

January 28, 2020

The Wythe County Board of Supervisors held its regularly scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 28, 2020. The location of the meeting was in the Boardroom of the County Administration Building, 340 South Sixth Street, Wytheville, Virginia.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brian W. Vaught, Chair
 Ryan M. Lawson, Vice Chair
 Rolland R. Cook
 B.G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.

Coy L. McRoberts
 James D. "Jamie" Smith
 Stacy A. Terry

STAFF PRESENT:

Stephen D. Bear, County Administrator
 Scot Farthing, County Attorney
 Martha Collins, Administrative Assistant/Clerk
 Curtis Crawford, Emergency Services Coordinator
 Billy Bowers, Building & Grounds/Solid Waste
 Landon Sayers, Maintenance Foreman
 Don Crisp, Water/Wastewater Director

OTHERS PRESENT:

Sally Bass
 Marc Brade
 James Brown
 Sandy Bryant
 Dean Coe
 Roy Cox
 Keith Dunagan
 Jim & Dee Ennis
 Charlie Foster
 Andy Fowler
 Lori Guynn
 Breanne Forbes Hubbard
 David Kause
 Rick Lindamood

Stacy Linkous
 Paul Matthews
 Linda Meyer
 Charles Miller
 Cathy Pattison
 Tonya Remines
 Millie Rothrock
 Karen Shelton
 Kristina Smith
 Corbin Stone
 Beth & David Taylor
 Kathy Vaught
 Margaret Wagner
 approximately 7 others

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Vaught determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m.

INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Pastor Rick Lindamood, West End United Methodist Church, provided the invocation and Supervisor Cook led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CITIZENS' TIME

Chair Vaught inquired if anyone present wished to address the Board.

1. Conners Valley Road – Mr. Jim Ennis appeared before the Board and stated “Good evening everybody. Jim Ennis, living on Conners Valley Road, and I came here to talk about Conners Valley Road. I’ve been there for about a little over two years now and this road is a, most of it is a dirt road or a travel road, two or three miles long, I’m not sure; I don’t live out on the end. It’s pretty treacherous driving on this road. You know, this thing is along a creek and when it rains, it washes out. It used to happen once every few years, and it happens several times a year. It’s really, really treacherous. I’ll just tell you the story of the last, most recent incident, just a couple weeks ago. We had a big rain on a Saturday night; washed out the road. It was impassable so I gotta go somewhere so I’m in my car driving down, ‘uh oh, debris in the road’. Big rocks and big limbs and stuff that’s coming down from the wash-water. You know, water’s gone but all the debris is up on the road. But I’m trying to be careful and trying to drive around and I hit this stuff and I damage my car. It suffered a lot of damage because it didn’t clear it. So I had to get out of my car and get out and start clearing the road, and picking this stuff up and throwing it over here just so I can get out of there. Now, this is not just one time. This road just, this happens a lot, several times a year. I don’t know if it’s four or five times a year, I’ve only been there two years so I can’t give you a long average, but it happens a lot. Another thing about that road that’s really, really dangerous and really hazardous is, you know, the road gets worse and worse every time it gets washed out and the creek’s right here and the road’s here. Well, it gets washed out and there’s places where the creek is now cutting into the road, you know. Last couple times it washed out, VDOT put one of these big cones there – oh, you don’t want to drive over here because if you do, you’ll fall into the creek. It’s about an eight-foot drop. It’s just getting eaten up and eaten you out every time we have another flood. I think there’s two places between my house and on the way out. I don’t know about other places further down where there’s treacherous things like that, where the creek is eating into the side of the road, and so it’s probably something that needs to be addressed. The road is really a mess and the school buses go down there and all kinds of trucks, UPS and FedEx and all kinds of traffic. It’s not like I’m the only one on that

street. There's quite a respectable amount of traffic, but thanks a lot for the consideration."

2. Conners Valley Road – Mrs. Diane Ennis appeared before the Board and stated "Good evening. Diane Ennis, Conners Valley Road. Same thing but I got two incidents to share. In October of 2018, my brother and his wife, my sister-in-law, came to visit from Wisconsin. They drove all the way and it wasn't until they got to Conners Valley Road that they ran into a flood. The water was over a foot deep; they had to drive on the pasture just to get past. Everybody was freaking out. My sister-in-law told me she's not coming to visit me anymore because of that road, and as my husband said, this doesn't happen just once in a while. Then in February of 2019, I was leaving in the morning, there was a gentle rain and I thought '*Well, I guess it's going to be okay.*' So I come back in the afternoon and there's this big caution, high water sign right at the beginning of where the flooding was and I thought '*Oh my gosh, what am I going to do?*' So I call my neighbor who has lived there for a long, long time and he said '*Look, just drive straight in the middle and don't stop. Go slow, but don't stop.*' So I'm driving and my car takes this descent and dips into the water, all this water goes out and I think '*Oh my gosh, just go slow, keep going, stay in the middle.*' and thankfully, I knew where the road was and I did and I made it through and I took a video if you want to see it of all the washout flooding in this road and it happened in what, less than a few hours? So yeah, it would be nice if it was fixed. Thank you."
3. Pope Road & Powder Mill Road – Mr. Paul Matthews appeared before the Board and stated "My name is Paul Matthews. I live on Pope Road, and my concern tonight is what has happened on the low water bridge that nothing's been said about it for a while; what's taking place on that; and are they rebuilding it? And also come up Powder Mill Road and the first grade up Pope Road on the gravel road, it's a ditch about that deep. About a month ago, a school bus got in the ditch and they had to come in and tow it out. That's how bad it is. Why is it, up that one grade, it's about 100 yards long, that we can't get good size gravel or rock put in that ditch and build a shoulder on the road instead of having just a drop-off in a ditch. You get off of surface, you're in the ditch. And you get in the ditch, you don't go nowhere. The car's on the bottom, and I would like to know why I can't get a couple truckloads of good size stone which would drain good and fill that ditch line up that it won't be there like that, cause it's bad. I mean, if you meet somebody on that grade, if you don't almost come to a stop and be real careful, if you get off that regular surface, you're in the ditch. And it's been several people that's been in that ditch and had to be towed out. It ain't no good. I mean, it's no shoulder to the road, period. It's a surface and a ditch, and that's it."

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And another thing, our drain pipes on the road has never been cleaned out. They run the ditch line to the end of drain pipe and drain pipe is full of gravel and dirt; no water goes through them. And I know, according to what the plans are, about six months from now the road's supposed to be blacktopped; probably will put new drain pipes in but still we got the problem with the drain pipes there now because when it comes to hard rain, there's no way to get the water away from the road so it runs right under, right down the road and washes across the road, ditch lines in the road and everything else. It gets just like a rock break after a hard rain until then it's scraped and everything refinished, then you got a rough road to try to get over. So, I don't know what your plans would be on that and the drain pipe system right now but it seemed like it, these pipes supposed to have been cleaned about two years ago and they ain't never been touched. The County said they had the equipment to do it with but they must've lost the equipment. But it's two things that need to be done bad; the main thing is get that ditch line in the hill shored up so that, you know, people won't get in the ditch and have to be towed out. When the school bus gets in it and have to be towed out that means that ditch is bad, and that has happened about a month ago and it could cause a lot of damage; could cause injury to the children or whatsoever. It all depends on what speed they're travelling and whatsoever. So, need to be done something about it. Need to come out there and take a look at it and see exactly what I'm talking about because it ain't no good like that. I mean you ain't got no shoulder. You got surface and a ditch. There's no shoulder and a lot of places up that hill, two vehicles, they got to go slow in order to pass without getting off in the ditch or something. So, it needs to be something done about it. Thank you."

Chair Vaught commented that Mr. Fowler from VDOT is here tonight and can possibly address some of these issues.

4. Pope Road – Chair Vaught introduced Mr. Roy Cox, one of his favorite people to come to these meetings, and to wish him a happy birthday. Mr. Cox appeared before the Board and stated "That's what I'm here for (Pope Road blacktop). I know you know about it and everything, and promising we got a good man at VDOT now and he promised me so there ain't much I can say but he's been taking care of the road and he's been in there putting gravel and scraping it and cleaning the ditches out so I know we got a good man; we got some good guys up here that's going to take care of it. Y'all have a happy day."

The Board wished Mr. Cox a very happy birthday.

5. APEX Center Health Issues – Mr. Dean Coe appeared before the Board and stated “Good evening to you all. My name is Dean Coe and I live in Marion, Virginia. I want to talk about your Expo Center. I was a subcontractor contracted to do all the inside work when the building was put up. Last July, I and all my help started getting sick. We had a bad fungus epidemic come into the arena. I stepped into this fungus and it collapsed both lungs. I lost 40% of my lungs. I reported to Dr. Shelton in Marion and Labor Board of this incident, also Bill Vaughan and the head architect, David Shanks. David Shanks said he would look into it. Mr. Shanks approached Bill Vaughan about it and had lined up a laboratory to do the testing on this soil. Mr. Shanks was told to stand down the soil tests. We got our own soil tests and turned them over to David and again he was told to stand down. Meanwhile, James Brown had over 100 seizures in that building. Mrs. Remines, her husband died from it. He was 51. No oxygen to his heart. It attacks you; it gets you fast. I mean, you don’t have a minute. And it got me a total of four times. My lungs have collapsed 77 times. I have results of the soil test, what’s in the soil, and the results of what’s in their lungs, if you want to see it. But someone needs to be accountable for this stuff. It was there when we started. I got pictures of it on January 10th when we first started digging. It showed up the next day. It’s so fast moving; it shows up overnight, and it’ll be 2-3 inches deep, just like it snowed in the arena overnight. You cut it off at the dozer, it follows right in the dozer tracks coming back, that’s how fast it is. It’s a very deadly fungus. It’s the 10th most dangerous in the world and the third, there’s three of them in our lungs and the third fungus was discovered in 1926; one case of it. Then again in 2012 it showed up. They don’t know how to treat it, and if it’s not treated, it’s 100% fatal. And it’s in that arena. Now Dr. Shelton, along with the Health Department in Richmond, has employed an investigator for this. Their testing is almost complete but I just want it brought up that something definitely got to be done. There’s 14 of us that cannot work at all, nowhere. But I sure appreciate it if there’s something y’all can do with this. It attacks your limbs. Luther Pruitt wanted to be here tonight but he’s in such a bad shape, he’s bedridden. He’ll probably be in the hospital for a day before the night’s over. It’s his 13th time in intensive care and it took 7-8 weeks learning to walk again; it took his legs. The first time it hit me, it got my left arm and my voice disappeared, and I just failed. They had to carry me out. Bill Vaughan assured me it had been taken care of the second time I went in; I went down again. And till this day, we witnessed animals walking out the doors collapsing in that lot up at that sheep show. We got bad coughs, every one of us; bad stomach problems, groin problems, huge sores appear about the size of a nickel. They first start in your ears and go plum through your ear and then inside your mouth, the bottom of your feet then work up. Mr. Brown had an

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episode last Monday; he was walking his wife to the convenient store and he went down; he went out of air. It took about a half hour to get him back up. So, he turned around about a block away from his house and he goes down again, and it took four hours to get him up. So, Luther Pruitt's lungs collapsed on him five or six times, and just out of the blue it does it. If you don't have an inhaler or you're not ready, you're not going to make it. Tonya called me the night that Bobby died and wanted me to take him to see the specialist in Lexington we been seeing. So I agreed to it; said I'd pick him up in the morning. Well, I stopped to fuel up the next morning and call and tell 'em I'd be there in about 10 minutes, and his son said he died. He got to coughing and choking and that was it. So that's basically all I got to say about it but I've got all the information and eight months' time from October 8th to May 8th my medical records is 1,484 pages from this stuff. And it's extremely, extremely dangerous. We sat and we watched the sheep and the sheep show, go in one door and out the other and hit the ground; couldn't get them up. Three of them died. But I can't go near the building now and I'll start throwing up from my lungs, and so will Mr. Brown. So that's basically all I got to say about it."

Chair Vaught asked Mr. Coe if the Board could get a copy of his supporting documentation, excluding the medical records, and Mr. Coe agreed.

6. APEX Center Health Issues – Mr. James Brown appeared before the Board and stated "I was at the same places that he was working. Before I went there, I was boxing. I was jogging a lot; I was very athletic. Within about six months of me working there, three months of me working there, I started going into seizures. So they thought it was from boxing. So I had everything, all the exams and examinations done. My brain is fine. I stopped working there. No more seizures. But now I can't breathe; I can't jog no more. I can't even play with my kids. I just run out of air. Just the other night, like he said, I went down and I couldn't get back up. I couldn't breathe. Then, about two nights ago, I wake up and still couldn't breathe. Now these people are . . . it's still there and they're holding all these events there and all these kids that don't have a shot. These kids get it, they're done. That's what my concern is. I don't want no kids getting it. So that's why I want you guys to try and look into it because they don't know, they're treating it as the flu. But we're not responding to it. By the time they figure out it's not the flu, it's too late. And they do it to these kids, and a lot of kids go there. They hold a lot of events for the kids. So, I'm just saying just look into it because these kids are going to start dropping and no one's going to know why. That's all."

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Chair Vaught asked Mr. Brown who he worked for and Mr. Brown responded Dean Coe, the subcontractor.

7. APEX Center Health Issues – Ms. Tonya Remines appeared before the Board and stated “I’m Tonya Remines. My husband, Bobby Remines, Robert, worked with Dean Tolley at the Expo Center putting the lights in. Bobby got last October to where he couldn’t walk. Me being in the healthcare field already, I have a belt, it’s called a gate belt, and then we worked with him, I did till he could get up and walk. Thanksgiving last year he got to where his stomach was bothering him and his man parts like he went to the hospital and nobody could figure out what was going on with him. He just went down hill because of the mold down there. Now here I am, a year later, October, and my husband’s gone. First time in my life I’m a single parent of two of my grandkids, wondering what I’m gonna do about a house payment, or car payment, a light bill. You know, listening to Emma scream at night, *‘My heart hurts. I want my pawpaw. I want my daddy paw.’* Because that’s the only daddy’s she known. You know, what do you say to that? She says *‘I want to go climb the walnut tree and I’m gonna tell God to give me my pawpaw back.’* What do you say to a four year old? And it’s because he worked at that Expo Center and because of that mold. Like he had fluid around his lungs, around his heart, he couldn’t breathe. I took them to the playground one evening and come home and he’s laying there in the bed, gone, with two kids, screaming and hollering. Does anybody care? I mean is anybody gonna stand up and offer to pay my car payment that I’m weeks behind on because it’s \$500 a month. Are they gonna offer to take and pay my house off? I owe nine months on it. Are they gonna come in and are they gonna buy groceries? Because let me tell you, I went to Social Services because Bobbie’s check paid the house payment, it bought groceries and things like that because he was on Social Security Disability ‘cause he had rheumatoid arthritis. I went to Social Services over here and filed for food stamps. You want to know how many I get? \$68 a month. Don’t get me wrong, I’m grateful for what I get, don’t get me wrong, but \$68? Come on. You know, my daughter, their mom, out here running around doing whatever; can go right over here and file for food stamps and get \$200. Something’s wrong with this picture. But now, Bobbie’s gone and here I am and they’re suffering because of the mold. I would much rather have Bobby. And all I have is just memories.”

Vice Chair Lawson extended her sympathies to Mrs. Remines for her loss.

Mrs. Remines responded that “It don’t do any good if nobody’s gonna step up and do something about this. Because he had rheumatoid arthritis, but let me tell

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you something, he got out and he would cut wood, you know he could breathe. After he went to work down there, it was over with, over with.”

Vice Chair Lawson appreciates everyone coming forward to explain their situation and said that this Board will certainly look into this.

Mrs. Remines added “I’d give everything I had, my car, everything, if I could have Bobby. And I know a few of you. Some of you know me really good.”

Chair Vaught asked how long Mr. Remines worked at the APEX and Mrs. Remines replied “He started probably April or May, then he quit in September because he got to where he couldn’t talk and breathe, he couldn’t walk, you know, and he was up and doing the lights and the electrical work for Dean Tolley. That’s who he worked under, was Dean Tolley. Bobby hadn’t said anything to me but the day before Bobby passed away, Dean had talked to Bobby and was coming to get him to take him to the doctor. He called the next morning about 9 o’clock and my son answered the phone and Bobby died. Nobody knew anything. You know, he was told that it was nothing to worry about. And if you knew Bobby, he would not have took and put his self in a position to where it was gonna take him away from us, because I’m gonna tell you something, this young’n right here and her brother right here in the chair sitting here on the phone, you know our kids was grown, don’t get me wrong, he loves our kids, they mean the world to him but these two, because he knew that we were all they had. They meant the world to him. He would’ve walked through hell and high water for them. He would’ve never put me in a position to where I’d have to let my car go. You know, how am I gonna get back and forth to work after they come get my vehicle? Does anybody care? No. That’s my problem, but no, it’s not. It’s their problem because all the mold.”

With no one else wishing to address the Board, Chair Vaught closed Citizens’ Time.

PUBLIC HEARING – SURPLUS REAL PROPERTY

The Wythe County Board of Supervisors will hold a public hearing on Tuesday, January 28, 2020, at 6:05 p.m. to hear public comment for potential conveyance of lots in Progress Park or on Chapman Road from any of the following tax parcels: 27-61, 27-59, 42-41, and 43-26.

The hearing will take place in the Board Room of the County Administration Building, 340 South Sixth Street, Wytheville, Virginia.

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Mr. Bear explained this general public hearing is to simply allow for future conveyance of lots in Progress Park and along Chapman Road.

Chair Vaught opened the public hearing for comments.

Hearing no comments, the Chairman closed the public hearing.

PAYMENT OF COUNTY INVOICES

Supervisor McRoberts made a motion to pay the invoices for approval on January 28, 2020, for the various departments of County government. The invoices were paid on General Warrants 30105754-30105852 as follows:

EXPENDITURES BY DEPARTMENT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS January 28, 2020

CHECK #	ISSUE DATE	VENDOR	AMOUNT
30105754	01/21/2020	APPALACHIAN POWER	\$ 33,892.27
30105755	01/21/2020	CARTER BANK & TRUST (NOTE)	15,985.00
30105756	01/21/2020	ENTERPRISE FM TRUST	6,229.48
30105757	01/21/2020	SHENTEL	73.37
30105758	01/21/2020	TOWN OF WYTHEVILLE	403.62
30105759	01/21/2020	VERIZON WIRELESS	1,444.34
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 01/21/2020			\$58,028.08
30105760	01/28/2020	APPALACHIAN JUVENILE COMM	\$ 2,275.00
30105761	01/28/2020	APPALACHIAN POWER	443.34
30105762	01/28/2020	ARC3 GASES	321.42
30105763	01/28/2020	B & H PHOTO	575.83
30105764	01/28/2020	BEAR, STEPHEN	42.09
30105765	01/28/2020	BLUE RIDGE ANALYTICAL, LL	1,385.00
30105766	01/28/2020	BLUE RIDGE HEARING & AIR,	50.00
30105767	01/28/2020	BRENNTAG MID-SOUTH INC	2,002.99
30105768	01/28/2020	BROWN EXTERMINATING CO	81.12
30105769	01/28/2020	BUSINESS INFORMATION SYST	45.69
30105770	01/28/2020	CARILION HEALTHCARE CORP	180.00
30105771	01/28/2020	CARTER MACHINERY CO INC	3,748.21
30105772	01/28/2020	CENTURYLINK	39.98
30105773	01/28/2020	CENTURYLINK	48.40

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30105774	01/28/2020	CENTURYLINK	120.31
30105775	01/28/2020	CENTURYLINK	134.70
30105776	01/28/2020	CENTURYLINK	171.43
30105777	01/28/2020	CENTURYLINK	237.74
30105778	01/28/2020	CENTURYLINK	811.12
30105779	01/28/2020	CINTAS CORP NO 2	216.25
30105780	01/28/2020	COLT W. SIMMONS CONSTRUCT	53,675.00
30105781	01/28/2020	COM TEC	900.00
30105782	01/28/2020	PAUL WIDENER	1,475.55
30105783	01/28/2020	COMSONICS	724.00
30105784	01/28/2020	COULSON, ERIC D. & AUTUMN	560.43
30105785	01/28/2020	CREATIVE GLASS INC	753.14
30105786	01/28/2020	CSG SYSTEMS, INC	1,652.95
30105787	01/28/2020	CW WARTHEN	505.40
30105788	01/28/2020	DEMTECH VOTING SOLUTIONS	770.00
30105789	01/28/2020	DEPT OF MOTOR VEHICLES	230.00
30105790	01/28/2020	DIVERSIFIED INTEGRATION I	850.00
30105791	01/28/2020	DUNAGAN, KEITH	179.10
30105792	01/28/2020	FARTHING, SCOT S	3,512.50
30105793	01/28/2020	FERGUSON ENTERPRISES #5	878.30
30105794	01/28/2020	FIDELITY POWER SYSTEMS	1,001.20
30105795	01/28/2020	FIRE SAFETY PRODUCTS	700.00
30105796	01/28/2020	FN WHOLESALE LIGHTING & S	371.40
30105797	01/28/2020	CMRS-FP	2,000.00
30105798	01/28/2020	GOVERNMENT FINANCE OFFICE	225.00
30105799	01/28/2020	GRANT, BRUCE M	4,343.59
30105800	01/28/2020	HEART OF THE EARTH ANIMAL	202.75
30105801	01/28/2020	HIGHWAY INTERDICTION TRAI	750.00
30105802	01/28/2020	HOME DEPOT PRO	1,753.95
30105803	01/28/2020	HURT & PROFFITT INC	70.00
30105804	01/28/2020	ICOM AMERICA, INC	13,528.88
30105805	01/28/2020	JAMES RIVER EQUIPMENT EXC	65.35
30105806	01/28/2020	KUSTOM SIGNALS	8,320.00
30105807	01/28/2020	LACY, CAMPBELL & MUNIQUE	120.00
30105808	01/28/2020	MUNICIPAL EMERGENCY SERVI	910.00
30105809	01/28/2020	LEAD MINES RESCUE SQUAD	8,347.48
30105810	01/28/2020	MANSFIELD OIL CO	6,477.37
30105811	01/28/2020	MCI COMM SERVICE	36.14
30105812	01/28/2020	MCI COMM SERVICE	112.02

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30105813	01/28/2020	MCI COMM SERVICE	630.22
30105814	01/28/2020	MEREDITH, DAVID M	243.06
30105815	01/28/2020	MOUNT ROGERS PLANNING DIS	4,609.50
30105816	01/28/2020	MUSSER, JEREMIAH	55.77
30105817	01/28/2020	NATIONAL BANK	93,241.36
30105818	01/28/2020	NATIONAL SHERIFFS' ASSOC	129.00
30105819	01/28/2020	NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL	137,491.35
30105820	01/28/2020	OFFICE OF THE PUBLIC DEFE	20.00
30105821	01/28/2020	PAPER CLIP	328.91
30105822	01/28/2020	PARTNERSHIP SCREENING INT	28.80
30105823	01/28/2020	POLYTEC INC	2,880.00
30105824	01/28/2020	PREFERRED SOURCES INC	2,095.75
30105825	01/28/2020	R&C TOWING & REPAIR CO	20.00
30105826	01/28/2020	R&R ENTERPRISES INC	270.00
30105827	01/28/2020	R.E. MICHEL COMPANY, LLC	229.51
30105828	01/28/2020	SALEM STONE	407.93
30105829	01/28/2020	SIRCHIE FINGER PRINT LABO	1,111.64
30105830	01/28/2020	SOUTHWESTERN VA GAS SERVI	1,105.40
30105831	01/28/2020	STATE ELECTRIC SUPPLY CO	549.38
30105832	01/28/2020	THOMPSON TIRE	962.18
30105833	01/28/2020	TOWN OF WYTHEVILLE	13,280.45
30105834	01/28/2020	TOWN OF WYTHEVILLE DEPT O	1,000.00
30105835	01/28/2020	TRI CITIES/SW VA REGIONAL	482.57
30105836	01/28/2020	TYLER TECHNOLOGIES INC	55,051.25
30105837	01/28/2020	USA BLUE BOOK	1,133.00
30105838	01/28/2020	VAUGHT, BRIAN W	318.42
30105839	01/28/2020	VERIZON	50.50
30105840	01/28/2020	VERIZON WIRELESS	120.03
30105841	01/28/2020	VGFOA	50.00
30105842	01/28/2020	VIRGINIA BUSINESS SYST	95.13
30105843	01/28/2020	VUPS	71.40
30105844	01/28/2020	WELLS FARGO CORPORATE TRU	308,442.55
30105845	01/28/2020	WYTHE CO GENERAL DISTRICT	120.00
30105846	01/28/2020	WYTHE CO HEALTH DEPT	121.88
30105847	01/28/2020	WYTHE CO RESCUE SQUAD	2,000.00
30105848	01/28/2020	WYTHE OIL DISTRIBUTORS	4,503.45
30105849	01/28/2020	WYTHE TIRE AND MUFFLER	617.89
30105850	01/28/2020	WYTHEVILLE ENTERPRISE	81.95
30105851	01/28/2020	WYTHEVILLE OFFICE SUPPLY	724.14

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30105852	01/28/2020	XEROX	465.14
TOTAL EXPENDITURES 01/28/2020			\$764,071.63

TOTAL EXPENDITURES APPROVED 01/28/2020	\$822,099.71
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Vice Chair Horney seconded the motion and the roll call vote was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	

NAYS: None

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Board was presented with the January 14, 2020 minutes for approval.

Supervisor Terry made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Smith, to approve the January 14, 2020 minutes as presented.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	

NAYS: None

APPOINTMENTS

Supervisor Smith made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Terry, to appoint Brad Hughes to the Appalachian Regional Exposition Center Authority.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	

NAYS: None

Supervisor Smith made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Horney, to appoint Shannon Ball to the Appalachian Regional Exposition Center Authority.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	

NAYS: None

Mr. Bear reported that one more seat on the Authority will become vacant effective March 1st.

Chair Vaught made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Terry, to appoint Jeremy Farley to the Appalachian Regional Exposition Center Authority.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	

NAYS: None

Supervisor McRoberts indicated that he has two or three people who would like to serve on the APEX Authority.

Supervisor Smith also commented that he has a few names of people who'd like to be considered in the future.

Chair Vaught asked that those names be forwarded to Mr. Bear for future consideration.

FY2019 AUDIT – CORBIN STONE

Mr. Corbin Stone of Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates (“RFC”), appeared before the Board to present an overview of the FY19 Audit Report.

Wythe County received an unqualified or unmodified opinion which means RFC feels the financial statements are materially correct. A couple areas of improvement were noted but nothing crucial or uncommon.

Mr. Stone stated that ten years of data is presented in the report. The end of year balance in Governmental Funds is \$49.8MM. The General Fund/Capital Projects Fund decreased from last year about \$5MM primarily due to school construction. The unrestricted fund balance in the General Fund is \$39.3MM, an increase from the prior year. Long Term Obligations (Debt) is \$52.9MM.

Net Position for Water & Sewer Funds is at \$31MM, a slight increase.

Long Term Obligations to the Enterprise Fund are just under \$25MM.

School Board Long Term Obligations are at \$41MM, of which \$40MM is pension and liabilities. The County’s pension and liabilities were \$3MM. The total Long Term Obligations for both School Board and County is \$119MM, which is just under last year’s State average per capita.

Mr. Bear commented that the debt per capita from previous years is due to GASB numbers not being included. Not until 2014-2015 were pension liabilities included.

Mr. Stone stated that the County’s primary growing revenue source is general property taxes (real estate, personal property, machinery, merchants capital, etc.). Numbers reveal that meals and lodging tax has remained relatively flat.

Regarding tax assessments, the real estate assessed value jumped from 2007-2008 and it’s been a slow climb since. Personal property has seen good growth since 2005. Public service corporation (railroads, power lines, telecom) has grown significantly. Mr. Stone said these assessments are driving the revenues.

School Board sources of revenue going back to 2006 includes State aid which peaked in 2009. Since then, the difference has been primarily from local dollars. Federal aid increased in 2010 but then started coming down. In fact, it is lower in 2019 than it was in 2006.

The audit report also includes the new accounting standards that are coming out in the next several years. Biggest impact to the County, in effort not dollars, from these new standards will relate to capital leases. The new standard will require that anything leased (i.e. copiers), not just lease-to-own items, be recorded in the financial statements.

Overall, Mr. Stone said the audit went well and they were very pleased with the County, their assistance and their accuracy.

Chair Vaught commented that the audit report is a public document and is available online and here in the County Administration office.

Supervisor Horney made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Lawson, to accept the FY19 Audit as presented.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	

NAYS: None

TREASURER'S REPORT

Treasurer, Lori Guynn, appeared before the Board and reported the following:

1. Revenue Statement – Mrs. Guynn reported that the Consolidated Account was comprised of \$68,402,788 of which \$46,416,046 was in the General Fund Account at the end of December. Because the Treasurer's Office was still processing tax payments through mid-January, next month's report will more accurately reflect total revenues.
2. Tax Collections – Mrs. Guynn announced that thru end of business yesterday, real estate rate is at 91.4%. Personal property and mobile home is low, but merchants capital, machine/tool, and public service collection rates are higher because they are business-related taxes and more likely to be paid sooner. Overall collection rate (real estate and personal property) is around 91.6%. Mrs. Guynn expects to see an increase in the next couple of months as people receive their income tax

refunds which they will use to pay their taxes. Collections for license fees are around 67% but expect them to increase in the coming months.

COMMISSIONER OF REVENUE REPORT

Commissioner of Revenue, Kathy Vaught, appeared before the Board and reported that her transition has been smooth so far. She has spent time in training in Richmond, and she's also created a Facebook page where the general public can get up-to-date information (job openings, income tax preparation, Age Credit/Disability applications, etc.). The Commissioner's office has mailed out business personal property returns, including mobile homes and campgrounds. They are also beginning to work on building permits.

Mr. Bear added that a draft contract has been prepared for a reassessment firm for 2021. This was previously procured through Mount Rogers Planning District Commission. Interviews were previously conducted and expect the initial background work to begin this summer or late fall. The reassessment is required every five years.

SHERIFF'S REPORT

Sheriff Keith Dunagan appeared before the Board and reported that their IT person was recently promoted and, therefore, they desperately need to fill that position. The Sheriff's Office utilizes a great deal of technology (electronic ticketing, body and vehicle cameras, etc.). The Sheriff indicated they've identified someone who has the right skill set to meet their needs but cannot accept a salary less than \$45k. The Sheriff's Office cannot continue to fund the position 100%. The Police Activity Fund is steadily declining as people are not paying their fines. Sheriff Dunagan said the County pays for all the other IT staff, why not pay for his?

BUILDING & GROUNDS COMMITTEE

1. Progress Park Sub-Lease - Supervisor Cook made a motion, as recommended by the Building & Grounds Committee, to authorize Mr. Art Davis to sub-lease the Progress Park property (grazing lease only) to Bottomley Evergreens.

Mr. Bear added that Mr. Davis has leased the property since 1999; this is final year of the lease (expires 12/31/20). This would just be for the remainder of this year, and it pertains to the grazing lease only, not the separate hay lease for Lot 24. Mr. Davis may consider combining the two leases at the end of this year.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Brian W. Vaught Coy L. McRoberts
Rolland R. Cook B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
Ryan M. Lawson Stacy A. Terry
James D. "Jamie" Smith

NAYS: None

2. APEX Barn Project Change Order No. 1 – Supervisor Cook made a motion, as recommended by the Building & Grounds Committee, to approve Change Order #1 resulting in a deduction of \$3,500 for the APEX Barn Project.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Brian W. Vaught Coy L. McRoberts
Rolland R. Cook B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
Ryan M. Lawson Stacy A. Terry
James D. "Jamie" Smith

NAYS: None

WATER COMMITTEE

Supervisor Horney made a motion, as recommended by the Water Committee, to approve increasing the water rates effective March 1, 2020, as shown:

Current Residential Rates	Proposed Residential Rates
\$ 18.90 (0-1000 gallons)	\$ 20.79 (0-1000 gallons)
\$ 9.45 (per 1000 gallons after)	\$ 10.40 (per 1000 gallons after)
Current Commercial Rates	Proposed Commercial Rates
\$ 18.90 (0-1000 gallons)	\$ 20.79 (0-1000 gallons)
\$ 9.45 (per 1000 gallons after)	\$ 10.40 (per 1000 gallons after)

Mr. Bear explained the Water Committee which is an Enterprise Zone account which means its revenues are to cover expenses without having to dip into the General Fund. This is just the first step to help cover some of the losses in the water fund balance. The County last raised the water rates in 2015 so the Committee recommends the 10% increase which amounts to \$1.89 increase per month up to 1,000 gallons (base rate) and \$.95 increase per 1,000 gallons above the base.

Supervisor Smith said that rates need to be raised for reasons other than the deficit.

Mr. Bear responded that additional expenses include NRRWA rate hike, water projects to extend service to new customers, and we need to be in a more viable financial position. He said that Mr. Grant has experience working with regional water authorities and he's willing to work the Committee and the Board to study and determine how best to proceed. But the shortfall needs to be addressed now.

Supervisor Smith added that the rate increase will better able the County to get grant money so we can provide water to areas in need. We need more customers to make a profit.

Supervisor Terry understands the need to raise the rates but is concerned that this is merely putting a band-aid on it. He doesn't see this as a long-term solution and would like to see other options.

Supervisor McRoberts has argued the same point since he's been on the Board. Rickey Road and its 30 residents, have been asking for water for 10 years. He has people in his area that also need water. He said people in the lower end of Wytheville need water. Children are bathing in dirty, smelly water. The time is now to do something about it. Supervisor McRoberts pays the base rate (as a non-user) and he said he's happy to do it because he knows that if he ever needs water, it is there for him.

Vice Chair Lawson commented that this doesn't affect the majority of her area because they live in Town and have Town water. While she does not like to increase rates, it's been five years and this is not unreasonable. She said we need to get water to many of those people who need and want it. This may seem like a "band-aid" but it has to start somewhere.

Chair Vaught has strongly been opposed to the non-user fee being the same as the base rate for users. He requested to see several options but what the Committee is recommending is the very same one that's been discussed all along. The Chairman would like to see the non-user rate be lower than the base rate for users.

Supervisor McRoberts replied that if people don't want to pay the non-user rate, they end up paying for it anyway, indirectly, through their taxes (i.e. money will come out of the General Fund which is taxpayer money).

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Supervisor Horney said the Committee discussed reducing the non-user rate but that would require them to increase the user base rate to \$23-25 to make up that difference.

Mr. Bear reiterated that Mr. Grant will work with the Water Committee to look at long term solutions and a feasible way to structure the rates and possibly lower the non-user rate. But time is of the essence and the rate increase needs to happen now. We have to start somewhere. With budget season fast approaching, the rate change may not happen for six months. He stressed this is not a "band-aid", rather, this is the beginning of things turning around, and the County certainly cannot impose a greater increase all at once. This is just the start to solving the problem.

Supervisor Cook added that the Water Committee considered various options but any increases would require another public hearing and that would further delay the process; a process that the former board postponed and postponed. He said we need to take action now.

Supervisor Smith asked if the Board can vote on not raising the non-user fee and keep the other increases as is.

Mr. Bear responded they could do that but it would result in a decrease to their projected revenue.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Rolland R. Cook	Coy L. McRoberts
	Ryan M. Lawson	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	Stacy A. Terry

NAYS: Brian W. Vaught

BUDGET COMMITTEE

1. Surplus Vehicle Transfer – Supervisor Smith made a motion, as recommended by the Budget Committee, to transfer a surplus 2013 Ford Taurus to the Technology Center for training purposes in the Criminal Justice class.

The Sheriff advised they have a surplus vehicle and that the Technology Center could use it. The vehicle has close to 200,000 miles on it. The Committee recommends it be declared as surplus and transferred to the School Board.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES: James D. "Jamie" Smith Stacy A. Terry
Coy L. McRoberts

NAYS: None

ABSTAIN: Brian W. Vaught Ryan M. Lawson
Rolland R. Cook B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.

2. Sheriff's Office IT Position – Supervisor Smith made a motion, as recommended by the Budget Committee, to approve funding to the Sheriff's Office IT position 100% from the General Fund.

Mr. Bear explained that previously this position was funded out of the PAF but the Sheriff is now requesting it come out of General Fund, and he's offered to share the position with the Commonwealth Attorney's office. Mr. Bear would also like to see this IT person assist with Dispatch (Spillman technology).

Supervisor Cook asked if there are two issues that need to be voted on: (1) funding of the position and (2) increase in salary.

Mr. Bear replied that he does not have salary information but the Committee can later vote to amend and appropriate that. The motion before the Board is to just fund the IT position 100% out of the General Fund.

Vice Chair Lawson is concerned that sharing the IT person among several offices might spread them too thin, especially since the Sheriff's Office had a dedicated person for several years.

Mr. Bear doesn't see a problem with this. The goal would be to have the IT person shared by just the three offices.

Chair Vaught voiced concern about the IT person working with both the Sheriff and Commonwealth Attorney, as it relates to evidence and the Sheriff's Office personnel policy. Mr. Bear does not feel this would be an issue.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES: Rolland R. Cook B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
 James D. "Jamie" Smith Stacy A. Terry
 Coy L. McRoberts

NAYS: NONE

ABSTAIN: Brian W. Vaught Ryan M. Lawson

CONSENT CALENDAR

Supervisor Horney made a motion to adopt the Consent Calendar as follows:

1. PAYROLL – December 2019:

General County Fund	\$	562,025.72
Police Activity Fund		70,211.80
Courthouse Security Fund		11,716.61
Water Department Fund		20,444.33
Wythe County Wastewater Fund		20,205.74
TOTAL	\$	684,604.20

Check Numbers: 20000658-20000679

Voucher Numbers: 10398-10756

2. STATUS REPORTS:

- A. Animal Control – Arlan Dunford
- B. Building Inspection – Tim Spraker
- C. Emergency Communications – Darlene Lang
- D. Finance – Bruce Grant
- E. Parks & Recreation – Kevin Williams
- F. Solid Waste – Billy Bowers

3. PERSONNEL:

- A. Sayers, George Landon – Hired, Full-time B&G Maintenance Foreman, Annual Salary \$42,000, Effective December 16, 2019
- B. Crockett, Georgia – Retired, Sheriff's Office, Effective December 31, 2019

Transportation – Need to create/expand transportation assistance program, expand awareness of MCAP and emergency transportation programs, expand hours for transportation, work with community college to help students with transportation, and consider Uber and Lyft.

Obesity – They would like to expand Fit4Life and Shape Up Wythe Sheffey programs which have proven to be successful, and consider using schools for more activity programs.

Unemployment – Continue Workforce Development through the community college, and reduce the impact of substance use on job prospects.

Healthcare - Other areas they focused on include expanded child care opportunities, economic development, healthcare access with an urgent care center, Medicaid education, new MRCS crisis care center, community awareness of all resources available, and recruitment of healthcare providers.

Substance Use in Wythe County – Dr. Shelton reported there were 62 overdose deaths in last 12 years. Primary drugs are opioids and methamphetamine. SWVA has the highest concentration of prescription opioid deaths, and to our north and east, you'll find more heroin and fentanyl-related deaths. However, in Wythe County, heroin and fentanyl deaths are on the rise. Methamphetamine is the drug of choice for this area. Other drug related effects include Hepatitis C (50 new cases diagnosed annually in Wythe County every year averaging \$100k-300k per treatment). Dr. Shelton said the CDC did a study on the counties at greatest risk for an HIV and Hep C epidemic, and Wythe County was among top 5% nationally. Hepatitis A is also an issue in our area among the homeless, incarcerated and substance users.

Neonatal Abstinence Syndrome ("NAS") – These are babies whose mothers have used substances during pregnancy, and after they are born, go through withdrawal. Wythe County has higher rates than the State average.

Trauma & Resiliency – ACEs (Adverse Childhood Experiences) relate to abuse, neglect and household dysfunction. Dr. Shelton reported that children exposed during developmental years may develop lifelong difficulties, and are at risk for greater health-related issues. They look at ways to overcome these experiences and resiliency.

Prevention & Treatment – Addiction is a chronic disease, not a moral failing. Focus is on prevention through education, drug take-back days and drug drop-box, educating

healthcare providers on alternative medications, educating youth (prevent addiction before it starts), counseling, medication assisted treatment programs, life-saving treatment (naloxone), recovery courts, community support meetings, birth control, disease prevention (HIV, Hep C) and Comprehensive Harm Reduction program (Smyth County).

Vice Chair Lawson commented that the situation is very sad and all too often we turn a blind eye to the abuse that surrounds us. She appreciates all the work that's being done by Mount Rogers Health District and the community partners.

Dr. Shelton, in response to Mr. Bear's inquiry, said the Comprehensive Harm Reduction program (Smyth County) is a very structured program that requires community, BOS and law enforcement support. This program has been in Smyth County for one year with very positive results.

VDOT MATTERS – ANDY FOWLER

Mr. Andy Fowler of VDOT appeared before the Board and welcomed the new members. Mr. Fowler provided the following update:

1. Connors Valley Road – Mr. Fowler said that this road was looked at several years ago. VDOT is aware of a couple sections that are below creek level that need to be realigned or built up but, unfortunately, are outside the scope of Rural Rustic. Mr. Fowler will go back to review the files from five years ago and the cost estimates prepared then. Apparently, there were previous discussions with one of the land owners, Mr. Kelly, where he agreed with rerouting the road to raise it above creek level. This would be a significant project, though. Mr. Fowler will get back to Mr. Bear with estimated costs and potential funding.

Supervisor Smith asked about the washouts. Mr. Fowler will have the crews go out in the morning to survey the area.

2. Silons Bridge – Mr. Fowler reported that this bridge had washed out a few years ago and that no funding is available to replace it. Mr. Bear added that review and design work was previously done but, unfortunately, they could not proceed further due to lack of State funding.
3. Pope Road – Mr. Fowler confirmed that it's on the six-year plan and they are next on the list for surface treatment.

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4. Grouse Ridge Road – Mr. Fowler reported that the hold-up has been between the Attorney General and East Tennessee Natural Gas (“ETNG”) agreeing to subordination of rights. ETNG has the right-of-way which needs to be relinquished to the State so they can take it into their system. Mr. Fowler reports that that the Attorney General has signed off on the agreement and are now waiting on final signatures. W&L Construction is ready to go as soon as the agreement is signed. Mr. Fowler acknowledged that the road is in such poor condition that they won’t even wait until the weather breaks; they will begin immediately and mill up the surface.
5. Orion Drive – Supervisor Smith stated the he’s spoken with some of the residents and they are open to revenue sharing. Mr. Bear said Orion Drive was submitted in October for revenue sharing and we should know by July whether funding will be awarded. We can then proceed further.
6. Doe Run – Supervisor Smith asked if this ½ mile gravel road could be paved and drainage fixed (many washouts). Mr. Fowler believes there is a work order for the drainage problem but he’ll check into it. He will also measure the road to see if it qualifies for Rural Rustic and, if so, can consider adding it to the plan.
7. Major Grahams Road – Supervisor Smith asked for an update on last part of the road from Fish Hatchery Road toward the mansion. Mr. Fowler has spoken with JC Weaver who owns property on both sides of the road and he has volunteered to remove trees from the easement (has already begun) which will eliminate that expense and help move the project along. As soon as weather breaks, they will begin this work.
8. Muskrat Road – Supervisor Smith also inquired about this road. Mr. Bear said that because Muskrat is a private drive, it would have to go through the revenue sharing application process. However, VDOT has changed to a bi-annual cycle so the revenue sharing application could go in next year. He said they could at least begin having discussions with the community about the process and related preparation.
9. Route 94 – Supervisor Smith asked about Route 94 and the speed limit on it from Route 52 through the S-curve right below St. Paul Church (near Jewel Lane). He believes the speed limit is 45 and said the residents would like to see it lowered to 35 due to limited site visibility. Mr. Fowler will pass this along to VDOT’s traffic engineering staff.

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10. Crawfish Road – Chair Vaught appreciates they put down gravel recently but it needs to be machined as the gravel just went into the potholes. That road sees a lot of traffic especially during hunting season.
11. Gap of the Ridge – Chair Vaught said there've been 1-2 more accidents in that one section that Mr. Wright had previously spoken about. The Chairman asked if it's possible to maybe get a guardrail in that one section. Mr. Fowler said he'd go out and take a look at it.
12. Mount Airy Road – Mr. Fowler said they started work late in the season last fall and will pick back up as soon as the weather breaks.

Chair Vaught also wanted Mr. Fowler to convey his thanks to VDOT for their help during the tragic accident that recently occurred on West Lee Highway.

13. 35 mph Zone in Ivanhoe – Mr. Fowler said it's current in process and under review right now by traffic engineering.

THE BOARD TOOK A 5-MINUTE RECESS AT 8:18 p.m.

RESOLUTION 2020-01 – CIGARETTE TAX LEGISLATION

Mr. Bear explained that last year the Board of Supervisors passed a similar resolution. The Board has been working for several years to get equal taxing authority between cities, counties and towns. Because we were unable to get that equal taxing, we would at least like approval to impose a local tax on cigarettes, for both health and economical reasons. Mr. Bear, along with Mr. John Stirrup of the Revenue Equity Coalition, recommends adoption.

WYTHE COUNTY RESOLUTION 2020-01 RESOLUTION OF THE WYTHE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS SUPPORTING THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY GRANTING ALL COUNTIES THE AUTHORITY TO LEVY A LOCAL TAX ON CIGARETTES BY THE PACK

WHEREAS, The Commonwealth of Virginia has created counties, cities and towns as political subdivisions to more effectively provide and deliver an array of public services to the residents of the Commonwealth; and,

WHEREAS, Virginia local governments only have the taxing authority specifically granted to them by the General Assembly to levy taxes for the services they provide for their residents; and,

WHEREAS, the Virginia General Assembly restricts counties from imposing a tax on cigarettes. The Code of Virginia (current 58.1-3830) was amended in 1977 to deprive counties, cities and towns the right to levy taxes upon the sale or use of cigarettes, unless the locality had been granted such power prior to January 1, 1977. No county had the authority (except Arlington and Fairfax). Section 58.1-3840 saves towns and cities, allowing them to impose cigarette taxes with no limits. The result is that while every city and town, regardless of population, may impose a cigarette tax, only two of ninety-five counties of the Commonwealth have the authority.

WHEREAS, currently only Fairfax and Arlington Counties and cities and towns are authorized, pursuant to the Code of Virginia, to impose a tax on retail sales of tobacco products, including but not limited to cigarettes, while all other counties must seek approval from the General Assembly to be granted the same taxing authority; and,

WHEREAS, the General Assembly has never granted such authority to any County, other than Fairfax and Arlington, despite continued efforts by multiple Legislators and Counties throughout the Commonwealth to be granted such taxing authority; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Board of Supervisors of Wythe County does hereby approve this resolution expressing our enthusiastic support for state legislation that would grant counties the authority to levy a new tax on retail tobacco products including cigarettes, if and when such a measure was either approved by a majority vote of the Board of Supervisors or said measure was placed on a referendum and the voters passed said referendum by a majority vote.

Supervisor Horney made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Cook, to adopt Resolution 2020-01 supporting legislation granting all counties the authority to levy tax on tobacco products.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	

NAYS: None

DRAFT BUDGET CALENDAR FY20-21

Mr. Bear presented the FY20-21 draft budget calendar and stated that it's a requirement to adopt a budget calendar. This calendar has been shared with all Board members. Mr. Bear said the goal is to adopt the FY20-21 Budget by our May 26, 2020 meeting.

Supervisor Terry made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Horney, to adopt the FY20-21 Budget Calendar as presented.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	
NAYS:	None	

WYTHEVILLE FIRE & RESCUE – MARC BRADE

The Town of Wytheville Fire Chief, Marc Brade, appeared before the Board to report on the creation of Wytheville Fire & Rescue.

Chief Brade stated that Wythe County Rescue Squad ("WCRS") Board approached him months ago to discuss the possibility of combining operations. One year ago, the Town of Wytheville Fire Department consisted of 5-6 engineers and 11 volunteers. After midnight, no one would be in the firehouse (on call only) and the average response time was 10-15 minutes. They are now looking to have 35 employees, 8-9 per shift, will have 24/7/365 coverage and response time less than 5 minutes (within the Town limits).

Chief Brade announced that the estimated budget for 20-21 for the Town of Wytheville Fire & Rescue Department will be about \$2.5MM. He reported that last year, Wythe County gave the Town approximately \$21,480. Subtract those numbers, and the Town is investing about \$306 per citizen per year for fire department services (8,211 citizens in the Town). The Town of Wytheville Fire Department covers about 5,000 County residents (outside Town limits). Chief Brade said the \$21,480 that Wythe County gives the Town equates to \$4.30 per citizen per year that's invested. For the Town to take over EMS, they would invest \$624,305. Their ask is \$150,000 from Wythe County in the first year, \$125,000 the next year, and \$100,000/year thereafter. They propose the same coverage areas that the Town and WCRS currently cover. Chief Brade said the Town's fire department ran the most calls last year (380) than any other fire department. WCRS ran 2,554 calls last year. He reported that all of Wythe County ran 6,018 calls last year and

that by combining the Town and WCRS, they will cover almost 50% of all the calls in Wythe County.

Chief Brade strongly encourages this Board to consider making adjustments based on call volume and coverage area. He would like everyone to understand that the Town of Wytheville Fire & Rescue Department is not just available to the Town of Wytheville but "it is available to the entire county and we will always keep it that way".

Chair Vaught asked what the EMS billing practice is going to be.

Chief Brade responded that it will remain the same except they will likely go with another billing company; virtually the same collection process employed by WCRS. He added that the State sets the rates that can be charged.

The Chairman asked what if someone can't pay?

Chief Brade replied that they send three letters. They also intend to put a new program in place which is basically an annual membership for \$200 per household. They would still bill the insurance company, but the annual membership would cover any excess that the insurance company does not pay.

Chair Vaught also asked about the annual support they're asking from Wythe County and that Chief Brade has made no mention about the equipment, trucks, etc. that would be turned over to them.

Chief Brade commented that the County doesn't have a whole lot invested in transport units as they were purchased on grants.

Supervisor Cook replied that it doesn't make them worth any less.

Chief Brade also reported that WCRS is very close to shutting its doors and that they're having trouble paying their bills. He was told last week that they may not be able to make payroll. He also said that he's putting together a contingency plan and has hired some paramedics that can help supplement WCRS. He also added that this transition should have zero impact on the citizens.

Vice Chair Lawson raised concerned about timing and if WCRS closes, and the merger doesn't happen until March 9th, how do we bridge the gap? Does the County need to fund WCRS to keep them afloat until the agreement goes into effect?

Chief Brade said new employees are showing up on February 10th (for training). He can't promise anything but will do his best to implement a contingency plan to fill that gap.

Mr. Bear was just made aware of WCRS's inability to meet payroll this afternoon, and he wished he had learned sooner as this is critical and requires immediate attention. He hopes that the agreement can be finalized asap. Mr. Crawford is currently reviewing the agreement that the Town attorney has drafted, and will be discussed at tomorrow night's meeting.

Supervisor Cook raised concern about areas of the county not being served by this agreement.

Mr. Bear responded that those areas will continue to be covered by Lead Mines and Rural Retreat.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT

Mr. Bear presented the Board with a Draft Capital Improvements Plan which has been shared with and reviewed by the Budget Committee. With the upcoming budget, it's important to include a capital improvement plan as well as guideline for the next five years. Mr. Bear has met with an outside firm to possibly provide a financial overview and plan for Wythe County. In the coming days, the firm will present their proposal to conduct a financial overview that may provide us with alternative financing and/or options to consolidate debt. While the firm has a lot of our historical/financial information, they would like to have estimated expenditures (capital improvements) for the next five years. Therefore, Mr. Bear would like everyone to review this information and send him any comments/changes.

COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT

County Attorney, Mr. Scot Farthing, reported on the following:

1. Hamilton Knob Tower Site – Mr. Farthing received email yesterday from Enbridge that they're providing a company resolution authorizing the transfer of the land to the County, and their legal department is reviewing the deed. Mr. Farthing hopes to receive their comments on the draft deed by the end of the week.
2. Parking Ordinance – Mr. Farthing reported that the Committee met and he received comments from the County Administrator which he is revising and will send back for their recommendation to the Board.

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS' REPORTS

1. Lots Gap – Supervisor Smith said residents are complaining about recent grading at Salem Stone. Apparently, there's stormwater runoff that's hitting them pretty hard (property to property).
2. Wolf Rats in Speedwell – Supervisor Horney reported a complaint of wolf rats in Speedwell and the citizen(s) believe it's as a result of the feedlot. He said the Health Department said it's not their problem.
3. Wythe County Rescue Squad – Supervisor Terry would like to know how the Town of Wytheville learned of WCRS financial difficulties before we did. This is an unnecessary blindside and total breakdown in communication.

Mr. Bear admits it's been disheartening since the Board of Supervisors has worked so hard to support WCRS. Change is hard especially when jobs seem at risk. Hopefully, as soon as the agreement is finalized, we all can move forward.

Chair Vaught is all for the merger but the cost to Wythe County in the first two years seems excessive. He doesn't feel we're getting enough credit for the ambulances.

Vice Chair Lawson understands the start-up costs but feels we should be able to negotiate a better price. Their training/equipment costs seem high given that the WCRS people are already trained with equipment.

The Board briefly discussed financial aspects of merger before recessing.

RECESS

The Board recessed until Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 5:30 p.m.

RECONVENE

The Board reconvened on Wednesday, January 29, 2020 at 5:30 p.m. with the APEX Authority in the EOC Conference Room of the County Office Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Brian W. Vaught, Chair

Ryan M. Lawson, Vice Chair

Rolland R. Cook

B.G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.

Coy L. McRoberts

James D. "Jamie" Smith

Stacy A. Terry

STAFF PRESENT:

Stephen D. Bear, County Administrator
Colleen Cummings, Secretary
Blake Stowers, Public Information Officer

APEX AUTHORITY PRESENT:

Cory Aker, Chair	Doug Hughes
Bob Litton, Vice Chair	Cathy Pattison
Betsy Gillman	Shannon Vaught
Brad Hughes	

APEX STAFF PRESENT:

Tom Hager, Facilities Director
Jenna Lewis, Office Manager
Kristina Smith, General Manager

OTHERS PRESENT:

Jeremy Farley	Millie Rothrock
Kevin Funk	Beth Taylor
Joe & Patsy Hale	Tam Topham
Buddy Johnstone	James Warden
Whitley Lester	Frances & Graham Watson
Matthew Miller	approximately 10 other residents
Jim Penley	

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Vaught determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

Cory Aker, Chair of the APEX Authority, also determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 5:36 p.m.

INTRODUCTIONS

Both the Board of Supervisors and the APEX Authority introduced themselves.

REVIEW OF LEASE

Mr. Bear, County Administrator, provided a brief overview of the November, 2018, 10-year APEX Authority lease for the 41-acre property. The County owns an additional 50+ acres adjoining the property. The lease agreement provides for zero rent through

December 2020, annual rent of \$165,000 from January 2021 through December 2023, and \$330,000 annual rent from January 2024 through the end of lease. Rent payments are to be made quarterly.

There were no questions from either the Board of Supervisors or the APEX Authority.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS FOR 2020

Mr. Bear summarized the revenue budget for 2020. The County borrowed \$1MM and received two Tobacco Commission grants bringing the total revenue budget associated with the APEX to \$1.3MM. The proposed expenditure budget includes the barn, bath/washrooms, arena improvements (generator/heater), and lighting in parking areas. Mr. Bear said the total capital expenditure budget is \$1.25MM. Additional items, if money is available, would be additional outlets inside the arena.

Chair Vaught asked about the additional outlets and would it benefit events other than concerts.

Mr. Aker said most events would benefit from the additional outlets but it would greatly serve concerts. As it stands now, trade shows or similar events would have to run anywhere from 25' to 300' extension cord, and more than one promoter has complained. Mr. Aker said if any money is leftover, this would be a very important need.

Mr. Bear added that Mr. Bowers and Mr. Kincer prepared a layout of the household outlets as well as the large outlet plug-ins, and that cords could run off a portable transformer for concerts and other events.

Supervisor Smith asked if the sound system is accessible from the floor.

Mr. Bear replied that there are wireless microphone systems that can be used in the arena, but there's no easy way to connect into the sound system without running across the concrete to plug into one of the panels. Conduits are in the floor and are accessible but are not wired.

Mr. Aker said they need a way to get electricity from the breaker box to the floor without having to go through a crowd of people on the floor; they need better accessibility without having to use extension cords.

Mr. Bear commented that RV parking area was on the list of desired improvements but said the electrical needs are more critical. The Authority wholeheartedly agreed.

FINANCIAL REVIEW & FORECAST

Mr. Bear provided an overview of the revenue and expenses for the APEX for the six months ending December 31, 2019. It has been one year since the APEX hosted its first event. The financial report showed event rentals for the six-month period ending December 31st at \$19k. The month of January 2020 is coming in over \$6k. Mr. Bear said that January through April are generally busier months.

Chair Vaught said he appreciates having this information. He commented that there are rumors that the Board of Supervisors ("BOS") want to sell the APEX but he would like to put those rumors to rest. Chair Vaught said they want to see it succeed but admits these numbers are concerning. He said the BOS want to help APEX be successful, but those efforts are hampered when there's an adversarial relationship. The Chairman stressed the importance of transparency and stated the taxpayers have a right to these numbers and so does the BOS. He understands that as a new business, you generally lose money in the first year, but how much money - - what are the financial projections?

Supervisor Terry said that the BOS is looking for accountability. He reiterated what the Chair said about it being a new business and losing money in its first year, but this business is losing "taxpayer" money. Supervisor Terry commented that they have yet to see a business plan or a cash flow analysis. He said that none of them want to shut the APEX down, but none of them want to keep spending money either.

Mr. Hager, the new APEX Facilities Director, responded that they will have a business plan put together by the end of February. He knows the importance of having a business plan at least 3-5 years out. Mr. Hager said if you look at the proposed budget for the next six months, you will see a loss of about \$1,300-\$1,600 projected. What you don't see in the financials for the past year are the sponsorships. He commented that in the last four weeks, they've secured \$10k in sponsorships, and are currently negotiating with several large companies (naming rights of facility) that would generate \$300k over the next three years. He is also speaking with several other large companies regarding sponsorship of RV hookups. They intend to sell naming rights to the barn that could also generate about \$50,000 annually. If advertised properly, and he stressed the importance of advertising, Mr. Hager said the APEX could have booked about 75% of its business for the first year. He estimates that the APEX could generate \$472k annually, which he said is possible in the next 12-18 months.

Supervisor Smith asked about bookings at the APEX and the list showing 20 potential contracts. How many contracts are signed? It's the bookings where you're going to make your money. Sponsorships will just come and go.

Mrs. Smith explained that everything on the list is a signed contract; others that are being negotiated or waiting on signatures, are not on the list.

Supervisor Terry said he was told that not all these contracts are signed. Mrs. Smith confirmed that all are signed contracts. Supervisor Terry asked that she email him proof that they are all signed.

Chair Vaught admitted to being pessimistic when it comes to selling sponsorships as many times they have fallen through. He encouraged the use of Facebook and other social media for "free" advertising and said that Mr. Farley will be a great asset to the Authority in that regard.

Mr. Hager agreed that sponsorships alone won't sustain the business – it's sponsorships and financial controls in combination.

Chair Vaught understood that the APEX has been having open arena riding at a charge \$10 per horse. He asked what the daily cost is to open the arena.

Mr. Hager replied it's \$1,500 per day to open and run the facility. He supports the open arena riding because, while it's not a money-maker, it is key to many in the community; and it's word-of-mouth advertising. Mr. Hager said that through the horse rides, they picked up the jackpot rides and team roping events, and they are hopeful those type of events will grow. But they will closely monitor the profit/loss statement on every event to identify the money-makers.

Chair Vaught questioned events that are open to the public (RC Cars) and don't charge admission. He said if the attendance is 2,000 and all those people are using the restrooms, water fountain, etc., is the daily rate sufficient to cover all the expenses to keep the arena open?

Mrs. Smith responded that they may very well adjust the daily rental rate. Some rentals are private while others are public. She said any event they sell tickets to, the APEX must have security and EMS on site per the insurance company. All these costs need to be weighed when determining the rental rate. She said every contract is different and usually entails a lot of back-and-forth negotiations. Mrs. Smith also added that the open arena riding has sparked a lot interest in the barn. Customer satisfaction is a top priority for them, as it benefits both the APEX Center and Wythe County. They want every person and every promoter to come back to the APEX.

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Chair Vaught suggested that when the APEX promotes events, they should have a partnership with hotel(s) in the County. People are travelling here from all over the State and many from outside the State and the County could benefit from the tax revenue.

Mrs. Smith stated that she has worked toward getting sponsorships from the hotels. She stays at a hotel at Exit 80 every single week so the County is at least benefiting from her regular stay (lodging tax). But she will work on promoting the County hotels regardless of sponsorship.

Supervisor Terry asked who Jay Crumb is because the Authority has paid him several thousand dollars.

Mrs. Smith responded that Mr. Crumb is a concert booking agent. They have since discontinued his services, primarily due to the APEX not be properly equipped to handle big concerts. Mrs. Smith stated that Mr. Crumb did bring them three concerts recently, two of which they had to turn down. Another concert that he brought in was stolen by another venue before the APEX could finalize the contract. The APEX paid Mr. Crumb for six months of work (\$6,000).

Supervisor Terry commented that is a \$6k expense on top of them being \$13k in the hole. He said it's about basic accountability, plain and simple. He wants to see a business plan, cash flow analysis, and profit/loss statement on every event. If the Authority wants the County to fund money, then they need to provide this documentation.

Supervisor Smith would like the Authority to present monthly financials to the BOS, in person, in case the Board has questions.

Mr. Bear said the Authority currently meets the first and third Tuesday of every month. The financial report should be on the Authority's agenda at the third Tuesday meeting so they can present it to the BOS at their fourth Tuesday meeting.

Supervisor Terry mentioned local markets and venues that surround Wythe County and asked if they are reaching out to recruit those customers/promoters to bring them here.

Mrs. Smith referred to a "radius clause" that some venues have that would prevent us from luring certain events here, as in the case of the concert they lost to Roanoke.

Mr. Aker added that many promoters don't want similar/competing events booked too close to theirs (i.e. within 3-4 months).

Supervisor Cook raised concern about a very serious issued raised last night at the BOS meeting; that of mold at the APEX.

Mr. Bear explained that this was something that had happened during construction of the APEX. Although the incident that was mentioned involving sheep was after the APEX opened, Mr. Bear had no prior knowledge of this.

Matthew Miller, former Chair of the APEX Authority, said there were 400 animals at the Sheep & Goat Symposium from all over Virginia, and he is not aware of any animal getting sick. He said Katherine Carter, who ran the event, works at VA Tech and is the Youth Livestock Specialist for the State of Virginia. Mr. Miller said that if any of the sheep had died, we "all" would have heard about it. Additionally, he stated that this group is looking to book another event at the APEX for August.

Mr. Bear further explained that a few individuals who worked at the facility last summer, are now complaining of health issues, issues the worker's felt were attributable to the construction of the building. OSHA came and took samples of the soil and did testing and the results of those tests revealed two common forms of mold. OSHA determined there was no public health concern associated with that. During the construction phase, the Department of Health spoke with them about mold in the soil. He said the APEX construction took place during an extremely wet season (wettest year on record). Mr. Bear has been in contact with the contractor who has not received any filings for action, any workers compensation claim by these employees, no claims to the company for any health-related issues. None of those events have happened, and no claims have been submitted to the County either. Mr. Bear said the Health Department is continuing their investigation to see what factors might have contributed to the employees' health concerns, but there has been no indication of any health hazard with the building.

Vice Chair Lawson took the opportunity to thank the Authority for all their hard work. They don't get thanked enough for all the long hours they put in. Most people don't realize that the Authority are volunteers and don't get paid for all the time they've dedicated to the APEX. She appreciates all of the Authority members, past and present.

Mr. Litton did an analysis of all the time spent by Authority members, equipment they loaned, and the estimated cost of the Authority's dedication is \$259k since the beginning of the project. He said we all understand the public's concern as this is their

tax money. One variable is the heating cost as they need to keep the building at a certain temperature in winter months or they risk major damage to the water and sprinkler system. Mr. Litton said it's hard to plan for these costs until you have a full year behind you, so we have to allow for these types of variables. Mr. Hager was right about sponsorships and the need to secure more, and Supervisor Smith was right about NASCAR sponsors being a dying breed. We need to have reserves should sponsors drop out. Mr. Litton added that the more sponsors they get, the more events they get, the bigger a success the APEX will be, and that "we all got skin in the game".

Supervisor McRoberts admitted that he's not a horseman nor is he into cycles. The Board talks about wasting money – he'd like to talk about substance abuse in Wythe County. He's been on board with the APEX from day one because he wanted to see an opportunity for the kids in Wythe County, something they could enjoy. He was at the APEX last Saturday and there had to be around 125-150 young kids (and some adults) riding horses. Supervisor McRoberts asked what the average cost is for substance abuse treatment? Talk about wasting money? He said they're trying to put something out there for the kids to enjoy, something positive, and he is all for the ball fields too for the benefit of the kids. Saturday night when he left the APEX he thought to himself 'there's 125 kids that you don't have to worry about on dope today'.

Supervisor Horney added that he too wants to see the APEX succeed.

Mr. Hughes wanted to share some 'food for thought'. He has a good friend who's been running the Wilson County Expo Center in Lebanon, TN for the past 25 years and they've had difficulties keeping their doors open. They're home to the 4th largest county fair in the United States; granted, they're a lot larger than us, he said. But the County was bringing so much revenue into Lebanon (part of Wilson County) so the Town of Lebanon and Wilson County together imposed an additional 3% tax on lodging and split the revenue between the County fairgrounds and the school system. They each received a check for \$900k from the tax revenue.

CLOSED MEETING

Mr. Litton made a motion, seconded by Mr. Hughes, to enter into Closed Meeting under Section 2.2-3711.A.1 (Discussion of Personnel Matters) of the Code of Virginia. The motion passed unanimously. The Authority also invited the Board of Supervisors to join them along with the two new Authority members.

Mr. Litton made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Pattison, to return to open meeting. The motion passed unanimously.

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Upon returning to open meeting, Mr. Aker made a motion, seconded by Mrs. Pattison, to adopt the following Resolution certifying the business conducted in closed meeting as follows:

**RESOLUTION
CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

WHEREAS, the Appalachian Regional Exposition Center Authority has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and,

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Appalachian Regional Exposition Center Authority that such meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law; and,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Appalachian Regional Exposition Center Authority hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed, or considered by the Appalachian Regional Exposition Center Authority.

The motion was unanimous.

With no further business to discuss, the APEX Authority adjourned their meeting.

THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS TOOK A 5-MINUTE RECESS AT 8:05 p.m.

WYTHE COUNTY RESCUE SQUAD ("WCRS")

Joining the meeting from the Wythe County Rescue Squad were Ashley Showalter, Shane Mabe and Charles Miller. In addition, Curtis Crawford, Wythe County Emergency Services Coordinator also joined the meeting.

Mr. Bear explained that Chief Brade (Wytheville Fire Department) made it known at last night's BOS meeting that Wythe County Rescue Squad was in serious financial distress.

Mr. Miller stated they currently have \$1,150 in their bank account and cannot meet tomorrow's payroll. He said a big reason is the time of year, as insurance companies are trying to collect deductibles, so there's a lull in WCRS getting paid. Mr. Miller came to the BOS at an earlier meeting to ask for financial assistance (\$50k being held as collateral on loan).

Mr. Bear explained that WCRS Board elected to take out the loan on their truck and to keep that \$50k in the bank as collateral. This is not money that the County is holding. He understands the move to combine WCRS with Wytheville Fire Department, but said this is a process that requires us all to work together. Mr. Bear said that while the Town of Wytheville donated the land to WCRS, Wythe County BOS has been the primary financial backer of WCRS for years. He also expressed his disappointment in the lack of communication between the WCRS and BOS and their current financial status.

Ms. Showalter stated that \$16,697 in payroll is due tomorrow (payroll is every two weeks). Until the insurance companies send them a check, they don't know exactly how much they can expect from billing. They basically need at least \$45k to pay their bills and cover payroll for the month. They have \$46-50k in debt now, not including the truck. Their billing company charges 5% on what is billed out, and WCRS is still about six months behind in what they owe the billing company. Surprisingly, the billing company is not charging any late fees. Ms. Showalter also said they are collecting only about 40% of what they bill (that collection rate used to be around 30-33%).

Vice Chair Lawson said that WCRS has tried and has worked hard to increase collections. They inherited a lot of problems. She understands the potential merger has produced added strain in that their staff are facing uncertain futures.

Mr. Bear added that the "Wytheville Fire & Rescue" merger is a real possibility and the agreement is close. The goal was to keep WCRS afloat until that agreement goes through. But the amounts being requested now is very concerning especially when you can't count on revenue.

Mr. Mabe, in response to Mr. Bear's question about garnishment, stated that North Carolina has automatic debiting (ACH) on an employee who hasn't worked there in 6-12 months.

Chair Vaught suggested they provide North Carolina with a letter certifying that the employee has not worked there since a specific date to stop those garnishments.

Mr. Bear is meeting with the Town tomorrow night to hopefully finalize the numbers for the merger agreement. If WCRS were to shut down today, all the assets and debt would revert back to Wythe County.

Mr. Mabe commented that their average monthly billing is around \$100k, of which they only expect to collect \$40-45k (with a three-month lag).

Mr. Bear stated there is \$8-10k left in WCRS budget but that includes \$8k of State money; however, if they dissolve before the March filing period, they may not get State funds. He recommends providing \$16-17k to allow WCRS to meet payroll and then closely monitor them over the next two weeks. He hopes they can finalize and move forward with the merger. If not and they have to consider an earlier dissolution, then the County will work with Rural Retreat and Lead Mines, as well as Richardson Ambulance Service, to provide additional coverage.

Supervisor McRoberts added that Lead Mines too has gotten in financial distress.

Mr. Bear said they're in a slow downturn now but they may get through it.

Vice Chair Lawson expressed desire to keep WCRS up and running until the March filing date in order to get the State money, and we need to insure a smooth transition.

Vice Chair Lawson made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Terry, to suspend Rules of Order to take immediate action on an emergency situation.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.
	Ryan M. Lawson	Stacy A. Terry
	James D. "Jamie" Smith	

NAYS: None

Supervisor Horney made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Lawson, to amend and appropriate \$17,000 and authorize payment to Wythe County Rescue Squad.

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Supervisor Terry asked how we got to this point, at the 11th hour, to find out about this dire situation? He will always support fire and rescue but there's an obvious breakdown in communication.

Mr. Bear said the responsibility falls on WCRS board. The County receives monthly financial reports from the others, and that same accountability is expected from WCRS. For the Town of Wytheville (Chief Brade) to learn of this a week before Wythe County does, that is inexcusable. He said for years, Wythe County has financially supported WCRS; they even put \$40k toward their ambulance. Mr. Bear fully supports the merger with the Town of Wytheville Fire Department.

Chair Vaught is a supporter of fire and rescue but, like the APEX Authority, they need to be accountable and they need to communicate. He said until the merger happens or doesn't happen, this Board and the County Administrator are your point of contact.

Ms. Showalter explained that her very first spreadsheet of WCRS financial position was submitted to the County long ago; this is nothing new. She said that Chief Brade requested that information in the midst of their merger talks.

Mr. Crawford and Mr. Bear said they were aware of the debt but not the cash flow problems.

Supervisor McRoberts asked why the collection rate (40%) is so low.

Mr. Crawford responded that the billing company came in to do a review/analysis and they felt that WCRS was doing a great job, and they couldn't understand why collections are so low.

Ms. Showalter responded that the majority of their payors are Medicare, so it's a (low) set rate.

Mr. Bear said about 10 years ago they tried to get everyone with the same billing company. They bid the work out but none of the rescue squads would agree at that time.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:

AYES:	Brian W. Vaught	Coy L. McRoberts
	Rolland R. Cook	B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.

Ryan M. Lawson
James D. "Jamie" Smith

Stacy A. Terry

NAYS: None

ADJOURNMENT

With no other business to come before the Board, Chair Vaught adjourned the meeting at approximately 8:57 p.m.

Brian W. Vaught, Chair