

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Alleghany County, Virginia held on Tuesday, February 4, 2025 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 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

CALL TO ORDER:

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

MINUTES:

Hearing no corrections or deletions, the Chairman declared the following minutes approved as submitted: (1) a regular meeting held on January 7, 2025.

PUBLIC COMMENT (5 MINUTE TIME LIMIT):

Mr. Garten gave an opening statement as follows and mentioned that there is a handout in the back of the room regarding the appeals process:

It is important to the Board that meetings be conducted with the highest degree of order and decorum. As Chairman, I will make sure to maintain that degree of order and decorum. Anyone who signed up under public comment will have an opportunity to speak, but please be respectful.

Those signed up under public comment with reassessment questions, I will address several items that may answer questions the public would like to address:

1. *The Code of Virginia (§58.1-3201) requires that all jurisdictions in the Commonwealth periodically perform a general reassessment, requiring at least one reassessment every six years.*
2. *The reassessment was done by Wampler-Eanes.*
3. *Wampler-Eanes is in Botetourt County and has performed three reassessments in Alleghany County over the last 18 years.*
4. *Alleghany County sales were used in this assessment not Botetourt or any other county.*
5. *The Board of Supervisors do not change individual tax assessments or provide any input to the reassessment company.*
6. *There is an appeals process. If you feel that your assessment is not equitable with other properties in the County or does not accurately reflect the real estate market, then you should make an appointment with the assessors. You should be prepared to state your case and provide any evidence to support your position. Initial informal appeals with the assessors must be made by 4:00 p.m. on Wednesday, February 12, 2025 by phone, email, or mail.*
7. *The next step is to make an appointment with the Board of Equalization.*
§58.1-3380. Taxpayer or local authorities may apply for equalization.
Any taxpayer or his duly appointed representative may apply to the board of equalization for the adjustment to fair market value and equalization of his assessment, including errors in acreage.
8. *How did the assessor arrive at my value? Recent sales are analyzed to determine market value rates for all applicable land, outbuilding, and structural features. Those rates are then applied to the factual data about each parcel and adjusted with quality and depreciation factors to equalize the property value with other like parcels.*
9. *Property values of Board Members increase just like all other taxable real estate in Alleghany County.*
10. *Total County income from taxes can only be raised 1% from the previous year. Rates will be adjusted to offset the increase in value and maintain a maximum increase of 1%*

Mr. Jeff Irvine, 1261 Commercial Avenue, spoke regarding tax assessments being needed to maintain services, but

mentioned that families in the area struggle as the average income in the County is \$46,000 and in Clifton Forge is \$35,000. He commented that there are many individuals on a fixed income and it is hard on them. He asked the Board to remember this when they set their tax rate. He added that there previously was an Intergovernmental Committee in the area that fell through and he would like to see the committee reinstated with two Board members.

Mr. Bennett mentioned that the Intergovernmental Committee fell apart during COVID.

Mr. Douglas Albrecht, 213 Glen Haven Drive, spoke regarding the reassessment and that his property was assessed at twice the amount he paid for it 12 years ago. He commented that he has a zoom meeting scheduled with the assessors in a couple days and will go through the process. He mentioned errors in his assessment (i.e., does not have hard wood floors, chimney valued on an accessory building, etc.). He stated that he checked various real estate sites (i.e., Zillow, Realtor.com, etc.) and their estimates are well below his assessment.

Ms. Kathy Elmore Childs, 80 W. Morris Hill Road, commented that she is a life long resident and lives in an 1860's farmhouse. She stated that property values have skyrocketed and she would hate to have to leave her home or sell it. She mentioned that the lady came to her house and took pictures, but did not want to listen or look at issues (i.e., dilapidated barn, etc.). She commented that Bath County has cheap taxes and she does not understand why the County and Covington are higher.

Ms. Susan Goings, 1717 Ridgevue Avenue, commented that a lot of people may have a similar story as Ms. Childs. She asked if there was any consideration to using another company and why was this one chosen.

Ms. Carolyn Jones, 503 Bird Farm Road, stated that she has lived in her home for 50 years and her property was assessed at \$114,000 and now it is \$235,000 (104% increase). She mentioned looking at other houses in the area which ranged from \$126,000 to \$148,000 with a rental property (Biddles) nearby. She commented that if the tax rate remains at \$0.73 then it would take her entire check to pay it. She then mentioned the cost of water and sewer and individuals being on a fixed income.

Mr. Chad Perkins, 4206 Johnson Creek Road, commented that no one wants to pay higher taxes and asked the Board how they would be kept down. Mr. Garten replied that values went up and the tax rate will be equalized. He stated that the appeals processes must be completed with the assessors and Board of Equalization before the Board has a number to work with to offset the tax rate. He mentioned that prices have gone up since COVID.

There was then some discussion regarding the tax rate going down to equalize the rate, but if more revenue is needed then a separate public hearing would need to be held; that the State tracks all real estate transactions and the County can not go under a 70% sales ratio or the State withholds funding; the assessors are not required to go into houses; the Board of Equalization members are appointed by the Circuit Court Judge and consists of local citizens; the step following a Board of Equalization appeal is to take it to the Circuit Court; 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

- *Brush and debris removal on Rts. 860, 269, 616, 18, 220N, and 687.*
- *Responded to multiple winter weather events throughout the County, including drifting on Rts. 616, 220, and 661.*
- *Addressed mailbox damage due to heavy snow.*
- *Cleared debris behind the concrete barrier on Rt. 220 and a small slide farther north.*
- *County-wide patching due to winter breakup.*
- *Will be removing the old truss bridge on Rt. 633 (McKinney Hollow Road) on February 18-20. The road will be closed during the day from 8 a.m. until 5 p.m. Will have a press release coming out with more information.*

Mr. Dodd stated that the wall coming into Cliftondale Park has graffiti on it and asked if there is any way to get it off. Ms. Hammond replied they can put a product over it.

Mr. Griffith commented that the decking on the Rosedale bridge going into Covington is crumbling (eastbound lane

at the hotel).

Mrs. Cox mentioned that the bridge heading south on Rt. 18 before Summit Drive is holding water on both ends anytime it rains.

Mr. Garten thanked her for taking care of the slide on Rt. 220. He mentioned that there are trees barely holding on behind the barrier on the hill on Rt. 220. He asked if the area on Rt. 687 at the rock face will be paved decently. Ms. Hammond replied that it has settled now and she will see if they can come back in.

MR. JEREMY HOLMES, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR - ROANOKE VALLEY-ALLEGHANY REGIONAL COMMISSION ANNUAL PRESENTATION:

Mr. Garten stated that Mr. Holmes presentation has been postponed until the next regular meeting.

APPROVE SUPPLEMENTAL APPROPRIATION IN FY25 (FOREST SUSTAINABILITY GRANT):

Ms. Adcock-Nicely stated that the County made application through the Commissioner of Revenue office for Forest Sustainability grant funds and those funds can be used for public education or for projects related to outdoor recreation or forest conservation. She mentioned that an appropriation is needed to expend the funds.

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

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors budget and approve the following supplemental appropriation in FY25:

1.	<i>Parks and Recreation - Award of Forest Sustainability Grant</i>	
	<u>Revenue Account</u>	
	Miscellaneous Grants (11000000-42499)	\$19,757.99
	<u>Expenditure Account</u>	
	Capital Improvements (11071100-570009)	\$19,757.99

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 RESOLUTION REGARDING USED TIRE LEGISLATION:

Mr. Williams reviewed a memo from him to the Board which is included in the agenda packet. The memo is as follows:

Bill Tanger, Chair of Friends of the Rivers of Virginia, is seeking a resolution from Alleghany County to support State legislation for a tire stewardship program. The legislation would create extended producer responsibility (EPR) for tires in Virginia similar to programs in existence in Europe, Canada and Connecticut. EPR holds manufacturers responsible for their product from the time they are manufactured until they are recycled or properly disposed of. The environmental goal is to shift the burden of disposal from the taxpayer to the manufacturer. Similar support has already been given by Botetourt, Craig and Rockbridge Counties, as well as numerous private and civic organizations.

He added that Mr. Tanger is present if there are any questions.

Mr. Bennett asked why not add the cost to a tire when it is bought. Mr. Bill Tanger replied that the best entity to handle used tires are producers and this gives them the responsibility to take care of them properly.

Mr. Griffith mentioned that buyers pay a disposal fee now.

Mr. Bennett commented that the Alleghany Foundation used to pay for tire amnesty days that helped a lot.

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

**A RESOLUTION SUPPORTING
TIRE EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR) FOR VIRGINIA**

WHEREAS, Friends of the Rivers of Virginia (FORVA) is seeking support for State legislation for a tire stewardship program that would help end the illegal dumping of tires in Virginia's rivers and forests; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) estimates that waste tires are produced at the rate of one tire per person per year which equals 8,683,619 annually in Virginia with only 40,740 tons of tires being recycled per DEQ's 2022 report; and

WHEREAS, the proposed legislation (SB414) in 2024 which was sponsored by Senator Chris Head would put the costs of managing the tire waste on the tire producers rather than on individuals, struggling businesses, and local government. With a system for collection of waste tires (created and funded by tire producers under the supervision of DEQ), the incentive for improper disposal would be eliminated.

WHEREAS, the legislation as introduced would require producers of tires sold in the Commonwealth to join a tire stewardship organization which must submit a plan to DEQ for the establishment of an approved tire stewardship program. Such tire stewardship program shall establish a statewide collection system for discarded tires to facilitate higher rates of recycling and resale for such tires. The bill establishes reporting requirements for tire stewardship organizations and provides that the Office of the Attorney General may, at the request of the Department, enforce the provisions of the bill.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors hereby formally supports tire legislation, similar to SB 414 in 2024, that creates tire extended producer responsibility in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

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

DISCUSS AND TABLE REQUEST FROM SOCIAL SERVICES FOR FUNDING TO MOVE THEIR AGENCY OFFICE:

Ms. Tammy Wilson, Director of Social Services, reviewed a letter from her to the Board which was included in the agenda packet. The letter is as follows:

Please consider this as our formal request for funding to support a move of the Department of Social Services agency office. Attached you will find the quotes for technology and security, cubicles and furnishings, moving costs and a chair lift. The total comes to \$156,325.00. I will note that the technology and security is being requested, as the last quote is over 90 days old, and I have included a 10% increase to account for any potential adjustments in pricing. I am also attaching the financial analysis for this move. The County is responsible for a max of 73%.

I have also attached the lease information, which amounts to \$5,000 in rental fees per month. This includes all utilities, maintenance and repairs, as well as custodian services. The lease is for 10 years, with an effective date of March 1, 2025. You will note that the new rate is cheaper than what we are currently paying.

We appreciate your consideration.

Mr. Nicely asked what the total cost is. Ms. Wilson replied that the moving costs total \$240,500 with the State reimbursing 35% leaving the locality share of \$156,325.

Mr. Griffith asked if the current space is not big enough. Mr. Wilson replied that it is not big enough.

Mr. Griffith stated that a committee meeting was held a while back regarding the potential move, but no other meetings were held to bring back information for the committee to review. Ms. Wilson commented that she sent emails.

Mr. Bennett asked if Covington has been approached as this needs to be discussed with them due to their share of the cost. Ms. Wilson replied that she will meet with them next week.

Mr. Garten commented that most of the cost is for furniture and IT.

Mr. Griffith stated that the funds are not in the current budget and he feels this needs to wait until July.

Mr. Garten commented that he knows Ms. Wilson would like an answer, but the Board needs time to digest the numbers.

Ms. Wilson mentioned that she was hoping they could move in March, but the date is not set in stone and the lease has not been signed. She commented that they need to hire more people and need the room.

Mrs. Cox stated that she is in favor of the move and the church location (Christ United Methodist Church on Fudge Street) is worth looking into. She asked if the building is ready and where the office would be located. Ms. Wilson replied that the building is ready to be moved into and the offices would be located on the new side of the building.

Mr. Garten commented that this item will be on the next regular meeting for further discussion/action.

APPOINTMENT OF MS. MELISHA MUNDY AS THE ALLEGHANY COUNTY PARENT REPRESENTATIVE ON THE COMMUNITY POLICY AND MANAGEMENT TEAM:

Mr. Garten stated that a Parent Representative appointment needs to be made to the Community Policy Management Team and Ms. Melisha Mundy has been recommended.

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

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors that Ms. Melisha Mundy (Clifton Forge West District), 605 Brussels Avenue, Clifton Forge, VA 24422 be appointed as a Parent Representative on the Community Policy and Management Team.

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

REAPPOINTMENT OF REV. DONALD EARWOOD TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION:

Mr. Garten stated the term of Rev. Donald Earwood (Boiling Springs District) on the Planning Commission expires March 1, 2025. Terms are for 4 years and Rev. Earwood is eligible for reappointment.

Mrs. Cox commented that he does want to be reappointed.

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

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors that Rev. James Donald Earwood, Jr. (Boiling Springs District), 100 Parsonage Lane, Covington, VA 24426 be reappointed to the Planning Commission for a term of four years beginning March 2, 2025 and ending March 1, 2029.

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

TABLE APPOINTMENT TO THE PLANNING COMMISSION (CLIFTON FORGE WEST DISTRICT):

Mr. Garten stated that a replacement needs to be made for Mr. David Halsey (Clifton Forge West District) on the Planning Commission whose term expires March 1, 2025. Terms are for four years and this appointment is by district.

Mr. Dodd commented that he has not found a replacement at this time.

Mr. Garten stated that this item will be placed on the next regular meeting agenda.

REAPPOINTMENT OF MR. RICHARD FRIDLEY AND MR. KENNETH YEAGLEY TO THE WATER AND SEWER COMMISSION:

Mr. Garten stated that the terms of Mr. Richard Fridley (Boiling Springs District) and Mr. Kenneth Yeagley (Clifton Forge West District) on the Water and Sewer Commission expires March 1, 2025. Terms are for four years and both are eligible for reappointment. He mentioned that both wish to be reappointed.

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

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors that Mr. Richard C. Fridley, Jr. (Boiling Springs District), 2300 Kanawha Trail, Covington, VA 24426 be reappointed to the Water and Sewer Commission for a term of four years beginning March 2, 2025 and ending March 1, 2029.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Board that Mr. Kenneth Yeagley (Clifton Forge West District), 517 Roxbury Street, Clifton Forge, VA 24422 be reappointed to the Water and Sewer Commission for a term of four years beginning March 2, 2025 and ending March 1, 2029.

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

Housing Summit

The Alleghany Highlands Economic Development Corporation (AHEDC) is in the early stages of planning a housing summit. The AHEDC team and localities are working together to host a housing summit with a tentative date of September 25, 2025. This date was selected so we have time to get the word out, to assure collaboration, and to avoid conflict with any other conferences and the start of the school year. The purpose of the summit is to address housing needs and challenges within our community. These needs and challenges include affordability, the available supply, and the addition/updating of current/new infrastructure.

Informal Budget Committee

Alleghany County departments have begun the process of formulating their budget needs for the next fiscal year. The informal budget committee, historically comprised of the County Administrator, Finance Director, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors, and the Vice-Chairman of the Board of Supervisors will begin meeting this month.

Other

Mr. Walters added that our area had its first major winter weather event since 2018 and he appreciates the Public Works Department for continuing operations as best as possible during the event.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS (INQUIRIES/REPORTS):

Miscellaneous

Mr. Dodd thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and comments made by the speakers. He commented that he appreciates their concerns and thoughts. He mentioned that this is the first time a reassessment has been held since he has been on the Board and he is learning a lot. He stated that Mayor Irvine's comment on reinstating the Intergovernmental

Committee is a good idea.

Mr. Bennett stated to Mayor Irvine that the law makes it mandatory for the County to equalize the tax rate from a reassessment and he commented that it may apply to towns. He suggested that they may have to reduce their tax rate also. He mentioned that the reassessment process has a lot of checks and balances in place. He thanked the citizens for the way they handled their comments.

Mrs. Cox thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and she feels the citizens' concerns were heard.

Dr. Goings thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and that he hopes all questions were answered. He commented that from what he understands the amount of taxes the County collects can not go up 1% for the aggregate, not individually.

Mr. Griffith thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and participating. He commented that he hopes questions were answered and that all need to follow the process if there are concerns on their property assessment. He mentioned that more weather is coming and to be safe.

Mr. Garten thanked everyone that participated with public comments and being respectful. He commented that there is an information sheet in the back of the room with the appeals process and a "Frequently Asked Questions" document is on the County's website. He stated that the tax rate will not be the current \$0.73 and mentioned that since 1994 the rate has ranged between \$0.66 and 0.73 with minimal changes.

CLOSED MEETING:

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Mr. Griffith, that the Board go into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711(A)(8) for the purpose of: (1) contractual matter. Unanimously adopted.

On motion of Mr. Bennett, seconded by Mrs. Cox, 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/Ronald S. Goings	Yes
/s/Shannon P. Cox	Yes
/s/James M. Griffith	Yes
/s/Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
/s/Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
/s/Gregory A. Dodd	Yes

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Mrs. Cox, that the meeting be adjourned at 8:50 p.m. Motion carried.

G. Matt Garten
Chairman