

At a **Retreat** of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors held in the county-owned building (former I.P. building) located at 24283 Old Bridge Road, Courtland, Virginia, on March 4, 2010 at 8:15 AM.

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman (Drewryville)  
 Walter L. Young, Jr., Vice-Chairman (Franklin)  
 Walter D. Brown, III (Newsoms)  
 Anita T. Felts (Jerusalem)  
 Carl J. Faison (Boykins-Branchville)  
 Ronald M. West (Berlin-Ivor)  
 Moses Wyche (Capron)

SUPERVISORS ABSENT

None

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator (Clerk)  
 James A. Randolph, Assistant County Administrator  
 Julia G. Williams, Finance Director  
 Sandi P. Plyler, Information Technology Manager  
 Beth Lewis, Certified Planner  
 John Smolak, President, Franklin-Southampton Economic Development  
 Robert L. Barnett, Director of Community Development  
 Julien W. Johnson, Jr., Public Utilities Director  
 Bob Croak, Utilities Systems Supervisor  
 Hart Council, Public Works Director  
 Jackie Vick, Maintenance Director  
 Susan H. Wright, Administrative Secretary

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order on Thursday, March 4, 2010 at 8:45 AM. Supervisor Faison gave the invocation. (Breakfast was served from 8:15 AM – 8:45 AM.)

Mr. Michael Johnson, County Administrator, welcomed everyone. He briefly discussed the benefits of a retreat and keys to making it a success, and talked about the vision, mission, and values of Southampton County. He then provided an overview of the agenda. Afterwards, he led a group exercise entitled, “Words To Team By.”

Mr. Jay Randolph, Assistant County Administrator, and Mrs. Beth Lewis, gave a presentation on growth and development. Mr. Randolph shared and discussed the following:

Outline

- I. Current Status – Where we are now
  - a. Recent capital improvement encumbrances that require repayment/maintenance/further progress:
    - Riverdale Elementary – repayment
    - WWTP – repayment/maintenance (staffing)
    - Turner Tract – repayment/further progress
  - b. Most schools under capacity

School Enrollment/Capacities  
 From Southampton County School Board

School	Enrollment	Design Capacity	Enrollment/Design Capacity
Capron Elementary	187	89	210%
Meherrin Elementary	295	500	59%
Nottoway Elementary	267	500	53%
Riverdale Elementary	650	750	87%
Southampton Middle	633	750	84%
Southampton High	873	850	103%

- c. Relatively stable growth rate – 48/49 new residences per year
- d. Comprehensive Plan adopted in 2007, focused growth in towns and in planning areas
- e. Rural residential zoning designation helps protect agricultural land while still allowing some residential development

II. Challenges – What we need to focus on

- a. Need customers for WWTP
- b. Need buyers for Turner Tract land and mitigation credits
- c. Need buyers for Agribusiness Park land
- d. Need to maintain agricultural focus of County and preserve prime agricultural land
- e. Need to continue to reduce solid waste quantities
- f. Need to prepare for rebound in the economy that may create development pressure for residential property
- g. Need to consider recent health ranking of County - attached
- h. Historical reluctance to approve new development
- i. Historical reluctance to raise taxes

III. Opportunities – How we meet the challenges

- a. County has received grant from VDOT to amend Comprehensive Plan, zoning ordinance and other ordinances as required to facilitate designation of Urban Development Area/Traditional Neighborhood Area.
- b. Recent award of Enterprise Zone designations will provide impetus for development in Agribusiness Park and Turner Tract.

Supervisor Brown commended Mr. Randolph for an excellent presentation. He remarked that it was the best summary of growth and development in the County that he had heard.

Mrs. Beth Lewis, Principal Planner, elaborated on the grant received from VDOT. She advised that in 2007, the General Assembly added Section 15.2-2223.1 to the *Code of Virginia* requiring high growth localities to designate Urban Development Areas (UDAs) in their comprehensive plans by 2011. She noted that the term *urban* may not be an appropriate term for Southampton County. Such development areas had also been referred to as Traditional Neighborhood Developments (TNDs), which may be more appropriate for Southampton County. The purpose of the TNDs was to try and remedy the most pressing problems associated with recent suburban expansion – low-density, auto-oriented development, single-use developments lacking in context and distinction as a unique community. TNDs consisted of mixed-use development and may include a school, doctor's office, small grocery store, residential housing, parks, and open space all in the same neighborhood. Southampton County applied and received a grant that would provide at least \$50,000 of consultant services to analyze future growth patterns, plan for and designate at least one TND on the comprehensive plan, and revise applicable local land use ordinances to incorporate the principals of new urbanism and TND design. She shared slide photos of examples of TNDs in Chapel Hill and Cary, NC.

The Board indicated that they realized Southampton County was growing and they may need to rethink the way they looked at development.

Mr. Russ Held, Deputy Executive Director of Development at the Port of Virginia, shared a PowerPoint presentation. He advised that the Virginia Port Authority was established in 1952 as a political subdivision of the Commonwealth of Virginia. Its purpose was to stimulate commerce of the ports of the Commonwealth, promoting the shipment of cargoes and goods through the ports, improving the navigable tidal water within the Commonwealth, and in general to perform any act or function which may be useful in developing, improving, or increasing the commerce of the ports of the Commonwealth. The Authority owned and operated three marine terminals: Norfolk International Terminals (NIT), Portsmouth Marine Terminal (PMT), and Newport News Marine Terminal (NNMT). These facilities handled primarily import and export containerized and break-bulk cargoes. In 2008, the Port of Virginia was the third major U.S. east coast container port, with

2,083,278 TEUs and 15% market share. He noted that New York/New Jersey and Savannah were number 1 and 2 respectively. He shared the top 10 trading partners (countries) and top 10 commodities (imports and exports) in 2008.

Mr. Held advised that the Panama Canal Expansion was underway. Global container cargo shipping was being shaped by current efforts to widen the 48-mile long canal. When completed in 2014, the expansion would allow the waterway to accommodate the massive Post-Panamax container ships that mainly called on West Coast ports today. Accordingly, the project would increasingly divert import cargo to East Coast ports, resulting in significantly more business for The Port of Virginia. The Port of Virginia had the handling capacity to capitalize on this increased cargo. This would generate significant benefits for Hampton Roads in the form of job creation and economic investment. In turn, the development of the Turner Tract would position Southampton County to take advantage of the benefits. With its large acreage and rail, it could attract industrial or light manufacturing companies, for example, which may seek to locate here due to the Port of Virginia's ability to handle the increased cargo.

The Board and staff took a 30-minute break for lunch.

Upon returning to open session, Mr. John Smolak, President of Franklin-Southampton Economic Development, Inc., shared a PowerPoint presentation in regards to a local tourism initiative. A tourism steering committee was formed and had been working on a tourism initiative. The vision was to develop, attract, promote, and elevate the experience for visitors in the Franklin-Southampton area while maintaining our quality of life. Tourism goals were to: 1) establish tourism as part of our economic development program for growth, 2) create financial support for tourism initiatives, 3) improve, enhance, and promote quality of life, and 4) improve marketing efforts. He advised that we often associated travel and tourism with large destination resort areas or major attractions. However, visitors to our area were travelers from out of a 50-mile radius who were here for graduations, weddings, hunting/fishing, festivals, shopping, etc. Virginia generated almost \$19 billion in tourism revenue from visitors. Franklin-Southampton needed to increase its piece of the financial revenue stream. Franklin-Southampton's travel-related businesses employed over 250 people, supported by \$24 million spent by travelers in our community. It was important to recognize travel and tourism as an economic development initiative and a catalyst for job creation. Support for tourism was needed from our citizens and community leaders.

Mr. Joe Lomax, Residency Administrator of the Virginia Department of Transportation Franklin Residency, spoke. He advised that per the Board's request, he had invited Mr. Jack McCambridge, VDOT Environmentalist, to address them regarding outfall ditches and environmental issues.

Chairman Jones recognized Mr. Jack McCambridge.

Mr. McCambridge stated that he understood there were some concerns about outfall ditches and whose responsibility it was to clean them out. Years ago, VDOT took the responsibility of cleaning them out. VDOT had now taken the position that they were not going to clean them out unless it was an emergency situation and the road was going to give in. Water standing in the road was not classified as an emergency.

Supervisor Brown asked if there was anything in the code that placed any liability on the owner of outfall ditches, especially those that had a detrimental effect on our secondary roads? Mr. McCambridge replied that outfall ditches were ultimately the responsibility of the owner, but there was nothing in the code that required an owner to clean them out. It was often too expensive of an endeavor for the owner to afford.

Mr. McCambridge clarified for Supervisor West that most ditches in Southampton County were considered "red line ditches," meaning live stream, and a permit was needed to disturb them. This was often expensive.

The Board thanked Mr. McCambridge for his time.

Mrs. Beth Lewis, Principal Planner, briefly discussed the proposed Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) with the Board. She noted that the Planning Commission had amended and approved the proposed CIP and it would be the subject of a public hearing at the Board's March 22, 2010 regular meeting. The CIP was essentially a shopping list or wish list for the County, classified into high, medium, and low priority. There may be little to no money to actually fund the requests.

March 4-5, 2010

The CIP had been called the Building Fund in prior budgets. The state required that a CIP be updated each year, although ours had not been updated in quite some time.

The Board was concerned about “demolition of the Bell House” being listed on the CIP. The Bell House located across from the Courthouse in Courtland, although not in the best condition, was a historic house.

Mrs. Lewis advised that she would remove that item from the CIP.

Mr. Michael Johnson, County Administrator, presented a budget/finance PowerPoint presentation. He advised that regarding the current FY 2010 adopted budget of \$56,882,229, revenues consisted of \$24,628,263 in state revenue, \$3,569,720 in federal revenue, and \$28,707,246 in local revenue. He shared a comparative report of local government revenues and expenditures, comparing the localities of Greenville County, Southampton County, Isle of Wight County, Sussex County, City of Suffolk, City of Franklin, and Surry County. He stated that overall, state revenue would be reduced dramatically in FY 2011. Funding for K-12 Education would be reduced by more than \$2.3 million. Categorical aid for Constitutional Officers would be reduced substantially. State funding for public assistance had been reduced by \$4.6 million statewide. Local revenues were expected to yield almost \$1 million less in FY 2011. Personal property values were down almost 12% (almost \$690,000 less in revenue). Enrollment of property in the land use program had increased by 12%, while tax relief for the elderly and handicapped had more than doubled. Preparation of the FY 2011 budget would be a very challenging process.

The meeting was recessed at 4:30 PM.

Chairman Jones called the meeting back to order on Friday, March 5, 2010 at 8:45 AM. Supervisor Faison gave the invocation. (Breakfast was served from 8:15 AM – 8:45 AM.)

Mr. Michael Johnson, County Administrator, facilitated a goal setting group exercise entitled “Ask the Genie” for the purpose of setting goals for FY 2011. Each individual group shared its results of the exercise. Afterwards, the groups joined together and reached consensus on the following primary goal for FY 2011:

- Complete the Turner Tract, fill it up with businesses, and move on to the next industrial development project

Lunch was served from 12:00 PM – 12:45 PM.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 12:45 PM.

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Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

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Michael W. Johnson, Clerk