

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Alleghany County, Virginia held on Tuesday, March 5, 2024 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
Gregory A. Dodd
Ronald S. Goings

and Reid Walters, County Administrator
Suzanne Adcock-Nicely, Director of Finance
Chad Williams, Director of Parks and Recreation
Jonathan Fitch, Director of Public Safety
Jim Guynn, County Attorney
Melissa A. Munsey, Deputy Clerk to the Board

ABSENT: Shannon P. Cox
Cletus W. Nicely

CALL TO ORDER:

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

The Chairman stated that the Closed Meeting is being removed from the agenda.

MINUTES:

Hearing no corrections or deletions, the Chairman declared the following minutes approved as submitted: (1) a regular meeting held on January 3, 2024.

PUBLIC COMMENT (5 MINUTE TIME LIMIT):

Mr. Bif Johnson, Hurt & Proffitt, commented that they are the design firm for Phase 5 of the trail. He discussed a recent event in which there were significant rainfalls in early January and afterwards a section of fill area settled down and shifted (wall 1). He handed out and described three photos taken in this area which are a part of the records of this meeting. He mentioned that at no time did material go into the stream; DEQ walked the entire length on February 26th and had no additional concerns other than asking that additional measures be taken to rework the section and add additional silt fence; all work falls under the existing permit; we are working with the contractor so that the site remains stable; etc.

There was some discussion regarding the pictures: what is the black plastic material next to the creek as well as the metal fence with stakes that is leaning (this is silt fence installed during construction and the wire is to reinforce the silt fence while it is in place, but high water got behind the fencing and pushed it over which is normal with construction and the contractor put it back); the leaves on the fence and slope were blown in and also from water going behind the silt fence; 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

- Boom axed Rt. 687 and intersection roads, East Morris Hill, Hayes Gap, and Rt. 269.
- Tree and debris cleanup County-wide on primary and secondary routes due to high winds.
- Pothole patching County-wide for pavement breakup.
- Cleaned and opened pipe in advance of and after rain events.
- Replaced culverts on Rts. 683, 9881, 782, and 602.
- Graded Rts. 600, 613, and 770.
- Contractor pipe flushing on Valley Ridge Road and McCallister Lane.
- Addressed low hanging limbs with bucket truck. Will address more when truck is back in our area.
- March 18th paving will start on I-64. Will have larger update at next meeting.

Construction

- New projections released for secondary six-year plan. Will be working over the allocations in the next couple weeks.

Mr. Bennett stated that they did a good job on Hayes Gap Rd.

Mr. Garten commented that he is pleased with the high wall and mentioned that it is getting accumulation behind it again.

MR. JEREMY HOLMES, ROANOKE VALLEY-ALLEGHANY REGIONAL COMMISSION - UPDATE ON ACTIVITIES AND UPCOMING PROJECTS:

Mr. Jeremy Holmes, Executive Director of the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission, handed out and reviewed a presentation which is a part of the records of this meeting. The presentation included:

- Background on the Roanoke Valley-Alleghany Regional Commission (RV-ARC)
- Project Highlights: Collective Response (opioid crisis impacts)
- Project Highlights: RVARC and the CTB
- Project Highlights: Ready Appalachia (hired professional grant writers; community kick-off 3/14)
- Project Highlights: FY2024 (recreation plan, IIJA and other federal grant writing support, general technical support and data analytics, grow relations with federal agencies)

Mr. Griffith mentioned that the Board Room will be setup to participate in the March 14th meeting.

Mr. Bennett stated that he has heard that if you hire a grant writer they pay for themselves. He commented that it will be good to be able to utilize one through the RV-ARC.

MR. CORBIN STONE, ROBINSON FARMER COX ASSOCIATES - PRESENTATION OF COUNTY AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 2023:

Mr. Corbin Stone, Robinson Farmer Cox Associates, stated that the Board has a copy of the audit for year ending June 30, 2023, as well as a presentation at each seat. The presentation is a part of the records of this meeting. He mentioned that the audit went well with all departments and they did not have a problem getting information needed. He commented that there were a few minor recommendations regarding adjusting entries and reconciling the Special Welfare fund, a jail account, etc. He reviewed the presentation which included: (1) a chart showing a comparison of the General Fund from 6/30/14 to 6/30/23 (shows annualized growth rates with total revenues having a 2.42% growth and expenditures a 1.87% growth) and a fund balance of \$20,169,870 which would have been more if the \$3 million in sales tax for the school was included (this amount was provided directly to the School Board beginning in 2023); (2) a graph showing general fund revenues by fiscal year; (3) a graph showing general fund expenditures by fiscal year; (4) a chart showing a summary of original tax assessments (total annualized growth rate of 0.77%); (5) a chart showing select financial data (general fund balance of \$20,169,870 and a debt per capita of \$3,156.99 with the State's debt per capita \$6,545.00); (6) letter on governance with adjusting entries; and (7) audit recommendations memo. He commented that he is impressed with the County having an adequate fund balance (recommend at least \$8-\$9 million or 20% of annual budget) and low debt, as well as holding the line tight on expenditures.

There was some discussion regarding hitting peak interest rates to do longer term investments (i.e., VIP).

Mr. Garten asked the Board to contact Mr. Stone if they have any questions after reviewing the full audit report.

MR. TOM BOTKINS - DISCUSS NEW PHASE 5 ADDITION TO THE JACKSON RIVER SCENIC TRAIL:

Mr. Tom Botkins, 7206 Jackson River Road, handed out and reviewed a presentation with photos. The handout is a part of the records of this meeting and is as follows:

*Presentation to Alleghany County Board of Supervisors
March 5, 2024
(1 Before & 2, 3 & 4 After Pictures)*

When outsiders think of the Alleghany Highlands, one of several things come to mind: Falling Spring Falls, Lake Moomaw, the Jackson River, and the Homestead, among others. We have watched the deterioration of the Lake Moomaw fishery and its recreation facilities. Some of us are now watching the destruction of the Jackson River fishery and its other recreational opportunities.

I made two presentations to you in early 2023 regarding the environmental disaster in progress on Cedar Creek with the construction of Phase 5 of the Jackson River Scenic Trail. Photographs of inappropriate construction activities and environmental impacts occurring on Cedar Creek and the Jackson River were shared with you. My message with these presentations was: If all goes as "hoped/envisioned" with this project, the longest it may stay in place might approach 75 years "if" it survives the first significant flood event. I also stated it is not a question of if but when a significant portion of it collapses and is deposited in the Jackson River. When this failure occurs, the damage will be permanent. Note I now say "hoped/envisioned" instead of "as planned" because it is now obvious the project was poorly planned, designed, and implemented. All involved parties (county administration, DEQ, Corps, the H&P consultant, the contractor Summit?/ _____) have some responsibility related to this fiasco.

What you saw in the photographs showing present conditions is not what I am concerned about, it is a warning of what is coming.

I am sure that you like me have been hearing the trail would be open well before now. I thought it was important that I give you an accurate update on the situation with the trail and insure that you know the seriousness of the present situation.

The Allegheny Journal normally publishes a video of board meetings, but for the March meeting the recording was “corrupted” and only the administrator’s report of the meeting was published. Regarding the “trail”, the report stated:

Cedar Creek: Jackson River Trail Phase 5

Allegheny County has a contracted engineering firm with over 50 years of experience working within the Commonwealth of Virginia leading the project, a licensed contractor who has built trails throughout the region, and the proper permitting from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Army Corp of Engineers for the construction of the trail. The build-out of the trail is being conducted professionally and properly.

I wish this report was accurate, but it was not. It was nothing more than an inaccurate and unfounded rebuttal of the information I presented in my two presentations to you.

Information I received through a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request helped explain the environmental disaster I observed when I visited the trail construction site on Jan. 1, 2023 along with one of the questions I left with you which was (who is monitoring/inspecting the site?). Apparently no one was monitoring the site. DEQ was not monitoring the site because they had turned over the Erosion and Sediment Control Program to Allegheny County. The only individuals in the Allegheny County Administration that were aware of the construction activities were the Administrator and the Recreation Director. The County employees with responsibility for the Erosion and Sediment Control Program, including site inspections were not even aware the project had been restarted for at least 2 months after the fact and they only became aware of that fact when DEQ called and raised questions regarding complaints received and conditions they had observed at the site.

The FOIA request also provided some information on the involvement or lack thereof by DEQ and the Corps.

- In a March 1, 2023 email to others within DEQ, Harrisonburg DEQ Director Severs stated “The primary issue related to the project and complaints received is potential impacts to trout fisheries. “Given that DEQ has provided 401 certification for the USACE Nationwide Permit 13 for the work at the Site, DEQ staff have limited ability to manage these concerns.” DEQ based the certification approval on the original plans submitted by the county. These documents stated “there would be no impacts on Cedar Creek.” Obviously this conclusion was inaccurate.
- Dana Heston (USACE) in a 2/23/23 email to Amy Martin (VDWR) regarding the “Jackson River Trail NWP 2022-2190 - Cedar Creek restoration” wrote “I do understand your concern. This application came in as an after-the-fact permit and the impacts were already done. Most of the impact was above ordinary high water and outside of the federal action.” After issuing Nationwide Permit 13, the Corps did not follow up on any subsequent issues.

My major concern has been the use of earthen materials to rebuild the original railroad bed that has been washed away by past floods and how to deal with “springs” on the site. The “springs” could be natural springs originating from ground water or they could be creek water entering ballast filled upstream and flowing downstream through fill materials and then returning to the stream.

Following is a timeline regarding the “springs”:

After project construction was shut down by DEQ for lack of appropriate permitting, I attended an onsite meeting on **May 2, 2022** with Ben Leatherland (H&P), Chad Williams (Allegheny County Recreation and project lead), Peter Huber (Interim Allegheny County Administrator).

We observed and discussed the “spring” below the wash out area (5 Picture). Ben believed it was coming from the mountainside but based on my observations at higher creek flows, I believed it was upstream creek water flowing thru the cobble, etc. If it was creek flow then the OHWM had to be above that elevation and fill placement in that area would require Corps authorization.

On this visit, Ben reversed his prior opinion that the project would have “no impacts on Cedar Creek”. Ben also recommended that the County consider subcontracting some of the work to a different contractor because the present contractor “had no streamside restoration experience”.

I also told the group that “I did not believe they would place fill over a flowing stream of water but project plans and other documentation contained no information regarding site prep, site specific foundation details or drainage information. Also, the before and after site contour details indicated that placement of earthen fill over flowing water was planned. There was no denial of that intent.

On **January 4, 2023** a DEQ inspector visited the site to investigate the disturbing site conditions I had observed on Jan. 1. After completing the inspection, I showed the inspector the spring discussed above and discussed the potential problems of rebuilding the railroad bed over the area.

On **Feb. 7 and March 7, 2023**, I made presentations to you and discussed concerns with the placement of earthen fill over flowing water as well as how to deal with water buildup behind the Pyrowall structures.

On **April 3, 2023**, I sent an email to Keith Lockwood (USACE), Ben Leatherland (H&P), and Keith Fowler and Eric Millard (DEQ) including pictures and discussion of “springs” and asking the following questions.

- Are we comfortable putting earthen fill in a location that has water flowing under or behind and parallel to the fill?
- What should the fill foundation be?
- Should we consider adding drainage to prevent water buildup behind the fill?

One downstream “spring” shown in Picture 5 had already been covered and the contractor was preparing to cover the spring of present concern. (**Picture 6**)

Within 3 days of sending the email, the spring of present concern was also covered. Based on the tight working conditions and amount of fill placed. The fill could not have been adequately compacted, if compacted at all. In a follow-up email, I noted that “springs” were an issue we had discussed before and I had previously requested

information on how we planned to handle this section of the wall.

On **April 7, 2023**, Bill Wilson, President of Jackson River Preservation Association, sent an email to Keith Lockwood (USACE), Reid Walters, Alleghany County Administrator, and Eric Millard (DEQ) related to several concerns including “water coming through the fill dirt”.

On **May 2, 2023** - Fill was observed sluffing away from the trail and moving down the bank towards the creek (**Picture 7**). Fill was being eroded by water from “the spring” flowing under it. The spring discharge flowing into the creek was turbid. This issue and others were topics on the agenda of a Microsoft Teams meeting on July 13, 2023 with Tiffany Severs, Keith Fowler and Eric Millard (all DEQ). (**Picture 8**)

On **May 26, 2023** DEQ approved field changes on the retaining “structure to ensure the drainage that occurred during the last major rain event does not undermine the proposed wall, approved VDOT #1 stone and #57 stone for the fill material in the bottom courses of the pyrawall. The Contractor is also installing a wall drain system composed of 12” perforated pipes and outlets on 10’ (max.) centers. The stone and drains will be covered with filter fabric so they remain free draining.”

I do not understand the reasoning behind this modification. In my opinion, this change may have worsened the situation of concern. When we develop a plan to stabilize this site, we need to reconsider these field changes.

On **Sunday, February 18, 2024**, I became aware of the present situation (**Refer to Picture 2 After**). Obviously, the field changes noted above did not work. I have talked to DEQ officials and was disappointed to find they were “waiting” for design modifications from the consultant and not treating the situation with more urgency. When they were notified of the “event” they were incorrectly told there had been no discharge from the site. This past week DEQ visited the site and gave the consultant another two weeks to have a plan. I cannot understand how anyone could look at the site and truthfully say there has been no discharge. I believe over 100 tons of earthen fill has been discharged and now resides in the creek or most probably the Jackson River. How many trial and error fixes are going to allow the existing consultant and contractor before we have the major failure that I am predicting?

In addition, the Pyrawall structure in the area of most concern appears to have a bulge in it. I believe the majority of the event probably occurred about a month ago when a one inch rainfall event occurred. We are sitting on a time bomb waiting on a major failure. Based on the pictures, the 10’ trail section is losing elevation and is being maintained by adding fill. I would highly recommend that heavy equipment not be running over or near the areas of concern. I absolutely would not be adding any fill to the trail. I would think we should be off loading these areas instead of adding fill/weight.

I cannot see any corrective actions that would leave the fill in place before initiating the “new field change”. If that is the case, we need to be offloading materials from the trail as soon as practical, but not before we have a plan for doing that. The offloading will be risky and must be supervised and monitored closely. We cannot have the existing contractor remove this material like they removed the crib walls.

These areas of concern have not experienced any significant flooding. We know flood events are imminent and we are in the time of the year when they are more likely. No one associated with this project appears to be concerned about floods.

I pointed out in my first presentation to you that the County code requires a demonstration that work like this within the 100-year flood plain will not increase future 100-year flood elevations by more than 1 foot. A demonstration (dated September 2020) was submitted to Chad Williams. I expect Mr. Williams checked a box that it was completed and the study was filed. I cannot say that compliance with the less than 1 foot rise cannot be demonstrated but due to all the design and field changes that have occurred after September 2020, the existing demonstration cannot be a valid demonstration. After two follow up requests for information, the administrator responded by forwarding me the following detailed message regarding my requests. Note the detail regarding timing.

---Original Message---

From: “Bif Johnson” <bjohnson@handp.com>

Sent: Friday, September 1, 2023 1:29 pm

To: “rwalters@co.alleghany.va.us”

Cc: “JimG@guynnwaddell.com”, “mmunsey@co.alleghany.va.us”, “Jessica Littlejohn” <jlittlejohn@handp.com>, “Mike Wilson” <mwilson@handp.com>, “Scott Beasley” <sbeasley@handp.com>, “Mike Johnson” <mjohnson@handp.com>, “Gretchen Clark” <gclark@handp.com>

Subject: Jackson River Trail Project - Response to Botkins Email

Mr. Walters,

I am sending you H&P’s response to the Mr. Botkins email to you on August 22, 2023, at 8:13 am and which you forwarded to us on August 22, 2023 at 11:02 am. We offer the following response to his email:

1. A flood study was prepared for the proposed Phase 5 of the Jackson River trail project.
2. Both the floodplain study and construction plans have been accepted and approved by the necessary agencies.

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding this information.

In other words, the study was done, it was accepted and approved, and validity of the results is irrelevant. I include the above email as an indication of the lack of respect I have received as well as the lack of cooperation. I should not be surprised. After meeting with Mr. Williams for the second time informing him of permitting issues, he respectively disagreed and noted the County would be initiating construction shortly. At my only meeting with Mr. Walters that took 6 months to set up, Mr. Walters made it clear upfront that he did not care about any of my concerns regarding the trail and that the trail would be finished.

I hope this report will validate some of the concerns I have expressed in the past. I have spent two years now losing sleep regarding this project. I have yet to be told that my concerns are not valid but at the same time I have seen minimal cooperation from any of the parties involved. I have been slandered, barred from the trail, etc. It has been a difficult journey and I can only hope that you take my concerns seriously.

Doodlebug would be proud. The County, its contractor, and consultant are keeping his legacy alive.

There was some discussion regarding the pictures presented; erosion depositing in an area (i.e., Indian Draft Creek flow into the Jackson River) can occur naturally; trout protection; etc.

APPROVE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION FOR THE SCHOOL SYSTEM IN FY24 (TEXTBOOK FUND):

Ms. Adcock-Nicely stated that there is a memo in the agenda packet from the school system which is as follows:

This correspondence serves as a request for a supplemental appropriation for the 2023-2024 fiscal year related to textbook adoptions:

Textbook Fund. Alleghany Highlands Public Schools is requesting a supplemental appropriation of \$457,000 for Textbook Adoptions. The school division maintains a separate fund for textbook adoptions which do not occur every year. The balance in this fund allows for costly textbook adoptions when they are needed. For FY24, \$293,000 was appropriated from the Textbook fund. This year we will be adopting Science and History textbooks for a total of \$750,000. These adoptions will require an additional \$457,000.

Please let me know the date on which the Board of Supervisors will address this matter so that I may be present in the even there are questions or concerns. Thank you.

Ms. Adcock-Nicely commented that funds have been accumulated and \$457,000 is requested to come from the Textbook fund balance to be appropriated to that expenditure line item.

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

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors budget and approve the following supplemental appropriation in FY24 for the school system due to the receipt of Textbook funds:

<u>Fund Equity</u>	
Fund 261 - AHPS Textbook Fund Equity (26100001-330035)	\$457,000
<u>Expenditure Account</u>	
Fund 261 - AHPS Textbook Fund (26162011-566008)	\$457,000

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

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

APPOINTMENT OF SHERIFF KYLE MOORE TO THE REGIONAL POLICY BOARD OF THE ALCOHOL SAFETY ACTION PROGRAM:

Mr. Garten stated the Board needs to appoint Sheriff Kyle Moore to the Regional Policy Board of the Alcohol Safety Action Program to complete the term of Sheriff Kevin Hall beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2024.

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

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors that Sheriff Kyle Moore be appointed to the Regional Policy Board of the Alcohol Safety Action program (ASAP) to complete the term of former Sheriff Kevin Hall beginning immediately and ending June 30, 2024.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Absent

Gregory A. Dodd	Yes
Ronald S. Goings	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Absent
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

REAPPOINTMENT OF BERNARD “MAC” CAMPBELL, JR. TO THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Mr. Garten stated that the term of Mr. Bernard “Mac” Campbell, Jr. (Clifton Forge East District) on the Industrial Development Authority expires March 25, 2024. Terms are for four years and Mr. Campbell is eligible for reappointment.

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

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors that Mr. Bernard “Mac” Campbell, Jr. (Clifton Forge East District), 1310 Forester Road, Clifton Forge, VA 24422 be reappointed to the Covington-Alleghany County Industrial Development Authority for a term of four years beginning March 26, 2024 and ending March 25, 2028.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

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

REAPPOINTMENT OF MR. RICHARD ENGLEMAN AND MR. KEVIN COLE TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

Mr. Garten stated that the terms of Mr. Richard Engleman (Sharon District) and Mr. Kevin Cole (Falling Spring District) on the Planning Commission expire March 1, 2024. Terms are for four years and both are eligible for reappointment.

On motion of Mr. Garten, seconded by Mr. Bennett, that the following resolution be adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors that Mr. Richard L. Engleman (Sharon District), 4115 Firehouse Circle, Clifton Forge, VA 24422 be reappointed to the Planning Commission for a term of four years retroactive to March 2, 2024 and ending March 1, 2028.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Board that Mr. Kevin R. Cole (Falling Spring District), 300 Woodbrook Drive, Covington, VA 24426 be reappointed to the Planning Commission for a term of four years retroactive to March 2, 2024 and ending March 1, 2028.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

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

REAPPOINTMENT OF MR. GREG VESS AND MS. JEWELL MOORE TO THE WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION:

Mr. Garten stated that the terms of Mr. Greg Vess (Sharon District) and Ms. Jewell Moore (Covington District) on the Water and Sewer Commission expire March 1, 2024. Terms are for four years and both are eligible for reappointment.

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Mr. Dodd, that the following resolution be adopted:

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors that Mr. Gregory E. Vess (Sharon District), 201 Buck Horn Trail, Clifton Forge, VA 24422 be reappointed to the Water and Sewer Commission for a term of four years retroactive

to March 2, 2024 and ending March 1, 2028.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Board that Ms. Jewell K. Moore (Covington District), 4258 Callaghan Circle, Covington, VA 24426 be reappointed to the Water and Sewer Commission for a term of four years retroactive to March 2, 2024 and ending March 1, 2028.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

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

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

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

Alleghany County Fire and EMS Study Report

The Virginia Fire Services Board voted to approve the Alleghany County Fire and EMS Study Report on February 23, 2024 at their regular meeting. A member of the Virginia Fire Services Board will present their findings at the April 2nd Board of Supervisors meeting.

River Retreat Apartments

R. Fralin estimates that building 4 will be complete in April and building 5 will be completed in June.

Commerce Center Pad Site

The Commerce Center pad site is 50% complete. This past month the pipe was laid and buried, the power poles were relocated, and the continuous site work grading occurred.

Stoughton Lane

Bradley Riggelman, the VDOT engineer working on the Stoughton Lane improvement project, informed us the project is scheduled to be advertised this month. Stoughton Lane is in the Rosedale area of the County. The improvements will include improved access from Rt. 60, removal of the old asphalt, and installing new base and asphalt from Rt. 60 into Rose Dale Park. This project is funded through a recreation access grant awarded by VDOT in December of 2022.

Jackson River Trail Phase 5

Wall 1 of the current construction along the trail shifted and we have been working with Hurt and Proffitt and Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on what needs to be reconfigured. DEQ was immediately made aware of the shift and we have been working with them and Hurt and Proffitt on the fix. No construction material entered the creek. There is apparent drainage occurring on the back of the wall and the drainage system needs reconfiguration.

Mr. Griffith asked if the Board can get a copy of the soil compaction information. Mr. Walters replied that he will get this to the Board.

Housing Summit

The Alleghany Highlands Housing Summit is scheduled for April 25th. The program includes a full lineup of speakers and roundtable discussions aimed at creating a more impactful framework for housing investments in the region. Organizers also have scheduled time for the participants to network and collaborate on strategies that support housing initiatives. An exhibit area for AHEDC partners and sponsors will be on-site for attendees to gather additional materials and information.

NPS Dolly Ann Project

Parks & Recreation is working with the National Park Service (NPS) to develop a conceptual plan for potential outdoor recreation uses of a nearly 17.5 acre County-owned property in Dolly Ann. The NPS is planning a site visit for the end of the

month. The County was awarded a professional services grant through the Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance program. With this grant, the NPS staff work with the County and local stakeholders to develop the plan at no cost.

Parks and Recreation Update

Youth volleyball wrapped up last week and the boys' basketball tournament will conclude this Friday at Mountain View. The annual boy's all-star game will take place on March 15th at Alleghany High School. After another great rec season, we would like to thank all of our volunteer coaches and many staff that make these activities a great experience for all the kids involved.

Informal Budget Advisory Committee

Every year during the budget process, the County has used an informal budget advisory committee consisting of the Finance Director, County Administrator, and two Board members to review various alternatives for consideration by the Board. Historically, the Chairman and Vice-Chairman have served on the informal committee.

Wampler-Eanes Reassessment Update

Attached is an update and timeline from Wampler Eanes Appraisal Group.

The update from Wampler-Eanes Appraisal Group is as follows:

**Wampler-Eanes Appraisal Group
Alleghany County
2025 (effective 1/1/25) Reassessment Update Report
Estimated Total Parcels - 16,271
As of February 29, 2024**

*The Field Work began the week of 10/9/23.
We have completed Field Work on nearly 50% of the parcels.
Our Data Entry is close to 15% of the parcels.
We are updating with digital photography all existing Real Estate properties.*

*The Reassessment Team has inspected properties in Clifton Forge and Low Moor.
Appraisers are now moving to work in these areas: greater Covington, Iron Gate, Johnson Creek, Rich Patch, and west to the WV line.*

Sales continue to show a strong appreciation of property values over the last reassessment that became effective January 1, 2019.

*We are on schedule to complete the field work, data entry proofing, and field review completion by sometime in October/November 2024.
Also, we are on schedule to mail the Reassessment Notices to property owners in November 2024 with hearings to be scheduled in November/December 2024.
At that time, property owners will have an opportunity to review the new assessed values.*

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS (INQUIRIES/REPORTS):

Miscellaneous

Mr. Dodd thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and for the reports given during the meeting. He mentioned the outpouring of items collected for a family that recently had a house fire in the Sharon area and how they had to cut off people donating items due to the amount received. He commented that this says a lot about our area.

Mr. Bennett thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He mentioned the large number of items that were donated and stored at the mall during the flooding in White Sulphur Springs several years ago.

Dr. Goings thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He thanked Mr. Botkins for his comments. He commented that it is a big problem that needs to be solved to the satisfaction of all.

Mr. Griffith thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He thanked Mr. Botkins for his presentation. He mentioned that he plans to participate in the March 14th meeting mentioned by Mr. Holmes and the Board Room will be utilized for anyone that wants to also participate via zoom.

Mr. Garten thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He commented that he is very happy with the final outcome of the audit and thanked the Board and staff for keeping the County fiscally responsible.

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion of Mr. Griffith, seconded by Dr. Goings, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:35 p.m. to Tuesday, March 19, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board Room of the County Governmental Complex. Motion carried.

G. Matt Garten
Chairman