

AT A REGULAR MEETING OF THE GLOUCESTER COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HELD ON TUESDAY, JULY 18, 2023, AT 6:00 P.M. IN THE COLONIAL COURTHOUSE, 6504 MAIN STREET, GLOUCESTER, VIRGINIA:

1. Call to Order and Roll Call

Mr. Hutson called the meeting to order, and Mr. Bains took roll call.

THERE WERE PRESENT: Christopher A. Hutson, Chair
Ashley C. Chriscoe, Vice Chair
Phillip N. Bazzani
Kenneth W. Gibson
Michael W. Hedrick
Robert J. Orth

THERE WERE ABSENT: Kevin M. Smith [arrived at 6:02 p.m.]
Carol Steele, County Administrator

ALSO IN ATTENDANCE: Edwin "Ted" Wilmot, County Attorney
George Bains, Deputy County Administrator

2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance - Kenneth W. Gibson - Supervisor, Petsworth District

Mr. Gibson gave an invocation and then all in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

3. Approval of the Minutes - March 21, 2023

Mr. Chriscoe moved, seconded by Mr. Hedrick, to approve the minutes of the March 21, 2023, meeting as presented. The motion carried and was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

4. Adoption of the Agenda

Mr. Chriscoe moved to approve the agenda as amended to add a closed meeting for personnel matters. Mr. Hedrick seconded the motion. The motion carried and was approved by a unanimous voice vote.

5. Approval of the Consent Agenda - no consent agenda items

6. Matters Presented by the Board

Mr. Smith arrived at 6:02 p.m.

Mr. Hutson stated that he and Mr. Chriscoe had met with the Lieutenant Governor in King and Queen County. He noted that it was interesting to hear the things that she was doing to try to help the Middle Peninsula in general.

Mr. Chriscoe stated that the Executive Director of the Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission was also at that meeting and was able to mention some of the things that were trying to be done in the region. He noted that the Lieutenant Governor indicated if there was a need for a red carpet roll out for businesses coming into the region to let her office know so that she or another representative could attend.

7. County Administrator Items

Mr. Bains stated that Ms. Steele was not present as her first grandchild was due this evening. He then reported that the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) changes to the Building One and Two doors had been completed.

8. Citizens' Comment Period

HOWARD MOWRY - YORK DISTRICT

Mr. Mowry stated that it was the time that the old year closes, and debt was paid off. Now it was time to add more debt. He noted that some debt was necessary but the need to raise taxes was new and not called for. He advised that the capital reserve fund had a balance of \$1.4 million. He asked how the Board would consider each of the proposed items. He noted items one and two were necessary and ten and twelve needed serious consideration. He recommended that the items be separated by line item and represented at a different meeting. He stated that items three, four, six through nine and eleven could be put on hold. He asked if the Board was willing to jeopardize the County's credit rating in the current climate.

CATHERINE CARTER - ABINGDON DISTRICT

Ms. Carter stated that at the last meeting the Board said a lesson in the Constitution was not necessary. She advised that the Board members had taken oaths to uphold Constitution. She reviewed provisions of the Constitution and stated that whenever the Board members made a statement or vote, they needed to make it in the context of the Bill of Rights. As far as the budget was concerned, a very inexpensive concession for recreation would be to convert or combine tennis courts into pickleball courts.

SUSAN AUSTIN - YORK DISTRICT

Ms. Austin stated that fire and rescue needed to be fully funded. In the Constitution of Virginia, Article 1, she objected to the saddling of the citizens with debt. She stated that the burden of the office of the Board should be instituted for the common good and protected against maladministration.

The following comment was submitted through the alternate submission methods and was read by the Deputy Clerk.

BLAKE MABE - ABINGDON DISTRICT

Mr. Mabe questioned why over \$4 million was proposed to be spent on Woodville Park and another \$12.5 million on parks and a sports complex. He stated it would go a long way if the County could show a return on investment when proposing spending on parks and recreation. He recommended that the matter be put on the ballot as a referendum so that a majority of the people had to be in favor of it for it to happen.

9. Work Session Agenda

- a. **Public Hearing to Consider the Conveyance of Real Property at 3799 and 3823 George Washington Memorial Highway – Carol Steele – County Administrator**

Mr. Bains stated that this property housed the old County garage and a radial well. He advised that the garage was no longer in use. An RFP (request for proposals) was put out in 2022 to offer the property for sale but no offers were received. He stated that in April, the County received an unsolicited offer for the property by an adjoining property owner.

Mr. Bazzani asked for the assessed value of the property.

Mr. Bains stated that he did not have that but believed the offer was close to the assessed value.

Mr. Hutson opened the public hearing.

HOWARD MOWRY - YORK DISTRICT

Mr. Mowry stated that this was another in the great giveaway of County properties. He noted that he found it interesting that when assessments were accomplished, the increase in assessments was not true on some of the County's properties. He reviewed the parcels, noting the combined assessed value of \$383,000. He stated the value of the properties should be increased. He asked if a fair assessment was accomplished and stated that he believed the parcels deserved a higher selling value. He recommended that the Board reconsider this prime piece of real estate and consider a rebid.

As there were no other speakers, Mr. Hutson closed the public hearing and turned the matter over to the Board.

Mr. Gibson asked how long the property had been advertised and if there had been any other offers.

Mr. Bains stated that it had been advertised in 2022, and no offers had been received. Since that time it had not been readvertised. The offer received was unsolicited.

Mr. Gibson asked if the intended use was known.

Mr. Bains stated that the County could not ask the offeror for that, but he owned the neighboring property and intended to put a business on that parcel.

Mr. Hedrick clarified that there would be an additional cost to the purchaser of about \$60,000 to demolish the current structure and asked if there were any other likely expenses.

Mr. Bains agreed about the demolition cost. He advised that there were some deed restrictions for the parcel that housed the well. He stated that the well and the other building had been closed two years ago.

Dr. Orth stated that the Board had seen pictures of the prospective purchaser's properties in other localities. He noted that he felt the owner was a good, reputable builder and thought the changes he would make would improve the property.

Mr. Chriscoe stated that with the current state of the properties, the improvement that would come would be welcome. He also noted that given the amount of work the purchaser would need to put in, he would be paying in excess of the value of the properties.

After a brief discussion, Mr. Chriscoe moved, seconded by Dr. Orth, to approve the resolution. The motion carried and was approved by the following roll call vote: Mr. Bazzani, Mr. Chriscoe, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Hedrick, Mr. Hutson, Dr. Orth, and Mr. Smith - yes.

**RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE CONVEYANCE OF
REAL PROPERTY**

WHEREAS, the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors is advised that the County owns certain real property consisting of 5.03 acres of land, more fully described as: 3823 George Washington Memorial Highway, Tax Map #45-523A, RPC #12425, and 3799 George Washington Memorial Highway, Tax Map #45-526, RPC #19689, Hayes, Virginia 23072; and

WHEREAS, the Board is advised that there is an offer of \$275,000 to purchase said real property; and

WHEREAS, a Public Hearing was held on July 18, 2023, to consider the sale of the property; and

WHEREAS, the Board is of the opinion that the conveyance of this property should be authorized.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors that conveyance of the 5.03 acres of land, more fully described as: 3823 George Washington Memorial Highway, Tax Map #45-523A, RPC #12425, and 3799 George Washington Memorial Highway, Tax Map #45-526, RPC #19689, Hayes, Virginia 23072 is hereby authorized, and that the County Administrator is hereby authorized to execute all documents necessary to effect the conveyance.

b. Long Range Planning for Future Capital Needs – Carol Steele – County Administrator

Ms. Calloway reviewed that she, Ms. Steele, and representatives from Davenport had met with individual Board members last week. As a result of questions from those discussions some additional information was being provided in handouts. She stated that one question was how the County was considering the possible risk of the long-term borrowing. She reviewed that the proposed financing only included the sale of one parcel of GVFRS (Gloucester Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad) property. She advised that there were other parcels that could be sold that could potentially provide additional revenue. In addition, the plan did not consider any natural revenue growth that could be expected. The borrowing would not occur all at once but on an annual basis and could be reevaluated. If the economy worsened, plans could be changed at that time. She reviewed the second handout from the CIP (Capital Improvement Plan). She noted that the only projects that were ranked this year were those considered in the FY24 plan. The projects with scores of N/A were those for FY25 or later. Finally, she noted the last handout was the updated spending plan. She stated that the handout replaced the material in the packet. She noted that a couple of changes were made in the expenditures were made in the last review and those changes were highlighted.

Mr. Bazzani stated that he was concerned about the financial stability of the County and what the risk could mean. He noted that even though everything would

not be done in one year, it must be approached cautiously. He stated that he was a needs versus wants person. He recently toured the sports complex and that was a need. He noted that work had already been put into Woodville Park. He recommended the fire department first and then the sports complex. Enough had been done for Woodville. He was opposed to sending water and sewer to the park. He stated that the Board should wait to see what happened with this year's elections and next year when there was a new President.

Mr. Cole stated he was there to help the Board evaluate financing options and it was not Davenport's job to recommend any projects. He advised that they provided information on the existing debt for the County and the annual debt service payments. He reviewed the debt affordability analysis that showed how much debt could be issued to allow the County to remain at the same debt service amount. He then reviewed the set up for the bond referendum scenarios. He reviewed the assumptions. Three scenarios were provided - utilizing the current debt service only was option a; additional revenue of \$582,000 in FY25 was option b; and additional revenue of \$1.1 million beginning in FY25 was option c. He advised that the debt assumptions were funding fire and rescue for 25 years with payments of interest only for 2 years at 5%. All the other projects were projected for 20 years at 5%. He then reviewed the three different cases. He noted that as Ms. Calloway mentioned, the borrowing would not all occur at one time, and this Board or future boards would decide when to issue debt in the future.

Mr. Hutson stated that before deciding what level of funding to consider, the Board needed to decide which projects to consider. The fire and rescue projects and then what?

Mr. Hedrick stated he was uncomfortable with the sports complex as he did not know what work needed to be done.

Mr. Hartley, Acting Superintendent of Schools, reviewed some of the needed work such as the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) compliance issues, safety of the facility, resurfacing of the track, change to the turf, and potential relocation of the tennis courts.

Mr. Bazzani reviewed some research he did on synthetic fields. While slightly more expensive to install, he felt they were the way to go in the long run. He stated he did not see throwing any more money into Woodville so for him the sports complex would be the next project.

There was additional discussion on the sports complex.

Dr. Orth then asked Mr. Bains about the proposed water and sewer line to Woodville and clarified that no one else would be able to connect to it.

Mr. Bains stated that the water system would be a local system onsite. He advised that the proposed sewer line would be the low pressure line with restricted capacity. He agreed that it was a small pipe and additional connections to the line would not be possible.

Mr. Smith stated that he felt the fire department projects should be first and then the sports complex as long as the citizens knew they were not going to be completely shut out for use. He noted that he did not agree that nothing else should be done at Woodville. He stated that water and sewer was needed. There were a lot of kids in the community who did sports at the Woodville.

Mr. Chriscoe that stated he was very much in favor of dealing with fire and rescue. He noted that there were about \$22 million in projects that it sounded like the Board was in favor of getting done as quickly as possible. He stated that the rest of the projects had not gone through the scoring process. He advised that the Board needed to look at allowing the citizens to have a say but not look at an increase in revenue with taxation. He recommended the first case proposed by Davenport to take care of three items and the other projects could be brought back to the Board once they were scored.

Dr. Orth stated that with the 250th celebration coming up, the Board may want to work on the beach project. He thought moving forward quickly with the fire and rescue projects was paramount.

Mr. Hutson noted that the CIP process was changed this year to only score the items in the first year of funding.

Mr. Hedrick noted that the Botetourt renovation had been on the CIP for quite some time. He stated that for him Botetourt would come to the top after the fire departments. He advised that with the fire departments, sports complex and Botetourt, the Board was squeezing the list to where more revenue was needed to get the projects done as soon as possible.

Mr. Gibson clarified that Mr. Hedrick was indicating that all 12 projects were reasonable in totality. After Mr. Hedrick agreed, Mr. Gibson stated that he appreciated the earlier speaker's comments on the constitution and "We the People". He noted that it was a good thing to hear from the people. He stated that the people have indicated that public safety was paramount, and he agreed 100% to fund fire and rescue as soon as possible. Also, he had heard from families about the need to support the schools. He noted that good schools work hand in hand with attracting people and businesses. He stated he supported the sports complex and Botetourt renovation. As for the parks projects, he felt that the Board was missing an opportunity with Woodville. He stated that Woodville was heavily used now. By investing \$1 million there could be an interest in soccer tournaments that would attract folks to the County who would stay in our hotels, going hand in hand with economic development. He stated that we would also miss an opportunity by not investing in Gloucester Point Beach Park. He advised that it was time for "We the People" to vote on whether we want the projects or not.

Mr. Hutson stated that the Board needed to decide what projects to do initially and whether to do a referendum.

Dr. Orth asked how best to have the citizens consider the projects.

Mr. Hutson stated that he did not see any project that did not benefit every citizen of the County.

Mr. Chriscoe stated that the borrowing would not happen all at once. He felt the issue was affordability and he was more comfortable with the referendum with no tax increase.

Dr. Orth stated that he would be willing to support the referendum with no tax increase. He noted it would be good for the Board to be unanimous. He stated that the risk management sheet prepared by staff provides options to manage risk in the future.

There was additional discussion on the option for the referendum with no tax increase, costs of the projects over time, and allowing the citizens to decide.

Mr. Smith agreed with a referendum to allow the citizens to speak.

Mr. Hedrick stated in regard to affordability that all of the options were affordable based on Davenport's analysis. He noted he was in agreement with moving forward with the case for a two-cent tax increase with all projects on the referendum.

Dr. Orth asked Ms. Calloway if there was any indication yet on how this year's budget did overall in terms of revenue.

Ms. Calloway stated that the tax deadline had been extended so it was not known yet but so far indications were very much on target. She noted the sales, lodging and meals taxes were tracking on budget so far as well.

Mr. Gibson stated that it did not sound as if the Board had reached consensus and asked about the deadline.

After a brief discussion on timing, the Board discussed the need for one referendum question with a yes or no vote.

Mr. Chriscoe stated that the Board could fund fire and rescue without a referendum. He recommended that all the projects be scored and then hold the referendum in 2024 when there would be more voters at the polls for the presidential election.

After additional comments, Mr. Hutson asked staff to bring this matter back to the Board on August 1.

10. Supervisors Discussion

There were no items for discussion.

11. Closed Meeting

Mr. Chriscoe moved, seconded by Mr. Smith, to enter closed meeting. The motion carried and was approved by the following roll call vote: Mr. Bazzani, Mr. Chriscoe, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Hedrick, Mr. Hutson, Dr. Orth, and Mr. Smith - yes.

CLOSED MEETING RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors desires to discuss a particular subject in Closed Meeting during the course of its meeting of July 18, 2023; and

WHEREAS, the nature of the subject is:

Personnel Matters pursuant to Va. Code § 2.2-3711(A)(1), specifically the evaluation of the County Attorney and the County Administrator.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors does hereby convene in Closed Meeting for the purpose herein expressed pursuant to the legal authority herein recited.

Mr. Chriscoe moved, seconded by Dr. Orth, to return to open meeting. The motion carried and was approved by the following roll call vote: Mr. Bazzani, Mr. Chriscoe, Mr. Gibson, Mr. Hedrick, Mr. Hutson, Dr. Orth, and Mr. Smith - yes.

RESOLUTION TO RETURN TO OPEN MEETING

WHEREAS, the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors has completed its discussion in Closed Meeting, and now desires to continue its open meeting; and

WHEREAS, only public business matters lawfully exempted from Open Meeting were heard, discussed, or considered during the Closed Meeting, and the only subjects heard, discussed, or considered in said Closed Meeting were the matters identified in the Resolution by which it was convened.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Gloucester County Board of Supervisors does hereby reconvene in Open Meeting at its meeting of July 18, 2023, and certifies the matters set forth in Virginia Code Section 2.2-3712(D).

Mr. Bains clarified that for the fire and rescue station the earliest that a borrowing could be down without the referendum would be in the fall of 2024.

12. Adjournment

Dr. Orth moved, seconded by Mr. Chriscoe, to adjourn. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:21 p.m. by a unanimous voice vote.

Christopher A. Hutson, Chair

Carol E. Steele, County Administrator