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April 25, 2014

Mr. Thomas G. Shepperd, Jr.
Vice Chairman, Board of Supervisors
224 Ballard Street, P. O. Box 532
Yorktown, VA 23690

Tom,

I am writing to you regarding an article that reports that you said you “had tried to meet with Superintendent Eric Williams and CFO Dennis Jarrett to discuss the budget without any luck.” Multiple people who were present during your comments after your public hearing sent emails reporting that you stated that you had tried to meet with Dr. Williams and Mr. Jarrett but that they were not available and that you have not received answers to your questions.

I hope that these descriptions of your comments are inaccurate because the School Board, Superintendent, and Chief Financial Officer have consistently sought the opportunity to meet in an additional joint work session with the Board of Supervisors and to answer any questions you might have. As noted below, the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer shared information and answered questions you had during a meeting with Don Wiggins, the County Administrator, you and me on March 31. I also emphasized in an e-mail to you on April 4 that you are welcome to contact the Superintendent with any questions you still had.

I continue to be concerned by the ongoing refusal of the Board of Supervisors to hold an additional work session with the School Board. Here is a partial timeline of our attempts to hold more than one 55-minute joint work session with the BOS.

-in late November and/or early December, 2013: the School Board expressed an interest through the Superintendent to the County Administrator in holding a joint work session in late 2013 in addition to the work session scheduled for February 4.

-February 4, 2014: We held a joint work session, but the Board of Supervisors was not available for more than 55 minutes. We understand that the brief work session was related to your need to reschedule a hearing that was postponed due to inclement weather.

-March 20, 2014: School Board Chair Mark Medford emailed Don Wiggins (Chairman of the Board of Supervisors) expressing a strong interest in holding a joint work session. He referred to the possibility of a joint work session on April 1, April 14, or April 15. Each member of both Boards, the County Administrator, and the Superintendent were copied on this email.

-March 25, 2014: The Superintendent emailed the County Administrator stating that School Board members expressed a very strong interest in a joint work session on one of the dates Mr. Medford mentioned in his email to Mr. Wiggins.

-March 27, 2014: I emailed you again expressing a strong interest in a joint work session and again mentioning April 14 and April 15 as possible joint work session dates. I stated, "I understand that your Board's preference is for the Board Chairs and Vice Chairs to meet with select staff . . . we are still interested in having a joint work session with your full board. . . We are willing to have a meeting of the Board Chairs and Vice Chairs and select staff regardless of whether you are willing to have a joint work session."

-March 28, 2014: The Superintendent forwarded to the County Administrator my email to you dated March 27, 2014 and asked about the status of a possible joint work session and meeting of Board Chairs/Vice-Chairs/select staff.

-March 29, 2014: In response to my email, you wrote, "I support the joint meeting proposal to the extent that the School Board believes there is new information to provide to the Board of Supervisors." Your reference to "the extent that the School Board believes there is new information to provide" suggests to me that you did not have any questions that would lead you to support a joint meeting proposal unless we had new information to provide.

-March 31, 2014: As Vice-Chairman of the School Board, I joined Mark Medford (Chairman of the School Board) in meeting with you (in your role as Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors), Don Wiggins (Chairman of the Board of Supervisors), the County Administrator, the County Deputy Administrator, the County Controller, the Superintendent, and the Chief Financial Officer of the school division. We presented information and answered questions you asked. We expressed our disappointment in your unwillingness to hold a televised, joint work session and encouraged you to reconsider. We invited you to contact us with any additional questions you have.

-April 2, 2014: You emailed me again, stating, "I was unable to convince the BOS to participate in another joint meeting before the April 9th deadline. . . I strongly recommend that Dr. Williams and/or Dennis be present to address questions at the April 8 BOS meeting."

-April 3, 2014: You emailed me with a copy to each member of both Boards, the County Administrator, and the Superintendent. Some of your statements regarding the School Board proposed budget did not appear to be based on an accurate, complete understanding of our proposed budget.

-April 4, 2014: I responded to your email and copied each member of both Boards, the County Administrator, and the Superintendent. I provided additional information to address what appeared to be misperceptions in your email regarding the School Board proposed budget. I also stated, "While the Superintendent and the Chief Financial Officer are not available to attend the meeting on April 8 because they are out of town, feel free to email the Superintendent with any questions that arise before or during your meeting. I want to close by requesting, once again, a joint meeting with both of the Boards so a meaningful, detailed, and transparent discussion can

take place that would benefit all stakeholders. Although April 1 has passed (one of the dates we proposed for a joint work session), we could still meet jointly with you on April 14 or 15.”

Also, please note that the Evergreen Solutions report regarding the teacher pay plans has been and is available on our web site at yorkcountyschools.org/aboutUs/budget/FY15_Budget/docs/EvergreenSolutionsReport.pdf . This report was referenced in our joint work session on February 4. The Evergreen Solutions report is a great example of a topic we could have discussed further at an additional joint work session, had one occurred. For example, the report states that YCSD ranks 7th among the 9 local comparator school divisions in entry level salaries for teachers with master’s degrees.

It is not too late to hold a joint work session. Mr. Medford, School Board Chairman, will send a separate email to Don Wiggins, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, expressing interest in holding a joint work session on April 29 at 7:00 p.m. or 7:30 p.m. You already have a work session scheduled for 6 p.m. on this date so we hope that you can accommodate this proposal.

A member of the Board of Supervisors spoke last night with our Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer regarding the possibility of the two of them attending your work session on April 29. This individual stated that this was being mentioned only as a possibility since the full Board might not be receptive to this possibility. Although our strong preference is for a joint work session, the Superintendent and Chief Financial Officer are available to attend your work session on April 29.

I appreciate any support you might provide in terms of a joint work session and full funding for the School Board Proposed Budget.

Sincerely,



Robert George
Vice Chair, York County School Board

cc: Mr. Donald E. Wiggins, Chairman, Board of Supervisors
Mr. Walter C. Zaremba, Board of Supervisors
Mr. George S. Hrichak, Board of Supervisors
Mrs. Sheila S. Noll, Board of Supervisors
Mr. James O. McReynolds, County Administrator
Mr. Mark A. Medford, Chair, York County School Board
Mrs. Barbara S. Haywood, York County School Board
Mrs. Cindy Kirschke, York County School Board
Mr. R. Page Minter, York County School Board
Dr. Eric Williams, Superintendent, York County School Division