returned to the County many times over and they ask that the County support them with their local funds. Mr. McManus advised that they are precluded by law from using state funds and tuitions for anything five feet outside of the building such as increasing their parking lot, new lighting, new emergency call boxes or repairs of this nature and they depend on the local funds receive from the twelve counties. He noted that these contributions are very important.

Mr. McManus advised that 49% of the students who go on to higher education in Gloucester County go to Rappahannock Community College which is returning close to \$2 million dollars to County residents in their state funds. He indicated that in the past year they have given Gloucester County students \$425,129 in financial aide. He stated that due to the state of the economy many people are indicating that they need new skills and they are the best way to get people out of the economic doldrums because they really have an opportunity to give back to the community. Again, Mr. McManus advised that they appreciate the County’s support.

Mr. Bud Cleveland, Ware District – Mr. Cleveland addressed the Board and advised that the Board of Supervisors has worked in concert with the School Board and the County Administrator. He noted that he was pleased with the proposed budget. He thanked the Board and said he was proud that he lives in the County of Gloucester.

Mr. Cleveland asked the Board to please continue the good work that they are doing.

Ms. Nancy Dwoyer, Ware District – Ms. Dwoyer addressed the Board and gave the following prepared comments.

“Why do people decide to move to a locality because it offers something that other localities don’t and Gloucester County offers a lot. Gloucester can be very proud of the services it offers its residents. Parks and Recreation, Community Education and the Library all enhance a child’s educational experience. Our three library locations, the Point, the bookmobile and the main library offer a variety of services for all the residents of Gloucester from the traditional books to the play-a-ways, the library is truly the community center. From teaching patrons how to use a computer, to story times for very young children, to chess clubs for older youth and learning about nap time, the library is a learning institution that we can all be proud of.

I urge you to continue your support of the library and all the residents who depend on it for everything that I have mentioned.

Thomas Jefferson once said that ‘he could not live without books’ and I too feel like I couldn’t live without books. Today he would probably say I couldn’t live without books, computers and everything else that go with the library.

I hope you all feel as Thomas and I do that libraries are important at all times but at this time of economic distress libraries are needed more than ever and I am sure that you can look at any record the library has and see how much more they are used now then ever before.

Thank you for your attention and past support of the library and I hope you will continue to support the library in all of its endeavors.”

Brian McGovern, Petsworth District – Mr. McGovern addressed the Board and gave the following comments.

“Good evening Madam Chair and members of the Board of Supervisors. I am Brian McGovern and I am a resident of the Petsworth District and I also teach at Gloucester High School.

I am here tonight representing more than 300 members of the Gloucester Education Association in the capacity of their vice president and we are asking that you would support and fully fund the budget which has been approved by the School Board, as well as the proposal for level funding at 40.2%.

As is the case with your governing body, our School Board was faced this year with some very difficult decisions in light of dramatic decreases in funding from the state. For example, salaries have been frozen, some employee contracts have been shortened, positions have been eliminated, supplements have been either decreased or eliminated, and an entire career in technical education program at Gloucester High School will be eliminated for next year.

I can assure all of you that those of us who serve our children will strive very hard to continue and further the services that we provide for our students. In light of all these cuts, I think that will be a very challenging task. We anticipate that class sizes will increase, support personnel will decrease, intervention programs before and after that allow tutoring and summer school programs will be impacted. All of these things have helped our students to achieve great success.

In recent years, as the data will show our SOL scores have increased, the achievement gap is decreasing; more students who are members of minority groups and students with disabilities are passing our tests. We realize that you all have very difficult decisions to make as well, but we believe that the future and the education of our children are vitally important.

Once again, I humbly ask for the continued support of the Board of Supervisors for our students and I thank you all for your time and attention.”

Mr. Howard Mowry, Gloucester Point District – Mr. Mowry addressed the Board and gave the following prepared comments.

“**Direction:** Policy for all departments and agencies that receive county tax support funding. One of the major needs within the county is direction for the departments. A definite annual goal or goals must be achieved for the benefit of the taxpayers. Without a published set of acceptable goals established by this Board and the Administration then all spending is just that spending with no markers for achievement. Publish what you expect in the coming fiscal year and provide timeline goals for accountability.

Education: The past 27 months or three school years 2006/2008, 538 students never graduated as counted from the ninth grade four years earlier. Total funding 5.1 million, of this two million was local funds. This local funding equates to 5.26 cents on the real property tax combined over the same period of time. Since the citizen does not approve of category funding the need to set a percentage offset to restrict funding based on the prior years percentage of graduates to the record be initiated limiting the funding until the graduating percentages exceed 90% of the 9th grade four years earlier. Remember we have one government school employee for every six students in the system. A new fiscal initiative must be established to offset this expenditure on a dying school population.

Pay Scale: Since consolidation appears to have a profound impact on both sides of the governing bodies there is a temporary solution to the entrenched inequities within the "county employees" payroll system.

Using the county scale as the base line combine the school personnel pay scale, (excluding teacher's scale) with the county's system. All employees within those grades will fit without a loss in pay. Consolidation then can be analyzed and implemented by the beginning of the next calendar year 2010.

Utilities: You must do everything in your power to make this department self-sustaining. Of special interest are the historical expenditures of two line items. A. Permits to GSD#1 for 41,568 dollars, actual cost 7,170 dollars and, B. Debt 2.6 million with an actual of 1.3 million. This method of expanding expenditures should be investigated and the near actuals be timelined and utilized, thus reducing the department's costs. The difference is more than enough to offset the prior county contribution by all the taxpayers.

Increased Revenues: The current 09 budget has a silent revenue gain by the line item "Real Property Taxes." This can be partially attributed to 228 new homes having Occupancy Permits issued in this fiscal year to date. With this infusion of funding the 2010 Budget needs to have its real property tax revenue estimate recalculated. What are not projected is how many housing permits are outstanding and how many will be issued CO's in the next fiscal year. Your current revenue projected figure is only county existing properties reflecting the universe of one year ago.

With this new 09 windfall the assets need to be set-aside for new capital software and hardware acquisitions.

2011 Zero balance budget: As discussed at Ms. Altemus's Town Hall meeting the next budget should be developed from a zero dollar base. Justify every position, also where reorganization will improve local government overall and with a reduction of costs. As currently processed the 2011 budget is already complete you only have to add a selected percentage. This is no way to be accountable or business sensitive to actual needs.

Eliminate car tax: The need to eliminate the vehicle tax on all values of \$3000.00 dollars or less should be incorporated within this budget. It is currently an unknown figure but I believe would not impact the budget to any known degree. You need to consider the cost to process the tax bill annually over the meager return. Your review is requested with a projected figure as to loss of revenue?

In closing: as you approve this budget you are aware that it will be unbalanced this time next year when you set the new tax rates. To keep the current proposal balanced you must set a new tax year to eliminate the windfall. Additionally, you need to consider after you set the new tax rates that you compensate by lowering the mileage rate that effects the delinquent total of un-collected taxes. To have the taxpayer take up the debt of the non-payer is next to being criminal.

We cannot continue to increase the budget with taxes still in the arrears without reducing the operating budget of all the users by a like percentage that equals the total annual uncollected taxes to a specific date within the budget year. Preferably the end of the 1st calendar quarter.

I thank you for the time.”

Ms. Gidget Green, Petsworth District – Ms. Green addressed the Board and advised and gave the following comments.

“I am Vice-President of Peasley Middle School PTA, Vice-President of Petsworth Elementary PTA, Treasurer of Gloucester High School PTSA and I am also a mother of six children, four currently in the school system. I am here to ask you guys to go ahead with Ms. Garton’s budget as proposed and also do not cut the school budget any more because I believe our children are our future and we should put our money into our future. Also, I am asking that you do not go back into categorized funding and keep it as the lump sum funding and let the schools decide where to put the money.

Thank you.”

Ms. Dana Miller, Petsworth District – Ms. Miller addressed the Board and advised that she is Vice-President of the Gloucester High School PTFA and a mother of three, all of who are attending Gloucester schools. She indicated that she was in agreement with Ms. Garton’s proposed budget plan.

Ms. Liz McGee, Gloucester Point District – Ms. McGee addressed the Board and advised that as a parent of two children in Gloucester County she would ask that the Board adopt the proposed FY 2009-2010 budget as written.

Mr. Don Mitchell, Abingdon District – Mr. Mitchell addressed the Board and gave the following comments.

“You will notice that I am not in my traditional garb tonight that’s by way of a moderate thank you to the Board. You have made an almost worthwhile step this year and I appreciate the fact that you have heard the pleas of taxpayers and not increased taxes for the year. Having said that was a good first step, I want to clarify that I think it is only a good first step. Everybody talks about the hard times, they are just starting.

I want to comment on a couple of things that Ms. Garton said. While you established a set of principles when you were developing your budget and I think the principles in general are good but the practice of how you went about it actually shows that what you did was you started making a case in terms of support among programs and equalizing the pain. Well I am not sure that is a good way to look at it. In the meeting that we had with Ms. Altemus a few weeks ago, I suggested that Gloucester County try what the federal government went through in the 70s under Jimmy Carter with zero based budgeting. A step back to say what should we be doing, what are we

doing that perhaps we don't need to be doing anymore and are we doing it as well as we possibly could.

The discussions that I had with my fellow citizens does not lead me to believe that everything in Gloucester, while it is good, is perfect and that means there may be room for improvement.

The enterprise operations – bravo – you have heard my comment on that before and I want to say it again for those of us who have to pay for our own water and sewer and maintain our own systems: it's about time we stop having to pay for others that had the advantage of the County system to fall back on.

Ms. Garton I did have one minor nit with your comment that taxpayers are receiving a tax reduction because their vehicles are worth less. Many of us have seen a lot of financial losses in a lot of different areas and the value of our cars is trivial but I would argue the fact for those of us who took a reduction in our income this year, the fact that we paid less income taxes is not a tax reduction.

I would encourage you to return to the categorical funding of the schools and I would also encourage you with that last line that you showed the latest information in money that seems to be becoming available that it not be portioned out and be held in a reserve until such time as you can determine where it is most needed.

Thank you very much for your time again and thank you very much for your consideration of the taxpayer this year. It's worthwhile to see that.”

Mr. Nathan Brown, Ware District – Mr. Brown addressed the Board and advised that it is good not to have our taxes increased this year. He indicated that he was amazed to see that there are fifteen people that the County can do without. Why are they hired if the County can do without them? He noted that he is not sure what will happen with the economy but he thinks it will recover and he hopes that when his home is reassessed the value is down. Mr. Brown advised that he was not in favor of furlough days for employees because you should either cut salaries or cut people but he understands why this was done.

Mr. Brown advised that regarding the utilities system, last year the supplement was cut \$120,000 and this year \$680,000 will be cut from the Utilities Fund. Further, he stated that to save the average homeowner \$20 a year on their tax bill, most homeowners will realize a \$20 per month increase in their water and sewer bill. He noted that this would not be very popular with people and he was not sure how many of the large users would be able to afford a 35% increase in their bill. Mr. Brown advised that this increase should have been done on a gradual bases.

Ms. Theresa Owens, Abingdon District – Ms. Owens addressed the Board and advised that she is a former employee of Gloucester County and her tenure with the County was great. She stated that before working for Gloucester County, she worked in public accounting for over 15 years and during that time she worked with many different organizations and businesses, such as retail, construction, non-profit, government, doctors and lawyers and all of these organizations had one thing in common, their largest asset was their people and this is the case in Gloucester County.

Ms. Owens advised that Gloucester County is the largest employer and these employees live and spend their money in the county. She stated that Ms. Garton has done an absolutely wonderful job with a very challenging budget.

Ms. Owens asked that the additional revenue be used to reinstate all of the eliminated employees and to reinstate the furlough days. She stated that this will not only help the employees but also the community and the businesses in the county.

There being no additional speakers, Mrs. Ressler closed the budget public hearing.

IN RE: 2009 PROPOSED TAX RATES PUBLIC HEARING

Mrs. Ressler opened the public hearing to received public comments on the 2009 proposed tax rates.

Mr. Howard Mowry, Gloucester Point District – Mr. Mowry addressed the Board and advised the he appreciates the Board not raising the taxes but there is another item he would like the Board to consider in this coming year and that is whether all of the fees for services are current and up to date with the state code. Further, he advised that can they receive more fees for services to make more departments that charge the fees self-sustaining. Mr. Mowry indicated that if you are not a user you should not have to pay for something that you don't use. He stated that users who may be getting by at half-price, maybe the rates need to be reviewed so that these users pay the full price.

There being no additional speakers, Mrs. Ressler closed the public hearing on the 2009 proposed tax rates.

IN RE: BOARD COMMENTS

Mr. Allen thanked the citizens for being here and for their comments. He noted that the Board hears what you say and we thank you.

Ms. Altemus advised that she agreed and concurred with Mr. Allen. She thanked the attendees for being at the hearing and for sharing their suggestions and concerns regarding the budget. Ms. Altemus noted that this was one of the most economically challenging budgets that the County has been faced with in a very long time. She advised that she appreciates Ms. Garton, Ms. Champion, Ms. Michura and all of the other staff who have done an excellent job in developing a very difficult budget. Ms. Altemus stated that she believes they have developed a budget that they can all live with. Ms. Altemus noted that most people are trying their best to live within their means personally and publicly.

Mr. Crewe thanked everyone in attendance at the hearing and noted that he was surprised at the number of people here because he heard very little prior to the hearing since the Board decided not to increase the tax rates. He noted that he appreciated them voicing their opinion because these economic times are difficult for everyone and he felt he could not raise any taxes at all this year due to this situation.

Mr. Crewe thanked Ms. Garton and her staff for the wonderful job they did on the proposed budget.

Ms. Theberge reiterated the comments from her fellow Board members that they appreciate everyone attending this hearing, making their comments and voicing their opinion on the proposed budget. Further, Ms. Theberge thanked Ms. Garton and staff,

particularly that staff worked very hard with Ms. Garton to make this budget work. She stated that although this will be a hard budget to work on and decide, they could not have done their job well without the input from staff and their willingness to make sacrifices for this community. She again thanked Ms. Garton and staff for all their efforts.

Mr. Rilee advised that he agrees with what all the Board members have said. He noted that there were a lot of good points made and he thanked all for attending.

Mr. Woodard advised that he agreed with his colleagues and he appreciates the voices that have spoken and the praise and support of the community. He stated that it is said that the worst is yet to be seen, but he believes the best is yet to come. Mr. Woodard thanked Ms. Garton and her staff, all of the school individuals, volunteers, Social Services and everyone that has had an impact with the decisions that they make.

Mrs. Ressler thanked all in attendance for coming out tonight, voicing their opinion and noted that she appreciate the budget comments expressed on-line. She stated that even though I may not do exactly what was requested, you are heard and your comments are taken into consideration. Further, Mrs. Ressler advised that she too would like to thank Ms. Garton, staff and her fellow Board members for all of the work and effort that went into this proposed budget.

Again, Mrs. Ressler thanked the audience for attending and noted that she appreciated their input.

IN RE: REVIEW OF THE BUDGET ADOPTION SCHEDULE

Ms. Ressler advised that currently the Board was scheduled to meet on Tuesday, April 21st to include budget discussion, Tuesday, April 23rd for a budget work session and Tuesday, April 28th for adoption of the budget. She stated that there has been a recommendation made that the Board cancel the April 23, 2009 meeting.

Mr. Crewe moved, seconded by Mr. Woodard, that the Board cancel its meeting scheduled for Tuesday, April 23, 2009.

Ms. Theberge advised that her only concern with cancelling the meeting at this point is that if the Board has not come to a consensus by the April 21st meeting on how they would like the budget constructed and the April 23 meeting is cancelled, that makes it difficult for staff to develop the budget resolutions that the Board needs to adopt on April 28th. Further, Ms. Theberge suggested that they hold-off on cancelling the April 23 meeting until after the budget discussion at the April 21st meeting.

The motion to cancel the meeting scheduled for April 23, 2009 was carried by the following vote: Mr. Allen, yes; Ms. Altemus, yes; Mr. Crewe, yes; Mr. Rilee, yes; Ms. Theberge, no; Mr. Woodard, yes; Mrs. Ressler, no.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, on a motion by Mr. Allen, seconded by Ms. Altemus, and carried by a unanimous voice vote, the meeting was adjourned.