

Staff Briefing Meeting, Monday, February 23, 2026, 1:30 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 of Community Development
Julia Hensley, Planner II
Nicole Price, County Attorney

VIRGINIA: At an adjourned meeting of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors held on Monday, February 23, 2026, at 1:30 PM at the Government Center Main Board Room, and in the 250th year of the Commonwealth...

1. **VDOT**

Don Komara, Residency Administrator, discussed the VDOT status report of February 23, 2026.

The Board accepted the report as information.

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2. **Arts Grant**

Representatives from Oak Grove Theater gave a PowerPoint presentation on the theater.

The Board accepted the presentation as information.

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3. **Broadband Update**

Tom Innes, SVP, Business Development for All Points Broadband gave an update on the County's broadband project.

The Board accepted the presentation as information.

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4. **Fire-Rescue**

1. Greg Schacht, Fire Chief, discussed the monthly report.

The Board accepted the report as information.

2. Churchville Fire Station update.

Mr. Kincheloe stated that he has been receiving feedback from citizens in the Churchville area that they do not want the fire department moved out of Churchville. Among those conversations he has found that if the County decides to spend the taxpayer dollars to build a new fire department, the County should own the property.

The current Churchville station is lacking a lot of maintenance to the structure and needs to have some work done to it. The Board needs to look at the fact that the County needs to own the property and the Churchville Volunteer Fire Department needs to come with an agreement with the Board to give the County ownership of that property. The Board needs to decide whether the building is torn down or the current building stays and renovations are done, along with a new construction next to it with an agreement with Churchville Volunteer Fire Department to have full access to that property to use it.

Mr. Grepps stated that operations would be hard with having two different entities having ownership. If there cannot be an agreement on the ownership, then the next step would be looking at the property at Buffalo Gap.

Ms. Bragg stated that after touring the Harrisonburg and Rockingham County facilities, a facility like this would serve the purpose for what is needed. The estimate that was given to build a new station at the Churchville location was too large. Along with concerns regarding the property ownership, there are concerns about what is going to happen with the volunteers. If the volunteers fade away it would detrimental to the community. The plan for the hub concept is you have volunteer stations and then you have another County station located someplace else and the volunteer station is back up or support as needed. There are a number of things in the design itself that makes this over built which is also a concern. With budget discussion coming up, that may give the Board an opportunity to have a better understanding of where the County

stands financially.

Mr. Slaven stated that the location between Churchville and Buffalo Gap does not cause as much concern as the estimate that has been given. A Fire and Rescue Strategic Plan has not officially been adopted by the Board; however, the Board has been trying to pursue the parts of the plan it takes to get this project completed. This essentially uses up the resources. There are other fire departments in the County that question what they would get from the plan. With the estimate that was given to complete this project, there would be nothing left to give to other fire departments. There are needs throughout the County.

Chief Schacht stated that the plan referred to the infrastructure of every agency in Augusta County. It was not just building new hub stations. The plan referenced the status of each agency and how they all need to be renovated and updated. Churchville was chosen for a potential hub station because they are centrally located. In looking back at the study, the study does not speak about building a fire station in Churchville.

This idea came about because Churchville was unable to fund updating their station and their station is in need of repairs or replaced. Something needs to be done due to the conditions at Churchville and there is not enough space. There is a lot of aging infrastructure in the County's Fire Rescue services that cause concerns. All of the stations were built prior to housing people in them. They were built because everybody came from home so there were no bunk rooms or separations. There is a large number of apparatuses in the County that will age out this year under NFPA and that is a concern. Funding apparatus and how repairs would be funded or replacing fire stations throughout the County are all apart of the strategic plan. Along with that is the questions of how much apparatus is needed.

Churchville was chosen for the hub concept because it was already a piece of infrastructure that was there and they were willing to do it. A structural engineer has looked at the Churchville facility and found several structural integrity issues. A feasibility study has been completed and presented to the Board.

Candy Hensley, Assistant County Administrator, stated that the bigger question ends up being funding. How does the Board plan to fund this project. Lineage was tasked with getting estimates. Lineage went to Harmon Construction, which is the company that is building the stations in Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. They also reached out to Branch, which is the opposite spectrum of a company that can bid. That gives a low number and a high number. The \$13 million estimate that has been spoken about is a different type of construction. It is not a steel building; it is a more elaborate type of design. Ms. Hensley does not expect to build a \$13 million building, but as the project is worked through and it is determined where it will be built or what it is built out of, it could be higher than \$7 million. There are a lot of details to figure out and work through.

Chief Schacht stated that Harrisonburg came in at a lower estimate and then while going through process, it ended up being more expensive. Rockingham County averaged around \$6 to \$6.9 million for all of their stations. Waynesboro was priced at approximately \$7 to \$8 million and it is a common type of facility.

Ms. Bragg stated that the Board cannot make a decision to say we are going to look at a less expensive option if we do not know what the less expensive option is.

Mr. Shull stated that with the budget coming up, it may not be good timing. If the money is borrowed, it will be paid back by the citizens of Augusta County. Other fire companies will be coming forward wanting things done at their location. Cancer screenings were approved for career staff, but there are volunteers that have been serving the County longer than some of the career staff and should be approved for cancer screenings as well. There are a number of things that need to be done, but the funding is not there. He questions what Lineage is looking at on the structural part of the building that is in dire need of repairs. Mr. Shull would like to see where the courthouse project stands as far as funding. Are the taxpayers willing to pay for fire services? Can the building that is already there be remodeled? The Board needs to take time and review the project thoroughly.

Mr. Grepps stated that the first Fire Rescue Study was completed in 2000 and nothing was done. 2025 the second study was completed and nothing was done. If the Board continues to hold off on and wait to complete projects, the price tag continues to go up. A decision needs to be made.

Mr. Kincheloe stated that there comes a point when the Board needs to require ownership of the property that is referred to as the siron property. The County needs to purchase the property and decide how to build and if it is built there. The underlying issue is Churchville Volunteer Fire Department owes \$130,000.00 on the property so the County is ultimately going to pay that price. That would give Churchville Fire their old side for renovations and get the community involved. At some point something needs to be done. This is the entire western part of the County that this station is going to have a functionality at some point. There is going to be services run out of that department for the entire western part of the County.

Craig Williams, President of Churchville Volunteer Fire Department, does not agree with the County purchasing the property. He feels a better conclusion can be agreed upon and still take care of the citizens.

Mr. Fitzgerald asked the Board for direction on this project.

The Board would like to see the plans from Harrisonburg and Rockingham County. Mr. Shull requested the plans for the existing building.

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The Board took a five-minute break.

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5. **Regional Radio Project Update**

Cheryl from CTA gave a PowerPoint overview of what has been done to date and what is to come on the Regional Radio Project. Also present were representatives from the regional committee and a Radio Tech.

The Board accepted as information.

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6. **H2H Resolution**

Jennifer Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator, discussed the H2H Resolution. She stated that the Virginia Office of EMS regulations require that the governing body, where a licensed EMS agency is cited, authorize the agency to operate and designate the authorization area of operation. During the last Board of Supervisors meeting, there was discussion about getting a request of information on fees from some of the area agencies. Two responses were received and the information has been shared with the Board. The resolution authorizes H2H to have a physical location in Augusta County. Without the resolution they are still able to run in the County, however they are not allowed to have a physical site.

The Board authorized placing on the Wednesday, February 25, 2026 regular meeting agenda.

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7. **Planning Commission/Public Hearing**

Julia Hensley, Planner II, discussed the following:

- a. A request to rezone from General Agriculture with proffers to Single Family Residential with proffers approximately 1.00 acres owned by Jordan Enterprises, LLC, located off Misty Dawn Lane in Staunton in the Pastures District. The Planning Commission recommends approval.
- b. A request to add a Public Use Overlay on approximately 31.218 acres owned by Hebron Presbyterian Church, located north of the Hebron Road and Eidson Creek Road intersection in Swoope in the Pastures District. The Planning Commission recommends approval.
- c. A request to add a Public Use Overlay on approximately .25 acres of a 2.93-acre parcel owned by Augusta County Service Authority, located off Dry Branch Road between Buffalo Gap Highway and Crawford Drive in Churchville in the Pastures District. The Planning Commission recommends approval.

The Board authorized placing on the Wednesday, February 25, 2026 regular meeting agenda.

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

Mr. Fitzgerald stated that a funding request has been received from the Mt. Solon Volunteer Fire Department for the purchase of a new LUCAS device in the amount of \$18,860.37. This funding request will come from the North River Infrastructure account and will be on the agenda for Wednesday's meeting.

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

Mr. Shull requested a list of budget items that departments have ask for to be able to review prior to the budget meeting. He also would like to know if each department is utilizing grants that are available and how much funding has been received from grants.

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10. **Closed Session**

On motion of Mr. Kincheloe, 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 Commission: Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission and CAP-SAW

(2) the legal counsel exemption under Virginia Code § 2.2-3711(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. Proposed redistricting

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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.

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

Nays: None

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:

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

Nays: None

Motion carried.

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

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Minutes approved by the Board on Wednesday, April 8, 2026. The signed minutes can be reviewed in the County Administrator's Office.

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Chairman

County Administrator