

Board of County Commissioners' MeetingMonday, May 1, 1972

Present: George R. Aud, President
 J. Wilmer Bowles, Commissioner
 J. S. Guy, Jr., Commissioner
 Robert E. Wigginton, County Attorney
 Paul R. Raley, Administrative Officer
 Viola M. Gardner (Mrs.), Admin. Asst. (Recording)

Meeting came to order at 10:30 A.M.

Board of Education Budget

Present: Dr. Robert E. King, Jr., Supt. of Schools
 Mr. Henry J. Kanowicz, Business Administrator
 Mr. Fred H. Spigler, Admin. Aide for Education
 Mr. Robert Hendrickson, Legal Counsel
 Senator Paul J. Bailey
 Mr. B. Harris Sterling, Director of Finance

Senator Bailey was spokesman for the group. He stated that Governor Mandel wants to help. Mr. Spigler did not know that we were faced with such emergencies and asked if he could intervene to work along with the Commissioners in order to work out the problem.

Mr. Spigler stated he was only here to help and did not come to interfere in St. Mary's County affairs. Next year there would be a major administration program for funding of schools. He knew they faced a serious problem here in this County. Due to two Court decisions, the Counties that have low income bases will benefit more than the large Counties. He knew there was a serious problem this year. The County has made tremendous strides. He talked with Lt. Governor Blair Lee and he made additional soundings on the Impacted Aid money, but President Nixon will have to make some changes in it. The Governor will sign the Beer Tax Bill, and St. Mary's County should get approximately \$38,000. The School Construction Program has meant a lot to this County. He has requested some restoration for one more year. He said if they can hold the line this year, there will be some changes made to help funding beginning next year.

Senator Bailey stated that every County is in this position to a degree, and he feels that some type of educational funding bill will pass in the 1973 legislative session.

Mr. Aud stated that Anne Arundel County is dropping their tax base 10¢; that 44% of the total budget for Baltimore County is for education, and that 67% of St. Mary's County budget is for education, and that is because every other program has been scrapped.

Mr. Aud inquired as to what the P.L. 874 funds would be.

Mr. Guy stated that this was the figure with which they have had trouble in determining.

Mr. Spigler informed them that Mr. Ray Hamilton had a new figure on State Aid Programs. He also told the County Commissioners he thought it very important that the negotiations take on a new trend. If the Commissioners thought a two-year agreement would keep things from being stirred up, then that trend should proceed. The matter of staffing loses State money. The Board of Education has a strong obligation to try to maintain that two-year contract.

Mr. Bowles asked what percentage of this would the State contribute.

Mr. Spigler informed them that the cut indicates a staff of 46 per 1,000. The difference between 50 and 46 is the percentage they lose.

Mr. Bowles asked if the Commissioners could find the \$50,000 that was needed, what could the State do to increase its funding. He stressed the fact that they needed the State to come up with some money. He further stated that one of the County's problems in meeting the needs for education was the loss of the State meeting its obligations.

Mr. Spigler informed him that he was not giving the government credit for the school construction program.

Mr. Spigler told the group that there will be a revenue sharing bill, and, if they can hold the line this year, he could guarantee that they would receive relief next year.

Mr. Bowles explained that because of lack of State and Federal funding, the Board of Education has asked the County for \$4,000,000 and that they have been able only to give them \$3,000,000. This is an increase in the local contribution by \$500,000. He asked how do they get the Federal contribution up to where it belongs and also the State funding.

Mr. Spigler stated that all he could say was that next year it would be better. He inquired as to what would be the teachers'

reaction if they did not get the 5% that the others get next year. He stated the Governor is worried about this. If there could be some compromising in this County, it would cool everything.

Mr. Aud left at this point to talk to the students from Chopticon High School who were protesting at the Court House door.

Dr. King informed everyone present that he had talked to the students and urged them not to come, and if they did, they would be suspended from school.

Mr. Guy inquired of Mr. Kanowicz regarding the \$350,000 in investments. Mr. Kanowicz stated this was being held for teachers who might leave and would have to be paid. He also stated that a portion of this sum has already been used. The money is for accrued payroll and they had to cash \$150,000 for salaries.

Mr. Bowles inquired if there were areas where the Board of Education could make cuts.

Dr. King informed him that Mr. John Little had questioned them quite extensively in this area and stated that having him going back and forth caused confusing stories. Mr. Little informed them that there were two or three things that the Commissioners did not want them to get into such as instructional materials, kindergarten, etc. Dr. King also stated that they were getting a lot of "flack" from the students going home stating they did not have art supplies, and did not have books for some of their studies.

Mr. Aud stated that the Board of Education could help to prevent some of this.

Dr. King admitted that the teachers and principals had not handled it well, and they were working on it. Dr. King also replied to Mr. Spigler's question regarding the teachers' reaction if they did not get the 5%. Dr. King stated there would be "grumbling".

Mr. Spigler told them that this County had come a long way, and he hated to see what had occurred, and felt it was a breakdown in communications. The teachers say no one listens to them, but he thought much of the tension had been reduced, and they were back again at the point of working together. In working together, they might be able to convince the teachers to accept not getting the 5%. To the Commissioners and Board of Education, their first priority is class size. Salaries can be argued about, but not class size. He informed the Commissioners that they were having a meeting that night and he felt they could control everyone and that the Commissioners would not be abused. He asked them to come and just tell them that they didn't have the money and this was the best they could do. To him it was more of a communications problem. When you are talking about increasing school classes from 36 to 41, you are

talking about five (5) more kids in a second grade class, as an example.

Dr. King stated that he thought their ordinary turnover would handle the 50 persons at the top of the scale.

Mr. Spigler made a telephone call to Annapolis and was informed that additional revenues would be forthcoming from the "Piggy back" tax in the amount of approximately \$133,000.

Mr. Kanowicz informed them that they have 50 to 60 persons at the top of the Scale, \$15,000 or above. Give them the 5%, give the teachers the step increase, but not the 5%. This could run as high as \$40,000. If all got the step increase and 5%, it would be \$200,000.

Mr. Spigler stated that what the teachers want is \$400,000. What we are talking about is one-half of that - that everybody gets a little increase, and the class size stays as it is at present. He thought they would accept it if Mr. Aud presented it to them.

Mr. Aud stated that the first thing they would say is "raise the taxes".

Mr. Spigler stated what he was trying to say to them was "try to compromise so you won't lay off teachers if you want to attract light industry". A good school system is what they are looking for.

Mr. Hendrickson asked that they let him get back to his people as he did not want them walking into a "hornet's nest". He is to let them know the feelings of the teachers later in the afternoon.

Mr. Spigler stated that the piece-meal in State shares could not exist any longer.

Senator Bailey was certain that this would not happen next year and hoped the Commissioners would find the money from somewhere.

Board of Education-Afternoon Meeting

Present: Dr. Robert E. King, Jr., Supt. of Schools
 Mrs. Catherine Barnes, Board Member
 Mr. B. Kennedy Abell, Board Member
 Mr. E. Harry Ocker, Pres., Board of Education
 Mr. Henry J. Kanowicz, Business Administrator
 Mr. John Little, David M. Gruber and Company
 Mr. B. Harris Sterling, Director of Finance
 Mr. Paul R. Raley, Administrative Officer

Mr. John Little of the David M. Gruber Company, presented the budget of the Board of Education to the County Commissioners with a detailed explanation of all categories. The Board had decreased the original budget by approximately \$1,000,000 plus.

Mr. Ocker congratulated Mr. Little on the amount of work he had done in attempting to show areas where cuts could be made, and stated they appreciated it. He further stated that it was a guide for them to operate under these conditions, and that they were as anxious to operate under that ratio as the Commissioners were. He stated that the thing to do now was to take it and look it over. Dr. King also emphasized the fact that they would need a little time to look it over.

Mr. Ocker also stated that he wanted it understood that they could not sign the document at that time.

Mrs. Barnes said they appreciated what had been done.

Mr. Kanowicz informed them that they would have to release their letter tomorrow.

Meeting adjourned at 7:50 P.M.



George R. Aud
President

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