

Virginia: At the regular work session meeting of the Essex County Board of Supervisors held on Tuesday, March 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

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Akers called the Regular Board of Supervisors Work Session of March 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

Budget Request – Middle Peninsula Local Probation and Pretrial Services

Ms. Hope Brooks presented the Board with the Middle Peninsula Local Probation and Pretrial Services budget request for FY23 in the amount of \$21,500. The prior year request was \$29,600. Ms. Brooks stated that she has been with the department for 27 years which serves 6 counties. She and her staff are Gloucester County employees. Ms. Brooks said the budget amount is determined by the number of placements each County has. Her department receives a grant annually from the State Department of Criminal Justice. Essex County had 72 placements which represents 13% of the total. This is how the \$21,500 request was derived. Essex County placements have declined from last year. She has two funds: one for compensated absences to cover employees accrued annual leave and a committed fund balance which is kept for contingencies. The department had an excess in the reserve fund so it has been deducted from the budget request amount. Supervisor Magruder suggested using a rolling average and Ms. Brooks advised that she will check with her Director. Chairman Akers stated that the numbers have gone down probably due to COVID and asked if there was enough money in reserves. Ms. Brooks answered in the affirmative but advised that it is hard to tell where the number of placements will be. Administrator Lombardo said he would like to see the calculation changed based on placements rather than a percentage. Ms. Brooks said she will look into that possibility.

VPPSA – David Magnant

Mr. Magnant stated that he has been at VPPSA for 25 years. He reported that 8,840 tons of trash was moved this year. He said the budget request has increased 14.35% over last year due to the State mandated increase in the minimum wage; a need to increase wages to \$13.50 per hour to retain employees and remain competitive in the work force; and fuel cost increases to cover the 350,000 miles

driven to remove the trash. Rates for recyclables fluctuates monthly. This year's budget increase is the largest in 30 years. Supervisor Magruder asked who is paying for the Town of Tappahannock's trash transfer station. Mr. Magnant answered that the 2 to 3 tons of trash removal is paid for by Essex County. He indicated that if that changes it would not be a problem as he can send the invoice to either place. He added that the sludge removal cost was paid for by the Town. Mr. Magnant stated that VPPSA can put a tire container anywhere the County would like. The maximum number of tires disposed per citizen is 12 per year.

CHINS Presentation

Candace Mickelborough, Director of Social Services, gave an explanation of the CHINS program to the Board. She said there are three cases which are school cases; two cases which are residential; and five cases which are DSS cases. Children that are in need of supervision are the runaways. Children in need of services are those who are in clear or substantial danger of their safety. The family must want the child back into the family. The average staff member is making \$23.50 per hour, plus attorney's fees may have to be added depending on the case. The 25 month case in house went to court nine times and cost the department \$109,000. The 14 month case in house only cost the department \$9400, which illustrates that costs can vary widely depending on the case.

Proposed Resolution #22-002: Angel Visit Baptist Church

Ms. White spoke on behalf of the Angel Visit Baptist Church. She announced that a highway marker for the church will be celebrated on April 3, 2022. At that time she would like to present Resolution 22-002 as presented to the Board of Supervisors. She explained that African Americans left Ephesus Baptist Church after the emancipation to start their own church. She indicated that April 3rd was declared emancipation day in Essex County. Vice Chairman Gill stated that he is in support of the original resolution but will support it either way. Supervisor Johnson stated that he is in support of the original resolution.

Budget Update

Administrator Lombardo reported that the budget has a surplus of \$240,000. He is trying to source another insurance provider which could save the County 6% in premiums. He explained that the increase in the Sheriff department's budget is due to the increase cost of tires and fuel and the possible potential of cost of living increases. Chairman Akers stated that there is not a tax rate reduction built into the budget, but he would like to see a one cent decrease. Supervisor Magruder indicated that there is a need to look at revenue generating ideas. Administrator Lombardo reported that the CIP has not been updated yet, however, he hopes to have that to the Board of Supervisors by the end of the week. Thomas Blackwell, Commissioner of the Revenue, addressed the Board. He said in 2008 he was allowed a part time worker but that position was eliminated in 2010. In 2016 he hired a part time worker for 20 hours per week to assist with the Land Use revision. His current recommendation to the Board is to have a revalidation of land use. He said since it has been six years from the last one, Virginia Code allows localities to charge a fee. Commissioner Blackwell stated that he could not accomplish the revalidation with existing staff; therefore he is requesting a full time staff member. He suggested proration of personal property to increase revenue but again, would need an additional staff member as personal property records would have to be reviewed monthly instead of just once a year. Commissioner Blackwell announced that he would not be seeking reelection next year. He asked the Board to consider reviewing real estate tax relief for the elderly and disabled. Supervisor Magruder said he had talked to a

larger county about proration and it benefited that county, however, he also talked with a smaller county similar to Essex, who did not benefit much from the proration. Mr. Blackwell answered that proration is the fairer thing to do and asked the Board where they were on the Lodging Tax. Administrator Lombardo said it is being reviewed as part of the ordinance revision.

Outside Agency Budget Requests

Having a few extra minutes left, Chairman Akers asked the Board for their consensus on Budget Requests for Outside Agencies.

Legal Aid – accepted level funding

Ledwith Free Clinic – accepted level funding

Healthy Harvest Food Bank – tabled \$4,000 increase to determine what other Counties are contributing

Workforce Development – accepted request

Middle Peninsula Alliance – not funding at all

DAW Theatre – tabled \$10,000 increase until feasibility study is completed

Essex Youth – accepted request

Rappahannock River Basin – accepted request

Litter Control – added \$12,000 as a placeholder

Essex Football and Little League – accepted request

4th of July fireworks – accepted \$700 request

Pool repairs – tabled until school can be consulted

ADJOURN

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

Chairman

Clerk of the Board