

MINUTES OF BUDGET PUBLIC HEARING  
OF THE NEWPORT NEWS CITY COUNCIL  
HELD IN THE MARY PASSAGE MIDDLE SCHOOL AUDITORIUM  
400 Atkinson Way  
April 24, 2008  
7:30 p.m.

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PRESENT: Sharon P. Scott; Joseph C. Whitaker; Herbert H. Bateman; Joe S. Frank; William F. Haskins; and Madeline McMillan ----- 6

ABSENT: Charles C. Allen ----- 1

*MOTION MADE BY COUNCILMAN HASKINS; SECONDED BY COUNCILWOMAN SCOTT; AND CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY TO EXCUSE VICE MAYOR ALLEN FROM THIS MEETING.*

Mayor Frank presented A RESOLUTION OF RECOGNITION expressing congratulations to Mabel V. Washington, City Clerk, on her appointment as President of the Virginia Municipal Clerks Association.

Councilman Haskins moved adoption of the above resolution; seconded by Councilwoman Scott.

Councilman Haskins stated in his service to City Council and work with several different Clerks, Ms. Washington had been the most professional in every step of the way. She ran a professional office and got the job done. He was proud of her accomplishment.

Vote on Roll Call:

Ayes: Scott, Whitaker, Bateman, Frank, Haskins, McMillan

Nays: None

Mayor Frank advised this was the second of two public hearings that City Council was conducting on the City Manager's Fiscal Year 2009 Recommended Operating Budget. He apologized for not attending the April 22, 2008, City Council meeting and Budget Public Hearing due to the illness of his spouse.

Mayor Frank advised on Tuesday, April 29, 2008, City Council would hold a Work Session at 2:00 p.m., to discuss the comments, suggestions and recommendations from the public and communicate its desires and concerns to the City Manager. He advised on May 13, 2008, City Council planned to adopt the Newport News Public Schools (NNPS) FY 2009 Operating Budget, and, hopefully, the City's Operating Budget.

Mayor Frank asked City Manager Randy Hildebrandt to provide a brief overview of the FY 2009 Recommended Operating Budget.

City Manager Hildebrandt stated the budget being recommended for Fiscal Year 2009 was one of the most challenging to develop in recent years. He stated because of changing economic conditions, Newport News could expect growth in General Fund Revenues for the next fiscal year to be about half of the annual revenue growth that was experienced over the past two years. To adjust to the reality of limited growth in local tax collections, as well as cutbacks in State aid, the FY 2009 Recommended Operating Budget had significant cuts in spending. The Recommended FY 2009 Operating Budget reflected hard, but necessary, choices as he positioned the City and the community for the future. (A copy of the City Manager Hildebrandt's remarks are attached and made a part of these minutes.)

Mr. Jim Cumming, 719 Kensington Drive, Newport News, proposed a decrease in the real estate tax rate and indicated City government had become unaffordable to the taxpayers who were being penalized for being homeowners in Newport News. He understood the City did many good things for its citizens, but unfortunately the City's state of affairs was causing citizens to focus on negatives rather than positives, i.e. City debt. Citizens had to sacrifice more of their quality of life to pay taxes. He was disappointed with the state of the City, its Schools and its leadership. He asked City Council to work on solutions to decrease government spending, and cut the real estate tax rate to \$.93 per \$100 of assessed value. Also, the City's retirement plan was not comparable to what was offered in the private sector, which needed to be reviewed.

Ms. Arva Davidson, 13 Howard Court, Newport News, Chair of the Hampton-Newport News Community Services Board (CSB), commented on the services provided by the CSB, and asked City Council to approve the CSB's requested funding increase for FY 2009, so that the CSB could provide critically needed mental health services for the City jail. The total amount of the additional funding (\$521,245.00) would still put local support from Newport News significantly behind what was provided by municipal counterparts in Hampton Roads. The additional funding would divert individuals, with serious mental illness, from incarceration in the City jail, treat individuals with serious mental illness while in the City jail, and treat jail inmates at the CSB's Psychiatric Crisis Stabilization Unit.

Mr. Anthony Vladu, 111 Carlton Drive, Yorktown, Social Studies teacher at Heritage High School, spoke about the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom. He explained the process in technology over the past 20 years, i.e. from CD's to MP3's, and job searching by way of the internet. He stated School classrooms existed on past technology and would become irrelevant to children's learning unless they changed. Students needed to be able to use technology to collaborate, create and compete in the world. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiative was a move in the right direction. He thanked City Council for their continued support of NNPS.

Mr. Guy Levy, 463 Cheshire Court, Newport News, member of Newport News Educational Foundation, spoke in favor of the NNPS FY 2009 Operating Budget, as presented by

the School Board. He stated City schools and education were critical to the success of a City. Newport News, being an urban City, had many challenges that other school districts did not experience. If NNPS was going to be competitive, its pay had to be competitive. He asked City Council to approve the NNPS FY 2009 budget, and noted the raise recommended for NNPS employees and teachers kept Newport News on target with other local communities.

Ms. Cary Snowe, 215 Belray Drive, Newport News, Social Studies teacher at McIntosh Elementary School, noted what she and her colleagues did to ensure student success. She stated teachers had to be learners, leaders, and collaborators. Teachers needed to be competent in the skills students would need in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, which required them to learn new technologies. As she began to prepare students for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, it was important that they had access to technology. Teachers spent many hours at home to learn and practice new technology skills, i.e. Power Point technology, web page creation, etc. 21<sup>st</sup> Century learners were expected to have computer, communication, and social skills. Teachers needed time to learn and develop just as students. Ms. Snowe stated the role of a teacher was never complete; it required additional time and study.

Dr. Ashby Kilgore, 230 Nat Turner Boulevard, Newport News, Superintendent, NNPS, stated funding given to NNPS was an investment in the future of the City. She stated education was directly linked to economic development and businesses went where the workforce was. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiative, the Career Pathways initiative, and the Dropout Recovery initiative were aimed to develop the workforce potential and set the community up for future success. Dr. Kilgore asked City Council to approve the \$3.9 million increase that was recommended in the City Manager's budget for NNPS, so that NNPS could maintain its ability to recruit and retain the best possible teachers with the needed technical skills necessary to move forward in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The \$3.9 million increase represented less than one quarter of the additional revenues that Newport News would receive and that funding, combined with internal cuts made by the NNPS in terms of positions and departmental cuts, would allow NNPS to provide a 4% raise to its teachers and staff.

Mr. Billie Millner, 27 Indigo Dam Road, Newport News, expressed his appreciation to City Council for their service to the City. He indicated Council members had a tough job and reflected on how lucky Newport News was. Newport News had not experienced the rate of foreclosures and unemployment as had other communities in the United States. He credited City Council and its predecessors for making Newport News a vibrant City where business prospered, so that citizens could get jobs, and pay for their homes. He understood it was tough, particularly for retirees, in this day and time; however citizens took many things for granted, i.e. water, fire and police service, and an excellent school system. He particularly commended Councilman Haskins and Vice Mayor Allen who had served the City well. Mr. Millner suggested that City Council create a Finance Review Committee to include a banker, an

accountant, a retired citizen, a shipyard worker, a representative from the School System, and a representative from RETRO. The Finance Review Committee would have the task of reviewing the budget and looking for ways to save money. The Committee would not cost the City a dime and could offer much insight.

Ms. Amour Mickel, 1492 Monterey Place, Educator of Exceptional Children, Mary L. Passage Middle School, spoke in favor of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century initiatives. She and her co-teacher used technology driven components to keep their students engaged in lessons, i.e. laptops, power point presentations and facilitating students to work together. Her students were technology driven and were occupied on a daily basis with My-Space, I-PODs, MP3 Players, and Cellular Phones, which engaged them in alternative communication skills. Students came from different backgrounds and, as a 21<sup>st</sup> Century teacher, she was charged with preparing students to learn in a complex, digital society, which prepared them for the future. NNPS was committed to ensuring that all students had access to the new technological world, regardless of economic background. It was imperative that all students had the skills of critical thinking, problem solving, information literacy, collaboration, and communication, to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Students deserved to have the opportunities to explore and learn all the skills that ensured they became productive citizens.

Dr. Patricia Woodbury, 47 Indian Springs Drive, Newport News, member of the NNPS Board, spoke in favor of the FY 2009 School Board Operating Budget. She stated she had studied the FY 2009 Recommended City Operating Budget and found two pages of things that could be changed, without touching the budgets of Police and Fire, or Schools. She did not believe that Newport News had a revenue problem, but felt Newport News had a spending problem. She agreed with Mr. Millner's suggestion for the creation of a Finance Review Committee. Newport News needed tax relief, and City Council had the power to provide tax relief to its citizens. She noted the contract to appropriate \$300,000 per year, for the next 20 years, for promotion of the Marriott Hotel & Conference Center in City Center. She indicated the City had a contract with teachers, policemen, firemen and citizens. Citizens should be able to expect that their elected officials did what was in their best interest. Citizens must be left with enough money to support City Center, go out to eat, and grow the economy. Dr. Woodbury stated people were leaving the City, due to taxes and the increased value of real estate. Dr. Ruby Payne, an expert in urban affairs, noted that the sustainability of a community meant that all levels of economic beings had to be addressed. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., noted it was always the right time to do the right thing. She urged City Council to do the right thing by giving citizens a break in their taxes, the real estate tax rate and fully fund the budget for essential people.

Ms. Alice Orman, 89 Lakeside Drive, Newport News, educated and raised in Newport News, expressed her support for the Point Option Alternative School. She asked that funding for the school be left in the School budget. Her son, a graduate of Point Option, would

not hold a high school diploma if it had not been for Point Option Alternative School. Many had a misconception that Point Option was a school for students with discipline problems; however, she did not find that to be the case. Her son was never a discipline problem in school. Her son was diagnosed with Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD). He was intelligent, learned quickly, but had problems with his organizational skills, and was an average student in elementary and middle school, with the help of his teachers. It was not until high school when his problems began, where she was told time and time again that teachers did not have time to babysit him. It got to the point where he did not want to go to school. It was then decided by his medical physician that they seek professional help from a counselor. The counselor suggested that she contact Point Option, where her son was admitted. Within 30 days of being enrolled at Point Option, her son had a positive outlook towards school. Ms. Orman stated the caring teachers and staff took time to help her son. It was a long haul through Point Option, but because of the teachers and the administrative staff, her son was able to graduate. She asked that City Council keep Point Option Alternative School in the school budget.

Mr. Bud Ramey, 12 Hillcrest Drive, Newport News, Co-Chairman of People to People, spoke in favor of the NNPS FY 2009 Budget. He stated this was no time to cut the school budget. The work NNPS was doing was vital to the future of youth in Newport News considering the violence that had over taken many neighborhoods. This was no time to limit resources to teachers who were on the frontline of this violence, in any way, shape or form. By the same token, City Council had heard a cry for a reduction in property taxes from its citizens. He hoped City Council would find ways over time to reduce citizen tax burdens, but the school budget was not the place to start. Mr. Ramey reminded City Council of the major community initiative People to People was embarking upon. He stated People to People had studied crime issues in Newport News, at a grassroots level, by talking to youth in the community. People to People came up with what they believed was a reasonable way to attack youth crime, by establishing 12 centers in the City's most challenged neighborhoods. He stated People to People was not asking City Council to appropriate any funding for this initiative. At this time, they did not feel it was necessary nor would it succeed under the pressure of citizens who felt a tremendous pinch from property tax issues. He wanted City Council to know of People to People's plan to build 12 inspirational centers, within the City's most troubled neighborhoods, where kids could not cross the street because gangs defined where they could go. Neighborhoods, such as Courthouse Green, where he suspected 1,000 children were on the streets, because they had no other alternative, i.e. a Boys & Girls Club. Mr. Ramey stated Courthouse Green was one area in the City in which the City could contribute land. The City owned two acres of land at the entrance to Courthouse Green. The City could help People to People's initiative by making that land available for one of the 12 centers. Mr. Ramey stated People to People planned to approach City officials, in the coming months, to ask that City Council donate land to People to People for their community center initiative. People to People hoped the Schools would contribute land for 10 community centers. People to People believed

building Centers on School property coincided with crime rates in troubled areas. People to People selected 10 schools to build a neighborhood center that would feature, primarily, a brilliantly run Boys and Girls Club by the Boys and Girls Clubs of the Virginia Peninsula. Mr. Ramey stated Police Chief Fox was in Florida, working with the number two guy in justice, to put some information in his hands about People to People's neighborhood initiative. He hoped this would streamline the grant seeking process that People to People would undertake in receiving a major demonstration grant, from the federal government, to fund the building of these centers. The grant seeking process would be ongoing and might take months. In the meantime, People to People would seek a sponsor to build the first center in one of the most troubled neighborhoods to demonstrate what a vibrant Boys & Girls Club that was also a neighborhood center and free clinic could do. He asked City Council to keep People to People's vision in front of them as the months passed. When opportunities arose, where they were looking at capital expenditures, he hoped they would keep one thing in mind, which was whether what they were about to approve was more important to the future of Newport News than the establishment of neighborhood centers in the City's most troubled neighborhoods.

Dr. Bob Leber, Director of Education and Workforce Development, Northrop Grumman Newport News, and incoming President of the Newport News Educational Foundation, spoke in favor of the NNPS FY 2009 budget as proposed by the School Board. He thanked City Council for all they did wrestling with the problems they had in matching expenditures with revenue. He thanked Vice Mayor Allen and Councilman Haskins for their support in education and workforce development initiatives over the past two decades. He supported the NNPS FY 2009 budget for the initiatives it funded, in terms of Career Pathways and salary increases for teachers and school employees. All the initiatives were aimed at providing a competitive workforce and helping organizations acquire productive citizens.

Ms. Dee Johnson, 303 Ashland Court, Newport News, member of Newport News School Board, spoke in favor of the NNPS FY 2009 budget. She felt the NNPS budget presented a conservative plan for continued improvement of public education for the citizens of Newport News. The School Board continued to involve the community in the development of its budget, by including an Assistant City Manager, the PTA Council President, the Education Foundation President and the Newport News Educational Association President. The NNPS budget was designed to build upon the theme of Safe, Smart Schools. The priorities of the budget included 21<sup>st</sup> Century Learning, Career Pathways, Youth Development, Drop-out and Prevention Recovery, and competitive salaries and benefits for staff. She felt the School Board effectively and efficiently provided strong educational opportunities for Newport News children. She encouraged City Council to fully fund their FY 2009 budget.

Ms. Rebecca Tuzzolo, 307 Riverside Drive, Newport News, stated it was difficult for citizens to keep up with increasing real estate taxes. She stated members of RETRO felt teachers should receive a salary increase and indicated there were plenty of places where cuts could be made in their budget. She agreed with Mr. Cumming's above noted remarks and Mr.

Millner's suggestion for a City Finance Review Committee. This would allow citizens, with no political connection, to get involved in the budget and would bring an independent view to the process. She noted Mr. Vaughn's email to Councilman Bateman which indicated Mr. Vaughn found it difficult to believe that none of the numerous suggestions to reduce spending made over the last two years, by a variety of citizens, had merit. If all the ideas lacked merit, then perhaps, City Council was not explaining things well enough or they had divorced themselves from the will of the people. She agreed with Mr. Vaughn's email that City Council had divorced themselves from the will of the people. She encouraged more citizens to voice their opinions to City Council regarding a decrease in the real estate tax rate.

Mr. Teddy Hicks, Vice Chair of NNPS Board, expressed his appreciation to Vice Mayor Allen and Councilman Haskins, for the tremendous work they had done in helping with the budget process over the years. Mr. Hicks stated, on behalf of the School Board, he supported the NNPS FY 2009 budget. He asked City Council to fund the NNPS FY 2009 budget as presented.

Mr. James Stancil, 113 Phillips Lane, Newport News, felt City Council did not listen to its citizenry. He stated Mayor Frank controlled the parliamentary powers of City Council. He praised Councilwoman McMillan as the only voice on City Council that sought fiscal responsibility. He felt there needed to be term limits for City officials. He urged citizens, when approached, to sign petitions endorsing term limits for City officials. He proposed the creation of an Economic Development Council to address citizen ideas for businesses. A percentage of property taxes should be applied to create homegrown businesses. He asked citizens to work with RETRO and Ms. Cary Nunnally to push for term limits for City officials, and indicated no one should be allowed to serve on City Council for more than eight years.

Mr. David E. Kundis, 106 Church Road, Newport News, stated it was important for City Council to cut spending. He felt the City had too many levels of management, whose salaries were in high ranges. He stated City Council and the NNPS should cut cost 10% across the board in light of the way money was spent over the past few years. City Council should put a hold on all new spending, except for emergencies, for three years. Mr. Kundis stated the City needed to get its priorities in line. For instance, the City had an overcrowded jail for many years, and instead of building a new jail, the City opted to build a new Police Department that was not needed. Municipal buildings in Oyster Point could have waited. Parking garages in City Center were not needed, that only were 15% occupied. He questioned why City Council continued to spend money, and why the City had to now spend \$40 million in the CIP and the \$27 million for the King William Reservoir project. He wanted to see everyone get a raise, but he had taken a cut in pay for the past three to four years, so that everyone, in the City, could get a raise. His real estate taxes had doubled in four to five years and on a retiree's income that was a tremendous

amount of money. He noted the new School Administration building on Warwick Boulevard, and inquired why funding was spent for the building. He felt it was a pathetic expenditure.

Mr. Mike Wagner, 411 Dora Drive, Newport News, member of the Newport News School Board, spoke in support of full funding for the NNPS FY 2009 budget. He stated School Board members represented the most important segment of the population, children and their education. The School Board sent City Council a very conservative budget that met the educational needs of students through the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. The School Board also recognized that they must be good stewards of citizen's tax money. The School administration implemented many programs to decrease expenses, i.e. a \$700,000 savings in utilities, through a prudent energy management plan, \$400,000 in renegotiating copier and printing contracts and a reduction in teacher positions and elimination of vacant positions. The accomplishments of NNPS were something to be proud of, i.e. increases in accredited schools and recognition by the State of 17 schools who exceeded SOL expectations. Also, NNPS was recognized as one of the top 100 schools in the United States for music education. He asked City Council to support the NNPS FY 2009 budget as proposed by the School Board.

Mr. John Procyson, 305 Normandy Lane, Newport News, suggested ways to reduce the real estate tax rate to \$.93 cents: 1) stop the demolition of the Old Lee Hall Water Treatment Plant and Pumping Station, which saved \$4 million and equaled -.03 cents on the real estate tax rate.; 2) hold pay raises to 2%, which saved \$6 million and equaled -.04 cents on the real estate tax rate; 3) extend the hiring freeze for six months, which saved \$8 million and equaled -.06 cents on the real estate tax rate; 4) give no pay increases to employees earning more than \$80,000 per year, which saved \$3 million and equaled -.02 cents on the real estate tax rate. Those four items reduced the real estate tax rate by \$.15 cents, which brought the tax rate to \$.95 per \$100 of assessed value. Additional savings could be realized from reducing the average costs for Juvenile Detention detainees to less than \$70,000 per year, and extending the hiring freeze for a few more months. Mr. Procyson stated over the past nine months, he watched City Council struggle with budget issues, and indicated a tax rate of \$.93 per \$100 of assessed value was long overdue. City Council stated they had cut the budget; however, there was a 4% increase in spending. Citizens were experiencing higher gasoline and food prices. He inquired where City Council was, over the last five years, when the pension fund was short changed, so that City Center could rise on its back. Every \$3,000 cut from spending was one Newport News family that did not have to pay real estate tax. Mr. Procyson stated that every school system on the Peninsula was determined to have the very best teachers. The argument that Newport News had to pay more than anyone else was "smoke and mirrors." It allowed school systems to demand more money to keep teachers. He stated RETRO had worked with City Council in good faith and hoped City Council would treat the taxpayers the same way.

Ms. Donna Grubbs, 26 Claiborne Place, Newport News, President, Newport News Council of PTAs, representing the Council of PTA's 649 members, regarding remarks

about the addition to the School Administration building, stated, from her understanding, not one dime of the City or school funds went into the project. The addition was fully funded by State funds when they purchased the property, in front of the School Administration building, to widen Warwick Boulevard. The prior front entrance to the School Administration building created a safety issue when entering the building from the front of Warwick Boulevard, so the State proposed a side entrance. Ms. Grubbs noted the successes of NNPS for school year 2007 – 2008. She spoke in support of the NNPS FY 2009 budget, which included funding for a 4% salary increase for teachers and school staff. NNPS needed to be competitive to retain the best workforce available and Newport News youth deserved the best. An investment in the teaching staff would give Newport News a huge return on its investment by producing a highly skilled competent workforce in the years to come. On a personal note, she asked City Council to support Police Chief Fox and the Newport News Police Department and their request for 20 additional officers. It was necessary to increase the Police force to ensure safety, but to do so at the expense of teachers would only compound the problem. We need to invest in our youth today or pay the price later.

Ms. Cary Nunnally, 9 Hilton Terrace, Newport News, encouraged everyone to call their City Council representative to ask that they lower the real estate tax rate to \$.93 per \$100 of assessed value. She stated she loved Newport News and the amenities it offered, i.e. Historic Hilton Village and the historic West Avenue Library. She hoped City Council would not tear its historic sites down or cover them with fast food style entrances. She asked City Council to cease spending money, expanding or building new developments with tax dollars, and leave something of the old Newport News. Old buildings, along with the working class, did have value. Please take care of all the people who lived in Newport News, not just the ones who made big salaries or those who were politically connected. Teachers were leaving the City, not only for higher salaries, but because they could not afford to pay taxes in Newport News. It was hard to justify giving raises to City employees who made three times more than the average Newport News citizen. How could these employees be in touch with the people they were supposed to be working for if they were making \$100,000 to \$200,000 per year. Please remember the citizens that could be forced into foreclosure and decrease the burden of those paying oppressive real estate taxes. Please give the working class a chance to stay in the homes that they loved. Please do not make them slaves to tyranny. The City must return to an affordable tax rate of \$.93 per \$100 of assessed value.

Ms. Tivika Taswell-Richardson, 960 Hollymeade Circle, Newport News, 10<sup>th</sup> Grade English Teacher, Warwick High School, stated she was selected to be a part of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom Project at Warwick High School. She stated preparing today's youth to succeed in the digital economy required a new kind of teaching and learning. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom made a remarkable difference on how teachers taught and how students learned. Children had the opportunity to take more responsibility for their own learning. The 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom concept was using technology to teach and learn. She stated it was important that the City Council fully fund the NNPS FY 2009 budget, which supported the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Classroom.

Ms. Denise Banks, 260 Marcella Road, Hampton, Biology Teacher, Warwick High School, and member of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Team, reported the fastest growing occupations, between now and 2014, were concentrated in the health and technology sectors. She stated, by the year 2015, half of the world would be working in jobs that did not exist today. Educators had to understand where kids were going, by enhancing children's skills in computers and technology, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, collaboration, ethics and responsibility, and global awareness. NNPS had to promote technology use and move towards one-to-one computing. NNPS had to offer classes in programming, robotics, long-distance collaboration and cutting-edge science. Computer labs had to be staffed and kept open late and on weekends, especially in areas with limited technology access. NNPS had to make it their goal to create 100% student engagement in classrooms and implement the new kids teaching themselves with guidance concept. By implementing initiatives of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, student achievement would soar, an increase in secondary education and preparation of future employment would be evident and students as well as teachers would be powered up and prepared for the future.

Mr. Justin Roerink, 387 Stanton Road, Newport News, Career and Technical Education Teacher, Warwick High School, stated he had the ability to use technology in order to help students prepare for careers in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century job market. He stated his classes utilized computers, LCD projectors, Podcasts, Web Blogs, Microsoft Office 2007, and many other software programs in their everyday learning. It was imperative to ensure that all teachers and students had access to the most up-to-date software and equipment in the classroom. Today's students must be prepared for jobs, which would involve a high level of technology and communication skills. It was vital to place students in the best position to be able to compete and obtain 21<sup>st</sup> Century jobs, by allowing them access to technology in the classroom.

Mr. Stephen Kadar, 721 Daylight Court, Newport News, stated he fully understood the dynamics of funding in the City, whether it was for a capital, operational or community project. He asked City Council to keep the West Avenue Library opened. He understood closing the branch would only save \$200,000, which, essentially, was the salary for four librarians. It was interesting that the four librarians would be relocated to other libraries within the City, so he was not sure where the savings were. He felt \$200,000 was a small amount of funding in a large budget. He noted a recent consultant study done for the library system, which offered four scenarios that included expansions, additions and changes in library branches. Scenario four of the study suggested the closing of the West Avenue Library. Mr. Kadar inquired whether he should assume that if the West Avenue Library was closed meant City Council voted to go with scenario four of the consultant study. In the other three scenarios, the West Avenue Library was active. He was fully aware of the handicapped issues of the library, but what struck him, was that the closing of the branch and savings realized would not relieve any other problems in the library system, i.e. overcrowding at Grissom Library. As someone who used the library system, it seemed better to work toward a plan that improved the conditions at the West Avenue Library. He asked that City Council look at keeping the library open, rather than taking the short- term approach of closing the Library.

Ms. Uricka Harrison, 601 Collinwood Place, Newport News, representing the National Federation of the Blind, stated she supported keeping the Sub-regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped opened in Newport News, rather than transferring their service to Richmond. She voiced concern that Richmond's large service area would decrease the possibility of her receiving material. Ms. Harrison stated it was important that visually impaired residents continue to receive their books to be able to read. The future generation should be afforded the opportunity to receive books in a timely manner, as well as the opportunity to visit a library in the community to read. She feared those needing the resources most would be left out in the cold. She asked City Council to continue supporting the Sub-regional Library for the Blind because it was a free service.

Councilman Haskins moved closure of the public hearing; seconded by Councilman Scott.

Vote on Roll Call:

Ayes: Scott, Whitaker, Bateman, Frank, Haskins, McMillan

Nays: None

THERE BEING NO FURTHER BUSINESS,  
ON MOTION, COUNCIL ADJOURNED AT 9:39 P.M.

Jennifer D. Walker, CMC  
Chief Deputy City Clerk

Joe S. Frank  
Mayor  
Presiding Officer

A true copy, teste:

City Clerk