

HENRY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MINUTES

Annual Planning Session February 4, 2020 – 3:00 pm

The Henry County Board of Supervisors held its annual planning session on February 4, 2020, at 3:00 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; Richard Stanfield, Deputy Director of Finance; Michelle Via, Human Resources Director; Matt Tatum, Public Safety Director; Jennifer Gregory, Administrative Assistant; Sheriff Lane Perry, Lt. Colonel Steve Eanes, Captain Eric Hairston, and Deputy Nicole Dunn.

Also present were local residents Charles Williams, Rev. Tyler Millner, Kim Meeks of the Martinsville Bulletin, and Brandon Martin of Henry County Enterprise.

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Jim Adams called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m.

Dr. Martin moved to go forward with the agenda items, seconded by Mr. Zehr and unanimously carried.

Consideration of Adding Early Childhood Education Center to the Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS)

On a motion by Mr. Bryant and seconded by Mr. Slaughter, the Board unanimously approved adding the Early Childhood Education Center to the '20-'21 Regional Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS).

Review of 2018-19 Goals and Accomplishments

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 emergency services (law enforcement/public safety). The board also listed goals for the County in 2019-20 as follows:

- New Clients at CCBC.
- Client for the shell building.
- Start construction on the new jail.
- Keep fiscal policies strong.
- AEP Substation for CCBC.
- Treat employees well.
- New PSA water connections.

- Expand Marina and other amenities.
- Address escalating fire & EMS call volumes.
- Enhancements to Virginia Avenue.
- Plan for a County Fair.

Mr. Hall briefly discussed the current year highlights:

- The lowest unemployment rate in over 20 years (~3%).
- CCAT is open and being used.
- Opened Section 6B of the Dick & Willie Trail.
- Blue Ridge Airport Expansion Project.
- Modest growth in sales tax and meals tax.
- A modest increase in hotel tax.
- Installed trash compactors at the Axton Convenience Center.
- All schools are fully accredited.
- Upgrades in Bassett – The Bassett Train Depot is open for business.
- Added a “power shift” to Public Safety staff to improve response to emergency calls.
- Approx. 2% increase in the number of calls.
- Approx. 10% increase in responses by County Staff.
- County staff is handling/assisting with approximately 82% of all calls.
- County handles an average of 17 calls/month outside of Henry County.
- We require assistance from other jurisdictions on average of seven calls/month.
- Martinsville Southern Connector route approved.
- Smith River Sports Complex had a successful year.
- Henry County has been declared a V3 Certified Company - Virginia Values Veterans.

Economic Development

Mr. Hall updated the Board on Economic Development:

- Eastman expansion - \$7.7 million investment - added space - organic job growth.
- Teal Jones/Pine Products - 67 new jobs - \$21 million investment.
- DRP Performance - \$1.1 million investment - 13 jobs.
- Advanced Revert LLC - \$5 million investment - 30 jobs.

Construction Update Henry County Adult Detention Center

Mr. Wagoner updated the Board on the jail project:

- Construction is on schedule (8%).
 - Anticipated Completion – January 2022.
 - Favorable weather for Winter months – no delays.
- The site has been prepped and graded, storm water pipes installed, the foundation at 95% complete, block wall is being installed as the foundation is poured. Over 1,400 CY of concrete has been used thus far.

- Many of the materials/supplies are being sourced locally.
- Direct purchasing of materials and supplies will save money.
- Staff will ask the Board at the February meeting to award the contract for the sewer lift station to serve the new facility and other tenants at the site.

Looking Ahead to 2020-2021

Mr. Hall noted the following issues in the upcoming fiscal year:

- County will need to start hiring employees to work at the new jail.
- Demand for Fire & EMS continue to escalate.
- An escalation in health insurance costs.
- Compensation across the board is low.
- Housing Initiative – John Redd Smith School.
- New leadership at The Harvest Foundation.
- Additional personnel needed for Parks & Recreation.
- Potential for a Dog Park?
- Future of Smith River Sports Complex.
- Potential peripheral changes that will impact us:
 - Changes to the minimum wage.
 - Gas tax increase.
 - Right-to-Work.
 - Changes to how education is funded by the State (LCI).
 - New revenue possibilities
 - Equal taxing authority
 - Tobacco tax/meals tax/lodging tax
 - 1% sales tax for school construction.

Reversion

Mr. Hall updated the Board on reversion:

- The process began with City's filing in December 2019.
- Our process has begun too
 - Attorneys reviewing.
 - Forensic Accountant reviewing.
 - Anticipate a public presentation of our findings in the near future.
- Webpage active
 - <https://www.henrycountyva.gov/reversion>

GOALS FOR 2020-21

Board members and staff worked in groups of three to develop three goals they would like to see in Economic Development, Education, and Public Safety/Law Enforcement. Board members and staff were also asked to name a 10th goal that was totally far-fetched.

CLOSED MEETING

Mr. Zehr moved that the Board go into a closed meeting at 6:15 p.m., seconded by Ms. Buchanan and unanimously carried to discuss the following:

- 1) §2.2-3711(A)7 for Discussion of Pending Legal Matters.

OPEN MEETING

The Board returned to an open meeting at 6:51 p.m. on a motion by Ms. Buchanan, seconded by Mr. Slaughter and unanimously carried.

CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING

Mr. Wagoner read the Certification of the Closed Meeting and took a roll call vote.

Board members voting in the affirmative were Mr. Adams, Mr. Bryant, Ms. Buchanan, Dr. Martin, Mr. Zehr, and Mr. Slaughter.

Adjournment of Meeting

There being no further business to discuss, the meeting was adjourned at 6:52 p.m. The next regular meeting will be February 25, 2020, at 3:00 p.m. There will also be a joint budget meeting with the School Board at 5:00 p.m.