

## **Board of Supervisors – May 11, 2023 Regular Meeting**

---

The Wise County Board of Supervisors met in a Regular Meeting on Thursday, May 11, 2023, @ 6:00 p.m. in the School Board Education Center located at 628 Lake Street in Wise. The following Board members were present:

Honorable J. H. Rivers – Chairman  
Honorable John T. Schoolcraft – Vice-Chairman  
Honorable Tim Boardwine  
Honorable James R. Lawson  
Honorable Robert R. Adkins  
Honorable Steve Bates  
Honorable Fred Luntsford  
Honorable Randy Carter, 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.

### MINUTES

A motion was made by John Schoolcraft, seconded by Randy Carter, to approve the minutes of April 13, 2023, as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

### AGENDA

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

### IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING – VDOT & WISE COUNTY – SECONDARY SIX-YEAR PLAN & CONSTRUCTION BUDGET

A Joint public hearing was duly advertised for this date to receive citizens' comments regarding the proposed secondary Six-Year Plan & Secondary System Construction Budget for FY 2023/24 for Wise County.

There being no public comments regarding the proposed plan, the public hearing was closed.

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING – WISE COUNTY ELECTRONIC MEETINGS POLCY

A public hearing was duly advertised for this date to receive citizens' comments regarding a proposed Wise County Electronic Meetings Policy.

There being no public comments regarding the proposed policy, the public hearing was closed.

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING – CONVEYANCE OF EASEMENT

A public hearing was duly advertised for this date to receive citizens' comments regarding a proposed conveyance of an easement along existing driveway of property identified by Tax ID#009186.

There being no public comments regarding the proposed conveyance, the public hearing was closed.

IN RE: RECREATIONAL FACILITY FEASIBILITY STUDY – TOWN OF WISE

Kim Mullins, speaking as a parent, addressed the Board with the need for an indoor sports facility that would keep our sports teams at home and not having to travel all over to play sports. A sports facility would bring traveling teams to Wise County, increase revenue, and keep our children here at home to compete in different sports.

Julie Adkins Scott, who runs Youth Programs for the Town of Wise, provided the numbers of participants in the different sports teams, and the different locations that were being used to accommodate these teams. Traveling from place to place to accommodate these different sports is difficult at times, and costs for the participants. With an indoor sports facility in Wise, teams would be coming to Wise to compete, which would economically benefit the Town of Wise and Wise County.

Laura Roberts, Wise Town Manager, addressed the Board with a proposed indoor sports and recreation facility that the Town of Wise has been discussing, with the possibility of making it a joint venture with Wise County. The Youth Recreation Programs are growing with participants from the County as well as the Town of Wise. Many parents and organizers are for building a sports facility to house these teams and events. She noted that the Town of Wise is grateful for the financial support that was received from Wise County last year and hopes to see a continued partnership with Wise County to provide more of these sports opportunities.

The Wise Town Council has agreed to fund a Feasibility Study in the amount of \$18,500.00 as the first phase of an indoor sports facility, with The Sports Facilities Companies out of Florida conducting the study. The Town of Wise is asking the Wise County Board of Supervisors for financial support for the Feasibility Study in the amount of \$9,250.00, which is ½ of the cost. A location for the proposed facility has not yet been determined.

The Board was given a Proposed Services Document that was prepared by the Sports Facilities Companies with an overview of the proposed scope of work for the facility.

#### IN RE: COALFIELD AGRICULTURAL CENTER

Brad Mullins, Extension Agent for Dickenson County, provided a power point presentation on the history of the Coalfield Agriculture Center located in Clintwood and its benefits that have been provided for our area. He stated that prior to 2018, Wise County made an annual contribution to the Coalfield Agriculture Center Fund for maintenance and upkeep, as the facility is utilized by citizens of both Wise and Dickenson County. According to information available to Mr. Mullins, the amount paid by Wise County has been \$10,000 per year. Continued funding of the Coalfield Agricultural Center assures agricultural producers of both Dickenson and Wise County that financial assistance will continue, and support is much appreciated. He also noted that currently there are several organizations that utilize the Center on a monthly and quarterly basis.

The mission of the Coalfield Agricultural Center is to promote agriculture education and improve agricultural marketing in the Coalfield Region, including livestock marketing.

Supervisor Luntsford asked if there is a commitment letter or agreement that shows how much the County is to provide. Once this is known, the County can act accordingly.

#### IN RE: BLUE HIGHWAY FESTIVAL

Larry Roberts, representing the Blue Highway Fest, provided the Board with some history as to how the Blue Highway Festival came to Wise County.

The first Blue Grass Fest was held in Big Stone Gap at Bullet Park. Since that time, Big Stone Gap has made a big investment in the festival, which has benefited Big Stone Gap, the surrounding towns and Wise County as a whole. There has been a group of volunteers from Rhythm and Roots that have joined in to help with this endeavor. He reviewed the names of several well-known artists that will be participating in the upcoming event.

Mr. Roberts asked that everyone spread the word about the festival and make plans to attend.

#### IN RE: SCHOOL BOARD FY 2023/24 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Superintendent of Public Schools Dr. Goforth and Director of Finance Dr. Beth Shupe, provided the Board with a brief overview of the School Board FY 2023/24 proposed budget. Dr. Shupe stated that the majority of the school Budget is for staff. FY budget 23/24 plans are for a 5% pay increase for all employees, which could change to 7%, depending upon the General Assembly's adopted budget. Starting pay for employees will be \$12.50. Beginning teacher salary, straight out of college, will be \$44,000.00. The local appropriation from the County for this year is \$13.1M.

She also reviewed ongoing and upcoming repairs to the school facilities.

IN RE: COUNTY FY 2023/24 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Administrator Hatfield provided a brief power point presentation on the County's proposed FY 2023/24 budget as follows:

- Revenues..... \$67,291,937.08
- Expenditures ..... \$67,291,937.08
- Balanced budget ..... \$ 0.00

AS OF TODAY

- 5% COLA for all Comp Board starting July 1, 2023
- 5% COLA for school SOQ positions starting July 1, 2023
- Anticipate that the State will increase the COLA to 7% for Comp Board and School SOQ. Positions in their final budget, which is anticipated to be voted on around June 20
- American Rescue Plan anticipated to be able to replace shortfall in local revenues.
- \$1,805,898.00

Tax rate distribution for Real Estate and Personal Property were made available for review.

PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Jerry Kiser, a resident of the Coeburn area, provided the Board with pictures of trash that has accumulated on his neighbor's property that adjoins his property. He stated that this trash is being brought from the Tom's Creek Convenience Center on a regular basis. This has been ongoing for about three (3) years. Mr. Kiser said he has made many complaints, but nothing has been done. He asked for Board assistance in getting this trash removed and to stop allowing trash to be taken from the Tom's Creek Convenience Center.

CONSENT AGENDA

A motion was made by Steve Bates, seconded by Bob Adkins, to approve the consent agenda as follows:

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING – COUNTY FY 2023/24 BUDGET

Set public hearing (6-8-2023 @ 6:00 p.m.) on County FY 2023/24 budget

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING – ROAD NAME – FREEDOM BOULEVARD

Set public hearing (6-8-2023 @ 6:00 p.m.) proposed E-911 road name addition (Freedom Boulevard)

IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING – CONDITIONAL REZONING – NORTON-COEBURN ROAD

Set public hearing (6-8-2023 @ 6:00 p.m.) on a request for conditional rezoning of property located on the old Norton-Coeburn Road

IN RE: RESOLUTION - ESTABLISHMENT OF DATA CENTERS

Approved the resolution supporting the establishment of data centers in our area

**RESOLUTION # 9 - 2023**

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

IN RE: RESOLUTION – VIRGINIA OPIOID ABATEMENT AUTHORITY COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

Approved the resolution authorizing Wise County to execute the Cooperative Partnership Grant Application to the Virginia Opioid Abatement Authority

**RESOLUTION # 10 - 2023**

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

The motion to approve the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

IN RE: RESOLUTION - APPROVING SIX-YEAR PLAN & CONSTRUCTION BUDGET FY 2023/24

A public hearing was duly advertised on May 11, 2023, to receive citizens' comments regarding the proposed six-Year Plan and Secondary system Construction Budget FY 2023/24.

There were no public comments regarding the proposed Plan & Construction Budget.

A motion was made by John Schoolcraft, seconded by Randy Carter, to approve the Secondary Six-Year Plan for FY 2023/24 through (2028/29) and the Construction Priority List FY 2023/24 as presented.

**RESOLUTION # 11 - 2023**

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

IN RE: POLICY – ELECTRONIC MEETINGS POLICY

A public hearing was duly advertised on May 11, 2023, to receive citizens' comments regarding a proposed Wise County Electronic Meetings Policy.

There were no public comments regarding the proposed Policy.

A motion was made by James Lawson, seconded by Tim Boardwine, to approve the Wise County Electronic Meetings Policy as presented.

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

#### IN RE: EASEMENT CONVEYANCE

A public hearing was duly advertised on May 11, 2023, to receive citizens' comments regarding the conveyance of an easement along existing driveway of property identified by Tax ID#009186

There were no public comments regarding the conveyance of the easement.

A motion was made by Bob Adkins, seconded by Randy Carter, to approve the conveyance of an easement along existing driveway of property identified by Tax ID#009186 as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### IN RE: BUDGET AMENDMENTS

A motion was made by John Schoolcraft, seconded by James Lawson, to approve budget amendments #43 thru #46 as presented. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### IN RE: APPOINTMENT – STANDARDS COMMITTEE 911

Fred Luntsford nominated Russell Cyphers for re-appointment to the 911 Standards Committee for a term of two (2) years. John Schoolcraft made a motion that nominations cease, and Russell Cyphers be re-appointed by acclamation. James Lawson seconded the motion. The motion was unanimously approved.

#### BOARD COMMENTS

Supervisor Luntsford noted that one of the Town of Appalachia committees took on a project called Love Locks. Love Locks are placed on bridges or thrown in a lake in remembrance of a special person, or an event. For this event in Appalachia, the Town has prepared a box for individuals to deposit the Love Locks, which will be kept by the Town.

Supervisor Luntsford mentioned the subject of ongoing issues with the Fire and Rescue agencies that have been discussed in several budget meetings. It has been mentioned that it may be a good idea to have a consultant come in and give some suggestions as to where the Board needs to be with these agencies or whether or not there needs to be changes. These agencies have been clear about maintaining their current status.

Other Board members voiced their support of maintaining the current status for fire & rescue agencies.

Chairman Rivers briefed the Board on the VACo meeting he attended, and the following topics that were mentioned:

- Taxing Authority: With taxing authority, each County would be given authority to raise taxes based on their need, which would mean an additional new tax to replace the loss of revenue.
- Income tax: It was noted that some states are losing potential economic development because of their income tax. Some mentioned the possibility of eliminating that tax. However, that loss of revenue would need to be replaced.
- Opioid Settlement: There was some discussion on the Opioid Settlement and the different options available as means of participation in receiving these funds.

Chairman Rivers further noted that he has been receiving calls from citizens regarding Comcast. Comcast monthly payments are different from time to time with no explanation for the increase, the service is poor, and there is no local office to return damaged equipment, and the list goes on. He asked that the Board be thinking about options the Board may have to address these issues.

ADJOURN

There being no further business to come before the Board, a motion was made by James Lawson, seconded by Tim Boardwine, to adjourn the meeting at 7:56 p.m. The motion was unanimously approved.

ATTEST:

WISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

---

Michael W. Hatfield, Clerk

---

J. H. Rivers, Chairman