

Virginia: At the Special Joint Meeting of the Essex County Board of Supervisors and the Town of Tappahannock Town Council held on Saturday, July 22, 2023 at 9:00 AM in the Hampton Inn Conference Center, Tappahannock, Virginia:

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

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

Board of Supervisors Absent: Edwin E. Smith, Jr., Supervisor

Town Council Present: Roy Gladding, Mayor
Anita Latane, Vice-Mayor
Fleet Dillard, Councilman
Troy Balderson, Councilman
Kay Carlton, Council woman
Kenneth "Skip" Gillis, Sr., Councilman
Carolyn Barrett, Councilwoman

Town Administration Present: Eric Pollitt, Town Manager

Facilitator: Jane DeSimone Dittmar, Consultant, Virginia Institute of Government

CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Akers called Board of Supervisors Special Joint Meeting of July 22, 2023, to order.

Mayor Gladding called Town Council Special Joint Meeting of July 22, 2023, to order.

ROLL CALL

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

DISCUSSION

Chairman Akers stated that they had one matter of business to attend to before they got started. He asked for a motion to approve Resolution #23-014 as presented. Supervisor Magruder made the motion. Vice Chairman Gill seconded the motion. AYES: 4 NAYS: 0 ABSENT: 1

Mrs. Jane Dittmar, Consultant for the Virginia Institute of Government, stated that it is a pleasure to be with everyone today. She believes that it was February when her colleague worked with the Town to identify some Economic Development Projects. She also know that they have had other joint discussions in the past that she has seen the reports for where there was an award session that was held having to do with the future of the Town and the County. This is obviously something that you want to focus on and then also get some momentum. Her role is to help facilitate conversations and help meet the objectives.

COUNTY OF ESSEX

TOWN OF TAPPAHANNOCK



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UNIVERSITY
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Weldon Cooper Center
for Public Service

VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT (VIG)

Introduction

- Jane Dittmar
- Virginia Institute of Government (VIG)
- www.vig.coopercenter.org

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UNIVERSITY
of VIRGINIA

Weldon Cooper Center
for Public Service

Mrs. Dittmar stated that she is a consultant with University of Virginia Weldon Cooper Center. They deploy their consultants all over the state and actually out of state to facilitate meetings for local government to make things happen for the benefit of their citizens. She has been with them for a little over a year. She left the Governor's office where she was in charge of labor and workforce issues, before that she was with the General Assembly and before that she an elected official and Chair of the Board in Albemarle County. She feels that she has walked a little in their shoes. She has addressed some of the challenges they have had and has had to take advantage of some of the opportunities.

WELDON COOPER CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Reimagining Public Service

Vision

We envision resilient Virginia communities shaped by their residents.

Mission

To empower Virginians to promote the wellbeing of their communities through practical policy development, and training for effective and inclusive leadership.

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The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service, their vision is to have resilient Virginia communities shaped by our residents and their mission is empower Virginians to promote the well-being of their communities through policy development and training effective and inclusive leadership. Currently she is doing two components for the Senior Executive Institute. She is not sure if April or Eric have been involved with that. That is for people who work full time in local government helping lead departments or the entire operation.

WELDON COOPER CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE

Business Units

- Center for Economic and Policy Studies
- Center for Survey Research
- Demographics Research Group
- Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership
- ***Virginia Institute of Government***

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Mrs. Dittmar stated that Sorensen Institute for Political Leadership helps to train the political leaders for the future. The Virginia Institute of Government supports the work that the local government does.

INSTITUTE PARTNERS

To serve the needs of both elected and appointed local government leaders, the Institute partners with:

- The Virginia Municipal League (VML)
- The Virginia Association of Counties (VACO)
- The Virginia Local Government Management Association (VLGMA)
- Virginia First Cities
- The International City/County Management Association (ICMA)

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Mrs. Dittmar stated the Town is a part of the Virginia Municipal League and the County is a part of the Virginia Association of Counties which Sidney Johnson serves on their board. She will be training the leadership component this fall.

ELEMENTS OF THE DAY

Combination of:

- Presentation
- Discussion
- Viewing video clips
- Exercises

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Mrs. Dittmar stated that they are going a combination of things. There will be presentations, discussions, some video clips and three exercises that will get everyone up and moving.

ESSEX & RAPPAHANNOCK

STRUCTURE OF THE DAY – Over the next four hours:

Building Relationships

Communication Models

Roles & Responsibilities

Challenges and Opportunities for Region

Current Collaboration - Success Stories

Possible Future Projects

Planning Timelines & Next Steps

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Mrs. Dittmar went through the structure of the day.

Building relationships - The best decisions are made when you trust each other and you believe the motivation of the other is sincere. She sensed that there is a lot of goodwill in this community with each other and they are going to enhance that and talk about ways to continue that.

Communication Models – One of the things that came out in the interviews is how are you getting your information, what’s going on with this project, how do we talk about these things when we are such a structured environment as two elected bodies.

Roles & Responsibilities – We are in search of a new CA for the County and also we have a practiced Manager. We are going to look very briefly at the roles of elected and the roles of the paid professional staff. Sometimes those get blurred and as you make policy in the future about economic development and other things of well being for your community you want your professional staff to execute.

Challenges and Opportunities for Region – This should not be a heavy lift as you have already done a lot of good work in that.

Current Collaboration/Success Stories – This will be a brief presentation by April and Eric to remind us of the other collaborative projects that we have going on or have been successful in the past to set the stage for possible future projects.

Planning Timelines & Next Steps – A roadmap of quantifiable things that are going to happen next.

To start off they are going to do an exercise to introduce someone else to the group. This is to get away from this is the Town and this is the County. Everyone will be paired up and you will interview the other person and then you will introduce that person to everyone else.

They split up into groups for this activity and then came back and introduced each other.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that she will go back to that exercise in a little bit. She stated that she used to own business in her hometown. There was a gentleman that had just moved from another region of the country. One day he came into her business and said he didn't get this place and asked for help. He was used to when you come in to do business you walked in with the idea that time is money and you need to get down to business. What he found out was that people wanted to chat about things first before talking about business. When he would start into business people seem startled by that. She told him that in our community they like to know each other as people and not institutions or businesses.

She was pleased in doing the interviews that everyone spoke so highly of the other elected body. This exercise give the opportunity to get to know them as individuals.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that they wanted to talk about communication models. There was one person that brought up communication in the previous discussion. It had to do with how the external world see what you do and wished that they understood a little bit more about what you do. The focus of this is going to be about how you receive information. In some of the interviews it was 'I'm not sure what is going on with that project, I'm not sure what the County is doing, why is the town doing this?' So we want to talk about models of communication that work for you individually and as a body.

Group Discussion – When you are thinking about an issue that will come before your body. If you have to decide on perhaps a work session or even a vote how do you receive your information that then makes up the body of facts that you then act upon.

Supervisor Magruder stated that he is a phone person he enjoys a phone call but text messaging doesn't really work for him. Email is ok but he prefers to talk to people. That way he can not only get the feel for the information but the emotion part of it behind it as well. He is also a detail person so he likes to read. Send him the reports he likes to read them.

Mrs. Dittmar asked him since he is receptive to calls does he also make them?

Supervisor Magruder stated that he does make the calls as well while he is out farming.

Councilman Balderson stated that for them on Council the way they are structured is they get into those committee meetings and throw ideas out to each other. They always charge Eric with following up with the rest of the committee when there is a topic or something of that nature. He always hits Eric with what the committee has discussed and this is kind of the idea, feel it out. He is more of a face to face discussions.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that he likes to receive the information enough in advance to be able to review it, maybe think about different angles and then have a chance to discuss it with his peers. Email is fine but he has found that if you have to send more than three emails on the same topic you are better off picking up the phone and calling or setting up a time to meet and discuss. For efficiency he likes the emails but to get down into the details you have to go to the source a lot of the time.

Mrs. Dittmar asked if he was reaching out to have the face-to-face or people reaching out to you?

Vice Chairman Gill stated that it is both. Whatever the topic is if you are promoting it you should make the effort to get the information out. If you are wanting to receive information that someone else is promoting then you should reach out and ask.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that you mentioned reports and wanting it in advance. How are in advance do you like your reports?

Vice Chairman Gill stated that everyone is time crunched. We get our board packets in plenty of time to be able to review it before the meeting. He is not criticizing that piece. In other walks of life you may have to make a decision and you may not have it in time.

Chairman Akers stated that it depends on the topic. He is more of a face to face person because you can read facial expressions and body language. If it is just updates on topics an email is just fine. If you are wanting a decision on something then definitely 30 days in advance. He is not going to make a decision on the fly. Its really topic related, different people are built differently for how they like to communicate. He is a person who likes to go in and get it done but there are others that like to have the small talk first before you engage. You have to know who your audience is and who you are communicating with. He does like face-to-face you can have more dynamic discussion. He likes it one-on-one because you can have some of the tough discussions. You can't always say the things you need to say or ask the things you want to ask when it is a big open forum because other people may not know where it is coming from.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that they have covered text, email not too many on the same subject, reporting enough in advance to be able to review, informal face to face and committee meetings.

Supervisor Johnson stated that life is changing and if you are going to relate to tomorrow's constituents we are going to have to be flexible in the way we communicate. What works for me the one-on-one, eye contact, handshake isn't going to work for the future generation. Somehow or another for himself he is being forced to look at the communication mechanism in a different fashion.

Mrs. Dittmar mentioned the Instagram account and tik tok videos.

Supervisor Johnson stated that if anyone has grandkids they know what he is talking about.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that they will shift since they are talking about the modes of communication. What she got from the interviews that she did from the Town Council and Board of Supervisors is that you want more information about what each other is doing. One thing as homework that we might have come out of here is to enhance the communication between the two bodies. We can brainstorm that, she can work with April and Eric, or April and Eric can work together and come back with ideas. What would help if you have something on the top of your mind right now?

Councilman Balderson stated that they do a yearly evaluation on the Town Manager. During that evaluation we always look at focus forward goals for the Town Manager. He really pushed Eric for this year to enhance his communication with the County Administrator. That would be a good route between Council and Board of Supervisors. They really pushed for communication with the two of them so that will be better communication between the two bodies.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that high functioning regional entities, different cities and counties within each others area do have wonderful relationships with the CAO's. Those are your professional's working everyday for you. She stated that what she heard was that Eric could be more a resource you could ask him what is going on with the County and April could be asked what is going on Town.

Councilman Balderson stated that also reaching across the aisle too. We all try to communicate even with emails back and forth with a follow-up of what's going on.

Mrs. Dittmar asked so feeling free to reach out to an individual? Obviously you can't do group because that's not how it works in transparent government but one-on-ones.

Councilwoman Carlton stated that she encourages that Town Council and vice versa to go to each one's meetings. You can learn a lot in meetings. She stated that she listens to the Board every meeting. Things come up at meetings that are important. She is not saying go to every one of them but go to some of each other's meetings.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that to support that when she was on the Board for Albemarle County she had an incorporated town in her district. She would go to the meeting and observe and it got to the point that the Mayor would ask her to come up and share what was going on with the county. They eventually started coming once a month to their meeting. It would be either be the Mayor or the Town Manager. That was helpful because under public information you can go back and forth.

Supervisor Magruder stated that April had been putting on their monthly reports for them to read a publication that Eric does with the Town Manager's report. For him that is very informative. He can't make their Monday meetings but reading that catches him up pretty well. If that becomes a part of the regular report they can send it over and it can go in the Board packets. He also stated that sometimes there is a fear of communication. 'I don't want them to know' situations. We need to break down those fears about having someone else's information is a bad thing. We are one community. He doesn't know how we get over those fears but the more communication we have with each other the better decisions that can be made for the community. At some point it would be good for the Town and the County to discuss is how to get over that fear of knowing what each other is doing and going along.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that baseline you are public bodies so it is just imperfect information that keeps us from knowing what is going on in terms of public records. So what are we fearful of, what is not part of our regular meetings that if we had more perfect information that could be shared succinctly for decision makers. What are we afraid of the other group knowing?

Supervisor Magruder stated that he doesn't have anything. He thinks it should all be open. He has now problem with that.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that you are sensing something is being held back because of fear if she heard correctly.

Supervisor Magruder stated that he does have that feeling.

Mrs. Dittmar asked if anyone else in the group had that feeling where we could explore that a little bit.

Chairman Akers stated that they started but kind of fell slack on it between the Town and the County to get together once a month just with a couple of Board members and a couple of Town members just to talk about things that may be sensitive to the County may be sensitive to the Town that you can't just talk about in a public meeting. Not that you don't want to be transparent but you just can't physically do it. **A prime example is there is a lawsuit with the county, its been out there**. But you just can't start talking about that in an open meeting but it would be helpful to share that with a small group and have them pass it along. Instead of having to call each individual Board member or Council member. Just so you could share what is troubling the County or what is troubling the Town, what can you tell me about this or that so we are in the know. The real fear is not being in the know. Because if someone asks you something you don't really know how to respond.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that some of it has to do with not paying attention or not having any kind of way of understanding what is going on and all of a sudden it comes. That can erode trust because if you knew about it as a body and it is coming and then you have to have a work session and vote on it and the other body hasn't been part of that understanding then it is a surprise. The informal meetings are a good idea. There is a difference in compromising and collaborating. Compromise is when two groups have a position and in order to come to an agreement on part gives up something, then the other party gives up something and then you have a resolution. Collaboration is where there is some kind of goal and you come with all of your information and understanding, the other group comes with their information and understanding and you talk about it and the third thing happens. So the informal meetings where there haven't been strong positions taken are wonderful ways at collaborating.

Supervisor Magruder said another example is during our budget season we get a lot of outside groups that want a certain amount of money. This is a perfect opportunity to collaborate together and then we can compromise or collaborate on the amount of resources each have. That way they don't have to come and get asked 'how much is the County giving' or 'how much is the Town giving'?

Mrs. Dittmar stated that they were going to look at different ways of getting information from public bodies in the commonwealth and you have touched on most of them. If you like who you partnered up with for the original exercise well enough to continue then do that. Otherwise we know we like for our Chair's and our Mayors to work together because they are a part in setting the agenda. There is an uneven number of people so the rest of you should pair up and practice talking about what is going on.

HOW DO YOU RECEIVE INFORMATION TO GOVERN?

Word of Mouth

Requesting information

Informal Meetings

Official Meetings

Written reports & memos

Website postings

Legacy Media

Social Media

Mrs. Dittmar stated that we have :

Word of Mouth - a guy stops you on the street to tell you something

Requesting Information – Who do I need to call to ask about this or checking in with your advocacy groups. There are people out there in the community that are advocating are great resources even if you vote a different way than they want they will help you understand what you are doing.

Informal Meetings – including having monthly coffee meetings or walk and talks

Website postings – keep an eye out on the County website and the Town website that is where the citizens get their information. She poured through the websites to learn as much as she could.

Legacy Media – most is online now but your newspapers, radios, talking to reporters

Social Media – this can be very helpful and very damaging.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that she feels that they have looked at this enough during the debriefing she will get with April and Eric to discuss ways to bring this back to the boards.

Supervisor Magruder stated he knows that the Town uses the committee groups and discuss how the actions are made. As the board makes an action decision we just make a decision. The county does not form committees. But the town uses committees a lot.

Mayor Gladding stated that it is an implantation of policies. They have standing committees and other committees that have been established. So they have a police committee that when an issue comes involving state police that committee works with the Manager and staff to gather information, they may meet with the police chief, then they bring that information to the Council for further insight on the information or to implement a policy. The town likes to do all of the administrative stuff during the month during the day as it comes a long. Their meetings aren't long doing administrative things. The committees aid in doing that. The responsibility of the committee is to take charge and come back to the council with the recommendation for adoption or not adoption or any changes that need to be made.

Supervisor Magruder asked if there are 2 people per committee?

Mayor Gladding stated usually or sometimes 3.

Supervisor Magruder asked how they determine the committees?

Mayor Gladding stated that they are appointed by the Mayor. They are rotated to some extent, they are done by experience. This isn't their full time job so it seems to help it work efficiently.

Councilman Balderson stated that when they sit in these committee meetings they also provide as much information to Council so that when we make a recommendation they are still getting all of the information that we have. They dig a little deeper so they can try and answer questions that may come up during the open business meeting. That is the biggest part of the committee meeting is that we dig into what the issue might be and then provide information with some kind of direction.

Councilwoman Carlton stated that they basically do all of the homework and gather the information and try to come up with a suggestion and then Council is given all of that information and there are times that Council comes up with a better suggestion. So it is not always whatever they suggest as committees but at least the research as been done.

Supervisor Magruder they find on the board that a lot of times something comes up and decisions have to be made very timely. So when you form a committee that is going to look at something do they have a timeline to get back so that a decision is made or is it kind of open ended?

Councilman Balderson stated that it is a timeline. If there is something for water and sewer, he can connect quickly with Skip on a water and sewer issue so it can be resolved. Some of that is rather timely

matters. The flexibility of the Committee meeting is just based on what they have to announce to have the committee meeting.

Mrs. Dittmar asked if there was any working committees with the Board of Supervisors.

Supervisor Magruder stated that every know and then they form an Ad Hoc committee and they have the school liaison.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that they have a subcommittee with the school board and two members of their board and two members of the school board.

Chairman Akers stated that they do not have operational committees. We have governing boards that are not operational.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that it is probably a function of size too. Not long ago they were just a four-member board and now they have five. Sometimes that is hard to get to a committee concept.

Supervisor Johnson stated that they have the AG and Forestry group.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that it's an outside group not an internal, operational committee.

Supervisor Magruder stated that one thing that might help is from time to time if it is an issue that is more of a community oriented thing it might be beneficial to have a joint committee. It's not a voting power it's just a committee to gather information. That would be a great way for communication.

Councilman Balderson stated that they had connected on a couple of topics but it is more informative. Some of the topics that they are working on like the old airport they should pull a Board of Supervisor just so that you can return that information.

Supervisor Magruder stated that water and sewer would probably not be one of those things that the Board would need to be involved in.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that anything that promotes Economic Development could be a joint effort.

Chairman Akers stated that Parks and Recreation is another one. The things that are really shared by all.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that it would come up at a meeting for you all to recommend a joint committee on an issue. One would volunteer from each and then the two would meet and establish that. The great thing about committees is that they extend the ability of work. You can delegate to them, have experts come in and talk, you can talk about the issues with the pluses and minuses and come back with the work in a presentation form so it saves time for the elected body. The elected body can then chew on the expertise and the committees can further answer questions. Yellow warning on committees are if you have two or more elected that are on a committee you are a public meeting, you should always have staff there. They are the folks that can bring expertise but they are also the ones that have to take it back and implement it. Blinking red lights are when you have a group that feels that are at a point they can make decisions and they get into a debate with the elected body and the elected body chooses not to do what the group recommends. That is more for when citizens get involved.

Supervisor Magruder stated that for clarification that if they go to a VACO meeting it does not have to be announced as a public meeting because they are not making decisions. If decisions are being made then it has to be a formal meeting that is advertised.

Chairman Akers stated that if you form a committee and you are discussing a topic that a decision could come out of that then you would be violating it.

Mayor Gladding stated that a committee is considered a backing body under the FOIA so they advertise all of theirs.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that if you are invited to a meeting and the whole Town Council goes that is ok because it is not your public meeting unless you get up and start talking about town business then you get into a gray area. If you go to a garden party and there are several supervisors there, as long as you have the discipline not to discuss County business it is not a public meeting. If you start huddling up to discuss the agenda of the upcoming meeting then you are in violation. If you are discussing Town or County business and there are two or more of you it has to be posted.

Councilman Balderson stated that if the Council does a committee meeting and invites a Board member it is still their committee meeting not the Boards.

Councilwoman Barrett stated that she thinks it is an excellent idea that Supervisor Magruder suggested about having joint meetings regarding the Non-profits. She also asked if they could get a similar monthly report from the County that could be helpful.

Administrator Rounds stated that the full report is on the website on BoardDocs. It has every department's report for the month.

Councilwoman Barrett stated that if Eric is going through and sending report each month then it would be nice if April sent the one for the County.

Administrator Rounds stated that Eric doesn't send it to her she goes onto the Town website and pulls the report from there.

Town Manger Pollitt stated that usually he and April talk once or twice a week about projects and the things that they are working on.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that when they do the debriefing is how to facilitate that exchange to get you the information.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that a recent joint communication effort between the County and the Town is that Essex County recently hosted the Rappahannock River Basin Committee. That is a big conglomerate of localities, they have state Senators and Delegates as well as local officials. For some reason Towns are not included in in that Commission. We hosted that last month and with the regular business that is held quarterly when you are in a locality you try to highlight what is going on. He is the representative from Essex County and he got in touch with Eric to coordinate so that he could highlight the Hoskins Creek Project. Some Town Council members were there and Eric brought the engineering group there and it was appreciated that the two governing bodies came together.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that one of the reports that she was given to read stated that the Chamber of Commerce could be stronger or is less active than in other communities.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that he is on that board and they are making a renewed effort. Both the County and the Town have donated resources to help get that going again. There is also coordination with the Tappahannock Main Street project as well.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that is her question about other conveners. Chamber of Commerce usually convene their public sector partners at their event or to talk about a certain topic in the business community. Who are the strongest conveners, non public sector in the region?

Mayor Gladding stated that Civic Group the Rotary is very active.

Chairman Akers stated that the Rotary is probably the largest and then Essex Churches Together is probably just as big.

Mrs. Dittmar asked if elected officials were on Rotary?

Mayor Gladding stated that some of them are.

Mrs. Dittmar asked how many Rotary's were in the area?

Mayor Gladding stated that there is one.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that when the Rotary meets once a week there are Supervisors and Council members there?

Mayor Gladding stated that he is a member and Chairman Akers is a member and every week they have a speaker come in.

Mrs. Dittmar asked about the Essex Churches Together if it was different Pastors or what that was?

Mayor Gladding stated that it is the churches that come together and do Operation Inasmuch which does different projects throughout the area.

Mrs. Dittmar asked if they give them public funds for any of their projects?

Mayor Gladding stated that he does not believe they give any public funds. He knows that a lot of businesses donate to them.

Vice Chairman Gill stated they have not requested any funds.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that they had talked about non-profits maybe a joint committee? In other communities that they have worked with because a non-profit will come and ask each jurisdiction they will do all of the interviews together so that they have the same information and can decide what portion of the budget. A lot of that has to do with how many people are served from each jurisdiction.

Group Discussion

Roles & Responsibilities



Mrs. Dittmar stated that there are some where the elected officials and the professional staff have not learned, forgotten, or have decided to completely ignore their roles. That can cause real chaos in the decision making process.

There was a video about the roles and responsibilities of an elected official.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that there are no yellow blinking lights with either of your bodies. You all spoke highly of who you have working for you full time and they speak highly of you. There is not a bright line between 'we set' policy and 'we implement.' You are asking the folks that are going to implement to provide a lot of the information that will help you make your decisions. Sometimes Boards or Councils start to feel manipulated. It is not happening here but you want to be aware of that. How you get your information is important to. If you have a staff recommendation then you would want to have them give you the other options that they picked from so that you have all of the information and can see why they chose a particular option. The town of Charlottesville just offered a City Manager position to the 5th City Manager in less than 5 years. That is not good. They have new people on the Council. Think about what the citizens of Charlottesville didn't have benefit from while that was wobbly. You all have people that have been willing to serve, you have fresh eyes coming in, and you have good talent that are leading you. That is where you want to stay. It doesn't just happen because it happens it happens because of you all choosing the right people and continuing to support them.

Chairman Akers stated that they bring up their responsibilities as a governing body and it is to not go over or around the County Administrator. Not even if unintentionally because the staff will ultimately come from a staff position. If a Board member comes to a staff they are going to do what is asked regardless of if it is what the County Administrator wants. They have to be very cautious about that because they are seen as that leadership. He doesn't talk to anyone without talking with April first. If she tells him to go somewhere else then he will but it is going to go through her first. So they are not breaking that relationship between the County Administrator or Town Manager and staff.

Supervisor Magruder stated that he really values the CAO's opinion although he may not always agree with them.

Mrs. Dittmar stated they were going to talk about challenges and opportunities. To make it a regional thought she would like them to get into the small groups. If they feel that something is strictly Town or strictly County they can discuss it but they are looking for the joint challenges and opportunities. A challenge could be describe one way or flip it and it becomes an opportunity.

They met in small groups to discuss the challenges and opportunities.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that they would go over these and write them down and during the debriefing she would do a key findings report.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that he, Councilwoman Barrett and Councilwoman Latane looked at it broken down as services and economic development. In the Economic Development they saw coordinating with the Tappahannock Main Street as an opportunity. They thought they could collaborate on an Economic Development Director as a job share possibly. The County does have it in there budget to hire someone for that position but they all feel that it is such a crucial position that they should collaborate on it. With the Short Term Rental tax that is coming in a portion of that has to be devoted to Economic Development which would give us some funding for that as well. In the area of services coordinating with the Fire department with some need for dry hydrants. They also talked about is the need for a fitness center and the need for youth sports to have some new facilities and opportunities for that.

Councilwoman Carlton stated that is one thing that their group brought up is the need for senior recreation because not enough is offered except a building to go play pickleball in.

Chairman Akers stated that he, Councilwoman Carlton and Councilman Gillis talked about activities that would attract tourism and elderly recreation. A Challenge that they listed was the schools they feel that is always a challenge. It is certainly something that effects the County and the Town due to the perception of the schools and bringing the value added for more industry. For the town one of the challenges is that they are running out of space.

Supervisor Johnson stated that they needed to Annex the Town, take some property from the County to Annex the Town.

Mrs. Dittmar asked if the town was running out of developable land?

Chairman Akers stated that another one was lack of industry. Most of the citizens go out of this area for jobs and while they are there they spend money for lunch and other things while they could be spending them here. Land Use and one that is balanceable and favorable to all. Land use taxation whether it is perception or real the use of land use taxations defers over \$800,000 in revenue from the County so in the town how are people getting a big deferment when others are not. It is a highly debated theme but it does need to be looked at.

Supervisor Magruder stated that the challenge would be the land use tax deferral.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that when you talk about land use tax deferral, if it fits into a value of we want to protect the rural areas and invest in development of the town to protect the rural then that is a value that you achieve by making it affordable. If your value is equitable distribution of revenue that is the key

value. Then you have to say that you are favoring certain types of land owners over others. That has to be sorted out in good strategic planning.

Chairman Akers stated that they also discussed that we do not have a retirement community located in the County or the Town. Something like Westminster. We have the resources but not the facility. The opportunity is a joint RAISE Grant to look at planning and engineering studies for parcels of land to be able to improve such as making a recreation facility.

Supervisor Magruder stated that the RAISE Grant and Parks and Recreation. They talked about the Hoskins Creek and central park as well as the Poor House Track under parks and recreation opportunities to work together. Under Economic Development the town is almost built out there is no new space. They still have the old airport the challenge is without having more space it is hard to increase your tax base if you do not have places to expand and grow. They also talked about do they rehab what they have or start new with something in economic development.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that if you don't have jobs it means that you have people that want them but you don't opportunities so they go elsewhere. If you can't attract industry because you don't have workforce you have to articulate it separately.

Supervisor Magruder stated they talked about locating economic development being closer to Town. Water and sewer can be expanded closer to town. They have about 50% of the water and sewer available. They talked about the loss of three restaurants which in turn caused the loss of meals tax.

Administrator Rounds stated that the new restaurant that have come have provided the feedback that they cannot find workers or skilled workers. They are having a hard time staffing.

Councilwoman Carlton stated that it is hard for everyone to find people that want to work.

Supervisor Magruder stated that they talked about the opportunity downtown with the tragic loss from the fire. There is opportunity there for development. The last thing they talked about was the Government. In the eight years that he has been on the board this will be their 5th County Administrator. We don't have government continuity. Meaning the relationship with the town can't be built if no one is here long enough to help build it. The Town police was a challenge where they would have to hire a new Police Chief. When the Town Manager was hired the County Administrator sat on that which worked out well. Hopefully with the Police Chief someone from the Sheriff's office could sit on that and help facilitate. The demand for government services have increased but you have to balance that with the revenue to meet those services.

Councilwoman Carlton stated that the maintenance staff on from both groups work really well together.

Supervisor Johnson stated that the other groups have already mentioned everything they talked about but would add would be why hadn't anyone looked at a truck stop area. Where tractor trailers could pull in and rest and wash up. The other thing was that VCU is already here why are we not expanding our medical initiative for the area. In servicing our citizens we have to look at what will work and won't work.

Councilman Balderson stated that there are a number of people that travel through Tappahannock to go to Richmond for specialty practices. The VCU campus is full and we need to figure out how to incentivize them to bring more services to the area. He stated that the old airport would be a great area for a medical complex and they have tried to push that idea with VCU.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that she will put together the key findings with April and Eric during the debriefing.

Town Manager Pollitt stated that in planning this the County and Town staff work well together for some of the bigger projects. Examples would be the Hampton Inn while doing site plan review or doing inspections for water and sewer or building inspections. The day to day things it has been a lot easier to communicate things now.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that it is amazing how much the staff actually do. In the written report one that she saw that was not mentioned was riverfront access.

Chairman Akers stated the Hoskins Creek Project was one example of that.

Supervisor Magruder stated that it falls under the RAISE Grant.

Mrs. Dittmar stated another one was Broadband.

Chairman Akers stated that we have been awarded the Grant funding for that now.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that we have a path for it.

Town Manager Pollitt stated that one challenge he sees is the housing for those that are just starting out and looking to buy their first house. There is very limited housing in the County below \$300,000.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that they affordable housing is an issue because of the way we zone. Is it something that we want to put up there.

Supervisor Johnson stated that it is an issue and should be up as a challenge.

Vice Chairman Gill stated that the proposed Mt. Clement project will have some aspect of affordable housing.

Group Discussion

Which types of projects are most suitable for collaboration?



Mrs. Dittmar stated that they were going to talk about possible future projects but given the fact that we have some rankings on opportunities and challenges and the RAISE grant in the future to help with planning we can hold on that.

HOW DOES LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLAN?

Plans

- **Comprehensive Plan**
- **Capital Investment Plan**
- **Strategic Plan**
- **Annual Plans including the Budget**
- **Project Plans**

Mrs. Dittmar stated that these plans should be kept and refreshed. The strategic plans from 2018 or 2019 some would need to be changed just do to the changes from the pandemic. The Comprehensive plan has to be refreshed every so often by state code. Your Capital Investment Plan is more than a multi-year budget.

ESSEX & RAPPAHANNOCK

The Benefits of Strategic Planning

- A sustainable and nimble roadmap
- Prioritization of human and capital resources
- Assignments, accountability and timelines
- Enhanced internal & external communications

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WHAT COMES NEXT



IMMEDIATELY

- Debrief with your CAOs
- Adopt strategies for enhancing communications
- Informal pairing meetings

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WHAT COMES NEXT

FALL

- Complete RAISE application process
- Complete County CAO search

WHAT COMES NEXT

WINTER

- Budget season - learn from revenue side
- Key Priorities Planning

WHAT COMES NEXT



SPRING 2024

- **Strategic plan(s)**
- **Begin RAISE grant planning**

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Mrs. Dittmar asked if that sounds like a good timeline that we can conceptually come up with right now?

Chairman Akers stated he was a little disappointed he thought there would be specific action items that came out of the meeting.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that was part of the last thing that they held off on because they have the challenges and opportunities to organize. She thinks that the specific concrete will come out of the debriefing which may make you feel more comfortable about that. We could have said we have the RAISE Grant but that's already in the works. We could have said let's choose one of these and work it out together.

Chairman Akers stated that with the RAISE Grant that is one of the things that we have not been involved with so we have no idea where it is at.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that where she understands it is at is that an application has been made and it is now in the jaws of the federal government working through the things that they need to write a contract. There is a commitment to fund you but there is no work that can be done right now because they have not received final approval from Washington. Also, one concrete that will come out of this is enhanced communication so that you will never have to say 'I don't know what is going on with this.' If it has never shown up on a report then it better be new seeking new information about it.

Chairman Akers stated that what he means by specific action item is that we agree that we are going to have some regular group meeting like we did before where we are meeting once a month. Something definitive so that we know this is how the communication is going to happen. More so than a specific project.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that Eric and April would optimistically say that some enhanced communication actions are coming out of this and that you can move forward on that.

Town Manager Pollitt stated that one thing he has been thinking about is the different priorities that were discussed among the groups. How do you recommend us figuring out what are overlapping and how to tackle them. He would hate for them to talk about it and then there be no follow through.

Supervisor Magruder stated that the possibility of future projects is what they did with the challenges and opportunities. He like Chairman Akers would like to before they leave today pick a date where they are going to come back together and work on the information that was gathered and do something with it.

Chairman Akers stated that if they sent out the list of the challenges and opportunities and everyone ranked them then you put them in order and meet to discuss how to tackle each one.

Mrs. Dittmar stated that the next step is the key findings so that they can be ranked but the next get together could be key findings and specific projects.

Councilman Balderson asked about the timeline if there was something that could be scheduled after the middle of August.

Supervisor Magruder stated lets pick a date somewhere after the middle of August and meet for 2 hours to discuss. He asked everyone to put down August 29th from 7-9 to meet again to discuss these.

Chairman Akers asked if at their work session they could rank those items.

Councilman Balderson stated that at the August town meeting they will prepare for the August Joint Meeting.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR EFFORT TODAY!



ADJOURN

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

Chairman

Clerk of the Board