

November 24, 2008

A special called joint work session of the Council of the City of Martinsville, Virginia and Martinsville City School Board was held on November 24, 2008 in Council Chambers, Municipal Building, at 7:30 PM, with Mayor Kathy Lawson presiding. Council Members present included: Kathy Lawson, Kimble Reynolds, Jr., Gene Teague, Mark Stroud, Sr., and Danny Turner. Representatives from School Board included: Jim Johnson, Bill Manning, Robert Williams, Sandra Haley, and Nancy Baker. Also, Dr. Scott Kizner and numerous school staff and principals were present. City staff present included: Clarence Monday, Eric Monday, and Leon Towarnicki. Mayor Lawson called the Council meeting to order and School Board Chairman Jim Johnson called the School Board meeting to order.

Amanda Witt of the Chamber of Commerce gave Council an overview of the Chamber's legislative items. On a motion by Gene Teague, seconded by Kimble Reynolds, with a 5-0 vote, Council approved the Chamber's legislative items.

Copies of the West Piedmont Planning District Commission's legislative package were distributed to Council for review. The WPPDC legislative package will be on the WPPDC agenda for their next board meeting in early December. Once the WPPDC board approves their legislative package, then it will come to Council for approval.

Dr. Kizner gave an overview of school priorities, noting that the majority of the school budget goes for Standards of Quality and at-risk standards. He emphasized that school funding is important due to demographics and economics of this area which is reflected in this area's composite index. Dr. Kizner also gave an overview of the seven school legislative priorities noting that the 1% state cut on education amounts to \$140,000-\$190,000 loss of revenue by the city. He said the schools will do everything within their power to reduce the impact on children. On a motion by Gene Teague, seconded by Mark Stroud, with a 5-0 vote, Council approved the schools legislative priorities as follows:

1. **Funding** – Martinsville City Public Schools supports full funding for the General Assembly's minimum foundation school finance program for K-12 public education.
 - MCPS supports the General Assembly fully funding the benchmarking of the SOQ so the standards are "realistic in relation to the Commonwealth's current education needs and practices."
 - MCPS supports the General Assembly funding 12-month raises using the linear weighted average and real inflation figures derived from annual reports from the divisions.
 - MCPS opposes the continued use of the Literary Fund for purposes other than school construction.
2. **Tax Dollars** - Martinsville City Public Schools supports the position that public tax dollars should be spent only on K-12 public schools.
 - MCPS opposes tuition tax credits, scholarships, vouchers, and other like attempts to divert funds from K-12 public education.
3. **AT-Risk Programs for Achievement**

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Based on the findings of its recent survey and the original rationale from the Wilder Disparity Commission, MCPS supports increased funding for at-risk programs in order to reduce the dropout rate, increase graduation rates, lessen the burden on local governments to incur the costs of such programs, and reduce the disparity to offer such programs for students served across the Commonwealth.

4. **Have a moratorium on any new mandates or regulations** that can not be fully funded by the General Assembly.
5. **Provide flexibility to the School Boards** to determine how SOQ targeted state funds should be directed based on student needs.
6. **Insure that School Divisions with lower composite indexes** are not disproportionately impacted by reduction of state aid. Any reduction plan should be based on equity, student needs, and localities' ability to support their local school systems.
7. **Federal funds should not be used to supplant SOQ and categorical funding.**

Council then discussed the City legislative agenda for 2009. City Attorney Eric Monday suggested it is more realistic to request only legislation that protects cuts in funding instead of asking for items that cost more money. He also suggested the city have VML and Virginia First Cities to push legislation to support a State government that more closely supports cities and counties and not just counties. He encouraged a more aggressive approach to the federal government, thus requesting more funds due to the new incoming administration. Council agreed the city's legislative agenda would be further discussed at their November 25, 2008 meeting to look for revisions and suggestions from tonight's meeting. An agenda item will added for the November 25, 2008 meeting for final approval of the city's legislative agenda.

There being no further business to come before Council during their special meeting, the meeting adjourned at 8:43 PM.

Clarence Monday
Clerk of Council

Kathy C. Lawson
Mayor