

Virginia: At the budget work session meeting of the Essex County Board of Supervisors held on Wednesday, March 1, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the School Board Meeting Room, at 109 S. Cross St., Tappahannock, Virginia:

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

County Administration Present: April Rounds, Interim County Administrator, Deputy Clerk

Absent:

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Akers called the Board of Supervisors Budget Work Session of March 1, 2023, to order.

ROLL CALL

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

DISCUSSION

Regional Circuit Court

Middle Peninsula Juvenile Detention Commission/Merrimac Center

Office on Youth

Tappahannock-Essex Volunteer Fire Department

Peninsula EMS Council, Inc.

Virginia Department of Forestry

Middle Peninsula Regional Security Center

Middle Peninsula Local Probation and Pretrial Services

Virginia Peninsula Public Service Authority

Three Rivers Health District/Essex County Health Department

Middle Peninsula Northern Neck Community Services Board

Bay Aging

(First part of presentation was not there)

They asked for a 3% increase from last year. This will help keep drivers as well as for the fuel increase.

Supervisor Magruder stated that they came last year and they saw the value in what they were doing and they gave that. He asked if this included any from the town.

Mr. Pollack stated that they request from the town the amount to keep the service whole and for the past two years they have not given that service. They are hoping that the town will see the value and will help fund that.

Chairman Akers asked where the maintenance on the vehicles is currently done.

Mr. Pollack stated they have 2 facilities one in Warsaw and one in Gloucester and it is done in house.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if they were on a regular schedule for replacement vehicles.

Mr. Pollack responded that they are but are having difficulty due to supply chain issues. Typically they replace 9 vehicles per year. According to the Federal Transit Administration have a 4 year or 100,000 mile life cycle. Most of the vehicles are at 6 years and 200,000-300,000 miles because we take good care of them. They have not gotten a new vehicle since 2021 and were told we may get vehicles in 2023. Besides them being hard to get they went up from \$80,000 to \$150,000 per vehicle.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if they always get new vehicles or do they look at used ones as well?

Mr. Pollack stated they get new vehicles because the funding they get from the FTA covers 80% of the cost and does not cover a used vehicle.

Rappahannock Community College

Mrs. Tara Walker stated that they are working with ECPS to increase the dual enrollment offerings which includes funding for educational expenses for teachers. They have also received a grant that the main purpose of the grant is to provide education and support from 9th grade on for the underserved who might otherwise not go to college. That program supports Essex, Lancaster and Westmoreland High Schools. They are also partnering with VCU Hospital to start a medical diagnostic sonography program, they are wanting to improve their cardiac care in Tappahannock. This will be a two year degree and when they graduate it will be with an echocardiograph certificate.

They did request an increase of 3% which is \$255 of an increase.

Essex Youth Football Association

Mr. Chris Webb stated that the organization as been raising funds but cannot reach the goal that the youth needs alone. The median cost for one uniform is \$342 excluding any other fees. They had 90 students participate last year and to get them all new gear is \$32,580. They are asking for \$5,000 to replace the expiring or expired safety equipment for their program.

Chairman Akers asked how much the organization had raised in private efforts? Mr. Webb stated that as of today they had raised \$1,300.

Vice Chairman Gill asked what the registration fee was? Mr. Webb stated that there is an early bird special of \$80 and after a certain amount of time it will increase to \$100.

Supervisor Magruder asked how many participants they have. Mr. Webb stated they had 90 last year but no sign ups have started as of right now.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if all of those 90 are actually able to pay? Mr. Webb stated that coaches and individuals, and other people have helped insure that if a child wants to play they are able to.

4th of July – Essex Little League

No report

Essex County Little League, Inc.

Mr. Michael Clark is 100% volunteer organization. Last year we had about 250 kids register for the spring season and about 80 register for the fall season. The Senior boys won the district tournament. They also had a Rumble at the River that was hosted in Essex. It was a Coach Pitch which is 7-8 year olds and there were 14 teams that participated. After registration we have 286 players this year. 178 of those are between the ages of 4-8. In the 6-8 year old group there are 42 girls signed up and we will have 5 teams. There are 46 boys in that same age group.

Mr. Clark stated that there is an \$80 registration fee and that barely breaks us even. The little league fees and all star fees are through the roof. This year we have brought in \$19,674 through registration and every penny of that will go right back out in uniforms, a meager equipment purchase, insurance and the little league international fees. They also have to do more fundraising for trash service, utilities, and electricity for the concession stand. They have raised over \$25,000 in sponsorships and a golf tournament that brought in \$4,000. They are also taking over the concession stand to run that on their own in an effort to raise additional revenue.

The request is for the ball park that has become dilapidated. They have already replaced dugout seating, the dugout roofs, the bleachers, the batting cages and the concession stand roof. That totaled about \$20,000 and just scratches the surface of things that need to be done.

The request from \$3,000 to \$28,000 and that will just get us started on what needs to be done at the ball park.

Supervisor Magruder stated that the High school has an RFP out for new bleachers and asked if the little league had approached the high school about the old bleachers?

Mr. Clark was unaware of that and thank him for that suggestion.

Supervisor Magruder also asked about securing the long term lease?

Mr. Clark stated that they do not have a long term lease in place. He has talked to the landowner and he said if the league enters anywhere that is looking at lights or Capital improvement that warrants it he is 100% open to putting it on paper.

Vice Chairman Gill asked about the numbers that were given and work that had already been done from there.

Mr. Clark stated that some of the work has been done but it reflects the remaining work to be done.

Chairman Akers asked Vice Chairman Gill about the 4th of July fireworks proceeds. Vice Chairman Gill stated that equal parts go to the little league in both counties as well as the fire departments for both counties. Last year they gave \$500 to each of those.

Mr. Clark stated that a great opportunity for the little league at that event is running the concessions. This year will be at Richmond County so we will not have the additional opportunity.

Essex County Museum & Historical Society

Mr. Tim Manley is asking for level funding for the Essex County Museum. They did have substantial damage when the ceiling collapsed in the gift shop and the Museum was closed for 6 weeks. They saw over 2,000 visitors last year. They are already seeing an increase this year as well as having the new courtyard. They are also getting more presence online. They are wanting the level funding so that they could shore up the rest of the ceiling so that they do not have a repeat.

Vice Chairman Gill mentioned that there is also grants that Mr. Manley is working on as well.

Supervisor Magruder asked if there was an MOU between the museum and the county? Mr. Manley did not believe that there was.

Supervisor Magruder was wanting to ask about that since they came and asked for an increase last year due to the ceiling collapse so therefore it isn't really level funding.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that the ceiling collapse wasn't until mid-year. The insurance covered 90% of that. He is not sure that the funding from the county was dedicated to the ceiling.

Supervisor Magruder asked if there was a way to find a balance with having a bigger portion coming from the town some years and then the county could have a bigger portion other years.

Tappahannock Main Street Program

Mrs. Beth Sharpe is requesting \$65,000. \$50,000 is for salary and staff, \$5,000 is for general operating expenses, \$5,000 for the Essex Business Forum, and \$5,000 for conference room furniture. They did ask the county and the town if there was any leftover conference room furniture that they could have before making this request.

The goal is to take the profits where they can put this back in the community. They are continuing to work towards financial stability and independence with a three year funding strategy.

Supervisor Magruder asked about the three-year funding strategy and what they are projecting for viability? Mrs. Sharpe stated that they would like to say 2 years but it may be 3.

Supervisor Magruder asked what is the barrier keeping them from being viable on its own? Mrs. Sharpe doesn't believe there is a barrier but it's a foundation building. They are still building the organization and working with Virginia Main Street and Main Street America.

Middle Peninsula Planning District Commission

No Report

Three Rivers Soil & Water Conservation District

No Report

Legal Aid Works

Mrs. Ann Kloeckner stated that Legal Aid works has been serving since 1979. They are asking for level funding. They have one office in Tappahannock that serves 7 counties. They focus on low income families that need an attorney in civil legal matter. In Essex county there are 1,191 who could qualify for the services if needed.

Vice Chairman Gill asked how many were on staff in Tappahannock. Mrs. Kloeckner stated that they just hired a new managing attorney so they have 2 staff members. There is also a part time paralegal and just hired a public benefits paralegal. So at times there will be 4 staff members in the office.

Vice Chairman Gill also asked how difficult is it to fill these positions? Mrs. Kloeckner stated that there are always difficulty recruiting attorneys because they could easily make more money in any private firm.

Ledwith-Lewis Free Clinic

No Report

Healthy Harvest Food Bank

Stanley with the Healthy Harvest food bank is requesting \$10,000 which is an increase of \$5,000. They were able to get 2 grants last year for the Backpack buddy program to send food home with kids who need it on the weekend. It used to cost \$1.52 to make that and now it is \$8.96. 96% of the funds go back to the people that they serve. They have 5 staff members to manage all the deliveries. They are trying to get two new banks in Essex County. This has also been asked to the all 6 localities that they serve. They fill about 10-15 grants a year. They also will be building a greenhouse and aquaponics to grow fish and other foods that will grow in water.

Chairman Akers asked about the amount being asked and the ratio of that to the amount of meals being handed out. Stanley stated that there are less meals in Essex County due to the ways you can distribute. Some counties have 4-6 food banks where as Essex County only has 1.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if there were already other partnering agencies with Essex County? Stanley stated they are working on getting other partnering agencies but it is a commitment and a lot of regulations as well.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if there was a reason why Essex was behind some of these other Counties? Stanley stated that is probably because no one ever tried to push it before and he believes in it so he is pushing it.

Supervisor Magruder asked about increasing the grants to help supplement as well.

The Haven

Mrs. Ellen Yackel stated that The Haven supports women in need with various services. They are asking for the continued support of Essex County as well as an increase of \$450. This is to help offset the cost of a \$34,000 loss that they will experience in FY24. All of the Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault programs across the state are going to have a 10% cut from the Federal fund. They have asked all of the local government funders for a 10% increase. The support from Essex County also goes to helping to get state and federal funding as well as when they go to apply for grants.

Northern Neck Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA)

Mrs. Betty Wirth and Mrs. Julie Strock stated that CASA specializes in Child Abuse and neglect cases. They are strictly volunteer with only 2 part-time employees. It is hard to request donations due to there is nothing tangible. The only thing that is tangible is a success story from a child. They do have

fundraising. They also receive some state funding based on case load but they have to match that with community donations 33%. The funding is used to train the advocates and some mileage.

Chairman Akers asked if they receive funding from other localities. Mrs. Wirth stated that they are funded by Lancaster, Northumberland and Richmond County. They have not approached Westmoreland right now because of the number of cases being low.

Chairman Akers asked what the state threshold? Mrs. Wirth stated it is based off case load but the average is about \$40,000 per year.

Chairman Akers wondered if the request is to help with the 33% match? Mrs. Wirth stated they would be very grateful for any amount the County would like to give.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if they were restricted by any territorial lines? Mrs. Wirth stated that it goes through the main Richmond organization.

Bay Consortium Workforce Development Board, Inc.

Mrs. Jackie Davis stated they have 2 new positions in their office. One is a business services representative whose goal is to assist businesses with recruiting, lay-off support, workforce service, workforce education and coordinating job fairs. The other position is a youth program influencer and they assist in youth engagement. They are asking for a \$94 reduction in their request.

The Daw Theater Foundation

Mrs. Dana Bartholomew and Mr. Randy Shuford handed out a presentation with a feasibility study and some marketing material. The study does show all of the activities that could be possible once the Daw Theater is completed. The Façade was completed in November of 2022. The marketing material outlines the funds that need to be raised for the Capital campaign to get the renovation completed and the doors open. This campaign would bring about \$1,800,000. In addition to that we are looking at about a \$4,000,000 project for the total completion. They are expecting between 40-50% of the project to be funded through federal and state historic tax credits and new market tax credits. They also expect \$500,000-\$1,000,000 to come with grants which leaves about \$1,200,000 to raise locally through governments and local community.

They are asking for \$100,000 to get them started with the company that would get the tax credits and grants. They are also asking from the town a portion and with that it would allow them to get the first, second and third phases of tax credits. It would get them through the application process to obtain about \$2,000,000 in grants as well as the design process.

Administrator Rounds asked about the request for \$103,000. What is the other \$3,000 for? Mrs. Bartholomew stated that would be operating expenses with taxes and insurance expenses.

Chairman Akers asked what the request was from the town? Mrs. Bartholomew stated that they requested \$40,000.

Chairman Akers asked why? Mrs. Bartholomew responded that they had a discussion prior to that and they know that will be a stretch for them.

Chairman Akers stated that most of the data that was cited and improvements to restaurants and dollars per ticket sales will most likely impact the town not the county. The biggest ROI is on the town not the county. The town has a bigger investment than what the county has.

Mrs. Bartholomew agrees to a certain point. She believes that the draw will throughout the county and across the river when it does open.

Supervisor Magruder asked about the fact that this is this years request what do the requests look like next year and the year after? There are a lot of big things coming up and also see that there could be some other big asks. Mrs. Bartholomew stated that this request is for this year and that since it includes equipment as well it would only be another request if a replacement is needed.

Supervisor Magruder asked if there would be another construction request? Mrs. Bartholomew responded that they are not trying to ask for another construction request.

Administrator Rounds asked for clarification if they asked the town for \$40,000 or \$100,000. Mrs. Bartholomew stated that they asked for \$40,000 because the counties pockets are bigger.

Administrator Rounds asked about one of the towns advocates is on the board for the theater and they don't support it? Mrs. Bartholomew stated that they do and they could probably go back to the town for other requests but this is specifically for grant writing.

Administrator Rounds asked why not target the town for Grant money as opposed to the town if it will in turn benefit the town more. Mrs. Bartholomew stated that a lot of this is coming up with as they are learning it. After conversations they came to the first step of what we need right now. It could also be as a pledge over a period of time.

Vice Chairman Gill asked about the \$100,000 request and not seeing an itemized list of what the money would be used for since it just says for Capital campaign. Mrs. Bartholomew stated that the \$100,000 is an estimate from Frasier and Associates to get us to the point of the tax credits and the biddable plans.

Chairman Akers asked if the cost for Frasier and Associates was \$100,000 then you really need \$100,000 between the county and the town. Mrs. Bartholomew stated that that would not include a grant writer this is strictly tax credits. Chairman Akers stated if you get a good grant writer they will get a percentage of the grant.

Supervisor Johnson asked if for some reason the county is unable to support the \$100,000 effort what other options do they have? Mrs. Bartholomew stated that they are individually fundraising but it would slow them down 6 months to 1 year.

Tappahannock Artist Guild

Mr. Frank Rixey felt fortunate to have only suffered some minor damage during the fire with melted siding but the artwork was intact. In November they had a pipe burst and had water damage. They are a non-profit organization with all volunteers and do have fundraisers. They need sustainable leadership with a paid executive director. They are asking for support for the salary of a part-time executive director and if possible a part time financial operations chair person. This would be hopefully only asked for a couple of years until the director could access the grants and continue fundraising to sustain that position. \$8,000 for salaries and \$2,000 for extra rental spaces. They have applied for other sources of

income as well such as The Virginia commission for Arts with a matching Grant that they have asked from the town. They have also submitted a grant with dominion energy.

Chairman Akers asked how much they typically raise annually in fundraising? Mr. Rixey stated for fundraising its about \$25,000.

Chairman Akers asked if that was the total income that comes in? Mr. Rixey responded that right now they haven't paid the rent in 4 months since it is being renovated. Their cash balance right now is \$40,000 and that is the best year they have had. Normally their balance is about \$25,000-\$26,000. They are trying to find a salary that is reasonable but still competitive. They are looking at \$25,000 for the two part-time salaries.

Chairman Akers asked about the rent? Mr. Rixey stated that their rent is \$900 per month and the \$2,000 request for additional space would be for a year.

Chairman Akers also asked about the Grant and the town matching the cost. Mr. Rixey stated that the total grant is for \$9,000 but it is a 50/50 match so they only requested \$4,500 from the town.

Chairman Akers asked why they were asking more from the County instead of the town. Mr. Rixey stated the way the grant was written it made since to have them as part of that. Chairman Akers responded they could ask for the additional \$5,500 on top of that as well. Mr. Rixey stated they have a difficult time asking because they want to feel like they are capable of taking care of themselves but they need help getting started.

Vice Chairman Gill asked if they were committed to that current location. Mr. Rixey stated that it might not be the prettiest building but it is in an important location.

Essex-Tappahannock Youth Association

No Report

Rappahannock River Basin Commission

No Report

Tappahannock-Essex County Chamber of Commerce

Mrs. Teresa Lankford still met during Covid but did still exist. They are rebooting the Chamber of Commerce. They are asking for \$5,000 for liability insurance and other costs. They will be fundraising to help offset the cost to get the businesses out there. They are hoping that this will be a one time ask. They will not be discounting their membership next year but did do it this year to get members back in the Chamber.

Chairman Akers stated that he is pleased with the fact that the chamber is trying to reinvigorate the group but they are not charging enough. He feels that they should charge \$250 as a bottom line.

Mrs. Lankford wanted to find out what businesses need so that we can help them and increase the fees next time. She does agree that they undersold themselves.

Chairman Akers asked what they asked from the town. Mrs. Lankford stated that she did not go to the town budget meeting but Mr. Coxton did. That ask was for \$1,000-\$3,000. She still has to write the formal letter requesting for \$5,000.

Supervisor Magruder asked what the relationship would be with the EDA as well as with TMS? Mrs. Lankford stated that they took over the networking from TMS and are hoping to take over some of the educational portion.

Supervisor Magruder also asked if the EDA is going to be helping with the reboot financially as well? Mrs. Lankford stated they have not explored that avenue yet but will.

Supervisor Magruder asked what that money for the reboot would go to? Mrs. Lankford stated that Mr. Gill is the treasurer so she was going to put it on him. Vice Chairman Gill stated it is insurance, the website, paper products. Some of those things are going to need more work such as the website.

ADJOURN

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

Chairman

Clerk of the Board