

Virginia: At the regular work session meeting of the Essex County Board of Supervisors held on Tuesday, April 12, 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 April 12, 2022 to order.

ROLL CALL

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

AGENDA

Chairman Akers switched the order of the presentations.

DISCUSSION

Property Maintenance Code: Unsafe Structure Adoption Recommendation and Discussion

Ernie Sadler, Essex County Building Official, stated that there are a lot of unsafe structures in the County and his office has received complaints about the Pizza Hut Building and a hotel in town. He is recommending adoption of an Unsafe Structure Ordinance. It can be adopted in two ways: 1) adopt sections 1, 2 and 3 at first, then adopt sections 5 through 7 at a later date or 2) adopt the entire ordinance all at once. Sections 1, 2 and 3 allows for inspections of structures and the possibility of teardowns. Sections 5 through 7 deal with septic issues, ingress and egress, and plumbing and electrical issues. Mr. Sadler said the Ordinance was adopted on a complaint basis in Lancaster County where he used to work. The County issues a Notice of Violation of the Ordinance which allows the property owner time to correct the violation(s).

Supervisor Magruder asked if the Town of Tappahannock has any obligations and Mr. Sadler indicated that the Town gave authority to the County in this area. Supervisor Johnson was concerned about sections 5 and 6, plumbing and electrical. Mr. Sadler said he has received a complaint about raw sewage in Supervisor Johnson's district. He reiterated that sections 5 through 7 can be adopted at any time. Mr. Sadler said he does not have the authority to enter onto properties without the benefit of this Ordinance. He stated that the HOA's authority is all civil.

Mr. Sadler said the Ordinance is complaint based and does not apply to renters. Supervisor Magruder asked if section 106.4 includes abandoned properties and Mr. Sadler answered that it does and violations run with the property and inures to new owners. Supervisor Magruder asked if an Appeals Board needs to be established under section 107.1. Mr. Sadler answered that the County already has a

Board of Building Appeals in place. Supervisor Magruder asked if the County can recoup costs of teardowns and legal fees. Mr. Sadler answered in the affirmative and stated that the County can also invoke a tax lien on the property.

Supervisor Magruder asked the Clerk to make an action item to double check the Memorandum of Understanding with the Town of Tappahannock to make sure the County is reimbursed.

Mr. McRoberts stated that a Public Hearing needs to be held to adopt the Ordinance.

Budget Discussion Topic: Comparative Analysis Summary Report (Fee Study); COLA; Final Budget Discussion

CIP

Administrator Lombardo said the State is deadlocked on their budget and doesn't know when it will be resolved making it necessary to extend the deadline to finalize the County's budget. He would like the Board's input on the following: 1) CIP is still in transition 2) the EMS building has not been discussed and 3) the School gave him a laundry list of items for their CIP request. The Board could just give a certain allocation to the Schools for their CIP allowing them to decide how to spend the money. Chairman Akers said the excess fund balance could be used for their CIP. He suggested that drawings for the EMS building should be drawn up first and then solicit bids for construction. It may be cost effective to build the EMS building and the joint maintenance building at the same time. Mr. Lombardo said Broadband is a special project so therefore is not on the CIP list. The Board agreed to approve funds for the following critical CIP items:

- \$135,000 for an ambulance
- \$127,000 for two vehicles for the Sheriff's department
- \$ 27,000 for three bay doors at the EMS building
- \$ 13,000 for replacement windows
- \$ 8,000 for LED lighting

\$310,000 Total

Supervisor Magruder asked for a balance left in the CIP for this budget year after the \$310,000 is spent.

Fee Analysis

Administrator Lombardo presented the Berkley Group's analysis of the County's fee schedule. Chairman Akers said the building permit fee needs to be raised. Supervisor Magruder said fees should help defray costs rather than just keeping up with other Counties. Chairman Akers said fees need to be reasonable and comparable with other localities. Mr. Lombardo added that the last time fees were adjusted was 16 years ago.

COLA Increases

Chairman Akers said the School Board has already approved salary increases as follows: 8% for teachers, 6% for support staff, and 4% for administrative employees.

Administrator Lombardo said there are two competing bills regarding COLA in the State's General Assembly which are stalemated. Neighboring Counties are considering 5-7% in COLA increases. Chairman Akers is in favor of performance based increases rather than cost of living increases. It was the

consensus of the Board to allocate a 4% COLA increase in the budget. Vice Chairman Gill mentioned that the cost of living so far this year is 8.4%; the highest in 40 years.

Broadband

Mr. Hodges, the Essex County Zoning Administrator, asked the Board to approve two documents in order to move forward with the County's Broadband initiative. One is the Phase I MOU between Dominion Energy, Rappahannock Electric, and other counties. The second is the Broadband partnership agreement with All Points Broadband. Both are needed to complete the VATI application which needs to be submitted in August of 2020. The VATI funding is also dependent on maps being drawn. Dominion Energy would run the middle mile and bear that cost. Supervisor Magruder asked if the costs listed on page 3 of the All Points Broadband agreement could go up to 60 or 80%. Mr. Hodges said All Points is aware of Essex's upper threshold on cost. Chairman Akers stated that there will be a \$1,000 fee to enter into the agreement.

ADJOURN

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

Chairman

Clerk of the Board