

Board of Supervisors – March 10, 2022 Regular Meeting

The Wise County Board of Supervisors met in a Regular Meeting on March 10, 2022 @ 6:00 p.m. in the Wise County Education Center located at 628 Lake Street in Wise. The following Board members were present:

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

PRAYER

Randy Carter led in prayer.

PLEDGE

All joined together in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

MINUTES

A motion was made by John Schoolcraft, seconded by James Lawson, to approve the minutes of February 10, 2022, as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

AGENDA

A motion was made by Bob Adkins, seconded by James Lawson, to approve the agenda as presented to include the items in red. The motion was unanimously approved.

AUDIT -- COUNTY FY 2021 AUDIT

Emily Viers, CPA, representing Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, provided the Board with a brief overview of the County's financial statements for year ending FY 2021. The audit has been completed with a clean opinion, which means that the books and records are in good order under the quality of standards and in general compliance.

WISE COUNTY FIRE & RESCUE ASSOCIATION

Jack Mullins, Chairman of the Wise County Fire & Rescue Association & Captain of Wise Fire Department, and Travis Anderson, Deputy Fire Chief/EMS Chief of Appalachia Fire Department, addressed the Board with a power point presentation on their goal to provide safe, well organized, properly staffed, well equipped, professional emergency services within the scope of fire, rescue, and hazardous material response.

Mr. Mullins stated that they need to work directly with the leadership of Wise County to develop a plan to provide better services for our citizens and visitors. In time passed, there has been a lack of coordination and planning with Wise County: from the top down. Wise County ranks last with the lowest funding for fire and EMS services per capita in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Just a few of the financial problems are:

- Increased cost of utilities, fuel, equipment, and insurance with no incentives to help maintain volunteers
- No funding for paid staffing

He suggested that the Board appoint two (2) members of the Board of Supervisors to the Wise County Fire and Rescue Association, who have knowledge of the fire and EMS financial issues, and further that the Wise County Fire & Rescue Association be a part of the budget process when planning and budgeting for emergency services.

To help fire and rescue services, there needs to be a significant increase in funding. Funding directly to Wise County Fire and Rescue agencies should be increased to a minimum of \$50,000 for the 2022/ 23 budget with a \$10,000 per year budget increase thereafter. Also, funding for agencies with paid staffing or agencies wishing to add paid staffing to help supplement the loss or lack of volunteers needs to be studied as other counties around Wise County are currently doing.

He thanked the Board for its past and current support of the fire and rescue agencies.

IN RE: ANIMAL WELFARE ISSUES

Judy Harding provided the Board with a power point presentation on the different animal care issues that face Wise County as well as other counties. She explained different programs that are being implemented to care for the animals, which include Animal Rescue Programs, qualified staffing of the animal shelters, and improvement in the quality of care of the animals in the shelters.

She noted several organizations and individuals that provide assistance to the shelter with regard to food, transportation, etc.

She suggested that the Board move from a model of enforcement and impoundment to a model of a community focused outreach and care facility for our animals. In doing this, she suggested hiring a Shelter Manager, with the right skills and motivation, to manage shelter activities, as well as spearhead a coordinated effort towards holistic solutions, and working in partnership with the Rescues. She asked that the Board consider adding \$50,000 to the budget to fund this position.

She also suggested developing a plan (jointly with Rescues), establish priorities, and identify budget requirements, etc., which could be presented to an appointed Board who would be accountable for oversight and direction.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Big Stone Gap Fire Chief Billy Chandler voiced his support for additional funding for the fire and rescue agencies. These agencies take care of our citizens and are economic engines for county growth. At times, they use their own money to meet department needs, and provide their service with no pay or lack of sufficient pay. Additional funding is needed to keep these departments and their equipment up to date and meet their staffing needs.

Walter Crouse, a resident of the Hurricane area of Wise County, voiced his frustration with the court system, the condition of VDOT roads, the need for recycling, the CRT being taught in some of our schools, and the littering on our highways.

Lisa Odle noted that the County is losing money by not enforcing the collection of dog tags, which would bring in additional funds that could be used to take care of animal issues that face the County at this time. She voiced her support for Ms. Harding's presentation.

Travis Anderson stated that volunteers are needed on America Clean Up Day to get the trash off our highways. If Wise County is going to attract tourists to our area, everyone must do their part to keep our County clean.

Joann Harding and Tammy Dotson voiced their support on Judy Harding's presentation to upgrade the animal shelter, and to provide adequate qualified staffing for the shelter.

There being no further comments, the public hearing was closed.

IN RE: CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by John Schoolcraft, seconded by Randy Carter, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

IN RE: APPROPRIATIONS

Approved 4th quarter appropriations

IN RE: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2018 AMENDMENT

Set public hearing (4-14-2022 @ 6:00 p.m.) proposed amendment to 2018 Comprehensive Plan

IN RE: E-911 ADDRESSING SYSTEM ORDINANCE #5-2007

Set public hearing (4-14-2022 @ 6:00 p.m.) on a proposed amendment to the E-911 Addressing System Ordinance #5-2007

IN RE: E-911 ROAD NAME ADDITION

Set public hearing (4-14-2022 @ 6:00 p.m.) on a proposed E-911 road name addition

IN RE: PROCLAMATION NATIONAL LIBRARY WEEK

Approved the Proclamation proclaiming April 3-9, 2022, as National Library Week

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

The motion to approve the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

IN RE: COUNTY AUDIT FY 2021

A motion was made by Bob Adkins, seconded by Tim Boardwine, to accept the County's FY 2021 Audit as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: APPOINTMENT -BUILDING CODE AND APPEALS BOARD

John Schoolcraft nominated Steve Brooks to the Building Code & Appeals Board for a term of five (5) years. Bob Adkins made a motion that nominations cease. James Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: APPOINTMENT – CROOKED ROAD BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Bob Adkins nominated Michael Hatfield to the Crooked Road Board of Directors for a term of four (4) years. John Schoolcraft made a motion that nominations cease. James Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

John Schoolcraft nominated Natalie Chapman as an alternate to the Crooked Road Board of Directors for a term of four (4) years. James Lawson made a motion that nominations cease. Tim Boardwine seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: APPOINTMENT – WISE COUNTY TOURISM COMMITTEE

A motion was made by Bob Adkins, seconded by Steve Bates, to re-appoint Kathy Stewart to the Wise County Tourism Committee for a term of four (4) years. The motion was unanimously approved.

IN RE: APPOINTMENT – SOUTHWEST REGIONAL RECREATION AUTHORITY

Tim Boardwine nominated Richard Hull to fill the unexpired term of Jack McClanahan on the Southwest Regional Recreation Authority. John Schoolcraft made a motion that nominations cease. James Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR’S REPORT

County Administrator Hatfield gave the Board an update on the demolish project.

BOARD COMMENTS

Board members voiced their support on the need for additional funding for fire and rescue, which is essential for our citizens, as well as the need to focus on community outreach, and rescues for our animals.

Chairman Rivers noted that the next Budget Committee Meeting has been set for Thursday, March 24th in the County Administrator’s Office at 12:00 Noon.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by James Lawson, seconded by John Schoolcraft, to adjourn the meeting at 7:30 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

ATTEST:

WISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Michael W. Hatfield, Clerk

J. H. Rivers, Chairman