

# HENRY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES

## Annual Planning Session February 8, 2018 – 4:00 pm

The Henry County Board of Supervisors held its annual planning session on February 8, 2018 at 4:00 p.m. at the Henry County Public Safety Complex.

The following Board members were present: Jim Adams, Chairman; Debra Buchanan, Vice Chairman; Tommy Slaughter, Joe Bryant, Ryan Zehr and David Martin.

Staff members present were Tim Hall, County Administrator; Dale Wagoner, Deputy County Administrator; Darrell Jones, Director of Finance; Susan Reynolds, Human Resources Director; Michelle Via, Human Resources Generalist; Tim Pace, Engineering & Mapping Manager; Roger Adams, Parks & Recreation Director; Matt Tatum, Public Safety Director; Mark Heath, Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation; Sheriff Lane Perry, Lt. Colonel Steve Eanes, Captain Eric Hairston, 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. David Mills, and Lt. Allen Hall of the Sheriff's Office.

Also present were local residents Charles Williams, Andrew Barker, and Gordon Metz, and Ben Williams of the Martinsville Bulletin.

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Vice-Chairman Debra Buchanan called the meeting to order at 4:00 p.m. Chairman Jim Adams arrived shortly thereafter and assumed chairmanship of the meeting.

### **Presentations**

The Board heard presentations from the following departments: Mark Heath, CEO of the Martinsville Economic Development Corporation; Tim Pace, Director of Engineering and Mapping; Roger Adams of Parks and Recreation; Matt Tatum, Director of Public Safety; and Lane Perry, Sheriff. *(A copy of the presentations included in the Board's file).*

### **Fiscal Review**

Mr. Hall presented charts to the Board showing the County's total general fund balance at \$36,119,670 and its unassigned balance as 23,200,191. Mr. Hall noted that the unassigned balance is down from the previous year because the Board assigned \$XX to the revenue stabilization fund.

### **REVIEW OF BOARD'S 2017-18 Goals and Initiatives**

Mr. Hall reviewed the Board's priorities from last year's planning session that guided the Board and staff to focus on the three pillars of economic development,

education, and law enforcement/public safety. The board also listed driving factors for the County in the 2017-18 as follows:

- Thrive for clean communities and improved curb appeal; including tightening of local regulations, increased funding for mitigation unsafe structures, supporting the Smith River Small Town Collaborative initiatives and implementing Virginia Avenue safety enhancements.
- Market C.C.B.C. and the shell building.
- Monitor small business and retail development efforts.
- Explore options for revenue enhancements including adjusting taxes and seeking out grant opportunities.
- Seeks opportunity for tourism growth with increased excitement from the light project and 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martinsville Speedway.
- Continue support educational and workforce training.
- Continue support of public safety and law enforcement initiatives
- Explore recruitment and retention issues, and focus on improving compensation and benefits for staff.

Mr. Hall noted that the Henry County unemployment rate is currently at 4.4%. This is the lowest unemployment rate in Henry County since December 2006, and it is only the third time since 1990 that the County's unemployment has dropped to 4.4% or lower. Additionally, Hall noted that there are only 983 people listed as unemployed with the County. It has not been that low since December 2000.

Mr. Hall briefly discussed the following announcements and other highlights since the last planning session:

- Bassett Furniture – 22 new jobs, \$1.5 million new investment
- Applied Felts – 15 new jobs, \$3 million new investment
- Eastman – 15 new jobs, \$11.7 million new investment
- Hopkins Lumber – 25 new jobs, \$2.5 million new investment
- Work on the Centre for Advanced Training (CCAT) and the realization of an additional \$2.71 million for the project from New Market Tax Credits
- Celebrated the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Martinsville Speedway, including the addition of LED lighting at the track, and the Henry County Logo Project
- Progress on Meadow View Elementary School
- Progress on the Smith River Small Towns Collaborative
- Added a third PART bus
- Plans to expand the Dick & Willie Trail (Phase 6B)
- Revitalizations efforts in Fieldale

### **Challenges**

Mr. Hall noted that Henry County will face three main challenges in the next fiscal year: Significant expenses for outsourcing jail inmates to other localities, compensation issues for county staff and potential retirements of county employees.

## **GOALS FOR 2018-19**

It was determined that the three overarching goals will remain as economic development, education, and law enforcement/public safety.

Board members worked in pairs to develop their suggestions for goals for the upcoming year. In summary, the Board identified the following driving factors for FY '18-19:

- Strengthen partnerships and communication with education entities (PHCC, NCI, HCPS)
- Continue to examine development opportunities along Route 58 West corridor toward Blue Ridge Airport
- Continue emphasis on jail project and continue to monitor expenses with regard to housing inmates outside our system
- Keep fiscal policies strong
- Treat our people well – work on retention and compensation
- Pursue a Compensation Study to evaluate County and School Board personnel
- Continue to emphasize marketing of CCBC and Patriot Centre
- Expand the Philpott Marina and continue to emphasize/improve amenities such as Smith River Sports Complex, Dick and Willie Trail/River access points
- Work on curb appeal
- Evaluate incentives for fire and EMS volunteers

## **Continuation of Meeting**

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was continued until February 20, 2018 at 5 p.m. for a joint budget meeting with the School Board. The meeting ended at 7:20 p.m.