



Taxpayer advice to James City County -- no tax hikes, save money, give it to schools

Good morning! James City taxpayers tell the board what they should do in the next budget. Judge postpones hearing on county's office building.

[WILLIAMSBURG WATCH](#)

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Taxpayers give their two cents on the budget Tuesday. (Williamsburg Watch photo)

Some James City County taxpayers had a budget formula for the board of supervisors Tuesday – don't raise taxes, cut expenses, and give the savings to local schools.

Seven people spoke at a public hearing Tuesday evening designed to give staff input on what taxpayers would like to see in the next budget, which begins July 1.

All but one were concerned that real estate assessments, which are going up by double digits, will lead to higher tax bills.

"I don't want you to raise my taxes in this budget," said Fords Colony resident Charles Colegrove. Colegrove is also one of six county residents suing to block construction of the new county government complex.

Jamestown resident Chris Henderson, a frequent speaker at county meetings, urged the supervisors to use zero-based budgeting, justifying every single county position and expense. He urged the county to invite local business people to advise them on the process.

Henderson said the rising cost of living means "A young family starting out cannot afford to buy a home in James City County, and that's sad."

He said county money should go to schools, police, emergency medical services and road enhancements.

But planning commission chair Jack Haldeman, who said he was speaking as a private citizen, said county costs are going up because the population is rapidly increasing and demanding more services. He said growing populations and government spending go hand in hand.

Haldeman urged the county to issue bonds to buy land and keep it off the market to slow down home construction and reduce the impact on road congestion and the watershed.

County resident Linda Wise told supervisors they should declare a tax moratorium, show cost increases on a line-item basis, and reduce the scope and budget for the new county office building and library annex.

“Redirect the savings to teachers’ pay and financial support to help students’ (improve) their academic proficiency,” she said.

A Lanexa resident echoed concerns about county construction budgets and asked that future large projects be submitted to taxpayers in a referendum, “because it affects us all, it affects my household, it affects my family.”

In other business Tuesday, the board of supervisors unanimously approved an application to amend the master plan at the Williamsburg Pottery to allow Coastal Community Church to set up a church for 1,000 attendees.

Shaun Brown, who established the church 25 years ago, said it now has seven campuses from Richmond to Chesapeake with weekly attendance of 3,600 people. The church currently leases space in the county that has weekly attendance of 600.

Brown said because services are on Sunday morning, attendance would not impact traffic congestion on Richmond Road. He said the church has made a practice of repurposing existing buildings rather than starting new construction.

The church will go into a storefront that has been vacant for years.

Supervisors also approved allowing the Williamsburg School of Art and Innovation to open a campus at the site of the former Bright Horizons daycare on Jamestown Road. The school provides educational programs in arts, theater and design to home-schooled children.

Do you agree with the speakers' recommendations

Yes

83%

No

12%

Depends

4%

90 VOTES · POLL CLOSED

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Court postpones hearing on JCC government center



Site work continues at new government center (Williamsburg Watch photo)

A court hearing on the fate of the future James City County government center, scheduled for Tuesday, was postponed until January 22.

The county is asking Williamsburg-James City County circuit court to dismiss a citizen's suit asking for an injunction against building the center.

Plaintiff's attorney Christopher Woodfin asked for the postponement because of a flooding problem in his office.

Local taxpayers represented by Woodfin argued James City County needed to go through a voter referendum to approve a bond to pay for the \$190 million government center.

They filed a request for an emergency injunction to stop site work on the center, but that was denied by substitute Judge Jan Brody at an emergency hearing Nov. 26.

The judge said she was not convinced the case against the county would eventually succeed.

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McGlennon, Larson named chair and vice chair of James City County board of supervisors



From left, Barbara Null, Ruth Larson, Jim Icenhour, Tracy Wainwright, John McGlennon (Williamsburg Watch photo)

James City County supervisors reshuffled their leadership ranks at their first meeting of the year Tuesday, handing the reins to two members who have shuffled between the leadership posts over the years.

Roberts District representative John J. McGlennon, who has occupied the chair several times in his years on the board, was unanimously voted in as chair. He replaces Jim Icenhour of Jamestown district.

Berkeley District representative Ruth Larson, who has also rotated through the vice chair and chair seats, was voted in as vice chair.

Stonehouse representative Barbara E. Null was voted back in as chair of the James City County Service Authority board of directors, and newcomer Tracy Wainwright of the Powhatan district was named vice chair.