

HENRY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES

Annual Planning Session February 5, 2013 – 3:00 pm

The Henry County Board of Supervisors held its annual planning session on February 5, 2013 at 3:00 pm at the Henry County Administration Building. Prior to the start of the meeting, members of the Board of Supervisors and several members of County staff traveled to and toured both facilities of Commonwealth Laminating and Coatings, Inc. located in the Patriot Centre Business Park.

The following Board members were present: Jim Adams, Chairman; Tommy Slaughter, Vice Chairman; Debra Buchanan, H. G. Vaughn, Joe Bryant and Milton Kendall.

Staff members present were Tim Hall, County Administrator; Dale Wagoner, Deputy County Administrator; George Lyle, County Attorney; Darrell Jones, Director of Finance; Richard Stanfield, Deputy Director of Finance; Susan Reynolds, Director of Human Resources/Public Information Officer; and Rodney Howell, Director of Public Safety.

Also present were Paul Collins of the Martinsville Bulletin; Ron Morris of B-99; and Sheriff Lane Perry, Lt. Colonel Steve Eanes, and Captain Ricky Walker, Henry County Sheriff's Office.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Adams called the meeting to order at 4:50 p.m.

PUBLIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS – RODNEY HOWELL

Mr. Howell presented recommendations to improve delivery of fire and emergency medical services in the County. In December, the Board received the final report of the Virginia Fire Services Board study of Henry County's fire and EMS. Mr. Howell indicated that public safety staff had thoroughly reviewed the study document and received input from stakeholders, including two meetings with volunteer chiefs and captains to develop the recommendations. Additionally, Mr. Howell made reference to the 2011 ISO fire departments reports, NFPA standards, National Incident Management Systems, state code and local ordinances.

The following are recommendations by Mr. Howell:

- Update County Code to create the fire division and recognize the authority of the Public Safety Director. Mr. Howell indicated that this would create a framework for systematic growth, increase consistency and credibility, and increase grant funding opportunities.

- Create a Fire and Rescue Advisory Committee to develop a strategic plan, including a common mission and vision, and to make other recommendations to County staff and the Board of Supervisors. Mr. Howell indicated that he preferred the committee to consist of the thirteen volunteer chiefs and captains. However, he wanted input from the Board because there are many advantages and disadvantages as to the actual composition of the committee. Some other options for consideration may include a representative from each magisterial district and other stakeholders.
- Develop a working group composed of personnel from the Department of Public Safety, school system, and college to explore the possibility of conducting high school fire and EMS training programs. Mr. Howell noted that there are several hurdles to conducting high school programs, including funding, coordination, instructors, and curriculum.

Once the organizational structure is codified and the advisory committee is established, the Department of Public Safety and the advisory committee can explore and recommend additional measures to improve the system, including:

- Develop a single set of standard operating procedures
- Evaluate the need for an additional county supplemental crew
- Establish rapid intervention team training and policies per NFPA standards
- Implement reasonable and realistic officer standards
- Develop a capital improvements plan
- Establish apparatus specifications based on NFPA and ISO standards
- Look for opportunities for collective purchasing and standardization of specifications
- Seek grant and funding opportunities
- Explore having the Department of Public Safety maintain a reserve fire engine

Fiscal Review

Mr. Hall presented a brief review of the general fund balance. In the year ending June 30, 2012, the total general fund balance increased to \$28,393,368. The unassigned portion of the fund balance has increased to \$17,599,659, up from \$15,792,166 in the previous year.

Fiscal Preview

Mr. Hall presented a brief preview of some of the challenges and opportunities in developing the FY '14 budget, including:

- Preliminary data of the reassessments indicates a 4.72% decrease in property values. This represents a revenue loss of \$653,053. The County's current real estate tax rate is 46¢/\$100. In order to remain revenue neutral, the rate will have to be set at 49¢/\$100.
- School issues such as the decision whether or not to build a new school to replace Collinsville Primary and John Redd Smith Elementary, funding of resource officers, and creating a joint capital improvements fund with the schools.
- 9-1-1 center staffing to address the tremendous call volume and the need for additional dispatchers.
- General assembly matters including the proposed end of "Localities Aid to the Commonwealth" (\$286,000), proposed raises to teachers and Constitutional officers that will require a local match and threats to the BPOL and machinery and tools taxes.
- Second year of the phase-in requiring employees to contribute to the Virginia Retirement System.
- Funding for any new retail development efforts
- Expecting a 10% increase in health care costs
- Employee compensation – FY 2014 would be the 5th year without a pay raise for county employees.

Mr. Hall indicated that he will not recommend any decisions on carry-over funds until the FY '14 budget is finalized.

REVIEW OF BOARD'S 2012-2013 PRIORITIES

Mr. Hall reviewed the Board's priorities from last year's Planning Session, and the progress made on those goals. That report included:

Development of Industrial Sites

- Grading of Lot 2 in the Patriot Centre
- Proposal for a new shell building on Lot 8 in the Patriot Centre
- Issues with the Corps of Engineers in grading Commonwealth Crossing Business Centre

Support for the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation

- The County fully funded its shared of the EDC
- The County works closely with EDC almost on a daily basis and routinely provides engineering work conceptual planning, and data on infrastructure such as water supply and sewer capacity.

Job Creation and Capital Investment

- Tile Shop \$4 million
- Northwest TrueValue \$1.5 million 12 jobs
- LamTech \$2 million 30 jobs
- Ebay/GSI \$1.5 million 60 jobs
- Drake Extrusion \$3 million 25 jobs
- Commonwealth Laminating \$5.45 million 60 jobs
- AirCare Air Methods air amb. staff
- RTI Production begins \$135 million 27 emp.
- Taxing Authority Consulting 17 jobs

Tourism / Marina Project

- Developed site plan and construction drawings
- Soliciting bids for construction
- Much interest in renting boat slips and the group camp ground area
- Pre-bid 2/7, bids due 2/19
- Anticipate opening – Summer 2013
- Numerous successes in tourism such as fishing tournament held as Philpott Lake

Retail Development

- Three permits issued for new construction in retail
 - Northwest TrueValue Hardware
 - Dollar General
 - Family Dollar
- Modest increase in sales tax and meals tax revenue
- Board's support of retail initiative

Expansion of water & sewer infrastructure (particularly in areas surrounding Speedway, Sports Complex, and Airport)

- Water and sewer lines to CCBC

Raise the educational levels of residents, both high school and college, with an added emphasis on career and technical education

- New leadership at NCI and PHCC
- NCI – efforts to build new facility for advanced manufacturing and health-related careers
- NCI – increase in enrollment
- STEM initiative in County schools

Growth of E.M.S. program

- Added a 2nd crew during the daytime, stationed primarily at Bassett Rescue

- Received study report from the Virginia Department of Fire Programs
- Ordered a new ambulance for use by County staff, funded 80% with grant funds

Improving community appearance / litter issues

- Improvements to litter ordinance
 - now class 1-misdemeanor, minimum fines
 - fines from \$250 to \$2,500, up to 1 yr in jail
- Litter cameras / Enhanced enforcement efforts
- Inmate litter program
 - (picked up 5,511 bags of garbage from roadway in 2012)
 - Nearly 1,000 bags more than the previous year
- Volunteer efforts
 - Gateway Streetscape, DRBA, Trout Unlimited, etc.
- Anti-litter art contest
- South Street Project has improved the community appearance in that area.

PRIORITIES FOR 2013 - 14

The Board and staff divided into two groups to discuss and develop a list of priorities for the upcoming year. Each group presented its discussion to the entire group of participants. Mr. Hall then facilitated discussion to identify commonalities and to merge the ideas into one list of priorities. It was the consensus to have four priorities for the New Year with several bullets noted under each priority. Priorities for 2013 include:

Economic Growth

- Commonwealth Crossing
- Development of Lot 2 at the Patriot Centre
- Construction of the shell building on Lot 8 at the Patriot Centre
- Retail development
- Eco-tourism

Raise Education Levels

- Collinsville Primary and John Redd Smith Elementary Schools/facilities
- Support New College Institute
- Support Patrick Henry Community College
- Support the "New-Tech" concept at Magna Vista

Public Safety

- Establish framework for fire division and additional authority for the Department of Public Safety
- Explore possibilities for high school fire and EMS programs
- Look for economical solutions to increased jail overcrowding
- School security, including school resource officers and plant changes

Community Appearance

- Address litter issues
- Look for ways to improve community appearance

Several members of the Board expressed the desire to establish a capital improvements fund, preserve the County's fund balance, and to develop a tax revenue neutral budget.

Ms. Buchanan inquired of Mr. Hall as how he anticipated handling budget requests from outside agencies. Mr. Hall said it would have to be considered within the context of the entire budget development, but he did not anticipate any new revenues that would make it possible to fund new agencies.

There being no further business to discuss, Mr. Slaughter moved to adjourn at 7:45 p.m., seconded by Mr. Bryant and unanimously carried.