

**January 26, 2021**

The Wythe County Board of Supervisors held its regularly scheduled meeting at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, January 26, 2021. 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  
 Stacy A. Terry

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

James D. "Jamie" Smith

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Stephen D. Bear, County Administrator  
 Matthew C. Hankins, Assistant County Administrator  
 Scot Farthing, County Attorney  
 Martha Collins, Administrative Assistant/Clerk  
 Arlan Dunford, Animal Control/Code Enforcement  
 Darlene Lang, Director of Communication  
 Jimmy McCabe, EMS Coordinator  
 Kyle Taylor, Building Inspection  
 Regina Williams, Finance Director

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Frankie Akers  
 Harold Ayers  
 Kimberly Ayers  
 Kim Caudle  
 Skylar Chinn  
 Jim & Dee Ennis  
 Charles Foster  
 Chalmer Frye  
 Don Goode  
 Lori Guynn  
 Scott Jefferies  
 Gus Kincer  
 Lori Kincer

Mary Ellen King  
 Shelly Kyle  
 Ann Manley  
 David Manley  
 Linda Meyer  
 Jeremiah Musser  
 Wes Poole  
 Whitney Pugh  
 David Rose  
 Crystal Tibbs  
 Zach Wright  
 and three other citizens

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**CALL TO ORDER**

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

The Chair mournfully announced two recent losses this week. Debbie Repass, who retired after 42 years with the Treasurer's Office, was a dedicated employee and a real joy to be around. Her loss will leave a large void in this community. In addition, Supervisor Smith suffered the tragic loss of his 21-year-old son, Logan. Logan excelled in school, played football, and was an all-around nice young man whose family we now grieve. The Chair extended the Board's thoughts and prayers for both these families at this difficult time.

**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

A moment of silent prayer took place in honor of Debbie Repass and Logan Smith. Pastor Shelly Kyle, Bethlehem Baptist Church, then provided the invocation and Supervisor Cook led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**PRESENTATION OF RETIREMENT RESOLUTION**

Chair Vaught invited Mr. Musser and the Circuit Court staff to come forward to present the following to Ms. Frankie Akers:

**Wythe County Resolution 2021-01  
Honoring Frances C. Akers  
Chief Deputy Clerk  
of Wythe County Circuit Court**

*Whereas*, Frances ("Frankie") C. Akers was hired as Deputy Clerk of the Wythe County Circuit Court on November 16, 1999 and, after dutiful service, was promoted to Chief Deputy Clerk in February 2017; and,

*Whereas*, on March 31, 2018, Circuit Court Clerk Hayden Horney retired and Ms. Akers assumed the position of Interim Clerk; and

*Whereas*, as Interim Clerk, Ms. Akers managed the office and functions of the Clerk of the Circuit Court, leading her staff effectively to process lawsuits, indictments, motions and other related papers in all Civil and Criminal Cases in the Circuit or County Courts; and

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**Whereas**, Ms. Akers admirably maintained the records process and court action such as summonses and subpoenas, jury records and operations, recording judgments and executions, and keeping critical vital records including marriage licenses, marriages, medical and professional licenses, land deeds and more; and,

**Whereas**, Ms. Akers admirably fulfilled the duties of Interim Clerk through the election of a new Clerk of the Circuit Court in 2018 before retiring November 30, 2020, after twenty-one years of outstanding service in the Wythe County Circuit Court Clerk's office;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** by the Wythe County Board of Supervisors, assembled in regular session in Wytheville, Virginia, this 26<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021, that Wythe County does hereby express its sincere appreciation to Ms. Akers for her dedicated service and does convey its best wishes to her and her family for continued success, happiness and good health for many years to come; and,

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED**, that the Wythe County Board of Supervisors does hereby direct that this resolution be incorporated in the official minutes of this Board and that a framed copy be given to Frances "Frankie" C. Akers as a token of their high regard.

Supervisor Terry made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Horney, to approve Resolution 2021-1 Honoring Frances C. Akers, Chief Deputy Clerk of Wythe County Circuit Court.

The vote on the motion was unanimous.

Chair Vaught added that if anyone in the County ever had to deal with the loss of a loved one, Mrs. Akers was a "rock" assisting them with wills and estates and she should be commended.

#### **CITIZENS' TIME**

Chair Vaught announced that no one had signed up to address the Board so he, therefore, closed Citizens' Time.

#### **PUBLIC HEARING – PROPOSED ISSUANCE OF CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BONDS**

Mr. Bear read that Notice is given that the Board of Supervisors of Wythe County, Virginia (the "Board"), will hold a public hearing on the proposed issuance of bonds, at one time or from time to time, by Wythe County. The estimated maximum amount of

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the bonds is \$668,300 in the aggregate. The proposed use of the proceeds of such bonds is to pay costs of capital improvements to the County's wastewater system in the Austinville area of the County. The public hearing, which may be continued or adjourned, and at which persons may appear and present their views on the proposed bond issue, will be held at 6:05 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard, on January 26, 2021, before the Board in the Board Room of the County Administration Building, located at 340 South Sixth Street in Wytheville, Virginia.

With no citizens wishing to speak, Chair Vaught closed the Public Hearing.

Mr. Bear stated the Austinville sewer system is in need of repair. A principal repayment loan was received for ~\$600k and a principal forgiveness loan for around ~\$200k, for a total package of \$810,650. The principal repayment loan has an interest rate of .50% comprised of interest for the loan fund of .3% and a fee of .2% for management services. No action is needed until the final numbers come in, which may be less than anticipated.

#### **PAYMENT OF COUNTY INVOICES**

Supervisor Horney made a motion to pay the invoices for approval on January 26, 2021, for the various departments of County government. The invoices were paid on General Warrants 30108598-30108674 as follows:

#### **EXPENDITURES BY DEPARTMENT BOARD OF SUPERVISORS January 26, 2021**

<b>CHECK #</b>	<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	<b>VENDOR</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
30108598	01/19/2021	APPALACHIAN POWER	\$ 29,715.61
30108599	01/19/2021	CENTURYLINK	39.98
30108600	01/19/2021	CENTURYLINK	132.72
30108601	01/19/2021	CENTURYLINK	330.00
30108602	01/19/2021	VIRGINIA RESOURCES AUTHOR	2,619.74
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES 01/19/2021</b>			<b>\$ 32,838.05</b>

<b>CHECK #</b>	<b>ISSUE DATE</b>	<b>VENDOR</b>	<b>AMOUNT</b>
30108603	01/26/2021	APPALACHIAN POWER	\$ 1,928.68
30108604	01/26/2021	AYERS & SONS SEPTIC LLC	1,000.00
30108605	01/26/2021	BIG WALKER SWCD	2,000.00
30108606	01/26/2021	BOB HUFF	99.95

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30108607	01/26/2021	BOONE TRACTOR & IMPLEMENT	2.32
30108608	01/26/2021	BRENNTAG MID-SOUTH INC	1,679.80
30108609	01/26/2021	BROWN EXTERMINATING CO	420.00
30108610	01/26/2021	CARZ R US LLC	309.99
30108611	01/26/2021	CDW GOVERNMENT INC	148.10
30108612	01/26/2021	CENTURYLINK	51.87
30108613	01/26/2021	CENTURYLINK	93.97
30108614	01/26/2021	CENTURYLINK	123.58
30108615	01/26/2021	CENTURYLINK	146.50
30108616	01/26/2021	CENTURYLINK	244.46
30108617	01/26/2021	CENTURYLINK	300.77
30108618	01/26/2021	CENTURYLINK	3,548.05
30108619	01/26/2021	CENTURYLINK	4,856.38
30108620	01/26/2021	COMM OF REV ASSOC OF VA	200.00
30108621	01/26/2021	COMPLETE TRUCK SERVICE IN	362.00
30108622	01/26/2021	CREATIVE GLASS INC	5,933.27
30108623	01/26/2021	CSG SYSTEMS, INC	1,685.29
30108624	01/26/2021	TREASURER OF VIRGINIA	100.00
30108625	01/26/2021	EMORY WILSON PROCESS	29,974.84
30108626	01/26/2021	ENTERPRISE FM TRUST	5,106.33
30108627	01/26/2021	F&R ELECTRIC INC	6,285.00
30108628	01/26/2021	FARTHING, SCOT S	3,727.50
30108629	01/26/2021	FERGUSON ENTERPRISES #5	2,844.70
30108630	01/26/2021	FN WHOLESALE LIGHTING & S	63.48
30108631	01/26/2021	FOOD COUNTRY	3.76
30108632	01/26/2021	FP MAILING SOLUTIONS	135.00
30108633	01/26/2021	GENUINE PARTS COMPANY	42.47
30108634	01/26/2021	GRANT, BRUCE M	12,191.09
30108635	01/26/2021	GREATAMERICA FINANCIAL SE	459.00
30108636	01/26/2021	HOME DEPOT PRO	3,815.50
30108637	01/26/2021	JP COOKE CO	106.95
30108638	01/26/2021	KETCHUM MFG CO INC	264.96
30108639	01/26/2021	LANE GROUP	6,160.00
30108640	01/26/2021	LEAD MINES RESCUE SQUAD	1,140.59
30108641	01/26/2021	LEXISNEXIS	217.00
30108642	01/26/2021	LOWE'S	114.63
30108643	01/26/2021	MAX MEADOWS FIRE DEPT	3,084.55
30108644	01/26/2021	MCI COMM SERVICE	37.57
30108645	01/26/2021	MCI COMM SERVICE	97.09

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30108646	01/26/2021	MCI COMM SERVICE	624.56
30108647	01/26/2021	MOUNT ROGERS PLANNING DIS	4,682.78
30108648	01/26/2021	MUSSER, JEREMIAH	231.52
30108649	01/26/2021	NEW RIVER REGIONAL WATER	56,576.82
30108650	01/26/2021	NEW RIVER VALLEY JUVENILE	7,750.00
30108651	01/26/2021	OFFICE OF THE CHIEF MEDIC	80.00
30108652	01/26/2021	JOEL HUDSON	84.00
30108653	01/26/2021	JOSHUA BLEVINS	33.70
30108654	01/26/2021	KATHY DEHART	87.26
30108655	01/26/2021	WANDA LESTER	47.60
30108656	01/26/2021	PITNEY BOWES INC	169.98
30108657	01/26/2021	POLYTEC INC	2,880.00
30108658	01/26/2021	R&R ENTERPRISES INC	195.00
30108659	01/26/2021	ROBINSON FARMER COX ASSOC	55,700.00
30108660	01/26/2021	SALEM STONE	406.27
30108661	01/26/2021	STRYKER SALES CORPORATION	29,773.80
30108662	01/26/2021	THRASHER GROUP INC	39,400.00
30108663	01/26/2021	TOWN OF WYTHEVILLE	7,501.97
30108664	01/26/2021	TRI CITIES/SW VA REGIONAL	1,359.20
30108665	01/26/2021	USA BLUE BOOK	1,821.29
30108666	01/26/2021	V&M RECYCLING	950.48
30108667	01/26/2021	VERIZON WIRELESS	160.14
30108668	01/26/2021	VIRGINIA BUSINESS SYST	40.09
30108669	01/26/2021	VIRGINIA BUSINESS SYST	1,633.78
30108670	01/26/2021	VUPS	72.45
30108671	01/26/2021	WORDSPRINT	474.00
30108672	01/26/2021	WYTHE OIL DISTRIBUTORS	433.76
30108673	01/26/2021	WYTHEVILLE OFFICE SUPPLY	8.99
30108674	01/26/2021	XEROX	26.69

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**TOTAL EXPENDITURES 01/26/2021** **\$314,313.12**

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES APPROVED 01/26/2021** **\$347,151.17**

Vice Chair Lawson 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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

**MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

The Board was presented with the January 12, 2021 minutes for approval.

Supervisor McRoberts made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Terry, to approve the January 12, 2021 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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

**DAVENPORT & CO. – WYTHE COUNTY FINANCIAL REVIEW**

Mr. David Rose of Davenport & Co. provided the Board with a few handouts, and said he was here several months ago regarding the County's refunding of debt. His purpose tonight is purely educational to give everyone an overview of the County's financial status. Mr. Rose stated that the County is in "excellent financial shape", that it is well run, and testament to this Board and to the County staff.

Mr. Rose summarized the following:

- General Fund and Utility Enterprise Funds – Davenport did a comparison to other counties (statewide and nationwide) as they relate to fund balances, tax rates, debt level, etc.
- Policy Guidelines – Guidelines are typically reviewed/amended every 3-4 years. Mr. Rose noted that Wythe County is due even though current policies are keeping them in good shape.

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- Future Capital Needs – The County has a multi-year CIP and Mr. Rose wants to ensure the County is not overdoing it, financially. However, he did say that everything looks good so far.
- Refinancing – As most are aware, the County did refinance a number of loans in order to save money, nearly \$3M in debt service savings. The County also took advantage of the great rates to borrow \$2M for capital improvement projects.

**Observations:**

Mr. Rose indicated that the County is well managed; better than many of our neighbors. He said the County has strong, unassigned fund balance levels, and has done a very good job of balancing the budget and staying within those means. While Davenport will recommend policy guideline enhancement, Mr. Rose said the County doesn't need any more funds set aside. The County has strong debt management policies and if the County were to get a credit rating, Mr. Rose feels it would be just a step below a AAA credit rating (highest rating). He noted that other counties of similar size, seldom attain a AAA rating.

Regarding the \$52M of capital improvements over the next 5-6 years (mostly in schools), Davenport feels the County can achieve roughly half that in the next several years with little to no real estate tax impact.

In the Enterprise Funds for Water and Sewer, Mr. Rose reported that the sewer fund is in solid shape, but they do recommend annual rate increases that parallel inflation. The water side is running a deficit which poses a challenge, but there are ample reserves to help along the way.

The Unassigned Fund Balance is around \$38M, putting the County at nearly 50% of annual funds expenditures which Mr. Rose said is a very good position. Davenport has two recommendations: (1) amend the policy to go to 35% and (2) create a rate stabilization fund with the excess dollars.

Regarding the Overall Debt Portfolio, Mr. Rose said that nearly \$3M on the interest has been cut out. He anticipates that in 10 years, the County will have more than half the total principal paid off. Basically, he said the County is in a good position to take on additional debt.



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Regarding Debt Service to Expenditures, the County is just over a nickel for every dollar. Mr. Rose stated this is a very good position to be in, and is below the Virginia average.

Chair Vaught thanked Mr. Rose for doing an excellent job in refinancing the County's debt and for explaining all this in a manner that's easy to understand. He also thanked Mr. Bear for his diligent efforts to retain a financial advisor to save the County money.

Mr. Bear said that while it's good to hear the County is financially stable, he appreciates that some of our policies need to be amended. Those amendments will go to the Budget Committee for review. Mr. Bear also referenced page 10 of the handout that he said should be shared with the public, especially as it relates to the County tax rate.

The Chair, on behalf of the entire Board, is quite pleased with the financial shape of Wythe County and would like to ensure it remains that way for years to come.

### **AGENACARE HOUSECALLS**

Mr. Hankins explained that, as previously discussed, Agenacare would like to provide medical services to Wythe County residents (non-acute, cash pay) using nurses and paramedics. In order to operate this business using paramedics, it is required that Agenacare be designated as a non-transport EMS agency by the County. Because Wythe County previously entered into an emergency services agreement with the Town of Wytheville, it was necessary to use language that does not violate that agreement. It was recently confirmed that no such conflict exists with Agenacare providing the aforementioned services. It is recommended that the following resolution be adopted and a Memorandum of Agreement with the Town of Wytheville be approved.

### **RESOLUTION 2021-2 OF WYTHE COUNTY, VIRGINIA ESTABLISHMENT OF A NON-TRANSPORT EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES AGENCY**

**WHEREAS**, the Virginia Administrative Code (12VAC5-31-420) requires mobile emergency medical service providers to be authorized for such service by the governing body of the locality; and

**WHEREAS**, the Wythe County Board of Supervisors has considered a request from Agenacare Housecalls (Agenacare), through owner Whitney Pugh, to serve as a private provider non-transport emergency medical service in Wythe County, specifically to use paramedics, registered nurses and nurse practitioners to provide non-acute medical services within the County; and

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**WHEREAS**, in order to provide paramedic urgent care medical services and telehealth consultations in Wythe County, Agenacare must receive authorization from this Board to operate as a non-transport EMS agency; and

**WHEREAS**, Ms. Pugh and Agenacare have stipulated that Agenacare: 1) is a mobile health care provider on par with urgent and primary care; 2) does not now, and does not intend as a future service, to provide emergency medical transportation; 3) does not treat acute injuries or illnesses which would ordinarily require transportation to a medical facility for diagnosis and treatment; and 4) requires payment at time of service; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors of Wythe County finds that the service provided by Agenacare will free certain medical services and transports for critical needs, help expand local medical provider availability, increase access and convenience for health care consumers and meet expanding demand for types of medical services throughout Wythe County, all to the benefit of Wythe County residents; and

**WHEREAS**, the Board of Supervisors asserts that, as a non-transport, non-primary emergency medical service, its operational approval for Agenacare does not conflict with any existing agreement, specifically the February 2020 agreement for Wytheville Fire & EMS to serve as the exclusive primary response agency within its designated service area;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** and adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Wythe County, Virginia, meeting in regular session this 26<sup>th</sup> day of January, 2021, that, consistent with the conditions presented to the Board, Agenacare Housecalls is authorized upon adoption and state licensure to operate in Wythe County, to provide non-transport emergency medical services in Wythe County, and to park such vehicles in Wythe County as may be needed to provide and safely operate non-transport emergency medical services, consistent with the operating requirements of the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Supervisor Horney made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Lawson, to approve Resolution 2021-2 Establishment of a Non-Transport Emergency Medical Services Agency.

The roll call vote on the motion was as follows:



breakfasts). He wanted to thank and extend sincere gratitude go to everyone involved in this crucial mission (Mr. Skeens, Ms. Webster, bus drivers, cafeteria staff, and many others).

As to vaccinations, Dr. Jefferies reported that about 60% of staff have participated in vaccinations, and it's exciting to finally see some light at the end of the tunnel as far as school life getting back to normal. He thanked Mr. Haga (HR) and Ms. Robinson (Nursing) for facilitating this in coordination with the Health Department.

With respect to school sports, Dr. Jefferies commented that winter sports are now concluding with fall sports right around the corner. Middle school sports are starting this week as well as other extracurricular activities.

Dr. Jefferies was pleased to announce that WCPS earned a Jobs for Virginia Grant in the amount of \$30,000. They continue striving to expand the workforce and this will greatly help in workforce development.

With this being Principal Appreciation Week, Dr. Jefferies wanted to recognize and thank the principals of WCPS for all they do. Also, he and Dr. Poole would like to do a dedication to George Wythe High School when circumstances allow for a large crowd to gather.

Dr. Poole first wanted to say how much he appreciates living in a county that is so well run, financially. WCPS were also able to refinance some of their debt. In addition, they experienced significant budgetary savings (due to COVID) and were able to return \$1.5M back to the County. WCPS received CARES Act funding of \$824k in the first round, \$659k in the second round, and expect \$3.5M in the third round. Their expenditures have also changed as a result of COVID. Dr. Poole said with all that being considered, they're trying to get good numbers for FY22.

Projects that were postponed due to COVID include paving George Wythe parking lot and the press box at Rural Retreat for girls softball. They hope to accomplish these in the Spring. Dr. Poole also mentioned two roofing projects that actually came in under budget resulting in significant savings, so there may be ample funds to carryover into the next fiscal year.

CARES Act and ESSER funds went primarily to salaries, fixed charges and technology. Dr. Poole was proud to report that every pre-K thru 12 student now has access to their own device.

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Dr. Poole anticipates a small increase next year in ADM (average daily membership). Tax revenue received from Commonwealth (estimates) were quite low but the actual numbers were more in line with those of a normal year. WCPS is seeing a 4% decrease in health insurance for next year, another savings, so they feel they're in a good position, financially. Dr. Poole indicated that they should have more solid figures to share in March.

Chair Vaught asked about the \$3.5M CARES funding and whether they plan to continue providing meals to the students.

Dr. Poole responded that the USDA did the summer food service program, providing free lunches for all students in the County based upon our poverty rates. During the normal year, WCPS qualifies to have feeding sites at Spiller, the high schools and daycare centers. Dr. Poole said they expect this to continue at least through the end of this year. He also added that the \$3.5M in CARES funding has a spend-by date of September 30, 2023.

Chair Vaught asked about using that money towards a school addition.

Dr. Poole replied that with the latest round of funding, capital improvement is a possibility but he needs confirmation from Kent Dickey at DOE. If allowed, they will potentially look at restroom/classroom addition at Fort Chiswell Middle School. Additional space necessary for social distancing should make this an allowable expenditure. Installation of an HVAC or mechanical system is allowed as well. But before proceeding with any capital improvements, Dr. Poole would like to obtain confirmation from DOE that such improvements, in fact, qualify for funding.

The Chair commented that Scott and Spiller have been waiting for years and he would really like to see attention given to them.

Dr. Poole replied that Spiller is the next project planned using local funds. While they like to be frugal with their money (these are everyone's tax dollars), they want to make sure they get the most for the money being spent.

The Chair asked Dr. Jefferies when he anticipates kids going back to school fulltime. He said this Board is receiving a lot of calls from concerned parents. The kids were back in school 5 days a week then were immediately switched to 4 days a week.

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Dr. Jefferies explained that the School Board has been dealing with an extremely complicated situation for nearly a year now, and that they have to abide by the Governor's Order. All throughout the pandemic, the School Board has been evaluating many different factors, most importantly, what's best for our kids. He said they met a few weeks ago and their recommendation was to go back five days a week. That decision was weighed just as heavily as the decision made yesterday to switch to four days week. Dr. Jefferies has the utmost faith in the School Board to continue making the best and right decisions. He said everyone wants their kids back in school, in person, five days a week. Dr. Jefferies wishes he could provide a definitive date for that, but he can't.

Chair Vaught asked what numbers are they considering (7-day average)?

Dr. Jefferies replied that they monitor all the data regarding the daily snapshot provided by the Health Department, along with school opening metrics from the CDC. But they haven't really pinpointed a specific number or datapoint to alter a decision one way or the other. He said it's a moving target and, therefore, decisions will be fluid. They are doing their best to implement mitigation strategies while providing an outstanding learning experience both in person and virtual. Dr. Jefferies said people need to understand that it has been a burden to the teachers to provide for both types of learning, and they are doing the best they can and they deserve an abundance of respect. With more vaccinations, their comfort level will improve.

Vice Chair Lawson thanked Dr. Jefferies, the School Board and the teachers for all they are doing, not just as a Board member, but also as a parent. While listening to the School Board meeting, she enjoyed a common remark among many citizens that "you can't catch the virus on Wednesday". She for one appreciates all they do.

The Chair added that the biggest complaint he received was the sudden change in timing, leaving some families with no child care.

Dr. Jefferies understands and appreciates how difficult it has been and still is for families, students and teachers alike. He is grateful for everyone's support as they continue to safely navigate through the pandemic.

### **TREASURER'S REPORT**

Treasurer, Lori Guynn, wanted to thank the Board for their kind comments about Debbie Repass. She was a very special person, loved by everyone who knew her (and her "recovered costs"). Debbie will be sorely missed, and Mrs. Guynn also expressed her condolences to the Smith family in their heartbreaking loss.

Mrs. Guynn is so pleased that the tax rate in Wythe County has remained the lowest around and she credits her staff for their outstanding efforts collecting sufficient revenue.

The Treasurer also reported the following:

1. Revenue Statement – Mrs. Guynn reported that the Consolidated Account was comprised of \$70,316,966 of which \$46,908,455 was in the General Fund Account at the end of December. Some numbers are down compared to December last year but primarily due to a delayed posting (mail slow down).

Mr. Bear mentioned a 6-month analysis but with the mail service having been so slow, the analysis will now run through the end of January instead of December.

2. Tax Collections – As of December 30<sup>th</sup>, compared to what they billed, real estate collection rate was 84.6%. Personal property collection rate was 75.9%. However, the numbers through end of the day January 22<sup>nd</sup>, showed the real estate rate increased to 95.8% and personal property went up to 88.7%.

Mrs. Guynn said that she would continue to update the Board on a quarterly basis with respect to collections. Her office has also been working on delinquent real estate parcels that have many years of taxes owed. There are 35-38 parcels that were recently listed in the newspaper and are being turned over to collections attorney. Mrs. Guynn said that when two or more years of real estate taxes are owed, the property becomes eligible for a tax sale. Parcels have until February 12<sup>th</sup> to either pay the back taxes or set up a payment plan, otherwise, the court process will begin with the property owner incurring all court costs.

Chair Vaught thanked the Treasurer and her staff for having done a great job dealing with the onslaught of mail and unavoidable delays.

Mrs. Guynn appreciated his comments and added that processing the mail is very time-consuming especially when coupled with walk-ins and phone calls. But they do the best they can.

Mr. Bear said that it might be beneficial to budget a few more part-time staff to help during tax season.

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Mrs. Guynn commented that they currently have five stations for staff to work at so if additional part-time people are hired, they would also need additional computer(s), credit card machine(s), receipt printer(s) etc. Something to keep in mind.

## **COUNTY ADMINISTRATION STAFF REPORTS**

1. Building Inspection – Kyle Taylor appeared before the Board to provide an update on his department. First, he apologized for arriving late but he was assisting a homeowner who was upgrading the service panel by himself. When Mr. Taylor went there earlier in the day to inspect, the homeowner wasn't ready and when Mr. Taylor went back later in the day, the homeowner was still having issues. Because the homeowner has children, and because cold weather was approaching, Mr. Taylor stayed to assist him so AEP could get his power back on.

Mr. Taylor also wanted to commend the ladies in the front office (Water and Building Inspection) on the great job they do each and every day. He mentioned that over the course of one day recently, they took 749 payments! That equates to each of them taking a payment every two minutes (the majority of which were water payments). He just wanted this opportunity to recognize them for their great efforts.

The Building Inspection Department in December had 27 permits and brought in \$6,442. For the quarter, they brought in 88 permits for \$24,309. In 2019, over a six-month period, they had 193 permits for \$21,360. During the same six months in 2020, they had 235 permits for \$47,056, a significant increase from the prior year. Mr. Taylor said they are staying extremely busy and in the coming year they hope to be able to update their permitting process, their website, and software (current software is over 20 years old).

Mr. Taylor reported that he has completed four out of the five requirements for his position.

Chair Vaught thanked Mr. Taylor very much for assisting a citizen in need. Helping a citizen like Mr. Taylor did, should absolutely come before any Board meeting.

Mr. Bear commented that a replacement vehicle is coming for the Building Inspector and that his current vehicle (with 178k miles) can go to the Commissioner of Revenue.



2. Emergency Services – Jimmy McCabe appeared before the Board to provide an update on his department. He has been incredibly busy working on various emergency management issues and participating on several conference calls with VDEM. Mr. McCabe stated that VDEM has many changes in the pipeline including expanded role of VDOT on interchanges.

Regarding COVID, Mr. McCabe said that getting people signed up for vaccines has been a challenge as the Commonwealth shut down the VAMS system yesterday. However, they plan to roll out the new system by the end of this week. As soon as that happens, he will enter the rest of the staff who want the vaccine.

Chair Vaught complained that the Health Department doesn't have the manpower to do contact tracing so we need to shut down schools, but they've got enough people to roll out a new software program? It doesn't make sense.

Mr. McCabe received an email last week that everything was going so well that they'd be opening up another tier early. Today's system shut down was a real surprise. The whole process has been a debacle in his opinion. Mount Rogers confirmed they did not have enough vaccine to add 65-year-olds. The allocation of vaccines will now be based on population. Things are constantly changing even the guidelines regarding quarantines; first it was 14 days then it dropped to 10 days, and now Mr. McCabe hears it may go back to 14 days. All in all, he is confident we will get through it.

As for the radio system, Mr. McCabe reported they are nearing completion. Equipment is in for Hamilton Knob and once it's up and running, the radio system will be tremendously better. Mrs. Lang has put an incredible amount of work in this project. The digital system capabilities will be phenomenally better than the analog system and will allow for increased public safety.

Mr. McCabe mentioned that it's been busy with the fire departments. Pump testing and related repairs are now complete, trucks are in good shape as far as inspections, and on February 1<sup>st</sup> ladder testing will begin. This is an annual requirement that has not previously been done. Any ladder that fails, will have to be taken out of service. Hose testing also has to be done annually and Mr. McCabe is currently getting quotes on hose testing machines. In addition, fire departments' turnout gear is nearing the end of its useful life (several people are wearing expired gear). They had vendors come in to demo their gear. Mr. McCabe said they are looking at replacing the entire department, about 125 sets

(coat, pants, boots, helmet) and the total approximate cost is \$350k. The gear has a 10-year use life.

***The Board took a 5-minute recess at 8:08 p.m.***

3. Dispatch – Darlene Lang appeared before the Board to provide an update on her department.

The radio system was delayed due to equipment not being delivered on time. The equipment finally arrived in mid-December and the tower should be up and running the second week of February. Mr. McCabe has been a great help and a real asset helping get the radios programmed. She truly appreciates his assistance.

Mrs. Lang reported that the 911 Center is still short-staffed. When the center was first built back in 2013, it was built for four seats but somehow the numbers got skewed and they ended up with just 2 people on days and 2 people on nights, half of what is needed. Two positions were added a couple of years ago but they are still struggling. They are at the point where overtime is maxed, people are stressed beyond belief, and COVID has made it even worse. If one person has to quarantine, that leaves her shorthanded for 5-10 days, which has happened to three people over the past couple months, forcing her and her lead dispatcher to cover two shifts. They don't even have time to interview and hire more help although it's desperately needed. Mrs. Lang reported that Tazewell has four to six seats filled during the day (Wythe has two) and their call volume is the same as Wythe. Twin County has three people during the day, three on swing shifts and three on at night, with a call volume 8,000 less than Wythe. Smyth County has two people during the day, three in the afternoon and two at night and they only had 34,000 calls last year; Wythe County is well over 41,000 calls. Mrs. Lang warned that the 911 staffing is at an unsafe level. It's causing time lapses in dispatch and she spoke of an incident where she was handling several things at once, and she overlooked notifying the deputies of a COVID person in the home. She takes 100% responsibility but emphasized that the situation is unacceptable. This has become a dangerous situation for both our citizens and our first-responders. Mrs. Lang said they need four more positions but she humbly begged the Board for two, even offering up her salary.

Chair Vaught asked about funding and mentioned that the Town of Wytheville has added police officers which increases the radio traffic. They added paid firefighters, but has the funding for Dispatch changed?

Mr. Bear said no and that the funding is based on a per capita basis.

The Chair argued that it shouldn't be based per capita because if the Town hires 200 new officers, the population isn't changing, but the funding should.

Supervisor Cook made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Terry, to approve two new fulltime positions to the 911 Dispatch Center.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

Chair Vaught added that these two new positions are merely a band-aid and that the Board will further discuss the situation in due time.

4. Animal Control – Arlan Dunford appeared before the Board to provide an update on his department. For the calendar year 2020, Mr. Dunford started the year with 10 at the shelter, and they ended the year picking up 149 strays, 121 were surrendered by owners, and they received 44 from Bland, for a total of 324. Animals reclaimed by owners was 106, they adopted out 18, transferred 186 to local rescues, and euthanasia was just 7 for the year (all of which were court-ordered). They are keeping very busy with the weather and changes in the law (tethering and weather related). They only have 14 pens and it's tight since they take dogs from Wythe County, Bland County and Town of Wytheville. They're still holding 5 court-case dogs for an indefinite amount of time. He appreciates that a new shelter is in the Capital Improvement Plan.

Mr. Dunford also has numerous litter cases and summons that need to go out.

The Chair thanked Mr. Dunford for all his hard work and said that he continues to receive compliments about Ms. Dauley too. He added that Major Cline has addressed the cow issue, and Mr. Dunford confirmed he's not received any further complaints about it.

## **WATER COMMITTEE REPORT**

1. Rickey Road Water Extension Project Waiver – Supervisor Horney made a motion, as recommended by the Water Committee, to provide a 90-day waiver on residential connection fees for the Rickey Road Water Extension Project.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

2. Industrial Wastewater Service Agreements – Supervisor Horney made a motion, as recommended by the Water Committee, to approve the Industrial Wastewater Service Agreements for Somic America, Amcor PET Packaging, and SVC Manufacturing/PepsiCo Blue Ridge Gatorade Facility.

Mr. Bear added that all these plants have pre-treatment industrial agreements which all need to be updated. Highlights of the details were included in Mr. Crisp's summary. The County worked with a consulting firm, as well as the companies, and he recommends approval of all three permits.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

**CONSENT CALENDAR**

Supervisor McRoberts made a motion to approve the Consent Calendar as follows:

**1. PAYROLL – December 2020:**

General County Fund	\$	810,148.28
Police Activity Fund		60,734.93
Courthouse Security Fund		12,938.92
Water Department Fund		24,733.35
Wythe County Wastewater Fund		23,733.35
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>932,288.83</b>

**Check Numbers:** 2000975-2000985; 2001005-2001015

**Voucher Numbers:** 15036-15362; 15370-15534

**2. STATUS REPORTS:**

- A. Animal Control – Arlan Dunford
- B. Building Inspection – Kyle Taylor
- C. Emergency Services – Jimmy McCabe
- D. Finance – Regina Williams
- E. Parks & Recreation – Kevin Williams
- F. Water & Wastewater – Don Crisp

**3. PERSONNEL:**

- A. Anderson, Nickolas – One-Year Merit Increase, Consolidated Dispatch, Annual Salary \$28,560, Effective November 1, 2020
- B. Puckett, Zachary – Resigned, Full-time Sheriff Deputy, Effective December 31, 2020
- C. Sadler, Jerrod – Resigned, Full-time Sheriff Deputy, Effective December 31, 2020
- D. Underwood, Jacob – Hired, Full-time Athletic Coordinator, Annual Salary \$29,485, Effective January 1, 2021

- E. Williams, Regina – Promoted, Full-time Finance Director, Annual Salary \$79,024, Effective January 1, 2021

**4. BUDGET AMENDMENTS:**

- A. \$12,612.72 (32031-461250) Auto Claim, 2017 Ford F-450, LMRS
- B. \$2,578.11 (3102-461250) Auto Claim, 2017 Ford Explorer, Sheriff

Supervisor 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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

**NEW RIVER REGIONAL WATER AUTHORITY – FY20 FINANCIAL REPORT**

Supervisor Terry made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Lawson, to accept the New River Regional Water Authority Financial Report for FY20.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

**COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR REPORT**

1. Budget Calendar 2021-2022 – Mr. Bear stated this can be amended in the future if necessary. Budget presentations will be March 15-17. Ms. Williams will be sending out budget letters momentarily.

Supervisor Horney made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Terry, to accept the budget calendar as presented.

The vote on the motion was unanimous.

2. Budget Priorities FY 2022 – Mr. Bear commented this is for informational purposes and they can discuss in depth at the next meeting.
3. Cigarette Tax Implementation Update –Mr. Bear provided the Board with a copy of the proposed legislation indicating that if a tax is not in place by January 1, 2021, then it needs to be implemented by a regional group. Our surrounding localities are interested in a regional group which appears to be the most efficient approach. Mr. Bear will gather more information tomorrow during his meeting with other county administrators.
4. 2021 Projects – Mr. Bear provided a brief overview of several of the most important projects being considered. If the Board has any other major projects they feel should be considered, they are to advise Mr. Bear.

### **COUNTY ATTORNEY REPORT**

County Attorney Scot Farthing emailed his status report to the Board. He doesn't have anything significant to add to that unless the Board has questions.

Chair Vaught asked if there's been any movement with respect to the opioid litigation.

Mr. Farthing responded that he's not heard anything. The last update he received had to do with the Mallinckrodt bankruptcy that Mr. Barton is handling, but Mr. Farthing will reach out to Mr. Barton for an update on the lawsuit.

### **SUPERVISORS' REPORTS**

1. Speedwell Fire Department – Supervisor Horney asked if someone could please check the thermostats to get them working. Mr. Kincer added that it may need more than just a thermostat as he believes the heater is broken (fan went out).
2. Musser Mill Road and Windy Hill Road – Chair Vaught asked Mr. Bear to extend his thanks to VDOT for the work they did on Musser Mill and Windy Hill.
3. Library – Chair Vaught asked how much CARES Act funding have they received and why haven't they opened yet? Kids need to use the library even if it's just for the internet access for virtual education. He would expect a large return from their budget.

Supervisor Terry said that the library is doing appointments and he's had conversations with them about opening up. He believes their target date is mid-February to reopen with limited capacity. It is not a good situation. He also believes the library is in the process of hiring four more people in anticipation of opening.

Mr. Bear added that the library falls under the Wythe-Grayson Regional Library Board who is their primary funding source. But Mr. Bear will speak with the Grayson County Administrator tomorrow about this.

Chair Vaught inquired about suspending funding to the library until we get clarification on their operations.

**CLOSED MEETING**

Supervisor Terry made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Lawson, to enter into Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711-A.5 (Economic Development: Projects Panel, Honeybee, R<sup>2</sup>, Diego and others).

The vote on the motion was unanimous

Supervisor Cook made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Horney, to return to open meeting.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

Upon returning to open meeting, Supervisor McRoberts made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Horney, to adopt the following Resolution certifying the business conducted in closed meeting as follows:

**RESOLUTION  
CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**



**WHEREAS**, the Wythe County Board of Supervisors 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 Wythe County Board of Supervisors that such meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law; and,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Wythe County Board of Supervisors 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 Wythe County Board of Supervisors.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

### **AMBULANCE TIRES**

Mr. Hankins announced that with respect to the tire issue on the ambulances, the company has agreed to replace the tires but they won't install them.

### **RECESS**

Supervisor Terry made a motion, seconded by Vice Chair Lawson, to recess in honor and memory of Logan Smith until Thursday, January 28, 2021 at 5:30 p.m.

The vote on the motion was unanimous.

**RECONVENE**

Due to inclement weather, the Board cancelled the January 28, 2021 meeting and reconvened on Tuesday, February 2, 2021 at 5:00 p.m.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Brian W. Vaught, Chair  
Ryan M. Lawson, Vice Chair  
Rolland R. Cook

B. G. "Gene" Horney, Jr.  
Coy L. McRoberts  
Stacy A. Terry

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

James D. "Jamie" Smith

**STAFF PRESENT:**

Stephen D. Bear, County Administrator  
Matthew C. Hankins, Assistant County Administrator  
Scot Farthing, County Attorney  
Martha Collins, Administrative Assistant/Clerk

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Andrew Cohill

**CALL TO ORDER:**

Chair Vaught determined that a quorum was present and called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

**BROADBAND WORK SESSION**

Dr. Andrew Cohill from Design Nine, Inc., presented the findings from the recent broadband survey of Wythe County residents.

It comes as no surprise that the majority of residents are very much interested in better broadband. The response rate from Wythe County was excellent, around 15% when most counties average 3-4%. Design Nine mapped the respondents throughout the County. On the financial side, the 30-year estimated telecom expenditure in Wythe County is \$738,622,534. Funding strategies were included in Design Nine's report of which grants play a large part.

Dr. Cohill spoke about fixed-point broadband (not mobile like cell phones) that provides better quality service with no data cap. He also stated that public/private partnerships are the way to go. The County would provide basic infrastructure, putting up towers

then leasing space on those towers to WISPs. The towers, he added, are a long-term asset.

Design Nine's wireless design for Wythe County would provide internet to about 88% of addresses in Wythe County (16 towers). Through the use of community poles, you can reach many of the remaining addresses. Mountainous terrain can sometimes help or hinder a good signal. Dr. Cohill mentioned using CARES funding and said that HUD grants could also be used to help fund some of the towers. With grant funding available, now is a good time to get started. He also mentioned that the towers could positively impact public safety (911 dispatch).

Dr. Cohill said that to attract WISPs, they recommend a modest application fee and a fixed monthly lease fee, with a grace period to allow WISPs to build their subscriber base. The agreement should be for WISPs to go on all towers preventing them from "cherry picking" towers that have a higher density population.

Dr. Cohill stressed that Wythe County should continue to make clear to residents that the County is NOT seeking to be an internet service provider. But the County will partner with providers to make better broadband a reality for Wythe County. The County, by providing basic infrastructure, will be creating more jobs while helping local businesses grow.

Mr. Bear commented that Design Nine's estimated cost per tower is between \$200-250k, said to keep in mind that the County would be leasing the tower space to WISPs to partially defray those costs.

Dr. Cohill added that electric service could be a large expense if electric service is not available close to the tower. Land for the towers could be leased, or purchased outright, from landowners. He also mentioned that AEP is proposing putting fiber on some of their high-voltage transmission lines so WISPs could tap that fiber and build service off of it.

Most counties are issuing RFPs with a 3-5 year contract. If the WISPs don't keep their customers happy, they risk losing their contract. You can also avoid a monopoly by owning the towers outright and not allowing the WISP to own the tower(s).

Chair Vaught thanked Dr. Cohill for the presentation, which the Chair would like to share with the School Board. He asked that this presentation also be posted on the County website.

Mr. Hankins said that Dr. Cohill and his staff were great to work with and their findings and analyses were impressive. Some concerns as we move forward might be locating the right places for the towers as well as constructing them, and getting enough customers to make it worthwhile for WISPs. He recommends getting RFQs and to begin researching potential funding.

Chair Vaught said the survey was a good first step, and now we have data to move forward. Soliciting RFQs is a good next step. He and the Vice Chair believe that there are several residents who would likely donate their land for a tower just to have access to better broadband.

Mr. Hankins added that we may want Design Nine's assistance evaluating the RFQs.

**CLOSED MEETING**

Supervisor Terry made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Horney, to enter into Closed Meeting under Code of Virginia Section 2.2-3711-A.5, Discussion of Prospective Business or Industry (Project Panel).

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

Supervisor Cook made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Horney, to return to open meeting.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

Upon returning to open meeting, Supervisor McRoberts made a motion, seconded by Supervisor Cook, to adopt the following Resolution certifying the business conducted in closed meeting as follows:

**RESOLUTION  
CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED MEETING**

**WHEREAS**, the Wythe County Board of Supervisors 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 Wythe County Board of Supervisors that such meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law; and,

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Wythe County Board of Supervisors 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 Wythe County Board of Supervisors.

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

NAYS: None

ABSENT: James D. "Jamie" Smith

Design Nine's broadband presentation will be posted on the County website.

**ADJOURNMENT**

With no other business to come before the Board, Chair Vaught adjourned the meeting at approximately 6:30 p.m.

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Brian W. Vaught, Chair