

Regular Meeting, Wednesday, February 11, 2026, 7:00 PM Government Center Main
Board Room

ROLE CALL:

Jeffrey Slaven
Chris Kincheloe
Michael Shull
Steve Grepps
Gerald Garber
Scott Seaton
Carolyn Bragg
Timothy K. Fitzgerald County Administrator
Jennifer M. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator
Doug Wolfe, Director Community Development
Nicole Price, County Attorney
Erika Puckett, Administrative Assistant

Angie Michael, Executive Assistant

ABSENT:

VIRGINIA: At an adjourned meeting of the
Augusta County Board of
Supervisors held on Wednesday,
February 11, 2026, at 7:00 PM at
the Government Center Main
Board Room, and in the 250th
year of the Commonwealth...

Chairman Slaven welcomed those present at the meeting.

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

Jennifer Martinez Cano is a junior and is enrolled in the cosmetology program and the
Career and Technical Center. She plans to pursue a business degree and open her
own salon.

Eliza Swatz is a sophomore and plans to pursue an acting career.

Regan Gwaltney is a junior and enrolled in the Governor's School. She plans to attend
a four year college and go to medical school to become a Pediatric Intensive Care
doctor.

Brianna Hudson is a junior and plans to get an apprenticeship to become a licensed electrician.

Mikayla Lloyd is serving as one of the FFA presidents and announced that she has been accepted into Virginia Tech to study Animal Science and Agribusiness. She invited the Board to their appreciation breakfast on February 25th.

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Scott Seaton, Wayne District, delivered the invocation.

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1. **H2H Resolution**

The Board considered the H2H Resolution.

Jennifer Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator, stated that Hospital to Home LLC, doing business as H2H Emergency Services, has requested a resolution from the Board allowing them to run in Augusta County. They operate a medical transport service that is licensed by the Virginia Office of EMS. H2H has a desire to expand their services to include Augusta County. According to the Code of Virginia, a locality must adopt a resolution improving its operation within the county. They would not be running emergency services like the fire and volunteer individuals do and that is stated in the resolution.

Mr. Shull asked where H2H is based out of.

Ms. Whetzel stated that they are based out of Richmond and they have resolutions prepared by other localities, including Henrico, Newport News, Norfolk, Spotsylvania, Virginia Beach and Fairfax. After conversation with the Vice President of Corporate Strategy, it was stated that they also have entities with Charlottesville and Roanoke. Whether there is a site or a full time ambulance station in the County, they would like to have a resolution in place so that the municipality or locality is aware that they are operating in that locality.

Mr. Grepps questioned if Augusta Health and Sentara RMH have accepted them and they are working with them?

Ms. Whetzel stated that in speaking with the individual from H2H, they have been in contact with Augusta Health. They reach out to hospitals to see if there is a need in the area for this type of service. They would decide at a later date if they were going to put a unit here based on their business. They are expanding their business model, but at the same time they are stepping lightly into doing that to say if this resolution is done, they could be in Augusta County and then would Augusta Health need their services in

the future.

Ms. Bragg stated that it is her understanding that this has been done for other businesses. It is part of their legal process that they have to go through. They have to notify the Board and the resolution is stating that. It is up to H2H whether they get business from Augusta County hospitals or doctor's offices. It is not a Board decision.

This is simply giving them the ability to operate in Augusta County. If they are a good business they will get contracts.

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

Mr. Grepps questioned if this could postpone to allow time to look into the organization.

Ms. Whetzel stated that Staff has searched the VOEMS website to check for complaints against them and there was not anything listed. They also have a current license.

Ms. Bragg pointed out that as a Board, they are not in the position to exclude a business from operating.

Dr. Seaton asked if they needed the resolution to be licensed in the County or just to operate in the County?

Ms. Whetzel answered by stating if they plan to have a site or place an ambulance long term in the County, then yes, they will need the resolution. H2H likes to have a resolution in place and approved by the locality. So long term, they need this resolution approved so they could site a location in Augusta County in accordance with the State Code and Virginia Office of EMS guidelines.

Dr. Seaton stated another concern of their transparency of billing and being in the field. Legislature has helped to be more transparent with how much people are being charged and how they are being charged. Do we know how their rates compare to other ambulance services in our Area? Is there information on how they charge for their services and if their rates are comparable to other ambulance services in the area?

Ms. Whetzel stated that she did not have that information and did not inquire at that level. The Board of Supervisors would be allowing them to run in the County. Whether or not they succeed as a business will be based on their operations, what they charge and their customer service.

Ms. Bragg added that this is a private entity so it is not something that we as a locality get involved in as far as their costs and their contract negotiations.

Mr. Shull suggested postponing the item.

Dr. Seaton would like to know what they charge for services and what other ambulance

services charge. It is important to make sure the citizens are offered good service and competitive pricing. There should be transparency in their pricing.

Ms. Whetzel will research to get the information that is requested.

Mr. Grepps moved, seconded by Mr. Shull, that the Board postpone discussion to the February 23, 2026 Staff Briefing meeting.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps and Seaton
 Nays: Slaven and Bragg

Motion carried.

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2. **Outdoor Music Application**

The Board considered an Outdoor Music Application for the Augusta Regional SPCA.

Timothy Fitzgerald, County Administrator, stated that this is a new application for an Outdoor Music event from the Augusta Regional SPCA. The application is a requirement for anyone wanting to have fundraisers like music festivals. The County ordinance states that once the Board approves it, the same event can be held each year with the County Administrator's approval. The event is called the Rhythm and Rescue Music Festival and will be held on June 6th, 2026 at the Augusta Regional SPCA as a fundraiser event. All required information has been submitted from law enforcement, health department and adjacent properties.

Mr. Garber moved, seconded by Ms. Bragg, that the Board approve the Outdoor Music Application as presented.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton
 Nays: None

Motion carried.

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3. **Dick Huff Lane Easement**

The Board considered an easement request for Dick Huff Lane.

Doug Wolfe, Director of Community Development, stated that an additional lane for Dick Huff Lane needs to be added. The County recently procured an easement from the railroad to cross the railroad to add this extra lane. Mr. Wolfe showed a map depicting

what was built with the courthouse and the road improvement project that follows. This incoming lane is being added on the south side of Dick Huff Lane. There is already a right-of-way on the west side of the railroad, but the VDOT right-of-way needs to be widened on the east side. Board approval is requested and to authorize the County Administrator to execute the easement as it is drafted in a final form by the County Attorney.

Dr. Seaton moved, seconded by Mr. Grepps, that the Board approve the easement request as presented and authorize the County Administrator to execute the document.

Mr. Shull asked how wide the lane is.

Mr. Wolfe stated that it varies in width. On the east side of the railroad track, it is a standard width lane and gets wider as it is coming in from Route 11. Part of the reason the County wanted to go with the divided sections is to make sure that traffic can pass if there is an accident in one lane or the other.

Mr. Shull voiced concerns with tractor trailers.

Mr. Wolfe stated that there has been a simulation on the computer done to verify that trucks can make the turn by swinging wide.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton

Nays: None

Motion carried.

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4. **Resolutions:**

The Board considered the following resolutions:

1. House Bill 1374
2. House Bill 1377

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that there are two resolutions before the Board for consideration.

Both involve house bills that involve the Virginia Military Institute currently under consideration at the General Assembly and both resolutions would be in opposition of the bills. Bill 1374 is a bill that took the management of Virginia Military Institute and passed it over to Virginia State University as an oversight for VMI. The bill has been significantly changed and that is no longer currently in the bill. What the bill does now is it identifies the qualifications of Board of Trustee members at VMI versus having VSU

have some oversight of the institution. House Bill 1377 is a bill that indicated there would be a study group put together to look at VMI going forward and their state support and whether they would continue to be state supported. This bill is still intact. The VMI Superintendent stated publicly that he would support the bill if they would pass it because he feels very confident that VMI can stand on its own reputation. If a study group wants to come in and take a look, they would welcome them to do so. These are brought before the Board because as the bills were going through the General Assembly, there was question about the bills and the support. These resolutions officially show the Board of Supervisors in opposition of both of the bills going forward.

Dr. Seaton stated that when House Bill 1374 was originally constructed it wanted to repeal the existing VMI Board and put it under the governance of the Virginia State University. While there is nothing wrong with VSU, that would be the only university in the Commonwealth that would be governed this way. His concern is while it was changed for this time, it will most likely be brought back to the General Assembly next year. Dr. Seaton does not see House Bill 1374 as necessary. VMI is better off under its current governance structure and the Governor has her way of influencing that with her appointments. It is not necessary to pass another bill to create more expenses that will not be good for VMI and what it stands for.

Ms. Bragg stated that VMI is a unique institution. They have 186 years of history and have had issues that they have worked on. The original bill 1374 was to dissolve the Board of Visitors and take all oversight of the school to VSU. VSU is not a military school. They do not have the background or the history that accompanies a Board of Visitors that would be sitting at VMI. Bill 1377 suggests should VMI be a state supported school like UVA, JMU or any other state supported school. Part of the language talks about if there are other institutions in Virginia that could do the same thing that VMI is doing, which makes you question what the future is. Currently there is a plan to set up a task force to study VMI and the process, which they are not opposed to. The concern is that this particular task force will examine the school and then they make a recommendation on the future of VMI. This appears to be a path to put off the decision to dismantle VMI. Besides the history, you have to look at what the school contributes to not only Rockbridge County, but the Valley as a whole. There is a lot of value with VMI. She had several family members that attended VMI and the importance to those cadets and what they bring from VMI demonstrate service in their community. She recommends that the Board approve the resolutions even though the bills have changed. The Board and the community need to continue to support VMI. Should a new resolution be created that says the Board does not support the dismantling of the Board of Visitors and the funding?

Ms. Bragg suggested changing the last paragraph that says "expresses and affirms strong opposition" and take out to house bill 1374 and leave it as "affirms its strong opposition to dissolve the VMI Board of Visitors and place VMI under the governance of the Board of Visitors of Virginia State University or any other institution".

Dr. Seaton suggests leaving the house bill 1374 in the resolution and adding the “any other institution”.

Mr. Slaven questioned if the Board would like to vote on what is presented to them or hold on voting until a later date.

Dr. Seaton is concerned with waiting.

Ms. Bragg recommended approving the resolution with the changes.

Dr. Seaton moved, seconded by Ms. Bragg, that the Board approve the House Bill 1374 Resolution with the changes.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton

Nays: None

Motion carried.

Ms. Bragg stated that House Bill 1377 discusses the ceasing of state funding and localities across Virginia should oppose this.

Ms. Bragg moved, seconded by Dr. Seaton, that the Board approve the House Bill 1377 Resolution.

Dr. Seaton read the last paragraph of the resolution.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton

Nays: None

Motion carried.

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5. **Consent Agenda**

Mr. Kincheloe moved, seconded by Ms. Bragg, that the Board approve the consent agenda as follows:

MINUTES:

Consider minutes from the following meetings:

- Regular Meeting, Wednesday, December 10, 2025

- Organizational Meeting, Wednesday, January 7, 2026

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton

Nays: None

Motion carried.

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(END OF CONSENT AGENDA)

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6. **Matters to Be Presented by the Public**

Mr. Slaven read the following statement:

While the Augusta Correctional Center property is located in Augusta County, it is owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia. The Virginia Department of General Services, DGS, is authorized to sell the facility on behalf of the Commonwealth. During Governor Younkin's administration, the Commonwealth advertised the property for sale and received several proposals from private entities. While Governor Younkin made a recommendation on a proposal, Governor Spanberger has since directed DGS to review these proposals and determine which one to pursue for negotiations. Although Augusta County does not have control over which proposal moves forward, we remain in contact with the Department of General Services and have provided comments for their consideration. Based on conversations with DGS, the agency has indicated that the property's agricultural zoning as approved by Augusta County is an important factor in its decision making among other factors. While DGS is still negotiating the terms and conditions of the sale, the agency has indicated that Augusta Correctional Facility will not be sold for the purposes of establishing an ICE Detention Center.

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Phineas Chappell, 392 Cider Mill Road, Mt. Sidney, is a senior at Fort Defiance High School and is concerned that the issue of an ICE facility will come up again in the future.

Linda Revis, 1112 Estaline Valley Road, Craigsville, has done research on the Big Beautiful Bill and there is a loophole that after the State approves the sale to whoever they are going to sell it to, the Federal Government can buy it from them. Is there an

assurance that the loophole is closed?

Olivia Hathaway, 688 Spottswood Road, Steeles Tavern, thanked the Board for expressing their opposition to the proposed ICE facility.

Tom Engle, 51 Haytie Lane, Swoope, urged the Board to pass a resolution showing opposition to the proposed ICE facility.

Trina Cook, 21 Kenwood Pl., is the President of the Verona Community and invited everyone to the 10 year open house of the Community Center on March 8th from 2pm-5pm. She shared history of the Verona Community Center.

Mary Grimm, 554 N. Bayard Avenue, Waynesboro, proposes that the Board have some sort of legislation in the County that prohibits the private acquisition of the facility for a for profit detention center or jail.

Marie Santiago, 1413 Lee Highway, Verona, thanked the Board for their wise decision on the proposed ICE facility.

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7. Matters to Be Presented by Staff

Mr. Fitzgerald discussed the following:

1. There is a bill moving through the Senate to require local governments to enter into collective bargaining with unions that are formalized. The current law provides that as a local option. It is the Board's prerogative to entertain collective bargaining. Some of the larger localities across the Commonwealth have done collective bargaining, but smaller to mid-sized localities have not. This year there is a bill that states if a union organizes and they ask to collective bargain, the County would be required to do so. This has a significant impact on localities in regards to finances. He has reached out to Roanoke County, to get information on how they calculated the cost. Mr. Fitzgerald did a rough estimate and it would cost the County approximately \$36 million per year. This would be for the unions that are known, such as a Fire Union and a Teachers Union. This would also involve creating new positions for the County as well as increasing cost in local attorney's fees and outside attorney fees. There is a letter for the Board's consideration to express a support for preserving the current legislation, which states that the Board has the opportunity to decide locally whether the County want to collective bargain or not. With the current legislation, the local government and local Boards understand their fiscal responsibility and how much money is available. VACo supports the idea that the decision is best made at the local government level, not from a state level. This letter would be

sent to local Senators and Delegates requesting that they keep this as a local option. The letter would urge them to maintain the framework going forward based on potential significant cost in order to move forward.

Mr. Grepps reviewed the different local unions that the County currently deals with. Collective bargaining enables to negotiate collectively for better wages, benefits and working conditions through a legally binding collective bargain agreement, typically resulting in higher pay, improved health insurance, retirement plans and safer, more secure work environments. Mr. Grepps pointed out the key benefits of collective bargaining, which can lead to increased productivity and mutual respect between employees and staff. He stands in support of Virginia's Senate Bill 378, which repels prohibition on collective bargaining.

Ms. Bragg stated that when she joined the Board ten years ago, she toured all of the facilities the County has and had the opportunity to meet many of the employees. Two things that stood out; how much the County actually does and the caliber of and the quality of the employees. Valuing employees is at the very top of the list of things that are important for any successful operations. It is important to always make every effort to attempt to maintain fair and competitive wages and benefits and the County does that. This particular bill is another unfunded mandate that the State is bringing to the County. This particular one is a very expensive one. The cost for Augusta County is approximately \$36 million which translates to thirty-six cents on the tax rate. The current legislation states that the locality has the ability to decide and that is based on their employees and their needs and financial ability. It is the Board's job to work for the County, but we also work for the citizens. She recommends sending the letter. The letter is not changing anything, it asks that we maintain what we currently have.

Dr. Seaton stated that growing up in California everything that is union is a union job. The public sector unions would vote for people who wanted more public sector employees. This caused bigger payrolls and bigger taxes. Public sector unions are good, but the County should not be mandated to bargain with them. Unions have done a lot of good, but no one should be forced to join a union. A significant tax increase would be hard for citizens in the County. He recommends sending the letter that opposes mandatory collective bargaining.

Mr. Grepps stated that this bill has a refrain section and will not force anyone to join a union.

Ms. Bragg moved, seconded by Dr. Seaton, that the Board approve the letter and present it to the local Senators and Delegates stating that the County supports the preservation of the current legislation.

Vote was as follows:
and Seaton

Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Bragg

Nays: Grepps

Motion carried.

2. There have been multiple comments received regarding Augusta County's resolution dealing with the Second Amendment Sanctuary County that was passed in 2019. The resolution did not have an expiration date attached to it and is still valid. Citizens have requested that this Board reaffirm the resolution. The resolution specifically speaks to legislation in the 2019 session, but it is similar to current legislation that happening today. The resolution is brought before the Board to reaffirm or have conversation as to how the Board would like proceed with this.

Mr. Shull moved, seconded by Mr. Grepps, that the Board reaffirm the Second Amendment resolution as it was presented in 2019.

Dr. Seaton stated that this resolution was passed on December 4, 2019 and there were three thousand people that showed up at Stuarts Draft High School to voice their rights with the Second Amendment. Reaffirming this resolution is a wise decision.

Ms. Bragg stated that since there are new Board members, it is important to reaffirm the resolution.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton

Nays: None

Motion carried.

3. On March 23rd, prior to the Staff Briefing, there will be a Cornerstone Setting Ceremony at the new courthouse at 11:30 a.m.

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4. A ribbon cutting ceremony for the new courthouse is set for June 3rd at 4:00 p.m. The week after will be moving week from the old courthouse. On June 15th, the courts will be in full operation in the new courthouse.

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5. A visit to the Harrisonburg and Rockingham Fire Stations is set for Tuesday, February 17th at 8:00 a.m.

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

Mr. Shull requested an update on the radio project and broadband project at the next Staff Briefing. He would also like a report of overtime that has been paid for Fire-Rescue.

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The Board took a five minute break.

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9. **Closed Session**

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

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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 Commission: Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and CAP-SAW

(2) **the real property exemption under Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(A)(3)**

[discussion or consideration of the acquisition of real property for a public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held real property, where discussion in an open meeting would adversely affect the bargaining position or negotiating strategy of the public body]:

- 1. Augusta County Circuit Courthouse-1 E. Johnson St. Staunton
- 2. Augusta County General District Courthouse- 6 E. Johnson St. Staunton
- 3. Greenville Convenience Center-133 Old Quarry Lane, Greenville

3. the legal counsel exemption under Virginia Code § 2.23711(A)(8)

[consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by a public body regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by such counsel.

Nothing in this subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter]:

a. Zapton Building in downtown Staunton – 111 S. Augusta Street

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton

Nays: None

Motion carried.

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On motion of Mr. Shull, seconded by Mr. Garber, the Board came out of Closed Session.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Bragg and Seaton

Nays: None

Absent: Grepps

Motion carried.

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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: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Grepps, Shull, Bragg
and Seaton
Nays: None

Motion carried.

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

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Mr. Fitzgerald stated that there is a contract for sale of the Zapton House in downtown Staunton located at 11 South Augusta Street. The contract is in the amount of \$400,000.00 to Duffy Pappas. The terms of the contract were discussed in Closed Session. The contract requires Board consideration and to allow the County Administrator to sign the contract to move forward.

Dr. Seaton moved, seconded by Mr. Garber, that the Board approve the contract.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton
Nays: None

Motion carried.

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10. **Adjournment**

There being no other business to come before the Board, Mr. Shull moved, seconded by Dr. Seaton that the Board adjourn subject to call of the Chairman.

Vote was as follows: Yeas: Slaven, Kincheloe, Garber, Shull, Grepps, Bragg and Seaton
Nays: None

Motion carried.

Minutes approved by the Board on Wednesday, April 8, 2026. The signed minutes can

be reviewed in the County Administrator's Office.

Chairman

County Administrator