

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Alleghany County, Virginia held on Tuesday, April 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Alleghany County Governmental Complex, Covington, Virginia, thereof:

PRESENT: G. Matt Garten, Chairman  
James M. Griffith, Vice-Chairman  
Stephen A. Bennett  
Shannon P. Cox  
Gregory A. Dodd  
Ronald S. Goings  
Cletus W. Nicely

and Peter M. Huber, Interim County Administrator  
Suzanne Adcock-Nicely, Director of Finance  
Chad Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation  
Jim Guynn, County Attorney  
Melissa A. Munsey, Deputy Clerk to the Board

CALL TO ORDER:

The Chairman called the regular meeting to order. Mr. Nicely gave the invocation and the audience remained standing for the Pledge of Allegiance.

Mr. Garten stated that Item 9D under New Business is being added to the agenda to “discuss and consider signing an agreement with NueSynergy, Inc. in relation to employee health benefit plans.”

MINUTES:

Hearing no corrections or deletions, the Chairman declared the following minutes approved as submitted: (1) a regular meeting held on March 1, 2022; (2) a special call meeting held on March 16, 2022; and (3) an adjourned meeting held on March 28, 2022.

PUBLIC COMMENT (5 MINUTE TIME LIMIT):

Ms. Lorri Saville, 5813 Rich Patch Road and teacher at Clifton Middle School (CMS), handed out several items that are a part of the records of this meeting. They included compiled emails from teachers, memorandum on analysis of bus routes, and facility reviews of CMS and Covington High School (CHS). She stated that she is a voice for other teachers tonight in relation to the closing of CMS, some of which are present. She read the following emails from teachers:

*My biggest concern is the fact that they left CMS teachers completely out of the decision making process. You can tour a building, but the walls do not speak to give you the wealth of knowledge that the teachers who work here day after day, year after year possess!*

*This decision was not made to give our students the best possible place to receive the education they deserve. This was made to appease the public...the Covington Cougar Fan public! Teachers will make choices based on what's best for students, not what's best for nostalgia!*

*I am so concerned about the lack of a bus loop. When our students switch buildings the needs will not change. Hundreds of kids need a safe way to get to and from school. Currently this is impossible at CHS. My \$40,000 equipment cannot go in an un air-conditioned room. HVAC systems need to be put into place prior to students moving and moving equipment in. This is true for all CTE classrooms. All of the agricultural plants will die in the cold months because there is no climate control in those rooms. There is funding available, but there is no plan. There is no plan because people don't know what jobs they are going to be responsible for.*

*If the building is not paid for and it will be subleased to someone (Dabney?) who pays the taxes and takes care of the maintenance?*

*The library is on the second floor of CHS and 1 elevator. Our librarian is in a wheelchair and if in case there is a fire and the elevator will not be in service, how is she expected to vacate the building? The stairwells are very narrow to accommodate everyone leaving at once - Clifton Middle School has 4.*

*The CMS library is larger, there is no way to get 8,000 books in the CHS library.*

*Clifton Middle School is up to code - since Covington is a relic, you are unable to remodel it.*

*Parking issues - games, events, etc.*

*All ballfields are all in one place at CMS - at CHS they are all spread out.*

*Where is the report that shows that Covington is a better fit for the middle school?*

She added that she is not against consolidation and they want what is best for the children, but going from a modern school to an older school is not a good thing. Other items mentioned included: CHS should be a central office or something; CMS would be losing everything (school building, name, mascot, colors, etc.); background checks are done on adults at CMS

and MVE and asked if DSLCC leases the building if they would be required to also do them as it is all one building; etc.

Ms. Deloris Quarles, 701A Wrightstown Avenue, gave an update from the community on the Wrightsville project. She mentioned challenges and hurdles of the project; working with two County Administrators since the start with a new one on the way; Hammond-Mitchell will be doing the infrastructure work and will be given a notice to proceed toward the end of the month; a couple houses may be built soon; held a community meeting with Mr. Alvin Trout from VDOT attending who gave them information on future plans with Rt. 667 (Wrightstown Avenue); an extension on the deadline will be requested of DHCD due to COVID, etc.

Ms. Katie Hinkle, 6201 Uplands Road and CMS teacher/coach, spoke in regards to the issues with closing CMS in relation to the proximity for sports (i.e., games, practice, etc.) as four gyms are currently within a mile radius and CHS only has one gym; etc.

MS. SUSAN HAMMOND, VDOT RESIDENT ENGINEER - VIRGINIA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION UPDATE:

Ms. Susan Hammond, VDOT Resident Engineer, gave an update on the following VDOT activities:

Maintenance

- *Cutting brush on Rts. 850, 770, 650, 777, 776, and 600.*
- *Grading dirt roads.*
- *County-wide cold mix patching on primary and secondary routes.*
- *Replaced pipes on Rts. 613 and 600.*
- *Repaired shoulders/culverts in Dolly Ann, Rts. 159, and 311.*
- *Swept intersections off Rt. 18.*
- *Collected trash bags from volunteer pickup.*
- *Bridge repair on Rt. 687 near Petticoat should be complete this week.*
- *I-64 bridge over Sioux Ave. should be completed in the next two weeks.*
- *Bridge painting underway on I-64 between Longdale and Low Moor.*
- *Cleaning up snow equipment.*

Construction

- *Began work on Rt. 638 Rural Rustic project by replacing pipe and dressing up shoulders.*
- *Paving on I-64 westbound near MM 2 will start this week.*

Other

- *Requesting joint public hearing with County for Secondary Six Year Plan on May 3, 2022. Due to significant increases in material costs, no projects were added to the plan.*
- *May 2, 2022 Staunton District's Six Year Plan public hearing will be held in person this year at Blue Ridge Community College.*
- *April is Work Zone Awareness Month. Asked everyone to be aware when entering work zones. Cited 2021 statistics (i.e., crashes, fatalities, injuries, etc.).*

Mrs. Cox stated that a family has been in contact with VDOT on the speed limit at the Dominion Power plant on Rt. 311 and commented that a safety study may need to be done to decrease the speed limit. She mentioned that there are families with children that moved in that area and are concerned with safety. She asked about how "Watch for Child" signs could be put up. Ms. Hammond replied that VDOT would need to determine the appropriate location, but this is handled through the County.

Mr. Bennett stated that he is getting calls about ditch maintenance on White Rock Gap as water is going into the highway. He asked about the Rt. 159 bridge weight limit. Ms. Hammond replied that if a bridge has a posted/reduced weight limit then VDOT is looking at replacing it at some point. She commented that there are many bridges that need replaced and they try to look at doing temporary improvements in the interim.

Mr. Dodd asked if the bridge to the middle school was checked. Ms. Hammond replied that they could put in cold mix now, but it would not stay in. She commented that it will be patched with hot mix once the plant is running.

Mr. Garten stated that heading eastbound on I-64 just past Island Ford bridge water is coming across the road approximately 12' wide. He commented regarding the Rt. 220 highwall and that the material/debris is coming down.

APPROVE AUTHORIZATION TO PROCEED WITH THE PURCHASE AND INSTALLATION OF RESTROOMS

AT ROSE DALE PARK:

Mr. Williams stated that there is an update in the agenda packet along with pictures. The update is as follows:

**Rose Dale Park Update**

*The 14 acre Rose Dale Park property was donated to the County in February of 2017 by Lydia McAllister Mefford. Her desire for the property to be open to and enjoyed by the community prompted Ms. Mefford to trust the property to Alleghany County for development and management. The following are improvements the property has undergone since the County acquired it.*

**Improvements**

1. *Immediately after acquisition, Parks & Recreation staff began clean up of the property. This included hauling off immense amounts of trash from years of illegal dumping. Staff also cleared all the underbrush and dead trees from the section closest to Route 60 and the Rosedale Bridge. Staff prepared the soil in that section and reseeded.*
2. *Parks & Recreation staff then developed two parking areas and installed split rail fencing. At this time, the Jackson River Access point in the park was opened and a park sign installed.*
3. *Public Works employee David Wickline then graded part of the property so two full sized athletic fields could be developed. Parks & Recreation staff developed the fields.*
4. *A pavilion was installed on the side closest to Route 60.*

**Current Uses**

- *River access*
- *Fishing*
- *Football games & practices*
- *Tee ball baseball practices*
- *Volleyball*
- *Shelter rentals & open space use*

**Future Improvements**

- *Walking trail*
- *Playground*
- *Additional pavilion*
- *Community gardens*
- *Access road improvements*
- *Restrooms*

**Acquisition of 510 Stoughton Lane**

- *Staff was directed by the Board to purchase the building and it was acquired in June of 2021 with the intention of demolishing the existing building and installing restrooms for use at Rose Dale Park.*
- *Asbestos abatement was completed earlier this month and the building was demolished last week.*
- *The property is now ready for the addition of restrooms.*

**Restrooms**

- *Public Restroom Company through Sourcewell Account*
- *Same as the restrooms at the Intervale trailhead and future Cedar Creek Trailhead with the addition of integrated water fountains, baby changing stations, and small storage area. The restrooms at Intervale were installed five years ago, are heavily used, and have proven to be maintenance free to this point.*
- *Restrooms are highly vandal resistant with all stainless steel fixtures.*
- *The current quote for the restrooms and installation is \$319,799. All funding has been allocated through ARPA.*
- *Asking for the Board to authorize moving forward with the purchase and installation of the restrooms at Rose Dale Park.*

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Mr. Nicely, that the following resolution be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors authorize the Parks and Recreation Department to proceed with the purchase and installation of restrooms at Rose Dale Park through the use of ARPA funds which have already been appropriated.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

- |                    |     |
|--------------------|-----|
| Stephen A. Bennett | Yes |
| Shannon P. Cox     | Yes |
| Gregory A. Dodd    | Yes |
| Ronald S. Goings   | Yes |
| Cletus W. Nicely   | Yes |
| James M. Griffith  | Yes |
| G. Matt Garten     | Yes |

APPROVE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN FY22 (WESTROCK DONATION TO ALLEGHANY HUMANE SOCIETY):

Mr. Huber stated that WestRock gave the County a \$5,000 check for the Alleghany Humane Society. He mentioned that they used to give the money directly to them, but changed and funds are now going through the County.

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Mr. Bennett, that the following resolution be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors budget and approve the following supplemental appropriation in FY22 for the Alleghany Humane Society due to the donation of funds from WestRock:

<u>Revenue Account</u>	
Animal Protection (110-4160601)	\$5,000
<u>Expenditure Account</u>	
Animal Protection - Contributions (3501-55604)	\$5,000

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

APPROVE REQUEST FROM REGISTRAR'S OFFICE FOR A TRANSFER OF FUNDS FROM OPERATING CONTINGENCY TO COMPLETE THE REDISTRICTING PROCESS:

Mr. John Barnes, Electoral Board member, stated that to complete the redistricting process the Registrar's Office will need to notify all voters regarding changes. He commented that the redistricting process has moved the County into the 6<sup>th</sup> Congressional, 3<sup>rd</sup> Senate, and 37<sup>th</sup> House Districts and there were also approximately 800 voters that had a voting location change due to the local redistricting. He mentioned that all qualified voters will need to be sent a new voter card by mail prior to June 1<sup>st</sup> for the June primary. He requested that the Board approve a transfer of \$12,000 to cover costs (i.e., postage, supplies, labor, etc.).

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Dr. Goings, that the following resolution be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors approve and appropriate the following transfers from Operating Contingency in FY22 in order for the Registrar's Office to complete the redistricting process:

<u>Transfer From:</u>	
Operating Contingency (9100-54001)	\$12,000.00
<u>Transfer To:</u>	
Part Time Salaries Wages (1302-51003)	\$ 3,245.00
Postal Service (1302-55201)	\$ 6,775.00
Office Supplies (1302-55401)	\$ 1,980.00

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

APPROVE SIGNING AN AGREEMENT WITH NUESYNERGY, INC. IN RELATION TO EMPLOYEE HEALTH BENEFIT PLANS:

Ms. Adcock-Nicely stated that currently the County utilizes LD&B Benefits to administer health care savings accounts for employees. She commented that they no longer provide this service. She recommended that the Board approve the Employer Administrative Services Agreement with NueSynergy, Inc.

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Mrs. Cox, that the following resolution be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors authorize the Interim County Administrator/County Administrator to sign the Employer Administrative Services Agreement with NueSynergy, Inc. in relation to Health Savings Account (HSA) plans, Health Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA), and Limited Purpose Flexible Spending Account (LPFSA) plans.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. Huber handed out and gave a report on the following items which are a part of the records of this meeting:

Appointments to the Alleghany Highlands School Board

*The County is currently soliciting citizens interested in serving on the new consolidated School Board. The deadline is 2:00 p.m. on Monday, April 25, 2022 and interviews will be held as part of the May 3<sup>rd</sup> Board meeting.*

Forest Service Funding

*As described in the attached memo, the Forest Service funded a \$38,860 project to clear 5 miles of trails and \$10,000 for mile markers along the Jackson and Cowpasture rivers.*

Appoint Individuals to the Alleghany County Bicentennial Celebration Committee

*It is recommended that the Board of Supervisors appoint a bicentennial celebration committee. Appointment by the Board of Supervisors qualifies committee members and sponsored events for coverage under the County's VACorp insurance coverage at no additional cost. Persons currently working on events include: Suzanne Adcock-Nicely, Beverly Bowers, Ricky Bourne, Teresa Hammond, Chad Williams, Megan Persinger, Paul Linkenhoker, and Pete Hubers with others welcome as may be desired by the Board.*

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Dr. Goings, that the following resolution be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors appoint the following individuals to serve on the Alleghany County Bicentennial Celebration Committee:

Suzanne Adcock-Nicely  
Beverly Bowers  
Ricky Bourne  
Chad Williams  
Pete Huber  
Teresa Hammond  
Paul Linkenhoker  
Megan Persinger

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

Route 42/I-64 Triangle Property Development (Approve adding to CEDS listing and RV-ARC assistance)

*Attached is a general map depicting the location of approximately 170 acres given to the County by the Forest Service in 2003. In light of the need for housing as documented in the County's Housing Study completed in 2019, it is recommended that the commercial and residential development of this property be added to the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) project listing. Furthermore, it is recommended that the Regional Commission be asked to assist Alleghany County with the development of a conceptual plan for the effective development of this property to serve Nicelytown area as well as overall housing needs in the County.*

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Mr. Griffith, that the following resolution be approved:

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors request that the commercial and residential

development of the Route 42/1-64 Triangle Property be added to the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RV-ARC) Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy (CEDS) project listing;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorize staff to ask the RV-ARC to assist the County with the development of a conceptual plan for the effective development of the Triangle Property.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Yes
Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

#### CEDS Listing

*Listing a project on the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy of the Regional Commission helps to raise the visibility of that project while increasing eligibility for federal funding. Currently, a number of projects are on the CEDS listing that are fully funded and/or are now under construction and can be removed from the listing, a copy of which is attached. Projects that can currently be removed include Phase Five of the Jackson River Trail, repurposing the Falling Springs School, and the Wrightsville Housing and Neighborhood Rehabilitation project. Board action requesting removal is recommended.*

The Board agreed by consensus to remove the abovementioned projects from the CEDS listing.

#### BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS (INQUIRIES/REPORTS):

##### Miscellaneous

Mr. Dodd thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and for the teachers present that expressed their concern. He stated that for the school consolidation we need to be fair and going from a new school to an old school is not fair. He commented that this was the only way the deal went through with Covington.

Mr. Nicely stated that he appreciates all being here tonight. He commented that he is against closing CMS. He mentioned that it took forever to build the school as a bridge had to be built as well. He stated that if this is the only way to consolidate then it is wrong. He asked what would be put in there (i.e., college students with grade school kids). He commented that it is a beautiful school and he will fight this until it actually happens. He mentioned that we hold the purse strings.

Mr. Bennett mentioned two previous attempts at consolidating schools that did not work out. He stated that we knew this was going to be a problem, but Covington gave some in the negotiations too and an agreement was reached.

Mrs. Cox commented that she appreciates the teachers coming to the meeting tonight and voicing their concerns. She stated that they made a lot of valid points and have opened her mind. She mentioned that she did not think of logistics for sports/practice until Ms. Hinkle made her comments. She thanked Ms. Quarles for her update on the Wrightsville project. She commented regarding being at the Chamber dinner and Lumos mentioning that the County is fully covered with broadband access versus just saying their "coverage" area. She stated that a six mile stretch in the "lost colony" in her district has no service. She mentioned that students need internet. She commented that they were told to call the SCC and we need to stay on top of the situation. She stated that those people who do not have service may come to a meeting to let their voices be heard and she is going to champion for them.

Dr. Goings commented that he is glad the CMS teachers are here tonight and he understands their issues. He stated that he does not see why we should close the middle school and he would hate to think it was a done deal. He commented that the CMS building is larger than CHS and if Sharon or other schools were closed where would you put those students. He stated that he is tempted to say rip up the agreement and start over.

Mr. Griffith commented that he was not in favor of closing the middle school, but the plan has been presented to the State and funded by the General Assembly. He mentioned that when the public meetings were held last summer was when

the teachers should have been there expressing their concerns. He stated that one meeting was held at CHS and one at CMS.

Several teachers indicated that they did not know about meetings and did not get the chance to properly express their opposition to the closure in the first place. They only knew about the survey poll regarding colors and names.

Mr. Garten stated that he and Mr. Griffith are part of the Joint School Services Committee. He commented that it was not long ago that two schools (Boiling Springs and Falling Spring) were shut down. He stated that was done because of costs and not all employees kept their job. He commented that he does not want to shut down schools or raise taxes, but it costs a lot to run schools and you can not run two school districts with the population not going up. He stated that no matter which school(s) are closed someone will be unhappy. He mentioned that they made the best compromise that could be made.

CLOSED MEETING:

On motion of Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Griffith, that the Board go into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia Sections 2.2-3711(A)(1) and (8) for the purpose of: (1) personnel matters; and (2) contractual matters. Unanimously adopted.

On motion of Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mr. Griffith, that the Board come out of the Closed Meeting with the following certification:

CERTIFICATION  
SECTION 2.2-3712

To the best of our knowledge (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements under this chapter, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the Closed Meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the session.

/s/G. Matt Garten	Yes
/s/James M. Griffith	Yes
/s/Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
/s/Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
/s/Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
/s/Ronald S. Goings	Yes
/s/Shannon P. Cox	Yes

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Dr. Goings, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:35 p.m. Motion carried.

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G. Matt Garten  
Chairman