

Prioritization Meeting, Tuesday, February 16, 2021, 9:30 p.m., Government Center, Verona, VA.

PRESENT: Gerald W. Garber, Chairman
 Pam Carter, Vice-Chairman
 G. L. "Butch" Wells
 Michael L. Shull
 Scott Seaton
 Jeff Slaven
 Steve Morelli
 Timmy Fitzgerald, County Administrator
 Jennifer M. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator
 Leslie Tate, Senior Planner
 James Benkahla, County Attorney

VIRGINIA: At a Special Work Session Meeting of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors held on Tuesday, February 16, 2021, at 9:30 p.m., at the Government Center, Verona, Virginia, and in the 245th year of the Commonwealth....

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Chairman Garber called the meeting to order.

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Timothy Fitzgerald, County Administrator, stated that this was not a budget discussion. In January, Staff meets and discusses the priorities for each department and what the Department Head feels are their individual issues as a department.

Mr. Fitzgerald shared with the Board an Organizational Chart. This chart shows each department and the number of employees that make up that department. Currently, Augusta County consists of 380 Full Time Equivalent employees. The County is the Fiscal Agent for Middle River Regional Jail, Shenandoah Valley Social Services, Valley ASAP, Valley Career & Technical Center and Shenandoah Valley Regional Program. There are a number of Boards and Commissions that the County represents through County Administration. A common theme of each department within the County is staffing. Most departments are experiencing the need for additional staffing. COVID19 continues to present challenges for the County. There has been challenges with the budget process and continued unknowns with revenue due to the pandemic. As the budget is being compiled, the numbers will stay as conservative as possible. The need to effectively communicate with the public on potential tax increases and other revenue sources and the budget overall continues to be a work in progress for County Administration; along with important news to educate the public and highlight staff. Compliance with laws, mandates and policies is an ongoing concern. Communications is in the process of creating a Communications Strategic Plan and a social media plan.

The following are projects happening within the County:

- County Administration-Establish a clear courthouse path and deliver.
- Communications-Refresh of website.
- Finance-Procurement
- Human Resources-need for new financial software.
- Commissioner of the Revenue-increase personnel for new software.
- IT-support other department projects-RecTrac upgrade, Nexgen 911, CAMRA software for real estate, upgrade CWA servers, cyber security upgrades, DUO rollout and network operations center to monitor outgoing network traffic.
- Clerk-organize and digitize as many records as possible.
- ECC-Migrating to Nexgen 911, update GIS data and Radio Communications system next steps.
- Facilities Maintenance-Rec gym, river projects and Stuarts Draft Park pool.
- Parks and Recreation-Rec gym repairs/future usage, two river access projects.

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Renovations to the Stuarts Draft pool, software migration and the Berry Farm property.

- Economic Development-Finalize Mill Place covenants and rezoning. Design new entrance sign for Mill Place. Site Development Grant-state funding, sites in Augusta and greater Shenandoah Valley.

Service expansion has been discussed with various departments. The County Attorney would like to work towards restarting the real estate tax sales. The Clerk's Office is researching the option of offering plastic cards for concealed weapon permits and is considering passport work again. Fire and Rescue is working to engage volunteers and examine optimal placement of additional personnel. The Library is examining programing trying to capture more of non-library users. The Extension Office 4H education program is growing. The office hopes to assist farms and agriculture operations to become profitable or more profitable.

Mr. Fitzgerald discussed several capital projects that will be happening in the future; courthouse, Middle River Regional Jail expansion, radio system, financial software and the importance of maintaining depreciation funding post COVID. Operating costs coming in the future such as Middle River Regional Jail annual operating expenditures, Fire and Rescue personnel, continuation of CARES Act projects, increased annual maintenance due to equipment replacement, pay and reclassification study, Weyers Cave Library and Churchville Fire and Rescue personnel continue to be a concern. Other normal operations and services need to be maintained as well and revenue continues to be down and not fully recovering from COVID19. There are a number of potential revenue sources such as real estate tax, personal property tax, meals and lodging tax, cigarette tax and various fees for the County that could be considered for increased revenue.

Preliminary work completed on the Strategic Plan and what it is consists of was reviewed and discussed.

The following are thoughts on Countywide goals moving forward:

- Courthouse plan moving forward
- Middle River Regional Jail expansion decision
- Increased focus on public safety and retention of staff.
- Consideration of staffing levels to meet the community needs.
- Broadband
- Revenue and changes to increase revenue to fund core services.
- Policy decisions on solar
- Continued funding of the capital depreciation accounts.

The next steps:

- Currently meeting with departments to review their budget requests
- Finalize revenue numbers
- Administration and finance will reduce budget to meet revenues to present a balanced budget
- Administration will present a list of requests that could not be funded in the balanced budget along with the cost for the Board's further consideration review.
- Budget meeting to be held on March 29, 2021 at 8:30 a.m.

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Chairman Garber also thanked the Board for their participation. He felt the meeting was very beneficial and provided guidance moving forward.

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Chairman



County Administrator