

SPECIAL MEETING REGARDING BOARD OF EDUCATION BUDGET

March 17, 1973, 10:00 A.M.

Present: Commissioner J. Wilmer Bowles, President  
Commissioner J. S. Guy, Jr.  
Harris Sterling, Director of Finance  
Mrs. Barbara Dotson, Recording Secretary  
Miss Eloise N. Pickrell, County Council PTA's  
Dr. Robert E. King, Jr., Superintendent of Schools  
Delegate John Hanson Briscoe  
Delegate James Manning McKay  
Senator Paul J. Bailey  
James H. Ogden, Assistant Superintendent of Schools  
Hall W. Venetta, County Council PTA's  
A. Hope Swann, Supervisor of Instruction  
John G. Lancaster, County Council PTA's  
John Cross, Education Assoc. of St. Mary's County  
Walter Frazier, Education Assoc. of St. Mary's County  
Frank Barnett, Principal, Great Mills Elem.  
Charles Purcell, Maryland State Teachers' Assoc.  
Mrs. Sue Eikamp, County Council PTA's  
Bob Hmieleski, Principal, Frank Knox Elem.  
Bernard I. Johnson, Principal, Esperanza Middle School  
William H. Sluder, Assistant Principal, Margaret Brent  
James D. Adams, Director of Pupil Services  
Mrs. Ruth Rowe, Principal, Ridge Elem.

Also present were Patty Muchow, Beacon; Dave Fox, WPTX;  
Miss Janet Shaffron, Enterprise and Dick Meyers, WKIK.

Commissioner Bowles welcomed members present from the Board of Education, the legislative delegation and others representing various committees on education. This meeting was called specifically to review the financial situation for the Board of Education budget which is of great importance to St. Mary's County.

At this time, Commissioner Bowles requested the Secretary to read excerpts from the minutes of February 14, 1973, which outlined some of the problems that were caused by last years budget cut, specifically; the larger class sizes, the reduction of instrumental music, the curtailing of music and art classes. Also, teachers morale had become very poor and discipline problems had increased because of the larger classes. The excerpts of the minutes of April 1972 were read regarding Mr. Spigler's promise of changes to be made this year regarding State funding of education. He stated the County would get relief for next year's budget and that funding would be forthcoming.

Commissioner Bowles informed those present that the County contribution for 1971-72 was \$2,327,500; for 1972-73, it was \$3,162,263, and local requests for 1973-74 budget is \$5,272,138. Part of this amount is due to the loss of P. L. 874 funds. The



State has not kept its promise for funding as stated last year by Mr. Fred Spigler, the Governor's Administrative Officer for Education, which he led us to believe would happen. We are also aware of the Lee proposal which would only contribute \$316,000 to St. Mary's County next year. It is a five-year program which would provide only \$300,000 to \$400,000 annually. This would not take care of inflation. The County expects to receive revenues of \$10,132,690 which includes revenue sharing. The requested expenditures amount to \$12,208,882.42. These are projected figures, but are reasonably accurate according to the Director of Finance.

Commissioner Bowles stated there is a possibility that the County real estate taxes will have to be increased by \$1.22. The Commissioners request that all assistance possible be given to help meet this responsibility for more State and Federal funding. It is generally felt that the educational funding is the constitutional responsibility of the State, not the County.

At this time, Commissioner Bowles requested Commissioner Guy to make comments. Commissioner Guy stated he hoped there would be a concerted effort made by this group to see what can be done to obtain necessary funds from State and Federal sources. He also presented some figures he had prepared and converted them into percentages. Presently, it looks like the County will be funding 47.01%, miscellaneous local .38%, State 46.21%, Federal 4%, P. L. 874-impacted aid 4.52%, transfer of funds .02% and a deficit of 2.14%. Commissioner Guy feels the Federal government should contribute the same for P. L. 874 funds as was funded last year which amounts to \$1,010,000. Since the requested budget total is \$11,215,087, the State should come up with 55% of this budget. This means their funding would be \$6,168,298. This would be an increased request from the State of \$984,949. With these two combinations, the County share would be reduced by \$1,487,574. This would put the County back to contributing 33.74% of the total effort. These figures are computed with no change in the number of teachers needed and salary scales intact. Our problem now is to derive the Federal and State funds that are necessary to provide for a proper education in St. Mary's County. Commissioner Guy feels the County must justify to the State that this money must be forthcoming.

Commissioner Bowles informed the delegation that the County Commissioners have written letters to President Nixon, Vice-President Agnew, Senator J. Glenn Beall, Congressman William O. Mills, Senator Charles McC. Mathias requesting additional funding for P. L. 874 from Federal sources. As of this date, the Commissioners have no assurance that funds will be forthcoming. Mr. Bowles also added that the Board of Education has an operating deficit of \$239,975 for last Fiscal Year.

Senator Bailey stated they are presently working on the State budget in Annapolis, and it looks as though the State legislature is cutting all corners and more funding for education looks very



bleak. He also stated this situation generally exists in every County in the State because of excessive growth and development requiring additional funding for education.

Commissioner Bowles requested a representative from the Board of Education to present projected enrollments. Mr. James D. Adams, Director of Pupil Services, stated they do not expect an increase in student enrollments for the coming school year. Actually, they do expect to have a decrease of 42 students. Senator Bailey stated this would give them something to take back to Annapolis, namely that the increase is not due to increased enrollments, but higher costs in education and decreased aid from Federal and State sources.

Delegate Briscoe stated the Lee-Mauer Proposal was introduced to provide for the complete take-over of all costs of education, and there were a number of supporters of that bill last year, but this proposal would only provide \$323,000. The Governor did not sign this bill and felt that it was out of line. He did, however, appoint a blue ribbon committee to study the bill. Delegate Briscoe felt that the State will not pass any tax increases, whether it be sales tax or income tax.

Commissioner Bowles stated that there will be a meeting with Mr. Fred Spigler in Annapolis on Tuesday morning as arranged by Mr. Charles Purcell, Maryland State Teachers Assoc. This meeting was arranged to discuss ways of funding for education by the State.

Dr. King feels that the County Commissioners have presented a very clear picture of the financial situation and that the County problem is more serious than other counties in the State.

Commissioner Bowles instructed those present to arrange for disseminating information to the public about our budget situation. Delegate Briscoe suggested that the press indoctrinate the public of the possibility of a tax increase. Commissioner Bowles feels that it is unfair to impose a drastic tax increase on the people of St. Mary's County when this is a State responsibility.

Delegate McKay feels the State should take over funding of education 100%. This seems to be the only answer or else we will be back here again next year for a tax increase. Commissioner Bowles said if the State came up with 60% of the cost, then the County would be able to survive. He stated he is in favor of complete State funding and he believes it would work quite well.

Commissioner Guy stated that P. L. 874 is very vital in the over all funding of education and asked if the Senator and Delegates would write to our Senators and Representatives in Washington expressing concern about funds for education. Delegate Briscoe informed the Commissioners that a resolution regarding this was sent to Representative Hogan of Prince Georges County. Dr. King has requested our representatives to support funding for P. L. 874.

Commissioner Guy felt that the military people attached to the NAS should be aware of our situation and requested to write their

home State representatives to support funding for P. L. 874. Dr. King was requested to relay this message to our Navy people. Commissioner Bowles feels there is still some hope for funding as long as the legislature is in session. Mr. John Cross and Mr. Charles Purcell have been requested to make contacts on the Federal and State levels. Commissioner Bowles stated that the Board of Education should have the funds and not be cut back like they were last year.

The meeting adjourned at 12:00 Noon.

*J. Wilmer Bowles 4-10-73*  
J. Wilmer Bowles  
President