

V I R G I N I A:

At a special called meeting of the Washington County Board of Supervisors held Tuesday, July 16, 1991 at 7:00 p.m., at the County Administration Building in Abingdon, Virginia, the following were present:

PRESENT:

James P. Litton, Chairman
 Maurice H. Parris, Vice Chairman
 Aubrey E. Brown
 Charles O. Byrd
 Thomas Whittaker
 Cecil K. Simcox

Bruce E. Bentley, County Administrator
 Cliff Walsh, County Attorney
 Sandra M. Hatfield, Secretary

ABSENT:

Kenneth G. Mathews
 Mark W. Seamon, Director of Accounting

1. Call to Order

The special called meeting was called to order by Mr. James P. Litton, Chairman of the Board.

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance - Cecil K. Simcox

Mr. Cecil Simcox gave the Invocation and led in the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. Discuss what the impact of closing Hayter's Gap and Hamilton Schools may have upon the communities and upon grants for water projects, and to consider possible recommendations to the Washington County School Board

Mr. Litton stated the purpose for which he and Mr. Whittaker called for a special meeting explaining it is to discuss the impact of closing Hayter's Gap and Hamilton Schools and its effect upon the communities and upon grants for water projects, and to consider possible recommendations to the Washington County School Board.

Mr. Litton opened the meeting to the audience for their comments.

The following persons addressed the Supervisors in opposition to the closing of Hayter's Gap School and Hamilton School urging the Board of Supervisors to reconsider their action:

Denise Bowen, Parent, Hayter's Gap
 Jennifer Ilowiecki, Parent, Mendota
 Kathy Maggio, Parent, Mendota
 Patrick Manix, Parent
 Melissa Davenport, Parent, Hayter's Gap
 Lloyd Barton, Parent, Hayter's Gap
 Sam Cunningham, Mendota
 Harold Benfield, Mendota
 Mr. & Mrs. Dan Potter, Parents, Hayter's Gap
 Jim Mosier, Mendota
 Darrell Gilbert, Mendota

Their reasons for opposing the school closings were:

Winding and hazardous roads; children riding long distances on the school busses; leaving security of the neighborhood; oversized classes; closed vs. open classes; transportation concerns when picking up sick or injured children, attending parent conferences or school activities when schools are so far away; and, schools are the only benefit people in these areas get for their taxes.

Concern was expressed over young children riding on the same bus as high school students and lack of adequate supervision; School Boards' economic considerations for closing the two schools above childrens' needs.

Mrs. Ilowiecki addressed the Supervisors concerning the number of students from Mendota who will be leaving Washington County Schools and enrolling in Hiltons School in Scott County stating that it is closer than Valley Institute and the road is safer to travel.

(Mr. Whittaker provided a list of these students to the Board of Supervisors.)

In addressing the Supervisors, Mrs. Kathy Maggio commented on the importance of small rural schools and distributed information she obtained from Educational Research Information Center to support keeping the two small schools open.

During discussions, it was clarified that the action to close the two schools was by vote of the Washington County School Board and not the Board of Supervisors.

Some questions were raised concerning the role of the Superintendent and School Board; the hardship to Mendota and Hayter's Gap communities by closing the schools; salary increase given to school employees; cost for educating students.

At the invitation of Chairman Litton, Dr. George S. Stainback, Division Superintendent, was present and responded to questions raised by people in the audience. Dr. Stainback restated the reasons for closing the two schools. He addressed the issues of educational costs, pupil-teacher ratio, and proposed bus routes that are currently under study. Dr. Stainback also addressed the issue of the disparity in education and the State's responsibility for providing education.

Dr. Stainback announced the School Board will hold their next regular meeting on July 24, 1991, and encouraged members of the audience to attend the meeting or to call the school board member in their district to express their viewpoints and concerns.

Also present was Mr. Hershel Stevens, member of the Washington County School Board, who responded to questions from the audience.

At a point in the discussions, some parents requested the Board of Supervisors to provide more funds to the School Board so that the two schools could remain open.

Mr. Litton turned the gavel over to Mr. Parris for the purpose of making a motion.

On motion of Mr. Litton, second by Mr. Whittaker, it was resolved that the Board of Supervisors offer the Washington County School Board \$299,000, plus carry over funds up to \$100,000, contingent upon the School Board keeping Hayter's Gap School and Hamilton School open.

Mr. Byrd raised the question regarding the County's obligation to appropriate the money, and asked where the money will come from. Mr. Litton responded the money can be taken from utility tax revenues and suggested other account sources.

The vote on this motion was as follows (3-2-1):

Mr. Litton	Aye	Mr. Brown	Nay	Mr. Byrd	Nay
Mr. Parris	Aye	Mr. Simcox	Abstain	Mr. Whittaker	Aye

Mr. Simcox expressed his desire to have all the facts and figures before he votes on the motion.

Mr. Parris returned the gavel to Mr. Litton.

4. Adjournment

On motion of Mr. Parris, second by Mr. Whittaker, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote on this motion was as follows (6-0):

Mr. Litton	Aye	Mr. Brown	Aye	Mr. Byrd	Aye
Mr. Parris	Aye	Mr. Simcox	Aye	Mr. Whittaker	Aye

James P. Litton, Chairman