

A joint work session between the Botetourt County Board of Supervisors and the Botetourt County School Board was held on Tuesday, March 8, 2016, in Room 229 of the Greenfield Education and Training Center, in Daleville, Virginia, beginning at 6:30 P. M.

PRESENT: Members: Mr. Jack Leffel, Chairman, Board of Supervisors
 Mr. Todd L. Dodson, Vice-Chairman, Board of Supervisors
 Mr. Billy W. Martin, Sr., Member, Board of Supervisors
 Dr. Donald M. Scothorn, Member, Board of Supervisors
 Mr. John B. Williamson, III, Member, Board of Supervisors
 Mrs. Ruth Wallace, Chairman, School Board
 Mr. Michael Beahm, Member, School Board
 Mr. John Alderson, Member, School Board
 Mr. Scott Swortzel, Member, School Board

ABSENT: Members: Mrs. Kathy Sullivan, Vice-Chairman, School Board

Others present at the meeting:

Mr. David Moorman, Deputy County Administrator
 Mr. Gary Larrowe, County Administrator
 Mr. John Busher, Superintendent of Schools
 Ms. Janet Womack, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
 Mrs. Betty Holland, Clerk to the School Board

At 6:34 P. M., Mrs. Wallace called the School Board meeting to order. Mr. Leffel called the Board of Supervisors meeting to order and welcomed everyone to the meeting including Mrs. Joyce Kessinger, Chairman of the Economic Development Authority; Mr. G. Lyn Hayth, III, Vice-Chairman of the Authority; and Mr. Peer Segelke, CEO of Lawrence Transportation Systems.

Mr. Larrowe stated that this evening's presentation is titled "Hitting the mark with education and economic development" and is a proposal to grow the local economy through "raising the bar" with students, parents, and the community through different means. He noted that this proposal includes a business attraction model, retaining those businesses that are currently located in the County, and retaining the County's employment talent. Mr. Larrowe stated that this is proposed to create the future of the community and the County's businesses and developing opportunities for both to expand and grow.

Mr. Larrowe stated that education is the largest portion of the County budget and efforts are needed to retain the students after graduation and improve efforts to find jobs for them at companies located in the County. He noted that certificate programs instead of two or four year college degrees is an option to increase worker availability. Mr. Larrowe noted that, after high school or college, the County's graduates move away because they do not believe that there are any employment opportunities within the County.

Mr. Larrowe stated that area corporations have previously said that they need talent to fill positions within their companies and the County needs to engage the business community to find out what is needed. He noted that Arkay Packaging Corporation's CEO has said that the company needs 50 additional employees; however, they need a pathway for these employees to learn what types of skills are needed to fill these needed positions. Mr. Larrowe stated that, if training related to the company's needs can be incorporated into the high school curriculum, then the students can be employed by the company immediately upon graduation and then obtain additional training/education over time.

Mr. Larrowe tonight's meeting is to begin to determine what opportunities are available to achieve this goal.

Mr. Busher stated that the School Board's vision statement includes language that they are charged with preparing kids to be productive citizens in an ever-changing world. He stated that the Supervisors and School Board working together to achieve this is a win/win situation and he knows that these efforts will be beneficial to the County's students.

Mr. Busher stated that the question is, "what is available in Botetourt County." He stated that the schools need to know what employment opportunities are available for the students upon graduation, what is needed to help the students prepare for those jobs, and how the County/Schools/employers can collaborate on those issues.

He noted that their CTE (Career and Technical Education) programs prepare students for after-school life and 75% of the students in these programs have a job waiting for them upon graduation. Mr. Busher stated that it is key for the school system to visit the County's companies, become aware of what they do, and determine what skills are needed by the students to obtain these jobs. Mr. Busher stated that he hopes that these efforts will bring these students back to work in the County.

He noted that the School administration needs to review their pre-existing programs to see if they are "keepers" or what changes are needed to bring the curriculum in line with the companies' needs. Mr. Busher stated that many years ago the school system offered work-release opportunities for students whereby they attended school for part of the day and then worked part-time at a local business to obtain real world work skills. He further stated that children need to determine early in their high school years what career they want to pursue.

Mr. Busher stated that, to achieve this, school personnel need to get into the business, "walk their turf," talk to the business owners, and then decide the next steps in providing appropriate classes for the students to meet the companies' needs. He noted that they have parent advisory committees in the CTE programs which include business representatives.

It was noted that Mr. Peer Segelke, CEO of Lawrence Transportation Systems, was present to speak.

Mr. Segelke stated that LTS was formed in 1932 and have been located in Botetourt County for many years. He noted that they currently have 400 employees; 180 of which work in Botetourt County. Mr. Segelke stated that his company needs truck drivers, diesel mechanics, and moving and storage staff, among others and these jobs pay very well (\$45,000 - \$65,000/year). He noted that there is a huge deficit of tractor trailer drivers in the country. Mr. Segelke stated that in the past these drivers were on the road for weeks at a time but this is no longer the case. Mr. Segelke stated that 18 year olds cannot drive tractor trailers across state lines but they can be hired to make in-state deliveries if they have a Commercial Driver's License (CDL).

Mr. Segelke also stated that he also needs diesel mechanics and the lack of people in this field limits his company's growth. He further stated that they hire summer workers to help in their moving operations and some of these workers are eventually employed full time.

After discussion, Mr. Segelke stated that today's workers need to learn how to learn and be willing to make continual improvements in their work skills. He noted that technology is a part of everything in today's world including mechanics and large vehicle operations. Mr. Segelke stated that LTS would like to grow their workforce and he has discussed their employee needs with the County Administrator.

Mr. Larrowe stated that today's graduates need to know how to solve problems in the workplace, among other items.

Mr. Busher stated that SOL tests are not a measure of a student's readiness for employment.

Ms. Womack stated that she is part of a team of school personnel that meets weekly to discuss instructional cooperation and consider educational changes that are coming about in the next few years. She noted that problem solving skills have been lost by today's students because of State/federal educational criteria that schools are mandated to follow. Ms. Womack stated that problem solving skills need to return to the classroom curriculum. She noted that workforce opportunities and partnerships in the community will be a great benefit.

Mr. Busher stated that the Botetourt Technical Education Center (BTEC) offers a non-traditional classroom for students to learn welding, auto mechanics, etc.

Mr. Larrowe stated that the transferability of these skills is important into the actual working world.

Mr. Busher stated that, when high school students can go into a business and see the company's operations first hand, "it stays with them" versus a classroom-only education.

Mr. Larrowe stated that economic development and K-12 education need to move in the same direction. He noted that discussions have also been held on including K-14 students so that the community colleges can be involved in helping two-year college students finding jobs in the County.

Mr. Larrowe stated that, to this end, he would like to announce the creation of a County Corporate Visitation Program. He noted that this program would promote meetings and outreach between representatives of the County, Schools, and the business community in order to provide cross-education between the companies and the community. Mr. Larrowe stated that the first visit is scheduled later this month with Arkay Packaging Corporation. He stated that the group would consist of representatives from the Economic Development Authority, school system, County, workforce development organizations, Virginia Western and Dabney Lancaster community colleges, and others, who would visit the County's businesses and determine their workforce development needs and how the County can help fulfill those employment needs. He noted that the group's second visitation will be with Lawrence Transportation Systems.

Mr. Larrowe stated that the school system's representatives could include guidance counselors, teachers, etc., to see the company's operations, talk to their personnel, and how they can help the company to improve/increase its employment base. He noted that it is proposed that there would be one of these visits to a different company each month. Mr. Larrowe further stated that Arkay Packaging expressed interested in an internship program.

After discussion, Mr. Larrowe stated that groups of students could visit the company to see first-hand what goes on inside these companies and if the students might want to work there. He noted that teachers could even visit the company for a day or two to see how the company operates, produces its product, and what training is needed at the high school level to provide future employees.

Mr. Beahm then questioned if the school system does a good job of making students aware of other employment opportunities. He suggested that parents also be involved in the students' visits to the companies so they could encourage their child to consider that employment path.

Dr. Scothorn stated that the County's citizens are part of the economic development process and when they plant a seed they want it to grow in the County. He suggested that a

television commercial could be created showing the BTEC students visiting companies such as Arkay and LTS to encourage others to obtain education/training to work at these companies.

Dr. Scothorn stated that “we forget about desires in thinking about numbers.” He then questioned the extent to which colleges are willing to find jobs for their graduates.

Mr. Segelke questioned how much do high school students know about the salaries offered in various jobs and stated that the answer is probably not much. He referenced the high salaries offered to diesel mechanics and CDL drivers that students may not be aware of.

After questioning by Dr. Scothorn, Mr. Segelke stated that LTS is committed to the community and to finding ways to work together through partnerships. He noted that LTS could bring one of their diesel trucks to BTEC for the automotive classes to learn how to repair.

Mr. Busher stated that the program of having County/School representatives visit the County's businesses to assess their needs should also include business representatives visiting the schools to see what they offer. He noted that a local-level certification program for a diesel mechanic sounds like a great program.

Dr. Scothorn stated that the County “has been concentrating on the trees instead of the fruits” in our economic development and career training programs.

Mr. Alderson stated that the market is looking for high-performance stocks, cars, etc., however, the County is looking for high-performance people. He questioned if the students understand what the free-enterprise system is, what its rewards are, and what the system can do for them. He noted that, at the end of the process, there is a great reward waiting for these students.

Mr. Busher stated that there have been a lot of federal and State controls put on the education system over the past few years. He noted that the federal government has recently relented on some of these mandates and hopefully the State of Virginia will do so as well. In response to Mr. Alderson's question, Mr. Busher stated that the answer is no as high school or college students may not understand the free-enterprise system, its rewards, or what the system can do for them.

Mr. Busher stated that schools have only 335 minutes per day to teach a mandated range of courses and it is difficult to find time to fit other topics/classes into this schedule.

Mr. Alderson stated that students need help to understand that the opportunities in this country are unlimited and they should take advantage of what is available.

Mr. Busher stated that the school system begins offering classes/opportunities for students to determine what career they want at the kindergarten level. He noted that every parent wants their child to be successful and most believe that part of this success includes college. He stated that “skilled” labor requires higher education and training as well.

Mr. Swortzel stated that this information should be provided from within the County and its businesses and this data can be used within the school system to provide educational opportunities for career and technical students.

Mr. Dodson stated that the County is trying to determine how to best use the Economic Development Authority in these efforts. Mr. Dodson noted that, when he was in school, students were taken on field trips to visit various area companies to see their operations.

Mr. Alderson stated that there is no central repository in the County for local businesses to post job openings.

Mr. Segelke stated that there is a lot of misinformation in the working world about the salaries paid for career and technical positions.

Mrs. Wallace stated that the County is fortunate to have BTEC's facilities available for evening and Saturday classes to provide training in those areas that Lawrence Transportation and other companies need. She noted that the school system has added and expanded a number of technical and career course offerings over the years. Mrs. Wallace also noted that there are a lot of parents in the County that need jobs.

After questioning by Mr. Segelke regarding English as a Second Language classes, Mr. Busher stated that the only means that the school system provides for adult education is a General Equivalency Diploma (GED).

Dr. Scothorn stated that the "financial well-being of the citizens is one thing, but the desire has to be there."

Mr. Dodson stated that he believes that non-traditional classrooms equal innovation in education.

Mr. Leffel stated that the County's gifted program keeps many students in school because these classes are not taught in the traditional classroom environment.

Mr. Williamson stated that he thought that a bill was submitted in this year's General Assembly session to create a Governor's School style concept for technical education courses; however, he does not know if this legislation was approved.

Mr. Busher stated that in-house training for BTEC teachers to obtain certifications in such areas as diesel mechanics, etc., is an opportunity that he thinks the school system can make work. Mr. Busher encouraged Mr. Segelke to visit BTEC to see what courses they offer and discussions can be held on what classes are needed by Lawrence Transportation to train their next generation of employees.

After discussion, Mr. Dodson stated that an individual has to be 18 years of age to obtain a learner's permit for a Commercial Driver's License.

Mr. Busher stated that "money talks" at age 18 and if the students know that the money is available in such careers as diesel mechanics then "they will go with it."

Mr. Segelke stated that we need to make it easy and acceptable for students to not go to college right after high school. He noted that high school students can try out a job for a few years after graduation and then decide if they want to go to college.

After questioning by Dr. Scothorn, Mr. Busher stated that he does not know if there are grant monies available to fund diesel mechanics classes in a high school setting but, if there is a plan, there is an opportunity for funding.

Mr. Beahm also suggested that there be an apprenticeship program for orchard/nursery businesses as the County has recently concentrated on developing an Agriculture Strategic Plan.

Mr. Martin noted that he teaches Junior Achievement classes to fifth graders at Buchanan Elementary School and many of the free enterprise concepts discussed at this meeting, e.g., partnerships, corporations, sole proprietorships, etc., are taught in those classes. He noted that the students are also informed about different job sets and skills as well as soft skills such as attitude.

Mr. Martin stated that the schools still conduct career days and information on the companies' needs should be made available for the students at these events.

Mr. Busher stated that parents also need to be involved in the career options/decisions for their children. He noted that through the Corporate Visitation Program the school system will learn more of what type of courses/training is needed at each business visit. Mr. Busher stated

that common elements needed by each business can be determined to help the schools “hone in” on what courses they need to offer. He noted that the same can be done for Ag Science to help encourage agricultural businesses in the northern end of the County.

After questioning by Mr. Williamson, Mr. Larrowe stated that this business visitation program will be the responsibility of the new Economic Development Manager when the position is filled. He noted that these visits could also be made to the County’s smaller businesses to see if the County/Schools can help meet their staffing needs.

Mrs. Kessinger stated that she serves on the local Workforce Development Board and this region receives approximately \$1 million from the State for training-related needs. She noted that they focus on dislocated workers, adult training, in-school and out-of-school youth apprenticeships, etc. and helping businesses find workers. She noted that a presentation on what is available in workforce development could be held.

Mr. Larrowe stated that there are 27 State and local agencies that are working to find a workforce development solution.

Mr. Segelke stated that the suggestion that Lawrence Transportation representatives visit BTEC to see what training and workforce development resources are available is a good idea.

Mr. Moorman stated that students do not have an awareness of the employment opportunities that are available in the County and the region. He noted that the students need to “get inside these companies to see what they do and the variety of opportunities” that are available for employment.

Mr. Hayth stated that it was good to have this meeting. He noted that a transformation is occurring across the country in employment and the County is ahead in this effort. Mr. Hayth stated that there is a big misunderstand about what types of employment opportunities are available that do not include a large amount of college loan debt.

After discussion and review of calendars, it was stated that the next joint Supervisors/ School Board meeting would be held on June 21, 2016, beginning at 6:00 P. M.

Mr. Leffel then stated that he appreciated Mrs. Kessinger’s and Mr. Hayth’s attendance at this meeting. He noted that these meetings are a perfect opportunity for each board to know what the other is doing. Mr. Leffel also stated that he appreciated Mr. Hayth’s comments and he believes that the County has a chance to be ahead of the curve. Mr. Leffel noted that he is excited that both the County and the School system have recently hired new administrators and the EDA is taking on a new role in economic development for the County. Mr. Leffel stated that he feels good about where the County is going.

There being no further discussion, Mr. Leffel adjourned the Board of Supervisors meeting at 7:58 P. M.

Mrs. Wallace then adjourned the School Board meeting at 7:59 P. M.