

Board of Supervisors – October 8, 2020 Regular Meeting

The Wise County Board of Supervisors met in a Regular Meeting on Thursday, October 08, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m. in the School Board Education Center located at 628 Lake Street in Wise. The following members were present:

Honorable John T. Schoolcraft – Chairman
Honorable Steve Bates – Vice-Chairman
Honorable Fred Luntsford
Honorable Bobby Cassell (By phone)
Honorable Robert R. Adkins
Honorable James Lawson
Honorable Robert E. Robbins, Jr.
Honorable J. H. Rivers – members of said Board and
Michael W. Hatfield – County Administrator
Karen T. Mullins – County Attorney
Annette Underwood – Executive Secretary

PRAYER

Bob Adkins led in prayer.

PLEDGE

All led in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

IN RE: MINUTES

A motion was made by Robby Robbins, seconded by Steve Bates, to approve the minutes of September 10, 2020 as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

AGENDA

A motion was made by Robby Robbins, seconded by Steve Bates, to approve the agenda as presented to include the items in red.

Supervisor Lawson asked that discussion on Dotson Park be moved until after closed session.

Supervisor Robbins amended his motion to include moving discussion on Dotson Park until after closed session.
Supervisor Bates seconded the amended motion.

The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: VACO 2020 ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

VACo Director of Intergovernmental Affairs Jeremy Bennett presented to the Board a Virginia Association of Counties 2020 Achievement Award for an Innovative County Program ---Wise County /City of Norton Project Intersection – Lonesome Pine Regional Industrial Facilities Authority (RIFA).

IN RE: SANDY RIDGE RESCUE SQUAD UPDATE

Jeremy Indseth, Director Sandy Ridge Rescue Squad and Wade Fields Deputy Director, requesting funding for several items that are needed for the Sandy Ridge Rescue Squad to meet the COVID-19 requirements for his crew members, and individuals being transported to the hospital. He stated that since these items are related to COVID-19, perhaps they could be considered under the CARES Act funding.

Administrator Hatfield asked Mr. Indseth to send him a letter requesting these items be considered for approval for CARES Act funding.

IN RE: POUND BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT AGREEMENT

Danny Stanley and Phil Cantrell, Jr., members of the Pound Town Council, came before the Board with a revised boundary adjustment for the Town of Pound, which would expand the Town of Pound limits. This proposal would incorporate approximately 38.5 acres of land around the former Pound High School and the current J. W. Adams School, which are presently located within the County. It was noted that these two (2) properties are already being served by the town for water and sewer and trash pickup. No residents are involved. Mr. Stanley asked the Board to consider holding a public hearing at its meeting in November on this proposed adjustment, and the Town of Pound could also hold a public hearing at its meeting in November, which would expedite this boundary adjustment.

IN RE: AGENDA AMENDMENT -

After further discussion, a motion was made by Fred Luntsford, seconded by Robby Robbins, to amend the agenda to add setting a public hearing for the proposed boundary adjustment for the Town of Pound. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: TOWN OF POUND BOUNDARY ADJUSTMENT – SET PUBLIC HEARING

A motion was made by Fred Luntsford, seconded by Robby Robbins, to set a public hearing for Thursday, November 12, 2020 @ 6:00 p.m. in the School Board Education Center to receive citizens comments on a proposed boundary adjustment for the Town of Pound of approximately 38.5 acres of land now located in the County.

Supervisor Rivers said he would feel more comfortable knowing that the Pound Town Council had reviewed and voted on this revised proposal.

Council Member Stanley stated that the Council discussed this proposal several months ago. However, it has recently been reviewed by the Town’s Attorney.

The votes to set the public hearing were as follows:

Aye -	John Schoolcraft	Abstain:	J. H. Rivers
	Steve Bates		
	Fred Luntsford		
	Bob Adkins		
	Robby Robbins		
	James Lawson		
	Bobby Cassell		

Motion carried.

COMCAST COMPLAINTS

Jennifer Davis, a resident of Dotson Creek, addressed the Board with complaints against Comcast, and its seemly unconcern for poor cable service. She stated that parents are struggling with the internet with its inability to provide adequate service for their children to do their schoolwork due to the pandemic. Some citizens that need internet are within a short distance from hooking onto a source of Comcast Cable, but the price for installation is unreasonably high. She asked for any assistance the Board can provide to get Comcast to work with our citizens to get better service and/or get some competition in our area.

Board members voiced their concerns about Comcast and the many complaints they get on a regular basis regarding this same issue. They, themselves have contacted Comcast many times due to poor service. During discussion, it was noted that the franchise for Comcast is up in 2022, and hopefully, by that time, there will be some competition in this area. At this present time, the Board has no control over Comcast. It was also mentioned that a franchise should not be for more than five (5) years.

Terry Shortt a resident of South River Road told the Board that he agreed with Ms. Davis because he is having the same problems as well as some of his neighbors.

Stacey Carson, Town of Pound Mayor, invited all Board Members to the Town of Pound Trick or Treat event that is being held by the businesses in Pound on Halloween.

There being no further business, the public expression period was closed.

IN RE: CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by J. H. Rivers, seconded by Steve Bates, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

IN RE: COAL ROAD FUNDS – DRAINPIPE IN APPALACHIA

Ratified the use of Coal Road Funds for purchase and installation of drainpipe in Appalachia

Aye-	John Schoolcraft	Abstain:	Fred Luntsford
	Steve Bates		
	Robby Robbins		
	Bob Adkins		
	James Lawson		
	J. H. Rivers		
	Bobby Cassell		

Motion carried.

IN RE: APPALACHIA LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES AGREEMENT

A motion was made by Steve Bates, seconded by Bob Adkins, to approve the Agreement between the Sheriff of Wise County, the Board of Supervisors, and the Appalachia Town Council to provide additional law-enforcement services within the Town limits of Appalachia beyond those customarily provided in the unincorporated areas of the County, and to enforce the Town of Appalachia Ordinances.

Aye-	John Schoolcraft	Abstain:	Fred Luntsford
	Steve Bates		
	Bobby Cassell		

James Lawson
Bob Adkins
J. H. Rivers
Robby Robbins

Motion carried.

IN RE: RESOLUTION REDESIGNATING FUNDS NOW DESIGNATED FOR COUNTY CONSTRUCTION PROJECTS

Supervisor Rivers stated that he is not in favor of this resolution. The \$9M set aside for school construction several years ago has now been spent down to about \$4 1/2M. He is not in favor of putting that money in economic development. The County is yet to face the highest portion to pay for high school construction. This is a cushion that should be kept for school construction to help support any short fall that may occur later in that category.

Regarding DSS, he felt that staying where they are at this time, will save County money. That location being a Tech Park should remain as such to bring in data center, etc. Rather than have DSS there permanently, he felt it should be temporary / permanent. In the future, other departments that have been mentioned before that may need more space, would not be able to share this facility due to lack of space. He said he is in favor of growing economic development, but not in favor of using the money as stated in the proposed resolution.

Supervisor Lawson said the County is at a crossroads. The County needs to invest money to bring jobs and revenue into this area. There has been a spike in real estate purchases from other areas, which means the County needs to be prepared to assist companies that may choose to locate in this area.

Administrator Hatfield felt the County should use funds as a marketing tool for economic development.

After further discussion, a motion was made by James Lawson, seconded by Bob Adkins, to approve the resolution re-designating the revenue generated and to be generated by the two (2) cent increase of the 2019 tax rate increase revenue from County Construction Projects to economic development and further re-designate the remaining monies of the designated fund balance from high school capital improvement debt service to economic development.

Supervisor Rivers believes that both pots of money should be left where they are for growth.

Aye- John Schoolcraft
Steve Bates
Bob Adkins
Fred Luntsford
James Lawson
Robby Robbins

Nay - J. H. Rivers
Bobby Cassell

Motion carried.

RESOLUTION # -2020

(Said resolution is on file in the County Administrator's Office)

IN RE: JUDGE ELKINS REQUEST FOR ADDITIONAL FUNDING

A letter was received from Judge Elkins requesting County funding in relation to Drug Recovery Court. The grant funds for the year have been approved, however, the Coordinator's salary cannot be allocated as requested. It seems to be very common in other localities for Recovery Courts to be supplemented by the locality. Judge Elkins is requesting a

County contribution toward the Drug Court Coordinator salary of \$7,500 per year, and a onetime request of \$600 to purchase a laptop for her grant-required data entry.

A motion was made by Steve Bates, seconded by Bobby Cassell, to approve a County contribution toward the Drug Court Coordinator's salary in the amount of \$7,500 per year, and a onetime payment of \$600 to purchase a laptop for her grant-required data entry. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT SITE

Administrator Hatfield stated that VCEDA is willing to extend the DSS lease on the Sykes facility indefinitely. With the lease being extended, the County can proceed to renovate the facility by using the CARES Act Funds to build offices for the employees for an estimated cost of up to \$1.5M. The IDA Chairman and Vice-Chairman is in favor of this proposal, which will be taken before the IDA members for a vote at its October meeting. If there be other costs related to this project, it can be paid from the County's economic development fund.

IN RE: BUDGET AMENDMENTS

A motion was made by Bob Adkins, seconded by Steve Bates, to approve budget amendment #9 thru #12 as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: APPOINTMENT – LONESOME PINE YOUTH SERVICES BOARD

A motion was made by Fred Luntsford, seconded by Bobby Cassell, to re-appoint Lester Bowman to the Lonesome Pine Youth Services Board for a term of four (4) years. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: APPOINTMENT – RECREATIONAL AUTHORITY

A motion was made by Robby Robbins, seconded by James Lawson, to re-appoint Allen Couch to the Recreational Authority for a term of four (4) years. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: APPOINTMENT – REDEVELOPMENT & HOUSING AUTHORITY

A motion was made by James Lawson to re-appoint Karon Johnson to the Redevelopment & Housing Authority.

It was noted that Ms. Johnson is moving from this area and is not eligible for re-appointment.

Mr. Lawson withdrew his motion.

A motion was made by Robby Robbins, seconded by James Lawson, to appoint Kate Boyer to the Redevelopment and Housing Authority for a term of four (4) years. The motion was unanimously approved.

A motion was made by J. H. Rivers, seconded by John Schoolcraft, to table the District 3 appointment to the Redevelopment and Housing Authority until the November meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: APPOINTMENT - LENOWISCO PLANNING DISTRICT COMMISSION BOARD OF DIRECTORS

A motion was made by Fred Luntsford, seconded by Bobby Cassell, to appoint Jackie L. Johnson to fill the unexpired term of John Tull on the LENOWISCO Planning District Commission Board of Directors for a term to expire on 06/30/2023. The motion was unanimously agreed.

IN RE: CLOSED SESSION

A motion was made by Robby Robbins, seconded by James Lawson, to go into closed session as permitted by the Code of Virginia per the following Code Sections:

- Section 2.2-3711(A)(6) Investing of public funds
- (A)(7) Consultation with legal counsel
- (A)(1) Personnel

The motion was unanimously approved.

After a lengthy closed session, a motion was made by Bob Adkins, seconded by Steve Bates, to reconvene the regular meeting. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: CLOSED SESSION CERTIFICATION

Fred Luntsford read the certification for closed meeting.

A motion was made by Fred Luntsford, seconded by J. H. Rivers, to approve the resolution certifying that only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard or discussed by the Board of Supervisors. The motion was unanimously approved by roll call vote.

RESOLUTION # 2020

(Said resolution is on file in the County Administrator's Office)

IN RE: AGENDA AMENDMENT

A motion was made by Robby Robbins, seconded by James Lawson, to amend the agenda to discuss the use of up to \$100,000 of the economic development funds. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROJECT FUNDING

A motion was made by Robby Robbins, seconded by James Lawson, to authorize the County Administrator/Economic Development Director to utilize up to \$100,000 from the newly designated economic development funds for an undisclosed economic development project. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: AGENDA AMENDMENT

A motion was made by J. H. Rivers, seconded by James Lawson, to amend the agenda to discuss the transfer of economic development funds for upgrading the Tech Park from a Tier 2 Data Center Site to a Tier 4 Date Center Site. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDS ----- TRANSFER

A motion was made by J. H. Rivers, seconded by James Lawson, to authorize the County Administrator/Economic Development Director to transfer up to \$200,000 from the Economic Development Fund for upgrading the Tech Park from a Tier 2 Data Center Site to a Tier 4 Data Center Site. The motion was unanimously approved.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT

Administrator Hatfield gave a brief overview of funding sources that have been made available to assist families and small businesses during this pandemic. He also informed the Board that as of June 2020 Wise County is no longer the third leading coal county in Virginia, which means that the Board of Supervisors no longer have a member on the VCEDA Board.

BOARD COMMENTS

Board members encouraged citizens to get out and vote and to work together to help each other during this pandemic that has affected us all.

ADJOURN

A motion was made by Fred Luntsford, seconded by Robby Robbins, to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

ATTEST:

WISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Michael W. Hatfield, Clerk

John T. Schoolcraft, Chairman