

Regular Meeting, Wednesday, April 23, 2025, 7:00 PM Government Center Main Board Room

1. **ROLE CALL:**

Gerald Garber
Butch Wells
Jeffrey Slaven
Michael Shull
Carolyn Bragg
Scott Seaton
Timothy K. Fitzgerald County Administrator
Jennifer M. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator
Doug Wolfe, Director of Community Development
Nicole Prive, Interim County Attorney
Angie Michael, Executive Assistant

Pam Carter

ABSENT:

VIRGINIA: At an adjourned meeting of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors held on Wednesday, April 23, 2025, at 7:00 PM at the Government Center Main Board Room, and in the 249th year of the Commonwealth...

Chairman Garber welcomed those present at the meeting.

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The following students from Buffalo Gap Middle School FFA led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance:

Lindsay Lyle is the chapter FFA President. She plans to attend college and study to be a Vet Tech.

Rachel Baber is the chapter Sentinel. She plans to study Neonatal Nursing.

Bryson Riley is the chapter Reporter. He plans to farm after high school.

Kaiden Whetzel is in 6th grade and would like to be an FFA Officer.

Garrett Begoon is the chapter Treasurer.

Ethan Smith plans to take over the family farm after high school.

Davin Smith plans to breed chickens after high school.

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Gerald Garber, Middle River District, delivered the invocation.

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PUBLIC HEARINGS:

2. Rezoning Request-H2 Holdings, LLC

- a. Consider a request to rezone from General Agriculture to General Business with proffers approximately 33.11 acres (TMP 077 30D) owned by H2 Holdings LLC. The Planning Commission recommends approval.

This being the date and time advertised to consider a request to rezone from General Agriculture to General Business with proffers approximately 33.11 acres (TMP 077 30D) owned by H2 Holdings, LLC. The Planning Commission recommends approval. Julia Hensley, Planner II, stated that the property is located at 494 Three Notched Highway off Route 250 near Afton Mountain in the Wayne District. The property is located in a Rural Conservation Area of the Comprehensive Plan and is planned for Agriculture. The applicant intends to renovate an existing structure and construct additional standalone lodging units in a clustered layout, while also enhancing outdoor and natural amenities. The property is currently being used for overnight accommodations and passive recreation. This rezoning would bring the property into compliance with the current zoning ordinance. The applicant has proffered to limit the permitted business uses to standard hospitality uses, such as eating and drinking establishments, overnight accommodations, retail sales and services, active and passive recreational facilities and meeting places; the total number of additional units shall not exceed fifty and the northern entranceway to the property will be permanently closed. On March 28, 2025, staff received a call from the Shenandoah National Park indicating that there was an easement on the property that prohibited the erection of any other additional structures. Staff evaluated it and found the deed of easement that dedicated five hundred feet from the center line of the Blue Ridge Parkway/Skyline Drive as a scenic easement. Based on this finding and the fact that the applicant has shown a master plan that shows that no development will occur within the scenic easement, staff has recommended to the applicant to move forward with the rezoning process while the national park finishes their due diligence. Staff recommends that the draft master plan is in line with the type of business development that is desired in Rural Conservation Areas. This request, when combined with the proposed proffers, is also congruent with the recreational business future land use category, which planning staff

will be recommending for the Afton Mountain area in the Comprehensive Plan and Future Lane Use Map update.

Chase Hoover with H2 Holdings and the owner of the property stated that this plan is intended to bring more tourism to the area.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

Charles Poole is the owner of the adjacent property at 5603 Notch Mountain Highway. He spoke against the rezoning to General Business, however, supports the idea of a Special Use Permit. It is important that the scenic view be preserved.

There being no other speakers, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

Dr. Seaton stated that a site plan approval was needed. This is in line to what has been looked at on Afton Mountain.

Dr. Seaton moved, seconded by Mr. Wells, that the Board approve the rezoning of General Agriculture to General Business with the proffers of the 33.11 acres owned by H2 Holdings, LLC.

Mr. Slaven asked if this project could fall under a Special Use Permit.

Ms. Hensley stated that the option was explored. It was decided that a rezoning with strict proffers was a better fit for this project.

Mr. Slaven is concerned with the fact that there is no zoning like this along the parkway.

Ms. Hensley stated that there are none in Augusta County, but could not speak for the entire parkway.

Ed Blackwell, Engineer, stated that the limiting factor for development on the property is septic.

Ms. Bragg clarified that Afton Mountain is zoned General Business.

Mr. Shull asked the applicants if there was a timeline for the project. If it would be possible to hold this decision for a couple of weeks.

Mr. Hoover stated that with a development there is always a timeline and would like to get started with the project as soon as possible.

Mr. Shull moved to postpone the decision to allow for further review until the next regular meeting.

Dr. Seaton is uncertain of the purpose for the delay and how more information would effect the decision for Augusta County.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Shull,
 Nays: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Bragg, and Seaton
 Absent: Carter

Motion failed.

The Board voted on the original motion by Dr. Seaton to approve the rezoning.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Bragg, Shull, and Seaton
 Nays: None
 Absent: Carter

Motion carried.

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3. **Revised Budget for 2024-2025**

- a. Received public input on the revised budget for 2024-2025.

PUBLIC HEARINGS – DIRECTOR OF FINANCE PRESENTATION

Misty Cook, Director of Finance, announced that there would be three public hearings. One for the revised FY25 budget, the second for the proposed tax rate for 2025 and the third is for the proposed FY2026 budget. Ms. Cook gave a PowerPoint presentation with the following highlights.

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This being the date and time advertised to receive public input on the revised budget for FY2024-2025.

Ms. Cook stated that The FY25 revised budget as advertised totals \$327,502,963. The revised FY25 advertised budget has adjustments for expenditures that materialized during the budget year. Adjustments have been made due to increases in the cost of goods and services that were higher than originally projected. Additional adjustments have been made due to grants being awarded mid budget year (ex. COSSAP grant, JAG grant). Lastly some adjustments have been made to conserve escrows for CSA and dependent care.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no speakers, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

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4. Proposed Tax Rates for 2025

- a. Receive public input on the real and personal property tax rates for 2025.

Real Estate:	Current:
\$0.52 Proposed: \$0.52	
Personal Property-auto,motorcycle,campers	
boats,boat trailers,horse trailers	
airplane trailers:	Current:
\$2.60 Proposed: \$2.60	
Personal Property-business,large trucks and	
trailers, machinery and tools:	Current:
\$2.00 Proposed: \$2.00	

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The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no speakers, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

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This being the date and time advertised to receive public input on the proposed tax rates for 2025.

Ms. Cook stated that this is a public hearing on the proposed tax rates for calendar year 2025. There are no changes to the rates when compared to 2024. The current rate is \$0.52/per \$100 for real estate. The personal property rate is \$2.60/ per \$100 for

individuals (vehicles, campers, boats, trailers, etc.) and \$2.00/ per \$100 personal property rate for businesses (large trucks and trailers).
It is important to note that the advertised rate is the highest this board can set in 2025.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

Tracy Pyles stated that the personal property taxes are too high. The rate should be cut in half.

There being no other speakers, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

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5. **Proposed Budget for 2025-2026**

- a. Receive public input on the proposed budget for 2025-2026.

This being the date and time advertised to receive public input on the proposed budget for FY2025-2026.

Ms. Cook gave a brief overview of the budget process and the advertised budget. The Code of Virginia (section 15.2503-15.2507) notes the guidelines which localities are to follow for preparing a budget.

- Above information found in Code of Virginia, Section 15.2-2500 to 2507.
- County required to approve budget before July 1.
- 15.2-2500, fiscal year July 1-June 30
- 15.2-2503 April 1 deadline to present budget to the Board of Supervisors- Our meeting was held March 31,2025
- 15.2-2506 Budget ad in paper minimum of 7 days before hearing- Ad appeared in the News Leader on April 14, 2025_
- 15.2-2506 Budget hearing minimum of 7 days before budget approval-Hearing held 4/23/2025, approval scheduled for 5/14/2025.
- 5.2-2502 State agencies report info to localities within 15 days after General Assembly completed

The budget is a working document that is affected by many components. Work on the budget begins in December. Departments and Constitutional Officers, Schools and Regional entities draft a budget; Finance and County Administration compile a balanced budget within current projected revenue streams and the Board of Supervisors reviews and decides what to advertise.

At the public hearing, the public input is shared with the Board of Supervisors and taken into consideration before approving the budget and setting a tax rate. The budget is scheduled to be approved Wednesday, May 14, 2025.

Page two of the handout notes the breakdown of the work session revisions. The work

session revisions to the recommended budget included increasing the cigarette tax from \$0.30/per pack to \$0.40, this will increase revenues by an estimated \$200,000. There will be a separate public hearing on this tax. The rates for real estate, and all personal property rates were advertised at the same rates as 2024. The current rates are \$0.52/per \$100 for Real Estate, Personal Property rates are \$2.60 for personal property and \$2.00 for business personal property. Changes to expenditures at the work session included increasing funding for the Valley Children's Advocacy Center from \$20,000 to \$50,000 and increasing funding for volunteer training from \$100,000 to \$150,000. The board also increased the school's debt service limit from \$7.2 million to \$9.2 million. The previous \$7.2 million allocation had been in place since the early 2000's and was no longer adequate to move the school's capital funding plan forward. This increase for the schools would come from the increased cigarette tax revenue but the majority of the funding will come from reducing the County capital transfer for County projects. Total school allocation is \$64.9 million; \$53.9 million of this is for school operating; \$1,695,869 is for buses and will go to school capital. The remaining \$9.2 million is for debt service. This is an increase of 8% compared to the FY25 figures. The formula funding based on growth calculation.

Budget Advertisement Summary:

Total revenue in the Advertised FY26 Budget: \$279,683,223

Property Taxes	\$ 93,801,886
Local Revenue	\$ 59,268,636
State Revenue	\$111,256,679
Federal Rev.	\$ 15,356,022

Expenditures for the Advertised FY26 Budget: \$311,374,130

General Govt	\$ 7,028,007
Judicial	\$ 4,179,851
Public Safety	\$ 43,002,337
Public Works	\$ 6,189,915
Health & Welfare	\$ 25,203,312
Cultural	\$ 3,436,588
Community Dev.	\$ 2,970,551
Contributions & Non-Departmental	\$ 2,389,243
Education	\$164,141,867
School Capital Improv.	\$ 2,297,170
Debt Service	\$ 15,277,469
Capital Improvements	\$ 35,257,821

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

Kathleen Cavender spoke in support of fully funding the Augusta County Library budget for the next fiscal year and future planning for positive growth.

Rebecca Simmons, 314 Mountain Run Road, Churchville and the Executive Director of Valley Children's Advocacy Center, appreciates the support from the Board of Supervisors in the past. She requests that the Board increase their budget support from \$20,000.00 to \$50,000.00.

Brett Hayes, 1889 Sangers Lane, Staunton, spoke in support of the \$50,000.00 for Valley Children's Advocacy Center.

Rebecca Lamb, 3029 Stuarts Draft Hwy, Stuarts Draft is the South River Representative on the Library Board, thanked the Board for continuing to support the library through the budget.

Lou Gage, 367 Forest Springs, Stuarts Draft is the Stuarts Draft Ruritan Club President. He requests that the Board support a general proposal to build pickle ball courts in the Stuarts Draft community.

Tracy Pyles, Churchville, pointed out what he felt were issues with the budget.

Ronald Johnson spoke in support of the pickle ball courts in Stuarts Draft.

John White spoke in support of the pickle ball courts in Stuarts Draft.

There being no other speakers, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

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6. **Cigarette Tax**

- a. Consider an ordinance that would increase the excise tax on the sale of cigarettes equivalent from \$.30 to \$.40 on each package containing twenty-five or fewer cigarettes to be effective July 1, 2025.

This being the date and time advertised to receive public input on an ordinance that would increase the excise tax on the sale of cigarettes equivalent from \$.30 to \$.40 on each package containing twenty-five or fewer cigarettes to be effective July 1, 2025.

Jennifer Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator, stated that this public hearing is for a change in the cigarette tax. This was a consideration made by the Board at the Budget Worksession on March 31, 2025.

The Chairman opened the public hearing.

There being no speakers, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

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****(END OF PUBLIC HEARINGS)****

7. Fire-Rescue Fund Grant

- a. Consider Fire-Rescue Fund Grant Committee recommendations.

The Board considered the Fire-Rescue Fund Grant Committee recommendations.

Greg Schacht, Fire Chief, stated that the Fire-Rescue Fund Grant Committee reviewed five applications during the March 2025 round of grant requests totaling \$65,969.47 and recommends approving \$49,290.59 in requests.

Augusta County	SOS Triage Tags County-wide	\$
2,275.00		
Churchville Volunteer Fire & Rescue	Ropes, hoses, and nozzles	\$18,136.60
Mt. Solon Volunteer Fire & Rescue	Glidescope Go 2 laryngoscopes	\$ 8,131.00
Weyers Cave Vol. Fire Company	Twelve Seek FirePro 300 situational awareness cameras	\$
6,558.00		
Wilson Volunteer Fire Company	Eight nozzles, tips, two backpack blowers, one blitzfire combo package	
	One low profile NT	
\$14,189.99		

Mr. Shull moved, seconded by Ms. Bragg, that the Board approve the committee's recommendations.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Bragg, Shull, and Seaton
 Nays: None
 Absent: Carter

Motion carried.

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8. ECC Dispatch Contract

- a. Consider the ECC Dispatch Contract.

The Board considered the ECC Dispatch Contract.

Ms. Whetzel stated that currently there are nine released dispatchers available, which is down from the nineteen approved positions. Ideal shift staffing includes three dispatchers. Current shift staffing is two dispatchers and one power shift. There have

- \$55.00 per hour per dispatcher
- \$10,000.00 startup fee
- Includes housing stipend of \$2,200 per month per dispatcher

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Bragg, Shull, and Seaton
 Nays: None
 Absent: Carter

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Vote was as follows: Yeas: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Bragg, Shull, and Seaton
 Nays: None
 Absent: Carter

Motion carried.

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10. **Garbage Removal-Celebrity Lane, Fishersville**

- a. Consider removal of garbage -Augusta County Code Section 15-21.

The Board considered removal of garbage-Augusta County Code Section 15-21.

Doug Wolfe, Director of Community Development, stated that this is a request that the Board deem it necessary to have its own agents or employees remove all trash, garbage, refuse, litter, and other substances which might endanger the health or safety of other residents of the County from 22 Celebrity Lane in Fishersville. The cost or expenses thereof shall be chargeable to and paid by the owner of the property according to State and County code. The County has received complaints on this property for some time and has been working with the landowner on the issue since July 2024. The County has filed a case in Augusta County Circuit Court seeking the Court's permission to abate as well as an injunction to enjoin continuing violations.

However, in order to provide some relief for adjacent residents, staff is asking for Board's consideration ahead of the pending legal action.

Dr. Seaton moved, seconded by Mr. Wells, that the Board approve removing garbage from the property on Celebrity Lane in Fishersville.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Garber, Wells, Bragg, Shull, and Seaton
 Nays: None
 Absent: Carter and Slaven

Motion carried.

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11. **Consent Agenda**

- a. Consider minutes from the following meetings:

- Regular Meeting, Wednesday, January 22, 2025
- Special Meeting, Budget Briefing, Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Mr. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Shull, that the Board approve the consent agenda as follows:

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MINUTES:

Consider minutes from the following meetings:

- Regular Meeting, January 22, 2025
- Special Meeting, Budget Briefing, Wednesday, February 26, 2025

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Bragg, Shull, and Seaton
 Nays: None
 Absent: Carter

Motion carried.

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(END OF CONSENT AGENDA)

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****(END OF CONSENT AGENDA)****

12. Matters to Be Presented by the Public

NONE

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13. Matters to Be Presented by Staff

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that a funding request has been received from Buffalo Gap High School for Bermuda grass on the football field.

Mr. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Slaven, that the Board approve an infrastructure funding request for Buffalo Gap High School football field improvements in the amount of \$19,205.00.

Funding Source: Pastures Parks & Recreation Infrastructure
\$9,602.50
 Beverley Manor Parks & Recreation Infrastructure
\$9,602.50

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Bragg, Shull, and Seaton
 Nays: None
 Absent: Carter

Motion carried.

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14. **Matters to Be Presented by the Board**

Dr. Seaton asked for an update on the Bunny Lu Ordinance amendment.

Nicole Price, Interim County Attorney, stated that they are currently reviewing it.

Mr. Shull asked for an update on the squad truck that has been ordered.

Chief Schacht stated that it was on target to be delivered in August.

15. **Adjournment**

Dr. Seaton moved, seconded by Ms. Bragg, that the Board adjourn the meeting.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Bragg, Shull, and Seaton
 Nays: None
 Absent: Carter

Motion carried.

Minutes approved by the Board on Wednesday, May 28, 2025. The signed minutes can be reviewed in the County Administrator's Office.

Chairman

County Administrator