Regular Meeting, Wednesday, June 11, 2025, 7:00 PM Government Center Main Board Room

1. **ROLE CALL:**

Gerald Garber
Butch Wells
Jeffrey Slaven
Pam Carter
Michael Shull
Carolyn Bragg (VIA ZOOM)
Timothy K. Fitzgerald County Administrator
Jennifer M. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator
James Benkahla, County Attorney
Angie Michael, Executive Assistant

Scott Seaton

ABSENT:

VIRGINIA: At an adjourned meeting of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors held on Wednesday, June 11, 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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Larry Howdyshell, former Board of Supervisor, led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Pam Carter, Pastures District, delivered the invocation.

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Mr. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Slaven, that the Board allow Ms. Bragg to join the meeting via Zoom.

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

Motion carried.

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2. **Churchville Hub Station**

The Board considered a contract with Lineage Architects in the amount of $52,640.00 for the Churchville Volunteer Fire and Rescue Feasibility Study.

Funding Source:	Pastures Infrastructure	$13,160.00
	North River Infrastructure	$13,160.00
	Beverley Manor Infrastructure	$13,160.00
	South River Infrastructure	$13,160.00

Timothy Fitzgerald, County Administrator, stated that Lineage Architects is the County's on call contract for architectural services. This is a contract in the amount of $52,640.00. The original contract was at a cost of $42,240.00 to do a feasibility study for the Churchville Volunteer Fire Rescue hub station. The committee met and a concern of not having a site plan was mentioned. A site plan is not included in the original amount of $42,240.00. Ms. Carter requested a cost to move forward with getting an approved site plan. The cost for the site plan is $10,400.00. Board's consideration is needed to approve the contract presented to allow Lineage to move forward with the feasibility study. This will provide a cost estimate to move forward with the project.

Mr. Slaven stated that he is not opposed to the project, however, he has concerns with the project being a complete rebuild of an existing station and the cost involved.

Greg Schacht, Fire Chief, stated that one advantage to using the Churchville location is the land is already owned by Churchville and the County is using something that is already there that meets the need. The estimates that have been talked about are just estimates. The feasibility study will allow for a more accurate estimate of the total cost for the project.

Craig Williams, Churchville Fire Chief, stated that this is a building to serve the community and the membership of the fire department agrees that this is a good idea.

Mr. Slaven reiterated that his main concern is the price tag of the Churchville location when there are other locations to be considered in the future.

Ms. Bragg stated that she agrees with Mr. Slaven. The Board has decided that this is a project that needs to be considered, however there are other sections of the county that need attention as well. The cost is a big concern. Ms. Bragg would like to see a cost estimate of what a free-standing facility would look like.

Mr. Shull would like to see bids on projects for the County. The cost of the project is a concern.

Ms. Bragg questioned the contract term for architectural services.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that it is a five-year contract.

Mr. Wells requests that information be brought to the Board at the next worksession regarding the fire tax.

Ms. Carter moved, seconded by Mr. Wells, that the Board approve the contract as presented.

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

Motion carried.

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3. **Blue Ridge Rising Resolution**

BLUE RIDGE RISING RESOLUTION
The Board considered a resolution in support of Blue Ridge Rising.

RESOLUTION
Supporting Funding for Repairs and Strategic Implementation of Blue Ridge Rising along the Blue Ridge Parkway

WHEREAS, the Blue Ridge Parkway traverses 469 miles from Afton Mountain in Virginia to the Qualla Boundary in North Carolina and unites these two states' unique mountain cultures and identities with a world-renowned national park that celebrates the places, communities, and people along the Parkway; and

WHEREAS, the Blue Ridge Parkway is the most-visited unit of the national park system, attracting nearly seventeen million visitors each year and contributing significantly to the local and regional economies in Virginia and North Carolina; and
WHEREAS, the Parkway generates approximately $1.4 billion in visitor spending and $1.8 billion in total economic output for the 1,799,000 residents of the surrounding corridor of twenty-nine counties, seven independent Virginia cities, and numerous municipalities in North Carolina and Virginia; and
WHEREAS, the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation serves as the sole official philanthropic partner to the Blue Ridge Parkway, advocating for necessary funding and resources for the Parkway's maintenance, preservation, and community engagement;

and
WHEREAS, the Blue Ridge Rising strategic plan provides a roadmap for the sustainable management and enhancement of the Parkway, ensuring that it continues to serve as a vital resource for environmental education, recreation, tourism, and community connection; and
WHEREAS, Tropical Storm Helene has caused catastrophic damage and loss of life for several communities in western North Carolina and southwest Virginia, including those communities adjacent to the Parkway; and
WHEREAS, repairs are critical to preserving the safety and accessibility of the Parkway and its adjacent communities, which is essential for their economic wellbeing; and
WHEREAS, collaboration among local, state, and federal governments is critical in this response and imperative to secure the necessary funding and policies that will sustain and benefit the communities surrounding the Blue Ridge Parkway; and
WHEREAS, the establishment of a coalition composed of elected officials and community representatives will enhance advocacy efforts and foster a unified regional voice for the Blue Ridge Parkway corridor.
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Augusta County Board of Supervisors endorses and supports the following:

1. **Funding for Repairs**: Urging state and federal governments to prioritize and allocate funding for repairs along the Blue Ridge Parkway to ensure its continued safety and accessibility;
2. **Implementation of the Blue Ridge Rising Action Plan**: Advocating for the full funding and implementation of the Blue Ridge Rising Action Plan to enhance visitor experience, preserve natural resources, and promote sustainable tourism along the Parkway;
3. **Collaboration and Support**: Calling upon local, state, and federal officials to collaborate with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation and other stakeholders to secure resources and policies that benefit the Parkway and its surrounding communities; and
4. **Coalition Creation**: Supporting the formation of a coalition of elected officials and community representatives dedicated to advocating for the Blue Ridge Parkway, ensuring that the needs and voices of the communities along the corridor are effectively represented.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, to demonstrate our unified support for the Parkway and its vital role in our communities.

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that Blue Ridge Rising is a group that has been created to promote the Blue Ridge Parkway and Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation. The group has requesting funding from the General Assembly to help with parkway repairs. Localities along the parkway has been asked to consider a resolution supporting this request.

Ms. Bragg moved, seconded by Ms. Carter, that the Board approve the resolution as presented.

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

Motion carried.

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4. Consent Agenda

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

CLAIMS:

- Consider claims paid since May 1, 2025

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

Motion carried.

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(END OF CONSENT AGENDA)

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5. Matters to Be Presented by the Public

Pat Shipe, 180 Plum Tree Draft Road, Churchville, is concerned with road conditions in his area.

Larry Howdyshell, 697 Timber Ridge Road, Mt. Solon, is concerned about the assessment process and suggests evaluating other options on getting the assessment completed.

Tracy Martin, 114 North Poplar Street, Craigsville, voiced concerns for the volunteers and wants to ensure the volunteer work and needs are met with Minday Craun retiring.

Mr. Shull asked if the advertisement for Minday Craun's position is equivalent to what Minday's responsibilities were.

Chief Schacht stated that the title of the position has changed, but the job performance requirement, minus a few responsibilities, has been transferred over as part of the new position. The administrative assistant to the volunteers remains a part of the job description. Ms. Craun is technically still on County payroll until the end of September. Until the position is vacant, duties and responsibilities will be handled by current Fire-Rescue staff.

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6. **Matters to Be Presented by Staff**

NONE

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

Mr. Wells showed appreciation for the Fire-Rescue volunteers. He also congratulated all of the high school seniors that received scholarship awards.

Mr. Slaven addressed road conditions throughout the County. He also addressed concerns with the reassessment process and how it should be done. The County should handle their own reassessments.

Mr. Fitzgerald pointed out that an in-house assessment process is being evaluated by staff.

Ms. Bragg stated that The Home Builders group and some staff have been working together to come up with ideas to help developers as far as ordinances and ways to reduce costs, which would hopefully be passed on to the citizens to make housing more affordable. Recent conversations revolved around Planned Unit Developments (PUDs) and ordinances related to the PUD. There were suggestions made of things that staff might review. In order to start that process, the Board's permission is required. Ms. Bragg requests that the Board allow staff to explore suggestions on the planning and development of PUD ordinances.

Mr. Shull thanked the volunteers for attending the meeting and all that they do. He suggests a reduction in personal property tax for volunteers that run calls as an incentive. Mr. Shull voiced concerns regarding the assessment process and agrees the process needs to be reviewed.

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8. **Closed Session**

On motion of Mr. Wells, seconded by Mr. Shull, the Board went into closed session pursuant to:

(1) the personnel exemption under Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1)
[discussion, consideration, or interviews of prospective candidates for employment;

assignment, appointment, promotion, performance, demotion, salaries, disciplining, or resignation of specific public officers, appointees, or employees of any public body]:

a. **Boards and Commissions: Blue Ridge Community College**

(2) the economic development exemption under Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(5)
[discussion concerning a prospective business or industry or the expansion of an existing business or industry where no previous announcement has been made of its interest in locating or expanding its facilities in the county]:

a. **Mill Place Commerce Park**

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

Motion carried.

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Ms. Bragg left the meeting.

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The Chairman advised that each member is required to certify that to the best of their knowledge during the closed session only the following was discussed:

1. Public business matters lawfully exempted from statutory open meeting requirements, and

2. Only such public business matters identified in the motion to convene the executive session.

The Chairman asked if there is any Board member who cannot so certify.

Hearing none, the Chairman called upon the County Administrator/ Clerk of the Board to call the roll noting members of the Board who approve the certification shall answer AYE and those who cannot shall answer NAY.

Roll Call Vote was as follows:

Yeas: Garber, Wells, Slaven, Shull, and Carter
Nays: None
Absent: Seaton and Bragg

Motion carried.

The Chairman authorized the County Administrator/Clerk of the Board to record this certification in the minutes.

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BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Mr. Shull moved, seconded by Ms. Carter, that Board appoint Theresa Hanger to serve an unexpired term on the Economic Development Authority Board. Effective immediately and to expire on March 14, 2026.

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

Motion carried.

Mr. Wells moved, seconded by Mr. Slaven, that the Board appoint Dr. Bruce Bowman to serve a term on the Blue Ridge Community College Board. Effective July 1, 2025 and to expire on June 30, 2029.

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

Motion carried.

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9. **Adjournment**

Mr. Shull moved, seconded by Ms. Carter, that the Board adjourn the meeting.

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

Motion carried.

Minutes approved by the Board on Wednesday, August 13, 2025. The signed minutes can be reviewed in the County Administrator's Office.

Chairman

County Administrator