

Regular Meeting, Wednesday, January 10, 2024, 7:00 p.m., Government Center, Verona, VA.

PRESENT: Jeffrey Slaven, Chairman
 Pam Carter, Vice-Chair
 Michael Shull
 Butch Wells
 Gerald Garber
 Carolyn Bragg
 Scott Seaton
 Timothy K. Fitzgerald, County Administrator
 Jennifer M. Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator
 James Benkahla, County Attorney
 Angie Michael, Executive Assistant

VIRGINIA: At an adjourned meeting of the Augusta County Board of Supervisors held on Wednesday, January 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m., at the Government Center, Verona, Virginia, and in the 248th year of the Commonwealth....

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Chairman Slaven welcomed those present at the meeting.

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Boy Scout Troop 33 from St. Francis led the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance. Joel Tasey, Senior Patrol Leader for Troop 33, stated that the troop is working on two merit badges; citizenship in the community and communications.

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John Craft delivered the invocation.

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COMMITTEES & COMMISSIONS FOR 2024 APPOINTED BY THE BOARD

Mr. Garber moved, seconded by Ms. Bragg, that the Board appoint the following:

- a. Chief Greg Schacht and Mr. Slaven (Chairman of the Board) to the Local Emergency Planning Commission.
- b. Richard Williams, W. Douglas Riley, B. Randolph Roller, Joseph Sapotoczny, Ashlie Howell and George Price (Commissioner of the Revenue), Gerald Garber (Board of Supervisor) to the Agriculture and Forestal District Committee.
- c. Jeff Slaven (Chairman of the Board) as Emergency Management Director
- d. Timothy Fitzgerald as Emergency Management Co-Director
- e. Patrick Lam as Emergency Management Coordinator
- f. Amanda Irvine as Assistant Emergency Management Coordinator
- g. Jeff Slaven (Chairman of the Board) and Pam Carter (Vice Chair of the Board) to the Audit Committee

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

Motion carried.

REASSESSMENT UPDATE

Jennifer Whetzel, Deputy County Administrator, stated this is a presentation by Wampler Eanes, which is the firm working on the County's reassessment. Presentation was given by Steven Wampler, Betsy Wampler and Mike Calavecchio. Betsy Wampler gave an overview of the reassessment process.

Ms. Whetzel stated that notices will be going out to citizens and hearing dates to appeal to the assessors will start in approximately mid-February. The book will be finalized by March 31, 2024, including any changes that come of those hearings. The County will have a budget public hearing in mid-April. One of the ads related to the budget will be the equalized rate for that public hearing. There is a budget worksession the end of March and the Board will set a tax rate. Then, there will be a public hearing, the Board approves the budget and the tax tickets will go out immediately following that.

COURTHOUSE REIMBURSEMENT RESOLUTION

Ms. Whetzel stated that this resolution will allow the Board to recoup any spending that they had sixty days prior to this resolution or right after until bond proceeds are received for the courthouse. There will be additional approvals necessary for the Board in order to borrow funds and go through all of the legal items related to the borrowing. This resolution is to allow the County to recoup funds that may have already been spent or will be spending before the proceeds are received. It will also cover if the County decides to borrow at two different times for the courthouse project due to it being an eighteen month to two-year project.

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

BROADBAND UPDATE

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January 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

CONSENT AGENDA

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

MINUTES:

Consider minutes from the following meetings:

- Regular Meeting, Wednesday, October 11, 2023
- Regular Meeting, Wednesday, October 25, 2023

CLAIMS:

Consider claims paid since December 1, 2023.

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

Motion carried.

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(END OF CONSENT AGENDA)

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MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE PUBLIC

Dave Zimmerman, 120 Lee Highway, Verona, is concerned that the cost of body cameras for the Sheriff's Department will be a lot more than what some expect.

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MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY STAFF

Mr. Fitzgerald discussed the following:

- 1) Board Retreat will be held on Friday, February 9th from 9am-4pm.
- 2) Courthouse groundbreaking event will be held on March 15th.
- 3) A Pay and Compensation Study for the FY25 budget based on direction given at the 2022 strategic planning meeting was in the agenda package. The study will look at salaries, benefits and things that can be done to ensure high quality staff is retained and the County is paying staff the proper amount.

Ms. Carter moved, seconded by Ms. Bragg, that the Board approve funding for the Pay and Reclass Study with Berkley Group.

Funding Source: 4-70-80000-8199 \$57,876.00

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

Motion carried.

January 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

MATTERS TO BE PRESENTED BY THE BOARD (CONT'D)

Ms. Carter gave an update on the prison closure in Craigsville. She reiterated to the citizens that the County nor the Board of Supervisors knew that the prison was going to close until they were notified the morning of December 15th. The prison will close June 30, 2024. January 19th is the deadline for people to submit their request if they would like to be transferred. The water tank system was built in collaboration with the understanding that the prison would always be there to cover a large portion of those costs. The DOC will be maintaining the system and nothing will happen until after December 31, 2024. After that date, a decision will be made about how the infrastructure will be given back to the town. There are multiple openings at Middle River Jail and the training for the jail is very different from the prison training. The DOC has been working with DCJS to develop a training program to help transition from the prison to the jail.

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CLOSED SESSION

On motion of Ms. Carter, 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- Recycling, Library, Broadband, Planning Commission, Parks & Recreation, Youth Commission, Ag and Forestal Dist., Central Shenandoah Planning Dist. Commission, Social Services, Blue Ridge Committee, Board of Zoning Appeals

Dr. Seaton questioned the County Attorney if Board members were allowed to take detailed notes of the closed session.

Mr. Benkahla stated that it would be up to the Board. Currently, there is no rule regarding handwritten notes.

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

Motion carried.

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

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

Motion carried.

January 10, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION (CONT'D)

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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, Carter, Shull, Garber, Wells, Carter and Bragg
Nays: Seaton

Motion carried.

Dr. Seaton indicated that he was asked if he was recording the closed session and that was not in the motion to go to closed session. For this reason, he voted no to certify.

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

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BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Ms. Carter moved, seconded by Mr. Shull, that the Board appoint Kristy McComas to serve and unexpired term on the Planning Commission. Effective immediately and to expire on June 30, 2026.

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

Motion carried.

Ms. Carter moved, seconded by Mr. Shull, that the Board appoint Monica Rutledge to serve on the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee for the Pastures District.

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

Motion carried.

