

Help us grow wisely and well . . . become an MBRA member!



Marshall Minute

APRIL 2021

AND COVERING FROM OCT 2020—
APRIL 2021 DUE TO COVID-19

Come to the MBRA's

APRIL 13th

COMMUNITY MEETING

See old friends & meet new ones!

Featured speaker

Ben Shoemaker, Exec. Director

Water Sanitation Authority,

Fauquier County

beginning at 7 pm at the

Marshall Community Center

4133 Rectortown Rd

Marshall, VA

Please wear a mask~Check our
Facebook and website for updated info
closer to the event!

~~~~~  
**SPRING EQUIPMENT SALE**  
**Fauquier Livestock Exchange**  
**Begins at 9am**

**Saturday, April 3rd**

7404 John Marshall Hwy

540-364-1566  
~~~~~

Stay tuned for our
Upcoming Events:

MBRA's Spring Sidewalk Stroll
May 1st on Main Street

May Showcase Mixer at
Bears Soft Serve!
Saturday, May 15th!

Join the MBRA! Your dues support our
newsletter, website, meetings, & more!

Visit MBRA's website:

www.MarshallVa.ORG

Sign up to receive the
Marshall Minute by email!

Send your request to:
mbraeditor@gmail.com

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HAPPY EASTER!



Help the Ruritans Help our Community
~donate clothing and small household
items for \$5 Yard Sale Sat. April 24, 9-1
8400 Salem Avenue, held inside!
ALL YOU CAN CARRY FOR ONLY \$5
Call Now to donate! 540-364-3400

EASTER SERVICES AT

The Anglican Church of
St. John the Baptist
You're Invited!

Rev. Jonathan Ostman

April 1 - Maundy Thursday, 6 pm

April 2 - Good Friday, 12-3 pm

(Three hour meditation)

April 2 - Good Friday Liturgy 6 pm

April 3 - Easter Vigil, 8 pm

(Holy Saturday)

April 4 - Easter Day Services

8 am and 10:30 am

See their website:

<http://st-johnthebaptist.org/>

More info, call (540) 364-2554

4107 Winchester Road in Marshall

Library is now open!
Turn the page for more—>

Please! DON'T NARROW MAIN STREET!

Preserve our Rural Life

THE most impactful project to hit Marshall is the Marshall Main Street (Streetscape) Improvement Project, for which the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors (BOS) awarded the contract in October 2020, in the midst of a Pandemic and in spite of strong ongoing opposition from hundreds of local citizens and at least 15 Main Street businesses! No Feasibility Study was ever done for this One-Block Project (1,500 linear feet), which does the unheard of: narrowing a primary State road!

Yet even in this Pandemic, the Fauquier County Board of Supervisors pushed through an OPTIONAL beautification project of \$6.9 million (we've been told the costs will likely go higher), indebting the citizens and businesses of Marshall with a 400% Special Tax rate increase for this highly controversial project that unnecessarily narrows our Main Street! We were initially told our current sidewalks were not ADA-compliant width, and that this expensive and complex project was necessary in order to have sidewalks that are ADA-compliant. We verified with VDOT that our current sidewalks are, in fact, the ADA-compliant width and that VDOT has held off on repairing and maintaining our sidewalks & curbs and any upgrading of our ADA-ramps because this Project has been pending for years. *Such work is already funded by our State tax dollars!*

The MBRA is the original grant applicant for this Project, and we don't want this now-regressive project to make our Main Street crowded nor hazardous. A major reason for forcing Marshall forward with this Project is, according to the County, all of the effort over the years (since 2008) that people have put into this Project, which has changed like a chameleon. People do not want this Project and there are better ways. When the County finds itself in a hole, we respectfully request that the County **stop digging!**

We would applaud such a wise decision.

To see more, please turn the page —>

Continued from Page 1:

So where do we go from here, now that the BOS has awarded the contract? When life gives you lemons, make lemonade!

The MBRA is continuing to fulfill its mission and we are looking out for you! The MBRA asks you to contact us with any concerns or impacts from the Project, or other issues. You may text or call 540-364-3400 to reach us or email us at MBRAeditor@gmail.com.

Contrary to what you may have heard, the stormwater management work on Frost Street is independent from the Main Street Project and would occur with or without the Main Street Project.

Envision a Marshall Main Street that stays true to itself and its community without added cost to us! Don't give up; join us!

www.ShapingMarshall.com

**There is only ONE MARSHALL
Just say: STOP the Project
And Save Marshall!
Preserve our Rural Life**

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With skyrocketing materials costs and with the expense already built in to this wasteful Main Street Improvement Project, this planned Project is far from over. The MBRA is continuing to monitor the activity for the Main Street Project

The MBRA cares for our small businesses, senior citizens, and others facing the disruption and expense of the County's pending Main Street Project, for however long the Project may be allowed to proceed. That's why we're introducing a system to help:

Coming Soon . . .

What is SOS?

The MBRA is helping to promote a newly formed local effort, **SOS**, to assist our Main Street shops in the event the Main Street Project disrupts their business.

The Plan:

- *Caring Customers who wish to pledge their support choose one or more businesses within Project area
- *Customers pledge to patronize that business during Project construction, for a minimum amount each month or week, either by delivery or inside.
- *Customers are flexible to purchase, weekly or monthly, either gift certificates *OR* to support their chosen business by selecting from whatever their business has available at that time.

Let's join together to support our hometown businesses in a way that they can remain independent, without having to rely on loans or grants to get through this challenging time.

SAVE OUR SHOPS

Wait for it, and look for more info when SOS begins!

Our Library is Now Open!

Fauquier's John Marshall branch,
Public Library Hours:

Mon-Wed: 10 am-6 pm

Thurs-Fri: 10 am-5 pm

Saturday: 10 am-2pm

4133 Rectortown Road, Marshall

Phone: 540-422-8500

Fauquierlibrary.org

The Silver Tones Swing Band

will be at the Marshall Ruritan Club on Saturday, April 17th from 7-10 pm

This is their first event at the Ruritan Club and it's sold out, however, there is a wait list in the event any ticket holders cancel. Email: Silver.Tones@yahoo.com

For a walk, a lunch, or your next event

Northern Fauquier Community Park

The 88-acre park features picnic shelters, amphitheater, small meeting room, athletic fields, playgrounds, 1.75 mile paved walking trail, indoor restrooms and fishing pond.
4155 Monroe Parkway, Marshall, VA
Phone: 540-422-8570

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8349 W. Main Street in Marshall**



Look for past Community Meeting Notes in upcoming editions of the Marshall Minute! See our website for monthly meeting videos: www.MarshallVa.ORG

March 9, 2021 Meeting Notes

Mary Wilkerson, President, opened the meeting at 7:06pm. She welcomed everyone and shared that we are so excited to have y'all here for our March Community Meeting featuring our 1st speaker Reverend Jonathan Ostman of the Anglican Church of Saint John the Baptist, and then Fauquier County School Superintendent Dr. David Jeck.

Mary spoke about the MBRA's monthly newsletter, the **Marshall Minute**. We usually have about 10 newsletter editions a year (*except last year due to Covid*). Our next Marshall Minute will be coming out soon!

MBRA Secretary Mary-Elizabeth Wilkerson announced the list of Fauquier County Budget work sessions and hearings in 2021 (*they will also be streamed online at www.fauquiercounty.gov*):

- ~ **3/2, Tuesday, 2:00pm** Work Session
- ~ **3/9 Tuesday, 2:00pm** Work Session
- ~ **3/11 Thursday, 11:00a - 5:00p** Monthly BOS Work Sessions
- ~ **3/11 Thursday, 6:30pm** Monthly Board of Supervisors meeting and Public Hearings
- ~ **3/16 Tuesday, 2:00pm** Work Session
- ~ **3/16 Tuesday, 7:00pm** Public Hearing on County Tax Rates, Budget, etc., *located at Fauquier High School, 705 Waterloo Road, Warrenton, VA 20186*
- ~ **3/23 Tuesday, 4:00pm** Mark Up/ Mark Down final budget Work Session
- ~ **3/25 Thursday, 4:00pm** Adoption & Appropriation of budget, tax rates, Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

**Unless otherwise noted, above meetings occur at the Warren Green Building, 10 Hotel St, Warrenton.*

Our first speaker of the night was **Reverend Jonathan Ostman of the Anglican Church of St. John the Baptist** right at the corner of Winchester Road and Main Street. He thanked the MBRA for asking him here. He shared that Holy Week is the holiest time of the Christian year and this year it begins on the last Sunday of March, the 28th, which is Palm Sunday. Services for Palm Sunday are 8am, 10:30am. Palms will be blessed and available. On Holy Thursday, Good Friday, and Holy Saturday constitute these three days which are the holiest time of Holy Week. On Holy Thursday, service is at 6:00; Good Friday we have 3 hours of reflection from 12:00 noon until 3:00pm, and then Good Friday liturgy at 6:00 pm. Then Holy Saturday Easter Vigil which is quite an elaborate service that really speaks to the whole history of redemption and salvation, and begins at 8:00pm with a fire outside and then the blessing of the Easter Paschal candle and readings from scripture. Finally, the first mass of Easter at about 9:00/9:30am. That is the full Holy Week. On Easter Sunday, the usual services are at 8:00am and 10:30am.

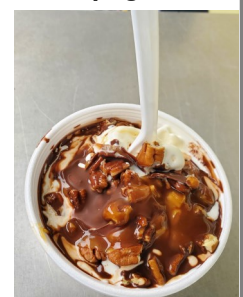
Rev. Ostman also shared that they have been working on the copula, the little dome on top which had to be completely restored since they had water leaking for years. That work will be finished hopefully by this week and then once the exterior work is finished, the interior work will be completed just in time for Easter. They will also be working on the church entryway! St. John the Baptist is located at **4107 Winchester Rd, Marshall** Also reach them at **540-364-2554** or see www.st-johnthebaptist.org



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Weekends, 12-7pm
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***Summer hours will be later**
Photo credits, The Marshall Magazine



MBRA President Mary Wilkerson thanked **School Superintendent Dr. Jeck** and **School Board member Duke Bland** for coming tonight. She introduced our second featured speaker of the evening, **Dr. David Jeck, Fauquier County Public Schools Superintendent**. He thanked the MBRA and shared that this is his 8th time speaking to the MBRA. Dr. Jeck has been in Fauquier for 8 years and this is his 13th year overall as a Superintendent in the state of Virginia. Recently, Dr. Jeck was informed by the Chairman of Virginia Association of School Superintendents (VASS) that he is one of the top 10 tenured Superintendents out of all of Virginia's 133 school districts, which was a shocker to him because he has always considered himself young and energetic.

This last year has been the most challenging professional year of his life. It has been a really difficult 12 months for a lot of reasons.

Right now, the schools are hybrid, meaning that half of the time students are getting virtual instruction and the other half of students are getting face-to-face instruction, and then they flip for the other days. On Wednesdays, they receive asynchronous instruction. So, all students are still receiving instruction on Wednesday, it is just not face-to-face.

Dr. Jeck shared the plan moving forward:

- 3/16** all elementary kids will be back to school full time, 4 days a week.
- 4/6** all middle school and high school students will return full time, 4 days a week.

continued on next page —>

March 9, Meeting Notes, continued

Asynchronous instruction will remain on Wednesdays. Dr. Jeck is very proud to say that Fauquier County was one of the very first to announce this type of plan.

Dr. Jeck explained that Senate Bill 1303 was recently passed by the Virginia General Assembly and is before the Governor now for his signature. Bill 1303 stipulates that all kids will return to school five days a week, 990 hours for the entire school year, face-to-face with the teacher, etc. What that means for everyone is that all kids have the opportunity to come back in the Fall full time.

According to the Virginia Dept. of Education, they are still required to provide a virtual option for students, but Dr. Jeck suspects that that group is going to be relatively small because as soon as Fauquier announced the upcoming change in the middle of March, lots of students started to re-enroll who had unenrolled for a variety of reasons. This is really good news for them; the sooner they get the kids back, the better.

Dr. Jeck is very proud to say that Fauquier is one of the very first school divisions to make that decision in our region. He is very proud of that, and it is due mainly to our schools doing an excellent job sticking to the mitigations as provided by the Virginia Dept. of Health. They have done a really good job and are down to a grand total of 10 positive cases amongst roughly 10,000 students and 2,000 staff members! That is outstanding and it is because they are following the mitigation standards. *(The audience applauded).*

Dr. Jeck said they are very appreciative of our staff and our students for making that happen because when they began this conversation about kids wearing masks, they were told that kids will not wear them and they would not

be able to get them to wear masks. But there has been no problem with kids wearing masks, as reported to him. The only issues that have come up are when the kids' parents have instructed them not to wear masks, but that has all been resolved. It has all been a very cooperative process that has been very positive.

Dr. Jeck said they are excited about providing two summer sessions for learning loss. Those two summer sessions will begin June 7th. They are paid for by the CARES Act grant money, which requires:

- the school system to assess students and figure out where and when the learning loss has occurred, and
- the students who have experienced the most significant learning loss will attend these free "Summer Academy" sessions.

He has been really specific with our principals and senior staff that they cannot lead people to believe that those two summer sessions are going to fix this problem, because they will not. There are rural issues, issues with kids who have fallen very far behind. This is not a situation where the problem hopefully gets solved in a couple of years. We need to deal with the problem now.

The conventional wisdom is, for the student who gets a really poor teacher for a year, that it takes three years for that student to get caught back up—assuming they have really good teachers subsequently.

It takes time, and Dr. Jeck said they aren't foolish enough to think that they are going to fix this problem during the summer. Hence their aggressive stance as far as getting kids back in school as soon as they can.

That's the plan moving forward. Hopefully things will be 'back to normal' in the Fall. He said they just cherish right now those opportunities to get back to normalcy and to experience normal things.

Last week they had the State school superintendent tour Fauquier High School and it was great because it felt normal. School Board member Duke Bland was also on the tour. It felt like this is what school people do -- hang out with kids, communicate, look at what is going on in classrooms -- and that really has not been happening much over the past 12 or so months. So, they are excited.

Budget: Not a lot to report. They are flat funded next fiscal year from the County. The County informed them prior to November that they were going to be flat-funded. Dr. Jeck said that FCPS appreciates being informed early by the County so they can plan accordingly; they normally don't know until February or sometimes March.

Schools are funded 3 ways: **1)** state, **2)** local, and **3)** federal. Local is the highest funding source in Fauquier's case; state funding is the second highest percentage; federal provides the lowest percentage.

Schools receive funding based on Local Composite Index (L.C.I.), how much a locality can pay. Last year, FCPS had a very disappointing experience. They were anticipating a lot more state money and the County coming through with significantly more dollars so that FCPS could really make an impact in terms of salaries and be more competitive with our neighbors to the north, and then COVID hit and it was gone just like that. The County flat-funded and the state pulled back. They had anticipated getting a lot more money from the state; this was going to be their big chance to work things out.

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March 9 Meeting Notes, continued

State funding is based on enrollment of 10,100 students going into next year. FCPS is typically at 10,800 students, so Fauquier schools have lost 700 students between last year and this year, thereby losing a lot of money.

The state instituted a “holds harmless” formula for this year where they provided money for every school division to help them out because all divisions lost money. But the County does not know what will happen next year and how many kids will enroll.

There are a lot of unknowns, it is extremely frustrating. The County Board of Supervisors indicated to them that for this next year the County will flat-fund the schools again. Assessments are coming up and the revenues coming up are unknown, so it’s a waiting game.

Calculating the current proposed budget given to the School Board after the non-negotiables of behavior specialists, special ed teaching positions, buses, fuel and insurance increases, puts FCPS \$800,000 in the hole going into next year, which is not terrible. It could have been a lot worse.

A new calculator tool is supposed to be coming out today from the State which will tell how much state funding is going to be.

On Thursday, 3/11/2021, the Board of Supervisors and the School Board will meet and discuss:

1) Next phase of the middle school projects: Cedar Lee Middle School renovation and beginning the Taylor Middle School expansion. They want to hurry because using state money to build schools is very cheap right now. Bond application will go out in November but they will start before then, with the County putting up the money and then paying themselves back in November with the grant money.

2) County Administrator Paul McCulla proposed a 2.5 percent increase for all County employees, including school staff. Every point increase equals about \$1 million for school staff, which means \$2.5 million for the schools, which would be fantastic because the State is offering a 2.5% match raise. This would help because we are losing teachers and have a teacher shortage here.

Unfortunately, Fairfax, Prince William, and Loudoun Counties gobble up teacher graduates very quickly which makes it difficult for Fauquier County. But what Fauquier County schools offer that you do not get in those other counties are:

- smaller schools & class sizes,
- much more personalized approach to instruction & teaching,
- a lot more autonomy; Fauquier is not a top-down organization. Rather very circular in the way we run our schools. We like to feel that everyone’s voice is heard. Other school districts are very different.

Dr. Jeck said it was a real gut punch when the pandemic hit last year. They had thought “This is the year” when they would get everything brought up -- teacher compression scale, etc. But Dr. Jeck said they will get through this. Everyone is going through a hard time, but he is very proud of Fauquier. We have very miniscule numbers.

Q&A followed:

Q: Do you know if we may have lost any students to suicide?

A: No, Dr. Jeck is not aware of any. He said that when all the students and teachers come back, they are going to deal with mental health issues. They are not going to be Pollyanna about it. Fortunately, about half of our teachers are trained in youth mental health first aid.

Q: Have any students been lost to COVID?

A: No, we are very lucky.

Q: You mentioned tonight that FCPS lost 700 students in terms of enrollment numbers; was that due to COVID-related things?

A: Yes. Dr. Jeck explained that when they make the budget they do so based on the previous year’s enrollment numbers. This year’s numbers were down by about 700. Lots of students enrolled in “K12” online schooling, and some students were homeschooled.

Q: Deep Equity curriculum: is Fauquier using that? If so, how much is it costing us?

A: No, Deep Equity is for teachers and is voluntary. There are many pieces of the Deep Equity training and just one piece was fixated upon on Tucker Carlson’s show. One of our teachers used to work for Fox News, that was his line of communication. Dr. Jeck explained that they actually wrote to Tucker Carlson after that. In terms of the cost of curriculum, they gave each school a 3-ring binder guide that the teachers could reference if they wanted to. Dr. Jeck figures the binders are probably around \$1,000.

Dr. Jeck also shared that Fauquier County has a 95/96% graduation rate for African American students and students with disabilities. The conversation for ensuring equity among all students started in earnest about five years ago in Fauquier. People have politicized it but it’s really not political.

School Board member Duke

Bland added that this curriculum gives teachers the tools to identify what specifically a child needs in order to be successful. You can’t just get in front of a class and teach everybody the same way when you can reach out and identify the students who need something else to help them, and that is what this tool does. It is a guide to show teachers what to do, how to do it, when to do it, and to motivate them to get these folks involved and get them whatever they need to make them successful.

Concluded on next page----->

March 9 Meeting Notes concluded:

Dr. Jeck further explained that this is another piece that gets lost a lot: it is not just kids who are of color or who are impoverished, it is also kids who are in the top. We need to make sure that they also get what they need. Thus, Fauquier provides more dual enrollment opportunities, etc. It is for every kid: raising the bar for what every student based on what that student needs. Dr. Jeck added that 93% of Fauquier teachers are white and one-third of our students are students of color, and teachers should understand where our kids are coming from.

Dr. Jeck shared that he himself hated school with a passion as a kid because of his own learning disabilities, and he was a special education student. He got into athletics and was fortunate enough to have gone to a high school that had equity and provided him with what he needed. He wants to ensure that our schools have equity for students, too.

Q: With all these new Van Metre homes coming to Marshall, any plans for new schools?

A: That's a good question. Believe it or not, no. They have studied it for years, and there is a formula for determining such needs. It involves multiplying the number of new rooftops coming, then dividing that number by elementary, middle school, and high school. They have run all the numbers and a new school is not actually needed. For example, Marshall Middle School is at about 76% enrollment, so there is plenty of room there. Dr. Jeck elaborated that if you can move kids around and keep schools balanced rather than build new schools, they are going to do it.

Q: Are these summer sessions that make up for lost education mandatory?

A: The Code of Virginia says you cannot require summer school, but the State is also saying they're not

calling it "summer school," they're calling it "Extended Learning Time" or "summer academies." So that's how they're kind of getting around that, because we need these kids who are falling back to be in school. These are two three-week sessions of "summer academies."

Q: These summer sessions are funded through the CARES program, but who funds the CARES program?

A: The Feds.

Q: Will all subjects be covered or just specific subjects?

A: Reading and math will be covered.

Q: Do they use a special curriculum?

A: It is a standard Board-approved curriculum.

Q: Lots of businesses are shrinking their brick & mortar; are the schools looking into that, as well?

A: Yes, we are working on Virtual Academies; however, nothing will ever replace face-to-face.

Q: Graduation rates in Fauquier County?

A: Graduation rates here have been steadily increasing over the past 8 years. Fauquier has the second-highest special education graduation rate in the state.

Dr. Jeck attributes all of this to:

1. We have really improved the quality of school principals,
2. We have a commitment to providing equity for all; no more Darwinian approach, and
3. The Fauquier School Board has been so supportive of any innovation and shaking up the status quo.

Other county school boards will have their meetings until 1:30 am or even 2:00 am, and their schools are very micromanaging; it is top-down by those school boards. Dr. Jeck explained that when you take that element out and let great school administrators run their

schools, you have great results like Fauquier has. Dr. Jeck wants people to take risks & challenges, and he spoke about the history of the American school system.

School Board member Duke Bland added that Fauquier's Career & Technical Education (CTE) program is second to none. We have won national awards, not just local awards. Duke also just learned that there is interest in carpentry, so FCPS is going to pursue that.

Dr. Jeck spoke to the benefit of these CTE fields and shared the statistic that half of the kids who go to college do not graduate. There is a lot of value in CTE programs.

Q: Do you think the rural nature of our County helps with mental health issues that stem from the shutdown and having to stay at home?

A: In Dr. Jeck's opinion, our kids are special. They are really well adjusted and are working every week. Fauquier kids are resilient, hardworking, and respectful. For example, over the last 8 years only 5 or fewer students have been expelled. **Duke Bland** spoke about intervention programs that the County has before it gets to that point. Dr. Jeck explained that one has to come in and just absolutely tank it in order to get to the point of being expelled.

Q&A finished. Mary Wilkerson, MBRA President, thanked Dr. Jeck and Duke Bland for speaking, and added that Fauquier teachers likely appreciate the autonomy they have here, without the micromanaging that is found in other school districts.

Door Prize Raffle followed, in which every attendee won a prize!

The meeting closed with the Pledge of Allegiance at 8:15pm.

Minutes by Mary-Elizabeth Wilkerson, Secretary.



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