

Virginia: At the regular work session meeting of the Essex County Board of Supervisors held on Tuesday, February 8, 2022 at 5:00 p.m. at the School Board Meeting Room, 109 S. Cross St., Tappahannock, Virginia:

Board of Supervisors Present:                 Robert Akers, Jr., Chairman  
                                                                  Ronnie G. Gill, Vice Chairman  
                                                                  John C. Magruder, Supervisor  
                                                                  Edwin E. Smith, Jr., Supervisor  
                                                                  Sidney N. Johnson, Supervisor

County Administration Present:               Michael Lombardo, County Administrator  
                                                                  April Rounds, Assistant County Administrator, Deputy Clerk  
                                                                  Andrew McRoberts – County Attorney

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Akers called the Regular Board of Supervisors Work Session of February 8, 2022 to order.

**ROLL CALL**

The Deputy Clerk called out the roll for the Board of Supervisors; a quorum was met.

**AGENDA**

No changes.

**DISCUSSION**

**Social Services Budget Discussion: \$590k Anticipated Deficit in March for Mandated Services**

Chairman Akers introduced Candace Mickelborough, Director of Social Services, whom he met with yesterday. He asked the Board to limit their questions just to the CSA.

Ms. Mickelborough offered a breakdown of the department’s needs as follows;

- 1)         \$489k is needed over the allocated budget for encumbered funds
- 2)         \$59k is the cost of repair cases
- 3)         \$36k is required for CHIN services
- 4)         \$4500 is needed for a non-approved case

The total shortfall is \$590k which was decided at a recent CMPT meeting. The shortage at the end of February will be \$302k and at the end of March \$175k.

Mandated services are required by the State but not the level of services. Cases can be redirected out of CSA and put under prevention. Ms. Mickelborough stated that she is looking for grants to cover some of the costs as well as prioritizing services and being more careful about spending CSA money. Supervisor Magruder asked how many children are in foster care currently. Ms. Mickelborough answered that there are twelve. She stated that the local match is \$265,500 or 45% of the total deficit of \$590k. Her department is starting to look at child support payments. The money will be needed by the end of April at the latest to pay expenses in a timely manner. Vice Chairman Gill asked if it was safe to assume that Social Services expenses were running about \$100k per month. Ms. Mickelborough answered that it will

be going up to \$120k per month due to some school cases. She explained that the County pays the full \$590k and then receives a 55% reimbursement from the State. Chairman Akers told the Board that they could bring up the allocation as an agenda item at the Board of Supervisors' meeting next month.

#### Social Services Funding Request for Furniture

Administrator Lombardo indicated that there is money for furniture that can come out of the regular budget.

#### Regional Broadband Updates

Rob Hodges reported that the Federal Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act will allocate \$42.5 billion to upgrade broadband with \$100 million going to each state. The state entities will decide how to distribute the funds via a grant process guided by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The County already has \$2 million from the American Rescue Plan Act earmarked for Broadband. The County's VATI application was lacking on the following items:

- 1) No partners
- 2) No unique partnerships and
- 3) The Cost Benefit Index was too high

He is waiting on FCC approval of Breezeline's FCC application. Breezeline is the new owner of Atlantic Broadband. The State will have a new LECAP program that will assist low to moderate income families to obtain the long drop necessary to receive service. \$16 million was available in that program in 2022. Administrator Lombardo added that he has looked into obtaining Federal grants, however, concluded that the VATI grant is the way to go. Supervisor Gill asked what the timeline was for obtaining the VATI grant. Mr. Hodges answered that in April the new guidelines come out. In June or July the final application draft will be finalized and in July the application sent. The State makes their decision in December. Essex County so far has not been able to compete successfully for the grants. Supervisor Magruder asked if this was an all or nothing grant and Mr. Hodges replied that the County could break it up into smaller projects, however, the State is looking for economies of scale. The ARPA funds could be used to benefit the Central and Southern parts of the County. Supervisor Gill asked if there will be synergy in keeping partners and Mr. Hodges answered in the affirmative.

#### Custodial Services to Schools Update

Ernie Sadler, Facilities Director, reported that the custodial services to the schools is now fully staffed. He has hired a part time quality control person to review school cleaning. He is adding some part time employees for the lunch time clean up since the Schools are no longer following COVID protocols and the students will be eating together in the cafeteria. Chairman Akers asked if the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has ever been finalized. He said the key to resolving the issues with the School is to finalize an MOU. He visited the elementary school and determined that the issues are maintenance issues rather than custodial. Mr. Sadler said maintenance is covered by the School staff. Administrator Lombardo pointed out that more maintenance staffing is needed as it is too much real estate for just two people. The County maintenance staff does pitch in when they can but they need more bodies. Mr. Sadler reported that he has one full time custodian during the day and two full time custodians at night for each school. As previously mentioned, he has part timers to fill in. He said the change from part time positions to full time has increased the application rate considerably. An equipment and product vendor will be conducting free training on February 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> for the custodial staff.

### Budget Update

Administrator Lombardo announced that he will be presenting the budget to the Board of Supervisors on February 22, 2022 at 7p.m. He suggested having the Department Heads present in case the Board had any questions about their budgets. Supervisor Magruder asked for the budget in advance of the meeting giving the Supervisors a chance to review it and prepare questions. The Board was in agreement. Supervisor Magruder asked if the budget would include CIP items. Administrator Lombardo said he would like to meet on that before the meeting and as a separate discussion. He has purchased a software package that has a CIP component, budget documents and transparency portal which should make the process easier.

### Repeal of Johnson grass Ordinance Update

Chairman Akers received a recommendation for the Ag Enforcement Board to repeal the Johnson grass Ordinance. Vice Chairman Gill said the Johnson grass is mainly on the roadways and additional mowing before the grass goes to seed will help with abatement. Chairman Akers will set a Public Hearing in March to repeal the ordinance.

### Boards, Commissions, and Authorities Project Overview

Chairman Akers would like to appoint a Board of Supervisors member to each of the Boards, Commissions, and Authorities either in the role as a liaison or an actual member. He recommended reviewing the appointments each year. The discussion will take place during the Regular meeting's closed session.

### Board of Supervisor Retreat – Date options

April 23, 2022 was agreed upon by the Board for their retreat. Administrator Lombardo will secure a facilitator.

### Purchase of benches

As there was time remaining, Chairman Akers introduced Meredith Tribble to talk about the purchase of benches in town. Ms. Tribble said she has identified key locations in town to install benches. She is applying for a grant that will pay for most of the cost of the benches. There are 22 of them and are made of powder coated steel. Ten self watering planters will accompany some of the benches as well as signs showcasing maps and facts about the town. The Town of Tappahannock has pledged \$3,000 and she is asking the County for \$2,000. The grant will be for \$16,000. The Board was in agreement to fund the \$2,000 for the benches.

### **ADJOURN**

Having no further discussion, Chairman Akers adjourned the Work Session meeting of the Board of Supervisors.

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Chairman

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Clerk of the Board