

At a regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors, Alleghany County, Virginia held on Tuesday, March 3, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. in the Alleghany County Governmental Complex, Covington, Virginia, thereof:

PRESENT: G. Matt Garten, Chairman (electronically)  
James M. Griffith, Vice-Chairman  
Stephen A. Bennett  
S. Miller Brantley  
Courtney F. Howard  
Cletus W. Nicely

and Ken McFadyen, County Administrator  
Suzanne Adcock-Nicely, Director of Finance  
Joseph Hubble, Director of General Services  
Jim Guynn, County Attorney  
Melissa A. Munsey, Deputy Clerk to the Board

ABSENT: Shannon P. Cox

CALL TO ORDER:

The Vice-Chairman called the regular meeting to order as the Chairman was not physically present to run the meeting. He noted that Mr. Garten is participating in the meeting electronically (via Zoom) and asked for a motion to allow Mr. Garten to participate in this manner.

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Mr. Brantley, that the Board agree to allow Mr. Matt Garten, Chairman, to participate in the meeting electronically per the Board's Remote Participation Policy. Unanimously approved.

Mr. Griffith commented that subsection (8) is being added to the Closed Meeting for consultation with legal counsel and Item 9F under New Business (discuss and consider resolution in opposition to gerrymandering and redistricting outside of the ten-year Census cycle) will be considered following the Closed Meeting discussion.

Mr. Nicely 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 February 3, 2026.

PUBLIC COMMENT (5 MINUTE TIME LIMIT):

Mr. Jeff Irvine, Mayor of Clifton Forge, spoke in support of the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce in relation to a recent tourism proposal which was released and noted that we do not need anyone out of the area to market us.

Mr. Chris Doyle, 414 Boys' Home Road, read the following prepared statement:

*Good evening. My name is Chris Doyle. I serve as the Executive Director of Boys Home of Virginia and as President of the Board of the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce & Tourism.*

*In my role on the board, I have had the opportunity to see up close the tremendous work the Chamber team does every day to support both our local business community and tourism across the Alleghany Highlands. These two efforts are deeply connected. When tourism grows, it brings new visitors, new spending, and new opportunities that directly benefit our local businesses and strengthen our regional economy.*

*Over the past several years, the Chamber's tourism team has demonstrated creativity, professionalism, and a deep commitment to this community. Just as importantly, they bring something that cannot be replicated by an outside firm — they know this region, they believe in it, and they are personally invested in its success.*

*We are fortunate to have such a talented and innovative group of people, with roots in this community, leading tourism development for the Alleghany Highlands. I appreciate the County's long-standing support of this work and hope that partnership will continue as we build on the momentum that has already been created.*

*Thank you for your time and for your commitment to the future of our community.*

Mrs. Julie Brackenridge, 1400 Concord Street, read the following prepared statement:

*I am here tonight, as a private citizen, to speak out about Sections E, F & G. Under number 9, F, New Business, I find it appalling that you as a local governing board would automatically "oppose" the redistricting proposal. First off, you are a local governing board. Did I miss the meeting where you asked for public input before "opposing" this amendment? Were there district meetings held seeking community input? How can your first option be to "oppose", if none of that happened? How are you representing your constituents if you are not having conversations with them?*

I disagree with your consideration of a resolution to “oppose” the upcoming election to amend the Virginia Constitution. My reasons are as follows:

1. To stop the unfair Republican grab for seats in other states. Texas, North Carolina, Ohio have already gerrymandered to favor the voting maps their way.
2. Virginia is one of the few states leaving the decision up to the voters. A move that is necessary to “level the playing field” and respond to aggressive map manipulation in other states.
3. There is a time limit on this proposed amendment. There will be an automatic return to a 10-year cycle in 2030.

When one side gets to play by a different set of rules, that is called cheating. What our great state is attempting, with a populace vote mind you, is called leveling the playing field. Let the people of Virginia decide on April 21<sup>st</sup> without preemptively saying that Alleghany County opposes because you, as our local representatives, have not asked for any citizen input before laying out such blanket statements.

As for Section E, I also wonder why a House Bill affecting VMI would be of concern to Alleghany County. Some insight to that would be appreciated.

And lastly Section G, what exactly will you be authorizing the County Administrator to say in a letter in regards to past action on the Second Amendment? If it is in regards to the proposed changes, I’d like to know which ones he will be addressing.

Will it be:

- “Assault Weapon” Restrictions: SB 312 prohibits carrying certain semi-automatic firearms in public places like parks and streets.
- Mandatory Storage: SB 348 requires firearms to be stored in locked containers when minors or prohibited persons are present.
- Campus Carry Limits: SB 272 and HB 626 restrict carrying firearms on public university properties.
- Unserialized Firearms: SB 323 prohibits the manufacture, possession, and transfer of unfinished frames/receivers without serial numbers.
- Taxes and Fees: HB 919 and HB 1094 propose an 11% excise tax on firearms and ammunition to fund violence prevention.
- Waiting Periods: HB 1195 and SB 273 introduce a 5-day mandatory waiting period for purchases.

Or will it be something else entirely? I am requesting a copy of said letter if it is deemed appropriate for him to send one.

Thank you,  
Julie Brackenridge

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

- Removed brush on Rts. 18, 220S, 666, 638, 687 and 629.
- Major snowdrift removal on Rts. 220S, 311, 687 and various secondary routes.
- Patched potholes on Rt. 42, 269, 18, 159, 311 and various secondary routes.
- Cleaned pipes on Rts. 666, 687, 269 and 220S.
- Replaced mailboxes damaged in heavy snow/ice removal.
- Restocking materials from winter storms

Upcoming

- Trees marked for removal on Rt. 220, 311 and 696.
- Weather permitting will be removing slate buildup from jersey barrier on Rt. 220, cleaning ditches and grading gravel roads.

MR. JOSH TAYLOR, ALLEGHANY HIGHLANDS CHAMBER OF COMMERCE AND TOURISM - PRESENTATION ON THE CHAMBER ANNUAL REPORT AND THE TOURISM STRATEGIC PLAN:

Mr. Josh Taylor, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director, stated that Ms. Katie Connor of the Virginia Tourism Council is also present to comment on the Tourism Action Plan. He commented that the Board has a copy of the Chamber’s 2025 Annual Report and the Tourism Action Plan at their seat. These documents are a part of the records of this meeting. He reviewed the 2025 Annual Report which included: 2025 Impact At-A Glance, tourism mission statement, new wayfinding signage, Virginia’s 250<sup>th</sup> Commemoration, new EV chargers in both downtowns, collaboration with VDOT for Humpback Bridge updates, tourism stakeholder engagement, tourism strategic planning, statewide tourism brochure distribution, tourism photography and content development, local tourism and initiative support, outdoor event attendance and economic impact, hosted tourism influencers, familiarization tours, marketing and media exposure, tourism website growth, revamped tourism newsletter, mission statement, membership growth and retention, Chamber website growth, Alleghany Living Magazine, Chamber chats, and events.

Mr. Griffith stated that Mr. Taylor gave a good presentation and he appreciates the information. He commented that a few people have had questions regarding the funding of tourism services. He mentioned that since the additional lodging tax funding was allocated in 2010 the County has issued a RFP every few years. He commented that is the process the County

has to follow by putting out an RFP when the contract term is up and this has been done at least three times now. He stated that funding is not being pulled.

Mr. Bennett added that even though a RFP is issued, it can be more about value of services received than cost.

Ms. Katie Conner, Virginia Tourism Corporation, read the following prepared statement regarding the Alleghany Highlands Tourism Action Plan update. Her comments are a part of the records of this meeting:

*Good evening, and thank you Mr. Chairman and members of the Board.*

*My name is Katie Conner and I am here to briefly highlight the work Virginia Tourism Corporation has done in partnership with Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism through the Tourism Action Plan process and why it matters for Alleghany County.*

*This Tourism Action Plan is one of the examples of the work Virginia Tourism has partnered with the Alleghany Highlands Chamber of Commerce and Tourism office on for over a decade. In collaboration, this plan was developed with facilitation and structure provided by Virginia Tourism through an open-house style planning session that received input from nearly 60 regional stakeholders. It reflects direct input from businesses, representatives from local governments, non-profits, and community members, and outlines a clear 3-5 year roadmap with measurable objectives.*

*Tourism is already a significant economic driver in this community.*

*The most recent Economic Impact from 2024 highlights:*

- *Regional visitor spending reached \$43.8 million*
- *Visitors boosted the local economy and contributed \$3.2 million in state and local taxes throughout the Alleghany Highlands*
- *Tourism supports 8% of total regional employment*

*When visitors come to a place, they do not just visit one community but rather experience all that a region has to offer. Visitors to the Alleghany Highlands eat in local restaurants, shop at local retail, and spend the night in local lodging establishments. As was mentioned in the annual report by Mr. Taylor, these successes demonstrate that strategic destination marketing and regional collaboration are working and positively impact the entire Alleghany Highlands region.*

*Many parallels can be drawn between this tourism action plan and the Alleghany County Comprehensive Plan from 2019, with focuses on helping grow the region strategically. Tourism isn't just about visitors. Tourism creates sustainable and thriving communities for everyone to enjoy, especially those who live here.*

*As the executive summary highlights, many of the core themes of the Plan focus on growing lodging capacity, outdoor recreation, cultural offerings, downtown revitalization, and marketing reach, while also ensuring strong community engagement and sustainable funding. Increasing overnight stays directly increases meals tax, occupancy tax, and overall visitor spending in Alleghany County.*

*Among the Plan's top priorities, you will find that outdoor asset enhancements to include continued expansion of regional wayfinding and enhancing trail and recreation infrastructure are key objectives. These improvements strengthen assets like Lake Moomaw, the Jackson River Scenic Trail, and Falling Spring Falls, encouraging longer stays and repeat visitation.*

*Importantly, this is not just a vision document. The Plan calls to establish and further enhance parameters for accountability, execution, and sets goals to pursue multiple opportunities and partnerships annually that support tourism infrastructure and development. The region can continue to create experiences that inspire visitors, empower residents, and ensure that tourism remains a meaningful asset for generations to come.*

*Tourism is economic development. It supports small businesses, strengthens downtown vitality, and generates tax revenue that benefits the entire County.*

*Virginia Tourism would like to acknowledge the dedication of the Destination Marketing Organization staff at the Alleghany Highlands Chamber for their dedication to effectively move from planning to implementation.*

*I appreciate the Board's continued partnership as we focus on execution and maximizing return for Alleghany County. Thank you.*

APPROVE RESOLUTION REQUESTING VDOT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACCESS PROGRAM FUNDING FOR ROAD IMPROVEMENTS IN THE ALLEGHANY REGIONAL COMMERCE CENTER:

Mr. McFadyen stated that there is a draft resolution in the agenda packet that would allow the County to apply to VDOT for \$150,000 in Economic Development Access Program funding for design and permits for a portion of Piney Ridge Road in the Alleghany Regional Commerce Center. He commented that the Board has a copy of the concept rendering at their seat. The rendering is a part of the records of this meeting. He stated that once the design is complete, then an application would be made for grant funding to make the improvements. He mentioned that it is currently a one-lane road.

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

**RESOLUTION  
REQUEST FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ACCESS FUNDS**

WHEREAS, the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors desires to pursue Economic Development Access funding for roadway improvements to the Alleghany County Regional Commerce Center; and

WHEREAS, property within Alleghany County Regional Commerce Center is expected to be the site of new private capital investment in land, building, and manufacturing equipment; and

WHEREAS, the existing public road network does not provide for adequate access and an access road improvement project is necessary; and

WHEREAS, the County of Alleghany hereby guarantees that the necessary environmental analysis, mitigation, fee simple rights-of-way and utility relocations or adjustments, if necessary, for this project will be provided at no cost to the Economic Development, Airport and Rail Access Fund; and

WHEREAS, the County of Alleghany acknowledges that no land disturbance activities may occur within the limits of the proposed access project prior to appropriate notification from the Department of Transportation as a condition of the use of the Economic Development, Airport and Rail Access Fund; and

WHEREAS, the County of Alleghany hereby acknowledges that the Virginia Department of Transportation's Economic Development Access (EDA) Program may provide up to a maximum of \$150,000 for a project and requires matching funding, up to \$50,000, from the County of Alleghany for estimated eligible project costs over \$150,000, up to \$250,000; and

WHEREAS, the County of Alleghany hereby guarantees that financing of all ineligible project costs, project costs exceeding the EDA Program project allocation, EDA Program required locality matching funds, if applicable, will be provided from sources other than those administered by the Virginia Department of Transportation;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors hereby requests the Virginia Department of Transportation provide Economic Development Access Program funding for the design of adequate roadway improvements to Alleghany County Regional Commerce Center; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the County of Alleghany hereby agrees to provide a surety or bond, acceptable to and payable to the Virginia Department of Transportation, in the full amount of the project allocation, prior to the Department of Transportation's authorization of Economic Development Access funds; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the County Administrator and/or his designee be authorized to act on behalf of the Board of Supervisors to execute any and all documents necessary to secure funding in the maximum amount eligible under the Economic Development Access Program.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
S. Miller Brantley	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Absent
Courtney F. Howard	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

APPROVE BOARD GOALS AND PRIORITIES:

Mr. McFadyen stated that there is a draft resolution in the agenda packet with the Board of Supervisor Goals and Priorities that were identified at the Board's Planning Session held in December.

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

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors approve the following Goals and Priorities as a result of the Board of Supervisors Retreat held on December 4, 2025:

## **BOARD OF SUPERVISOR GOALS AND PRIORITIES**

### **FY27 Policy, Budget & Financial Priorities**

- Policy Goals
  - Increase available housing units
  - Evaluate all County parcels and repurpose certain parcels
  - Leverage funding and relationships to enhance tourism opportunities
  - Encourage private residential and commercial development
  - Identify critical County infrastructure needs and develop effective strategies
  - Address community needs related to childcare, access to healthcare, transportation, elder care, and related community-identified needs.
  
- Advancement of Capital Projects
  - Alleghany Highlands Commerce Center
  - Alleghany Highlands Public Schools CIP-approved projects
  - Innovation Park - Exit 42 property (162 acres)
  - Water and wastewater infrastructure and County facilities
  
- Governmental Operations (Pain Points)
  - Prioritize needs in the Capital Improvement Plan
  - Evaluate employee retention policies
  - Explore utility billing rates
    - ▶ Review best practices of tiered billing systems
    - ▶ Review most recent rate study or prepare a study

### **Long Term Priorities (during the next three fiscal years)**

- Strategically Update the Comprehensive Plan
  - Utilize Planning Commission and additional resources
  - Ensure community engagement through surveys and input sessions
  
- Economic Development Strategies
  - Business retention and expansion
  - Create and enhance relationships with the County's large, primary employers
  - Leverage relationships with Virginia and regional economic development partners
  
- Business Attraction
  - Alleghany Highlands Commerce Center pad sites (bricks and mortar)
    - ▶ Evaluate the extension of natural gas with Columbia Gas
    - ▶ Increase available utility capacities
    - ▶ Secure VDOT funding to improve Piney Ridge Road
    - ▶ Evaluate combining the two existing pads into one pad (Phase 4)
  - Streamline County's business pitch to prospective businesses
    - ▶ Favorable cost to do business
    - ▶ Pro-business community
    - ▶ Affordable cost of living
    - ▶ Natural beauty and recreational amenities
  
- Entrepreneurial Growth
  - Support local entrepreneurial efforts
    - ▶ Support for start-up and existing small businesses
    - ▶ Assist in building networks and collaboration
  
- Workforce Development
  - Explore regional opportunities for partnership
  - Promote available credentialing programs

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
S. Miller Brantley	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Absent
Courtney F. Howard	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

### **APPROVE AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR THE RECONSTRUCTION OF STAIRS/SIDEWALK AT THE ALLEGHANY REGIONAL JAIL:**

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

*On January 8, 2026, the County released an Invitation for Bid for reconstruction of stairs/sidewalk at the Alleghany Regional Jail. We have budgeted for this project in this fiscal year and anticipate completion in the spring*

of 2026. The repairs are needed due to the cracking and deterioration of the concrete/brick which is creating trip hazards.

Bids were opened on February 17, 2026 and two bids were received by the deadline. One bid was received from Finley Asphalt and Concrete in the amount of \$114,675.00 and the other from Hammond-Mitchell in the amount of \$162,780.00. We are requesting award of the contract to Finley Asphalt and Concrete as the lowest responsive bidder and ask that the Board authorize Mr. Ken McFadyen, County Administrator, to sign the contract on behalf of the County.

If you have any questions feel free to contact me.

Mr. Bennett asked if the amount given is for the total project cost or just the County's share. He mentioned that Covington used to get upset if they did not have input. Ms. Adcock-Nicely replied that this is part of the budget approved this year and Covington is aware and had included their share in their budget.

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

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors approve the lowest responsive bid received for the reconstruction of stairs/sidewalk at the Alleghany Regional Jail from Finley Asphalt and Concrete in the amount of \$114,675.00.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Board authorize Mr. Ken McFadyen, County Administrator, to sign the contract for the above-mentioned project on behalf of the County.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
S. Miller Brantley	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Absent
Courtney F. Howard	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

TABLE ACTION ON RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF THE VIRGINIA MILITARY INSTITUTE:

Mr. McFadyen stated that there is a draft resolution in the agenda packet in support of the Virginia Military Institute.

Mr. Griffith commented that it came about as an area County requested a resolution of support.

Mr. Miller stated that the last bullet-point mentions support of the Virginia Military Institute as a state-sponsored institution of higher education. He mentioned that an amendment to legislation was made on February 6<sup>th</sup> by the General Assembly to send this to a task force. He commented that the resolution is no longer needed and would be moot. He stated that he grew up in Rockbridge County and asked why we would not support Washington and Lee or Mountain Gateway Community College.

Mr. Garten commented that the task force could take some time and the General Assembly will look at their report in the next session.

Mrs. Howard stated that she has a lot of questions and is not comfortable voting on the resolution. She asked if anybody has had a constituent bring this up as she has not heard from anyone. Mr. Griffith replied that he has heard from Rockbridge County.

Mr. Garten suggested tabling this to the next regular meeting under Unfinished Business as legislation constantly changes. The Board agreed by consensus.

APPROVE RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO SEND A LETTER IN REGARDS TO PAST ACTION ON THE SECOND AMENDMENT:

Mr. McFadyen stated that there is a draft resolution in the agenda packet that would direct him to send a letter forwarding the Board's 2019 Second Amendment resolution. He commented that he has drafted a letter that would be sent to Governor Spanberger, Attorney General Jones, Delegate Austin, and Senator Head if approved which is as follows:

*During its March 3, 2026 regular meeting, the Allegheny County Board of Supervisors approved a resolution to direct this letter to your attention with a copy of the Board's 2019 "Resolution Affirming the Constitutions of the United States and Virginia and Declaring Allegheny County a Second Amendment Sanctuary County" (Resolution 19-88).*

*The Board of Supervisors' 2019 resolution concerning the Second Amendment remains Allegheny County's position on the matter.*

*Thank you for your consideration.*

Mr. Garten stated that Allegheny County is currently a Second Amendment Sanctuary and this would be an affirmation of the 2019 resolution.

Mrs. Howard asked Mr. Garten what he understands that to mean. Mr. Garten replied supporting the Constitutional right to bear arms.

Mr. Brantley mentioned that the 2019 resolution mentions 2020 legislation and the 4<sup>th</sup> paragraph down states that we have no authority to tell law enforcement what to do.

Mr. Griffith commented that the Second Amendment is being challenged and has been brought up again.

Sheriff Kyle Moore stated that the reason the Second Amendment is being discussed again as it is being challenged in Washington, DC and Richmond. He commented that in 2019 the Board recognized this and affirmed the Constitutions of the United States and Virginia. He mentioned that he has a statement and also the Board has been given information that he has provided to Mrs. Howard on substantial risk orders. Both documents are a part of the records of this meeting. He recommended not recreating the wheel and let the 2019 resolution stand on its own. He commented that it does not alter law enforcement duties to uphold the Constitution. He read his statement which is as follows:

### ***Response to 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Concerns***

*I am honored to serve as your Sheriff, and I deeply respect the passion so many of you bring to this issue regarding your Constitutional rights. Your voices matter, and your concerns deserve to be heard.*

*In 2019, Allegheny County declared itself a 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment Sanctuary county. I stood at that first meeting as a private citizen in support of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment. Today, as your Sheriff, I reaffirm that support.*

*I spent nearly 29 years in the United States Army, including a deployment to Iraq. As a young man from Southwest Virginia, I swore an oath to support and defend the Constitution of the United States. I swore that same oath as a Virginia State Trooper. That oath has guided my life in uniform and continues to guide me as your Sheriff.*

*My position is straightforward: The Constitution is the supreme law of this land. Not Richmond. Not Washington nor any political party. The Constitution. I will uphold the Constitution. I will not enforce, nor will I ask my Deputies to enforce, laws that are unconstitutional.*

*At the same time, I believe strongly that the entire Constitution must be protected. The 1<sup>st</sup> Amendment safeguards free speech and religious freedom. The 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Amendments protect the right to vote no matter race or sex. The 22<sup>nd</sup> Amendment limits presidential terms to prevent the concentration of power. Each Amendment plays a vital role in preserving our freedoms. When we defend one, we defend them all.*

*I support government and rule of law. Order and lawful authority are essential to a functioning society. But government authority must always operate within constitutional boundaries. That principle is not partisan—it is foundational.*

*I will not post on social media and endanger the livelihood of my employees by picking sides. There is only one side to choose. Many Deputies suffered long reaching consequences for the actions of their leaders in 2019 and were told by politicians that they would not vote for pay raises based upon their decisions to voice such a strong resistance.*

*My duty is not to politics. My duty is to the Constitution and to the citizens of this county.*

*As long as I serve as your Sheriff, I will remain steady, thoughtful, and faithful to that oath. You have my word.*

Mr. Bennett stated that there was a question earlier during public comment regarding public input. He commented that he chaired the meeting in 2019 which overfilled the Clifton Middle School auditorium with citizens in favor and he does not feel that they have changed their mind.

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

BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors authorize Mr. Ken McFadyen, County Administrator, to send a letter to the County's General Assembly delegation, the Attorney General, and the Governor of Virginia to provide a copy of resolution R-19-88 which was previously adopted by the Board on December 3, 2019 in relation to the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution.

Adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
S. Miller Brantley	No
Shannon P. Cox	Absent
Courtney F. Howard	No
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

APPOINTMENT OF MR. JAMES ELLER TO THE INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY:

Mr. Griffith stated Mr. James Eller (Clifton Forge East District) would like to be appointed to the Industrial Development Authority as the 7<sup>th</sup> rotating member. The term is for four years beginning March 26, 2026 and ending March 25, 2030. He mentioned that Mr. Eller previously was the City appointment for the 7<sup>th</sup> rotating member as a business owner in the City.

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

BE IT RESOLVED by the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors that Mr. James R. Eller (Clifton Forge East District), 1201 Crestwood Avenue, Clifton Forge, VA 24422 be appointed to the Covington-Alleghany County Industrial Development Authority as the 7<sup>th</sup> rotating member for a term of four years beginning March 26, 2026 and ending March 25, 2030.

Unanimously adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
S. Miller Brantley	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Absent
Courtney F. Howard	Yes
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT:

Mr. McFadyen handed out and gave a report on the following items which are a part of the records of this meeting, as well as the attachments mentioned:

- A. *We have recently received compliments from the public and from among our Constitutional Officers for County employees in several departments, including Public Safety, General Services, and Public Works. It is wonderful to hear good things from our citizens about the good work County employees are doing every day.*
- B. *The Public Works Director Position has been advertised and finalists have been selected. The second round of interviews should take place this month.*
- C. *Public Works has prepared a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) and we are reviewing the recommendations for needed repairs and maintenance to the water and sewer infrastructure. The cost estimates are significant, and the emphasis should first be on securing state and federal grants to reduce any local funding that will be required. There will need to be additional review and decision-making during this Spring's budget process.*
- D. *Tourism Promotion Services RFP - Proposals for tourism promotion services are due March 18<sup>th</sup>. County staff are prepared to review received proposals and to interview offerors. Depending on the number of qualified proposals, we plan to have a recommendation for the Board of Supervisors not later than the June regular meeting, but it could be as soon as the May regular meeting. Should up to two (2) Supervisors wish to participate in review of the proposals and any interview, please let us know.*

- E. Commerce Center Pad Sites - A grant application has been prepared to the Virginia Business Ready Sites Program to seek funding to complete the design and environmental permitting to combine the two existing pads, which would create a single +/- 32 acre pad (known as the Phase 4 site development) and to conduct the preliminary engineering to increase water and wastewater capacity to the pad site. The Industrial Development Authority would be the grant applicant as the pad site property owner. If approved, the grant would require a local match up to \$28,000, which we would request through the FY27 budget process. If awarded, this project would begin in July 2026. We have reviewed the grant application with the City of Covington.
- F. E-911 Center - The localities have met with the Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to understand what would need to be done to consolidate the E-911 dispatch centers. This topic has been discussed for a long time and we are pursuing VDEM resources to evaluate the necessary considerations to consolidate E-911 operations to one location.
- G. Attached is correspondence concerning proposed rate increase proposals with Columbia Gas and the Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative.
- H. Broadband - We are awaiting an update and cost estimate from the Craig-Botetourt Electric Cooperative concerning a needed broadband expansion project for Crows/Hematite residents. Approximately 114 addresses are slated to receive Starlink satellite internet service and residents want to have fiber connectivity. We would pursue grant funding to deliver broadband connectivity to these residents.
- I. Housing - We should have a scope for planning assistance prepared during March 2025. Virginia Housing has offered to provide this assistance to the County as a further action from our housing study last year.
- J. Annual Budget - The County's annual budgeting process has begun. A budget committee of the Board of Supervisors Chair, Vice-Chair, and County staff should meet frequently during the process.

Please let us know of any questions or comments. Thank you for your time and support.

BOARD MEMBER COMMENTS (INQUIRIES/REPORTS):

Miscellaneous

Mr Nicely stated that it is good to see everyone out tonight supporting local government.

Mr. Brantley thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and the speakers.

Mr. Bennett stated that the Chamber Annual Report is a nice publication and he supports what they do. He thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He mentioned to Mr. Brantley and Mrs. Howard that it is good to never leave a meeting and wonder what was said, but to stop and ask questions.

Mrs. Howard thanked Mr. Taylor for his presentation and those present to support the Chamber. She commented that she is excited about the Board goals and priorities and mentioned one of them in relation to addressing community needs related to childcare, access to healthcare, transportation, elder care, and related community-identified needs. She thanked Sheriff Moore for taking her call and gathering information for her.

Mr. Griffith thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and Sheriff Moore for being present.

Mr. Garten commented that he is out of the country at this time and thanked Mr. Griffith for handling the meeting tonight.

CLOSED MEETING:

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Mr. Bennett, that the Board go into a Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia Sections 2.2-3711(A)(3) and (8) for the purpose of: (1) property acquisition and disposition; and (2) consultation with legal counsel. Unanimously adopted.

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Mr. Brantley, 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/James M. Griffith     Yes  
/s/Stephen A. Bennett    Yes

/s/S. Miller Brantley	Yes
/s/Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
/s/Courtney F. Howard	Yes
/s/G. Matt Garten	Yes
Shannon P. Cox	Absent

After the Closed Meeting, the following action was taken:

APPROVE RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO GERRYMANDERING AND REDISTRICTING OUTSIDE OF THE TEN-YEAR CENSUS CYCLE:

Mr. Griffith stated that the Board now needs to discuss and consider a resolution in opposition to gerrymandering and redistricting outside of the ten-year Census cycle.

Mr. Brantley commented that he is not in favor of this resolution as citizens are going to be voting and will make their individual vote at the polls.

Mrs. Howard stated that it is unfortunate that national politics is in local politics. She commented that she does not like redistricting outside the 10-year cycle, but is concerned about the Board making a statement.

Mr. Garten stated that he worked on the local redistricting maps and it took a lot of time. He commented that it does not just happen in one month so to break up the Census cycle does not make sense.

Mr. Bennett commented that every 10-years the localities have to do our redistricting and it should not be done for political reasons.

Mr. Griffith mentioned that the resolution is just saying that redistricting should stay in a 10-year cycle.

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

**RESOLUTION IN OPPOSITION TO GERRYMANDERING AND REDISTRICTING OUTSIDE THE TEN-YEAR CENSUS CYCLE**

WHEREAS, gerrymandering is the practice of manipulating electoral district boundaries to favor a particular political party or group. This tactic is often used to maximize the influence of a party's voters while minimizing the influence of opposing voters, effectively skewing representation in legislative bodies. It connects deeply with issues of political power and representation, especially in the context of changing demographics and electoral strategies; and

WHEREAS, the Virginia General Assembly has taken action which could allow the Constitutional amendment for mid-decade redistricting to be placed on the ballot for voters when redistricting historically occurs along with the ten-year Census cycle;

NOW-THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Alleghany County Board of Supervisors disagree with gerrymandering tactics in relation to any redistricting outside of the ten-year Census cycle.

Adopted by the following roll call vote:

Stephen A. Bennett	Yes
S. Miller Brantley	Abstain
Shannon P. Cox	Absent
Courtney F. Howard	No
Cletus W. Nicely	Yes
James M. Griffith	Yes
G. Matt Garten	Yes

ADJOURNMENT:

On motion of Mr. Nicely, seconded by Mr. Bennett, that the meeting be adjourned at 9:05 p.m. to Monday, March 30, 2026 at 6:30 p.m. in the Board Room of the County Governmental Complex. Motion carried.

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G. Matt Garten  
Chairman