

At a special meeting of the Southampton County Board of Supervisors held in the Courthouse of Southampton County, 22350 Main Street, Courtland, Virginia on April 16, 2013 at 6:30 PM.

SUPERVISORS PRESENT

Dallas O. Jones, Chairman (Drewryville)  
Ronald M. West, Vice Chairman (Berlin-Ivor)  
Dr. Alan W. Edwards (Jerusalem)  
Glenn H. Updike (Newsoms)  
Carl J. Faison (Boykins-Branchville)  
Barry T. Porter (Franklin)  
S. Bruce Phillips (Capron)

SUPERVISORS ABSENT

OTHERS PRESENT

Michael W. Johnson, County Administrator (Clerk)  
Lynette C. Lowe, Finance Director  
Richard E. Railey, Jr., County Attorney  
Cynthia J. Edwards, Administrative Secretary

OTHERS ABSENT

Julien W. Johnson, Jr. Public Utilities Director  
Beth Lewis, Director of Community Development

Chairman Jones called the special meeting to order. He stated that Mr. Jeff Stodghill was here with us this evening and he turned the meeting over to him.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill thanked the board for coming and agreeing to have a work session. He apologized for hitting them so cold at their last board meeting with something so large and high amounts. With the topic being security issues he didn't feel comfortable talking with 100+ people in the back of the room. He thought it would be better if they could walk and see some of the things he wanted to talk about. He stated that he didn't come tonight to sell us anything. He said he had 20 years of experience. He said he had worked with a number of counties north of us such as Amelia and Pennsylvania County who were without the kind of dollars and desire to do a Cadillac plan. He stated that he needed approval from the board to make sure we aren't overdoing something. He said he would talk straight from the options list on how to solve the problems. He said he has no intentions in having us do more or less. He has a responsibility to bring a series of recommendations that meet today's standards and practices. He stated that we could talk open about options. This will solve or address the problem and then they can decide what they want to do to address them. He said he spent 18 months in Accomack County until they decided what to do. In Northampton County they spent  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the cost of what you would find in Gloucester and Middlesex. The issue of security for the courthouse does not have to be all done at one time. He said he would like for us all to go out and starting at the entrance of the building take a tour. You could start with the heavy traffic under the colonnade to maximize the security of those coming in the front door. After we do the tour we can come back and start talking about the things on your mind and what you want to do. How much you do is optional and so is the generator.

Those attending the meeting went out to the parking lot of the courthouse and started the tour with Mr. Jeff Stodghill pointing out the options of the security improvements. He said to pretend that you are here for a case as a witness in a child custody case, maybe called as a witness, or a judge, the clerk, or as an attorney. The clerk has to see that angry person who is upset about what the judge has just decided. People could ask to come in through Mr. Rick Francis door on the side. He pointed out the Commonwealth Attorney's office which is right on the front of the building with a window there which could be threatening for him. So we have a complicated set of goals to address. It would be best for the public to have a separate way to get in that doesn't conflict with

the judge, the attorneys and the inmates coming in. It would be best to provide separate entrances. We don't always get the ideal situation when trying to figure out how to bring some degree of safety to a building that is over 100 years old and then you have situations like in Texas with the district attorney's family. There are a lot of imperfections. They need to screen for people trying to bring in weapons so the building can be secure. They need to slow down the way things unfold and have the public come in under surveillance. The way the building is set up someone could get in the nooks and crannies, pop up the ceiling tiles, etc. He stated that the front colonnade is setup to give them a good start. He stated they needed to limb up the trees to prevent someone from hiding there who might shoot a gun and break a window. We need to make the windows have bullet proof glass for protection. The windows actually open so someone could pass a weapon through the window. The windows need to be screwed shut. Metal detectors would help people to feel more secure and they would slow down the time of people getting into the building. Right now the way things are set up if he wanted to get through the door he could do it. It would be very easy to push his way right through the front door and then once you get in you could easily get to the Commonwealth Attorney's office, the courtroom. You could have a set of doors that have one way going in and one way out. Then to the right of the front doors you could have a closed off section with a desk to the right set up as a processing area and a security guard under roof. The security guard would take all phones, keys, and other items and slide them through the metal detector to make sure there was no weapon, no metal gun, etc. This gives the security person more confidence that there is no bomb in there after they have screened that person. A single entrance guarantees that a crowd can't get through very fast. People can be dealt with a lot easier by screening info exchange. Then once the person goes through the x-ray machine we can feel assured that there is no weapon. This would be a one way system with a wall of glass down the middle so when people leave once they go through the door they can't just get back in the line to come back into the building you have to go out of the building. So if you have 50 people in line no one can just work their way back in. They would have to enter on the entrance side by going through the line and being processed again. In every size courthouse built in the last 20 years they have put in x-ray machines because they really want to know what is in folk's brief cases. The enclosure doors do have some control over heating and cooling, but you may find it to be less comfortable in the winter and summer months. There would be some cost in dealing with bringing it up to code. This would have to be handicapped accessible. If you are going to enclose this area you would have to take up the pavement and steps to be level with the entrance of the current building. This would be a little pricey for this, but there is no way around it.

Commonwealth Attorney Eric Cook stated that when the air outside is cold the temperature in the lobby drops down to 50 degrees and they have to use space heaters. Then in the summer it is hot inside.

Supervisor Faison asked why they would have a glass partition instead of a solid wall.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said that for security reasons they would want to be able to see what is happening. He stated that there could be two sets of doors there to try to keep the heat from going out of the doors. There are two places on Eastern Shore which have two sets of doors without the door lock on the inner set of doors.

Chairman Jones asked wouldn't there be cost added to that if there were two sets of doors.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated there would be an additional cost for two sets of doors. The other alternative would be installing a larger heating and cooling unit here.

Mr. Rick Francis asked how high the clear center piece would be. He stated that if it didn't go to the ceiling that the air could go over it.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that it would be just like the Williamsburg and Newport News airports you get a panel of glass on the left and your security is on the right. You don't want to interfere with people coming in.

One of the attendees asked if the divider was bullet proof.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said no.

One of the attendees asked if it went into the vestibule because of the second door.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said the question is would the glass be resistant.

Sheriff Stutts stated if you have seventy people going to the right hand door you want to keep them going straight and not mixing with the people going out.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill confirmed that yes the divider was to steer the people to keep moving in the same direction without mixing.

Sheriff Stutts said ultimately this would force a witness to go into the parking lot when they left the building.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that they could put in a line item for bullet proof glass. If they really wanted to get in they could probably figure out how. The security folks need to be able to access what is going on. There would be a video at dispatch center and the folks there would know right off what was going on even if it was a fist fight.

Supervisor Updike stated that he wanted to see all the options and the budget on each section so they would know what to eliminate and what not to eliminate. We have got to look at the economics and the costs of aspects.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that to enclose this area in front of the building the cost would be around \$170,000 and if they enclose the area they could reduce the cost by about \$30,000.

Supervisor Edwards asked if that included the x-ray machine.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that was on a different line item.

Supervisor Edwards asked if that was handicap accessible.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that it was not wide enough for a wheelchair.

Chairman Jones asked about the cameras.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated they would be focused on the entrance ways.

Chairman Jones asked if they would be able to recognize the people.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said yes they will be able to see you.

Chairman Jones asked about the cost of the cameras.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said he could give a ballpark figure right now, but he won't know the lowest price until we go through the bidding process. He said they wanted to be flexible in giving feedback on what they wanted to see broken down.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated trying to get folks in the lobby of district court when there were a lot of people in there they didn't have elbow room in the entrance way there. People would be waiting in this area while others were coming in to go to court, pay fines, some coming in for jury selection and people were trying to figure out where to go. In today's world we don't want folks coming in and going down hallways turning here and there and don't know where they have gone. Once they get in that stairwell you don't know where they have gone. We need to have cameras so we can have the people in dispatch push a panic button and get the security guards some help if they need it. The cameras now of days do portray a much better image and they are relatively cheap.

Supervisor West asked what was the potential of the cameras catching the images. We don't want anything to happen and not have record of it.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that he was on the School Board in Newport News and they even had

cameras in the schools because of the concerns there and they are cheaper than having officers.

A guy from the audience said that is a priority if someone in the county goes on a shooting spree.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that the camera could be programmed to have to respond when an alarm goes off. Then it just takes bodies to get back in control. May need to have panic buttons in Mr. Rick Francis and Mr. Eric Cook's offices because of the way the building is built.

Mr. Rick Francis stated that on court day there would be about twenty of them. They would have about 45 jurors in the hopes of possibly getting 38. In the Steiner case they called 89 jurors in hopes of getting 14 from that group. Then you add witnesses and the court personnel. Then on Tuesday and Thursday it is the same as general district court and the number of people at least doubles when you have court going on all day.

Mr. Jeff Stodgill stated by moving the metal detector out into the other area it would expand the area to hold more people. We could build in 20 to 30 seats in this area. JD&R court consumes a lot of room because of the age of the children those cases are held in private. They usually hold these cases in small conference rooms because of the age of the children they have to be held in private. These cases have the most emotion and are held around small tables and it is very difficult to get under control. The overflow of people from these conference rooms are waiting in this area – the lobby. This gives you some flexibility and makes things flow more efficiently; so the enhanced lobby would be an advantage. In JD&R Court is where people lose their cool because of different expectations. Courts take kids away from families, and there are divorces and people reach their emotional limit.

Mr. Jeff Stodgill stated that everybody looked at the prospective number for the generator and thought they needed to do something. A 10 KW generator can run the computer camera and a 20 KW generator can do all the necessary things. We may not be able to run the air condition with the small generator power. You may be better off running the larger generator because you don't want to be tearing up conduit and drywall to make changes to the building to be able to run your security system for an extended time frame. If you don't bring in a generator then have battery backup such as Best Buy. That would provide twenty to sixty minutes of backup time to run the camera and lights to know who is coming and going. The door locking system with no power stays locked so you would need a key to unlock the door. These are reasons that the generator is so important. You always want to know who is coming and going.

Supervisor Edwards asked if 100 KW was enough to run everything.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said the lesser KW generators are just not practical. The main thing is how much do you want to pay for the cost to run the engine. It may take 120 to 150 KW or something like that would be powered for the options. It would be most practical to work with what we have.

Mr. Rick Francis said the problem that Judge Eason, who will probably one day be the Chief Judge, had a problem on January 31<sup>st</sup>. Judge said that it causes significant problems when you can't have court and you have to get witnesses back for a contingency. He will say they had a serious problem back on January of 2008 when they lost power.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that when Accomack Courthouse shuts down and waiting it is not typical to postpone trying a case so they figured the best way to end up at the end of the day is to be able to do everything at the most reasonable cost

Supervisor Edwards said well we don't want to have a courthouse full when the air condition is out. They won't be able to hold court under these type conditions.

Supervisor Phillips asked how many times they lose power or how often they are without power.

Mr. Rick Francis said as far as he knows only one time since January 31, 2008. During hurricane Isabel they were without power one day and during hurricane Floyd they were without power for three days.

Sheriff Stutts asked if there were any lights on during those times.

Mr. Rick Francis said if the T1 line goes out we can only talk to ourselves. The internet action keeps them running.

Mr. Richard Railey said in 1974 during the hurricane nobody was able to even get here.

Mr. Eric Cook said he can only remember one time they were without power and Judge Williams tried the cases by window light.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that they would need a generator to run the security system at least. The engineering would require this, but nothing big.

Supervisor Faison asked whether a new generator would interface with our old system.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said the old system isn't perfect, but it works. The problem that we need to be aware of is that the panels are all in the basement and the basement floods. The best objective is to get those panels up out of the basement. We don't have to tackle that now, but this would be a problem in a flooding situation.

Mr. Michael Johnson said a sump pump is working to address that and to try to keep them from under water.

Supervisor Edwards asked if the generator would be outside.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said yes it would be outside and it would be an LP generator.

Mr. Rick Francis asked about moving the boxes from the Sheriff's to run line to get to them up and beef their security up.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that every time they are asked to take a project on they are almost always looking at upgrading with a generator and I know you all don't want to talk about upgrades.

Chairman Jones called on Supervisor Porter.

Supervisor Porter asked how much was in the security fund.

Mr. Michael Johnson said in excess of \$600,000.

Supervisor Porter asked if that could pay for the generator.

Mr. Michael Johnson said it could.

Supervisor Porter said without lights we can't see people in the hall.

Mr. Michael Johnson said not to put the spot light on Sheriff Stutts, but the security fund could be used for the courthouse security equipment if it is requested by the Sheriff for security.

Sheriff Stutts said he would be glad to discuss that with them.

Supervisor Phillips said he thought they needed to know what covers the cost of upgrades necessary to get people in the building first, then replacing the windows.

Chairman Jones said we have it.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said that was in the handout from March, but it may not have enough detail based on a recent project. The cost range is on the high end because in the past when they budgeted on the low end and had to come back for more money it is more painful. They try to give the possible high end figure and hope it is somewhat less.

Supervisor Porter said as mentioned before we need flexibility in awarding the contract because the cost may be lower.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that there would be alternatives. He needs the approval to go ahead and get bids as that will add flexibility.

Supervisor Edwards stated that we need external security as far as the entrance first, security in the courthouse second, and then the generator third.

Supervisor Updike said the generator doesn't have to be this year. He is opposed to any big spending. The courthouse could maybe be number one, the parking lot number 2, and the generator number three. We can spread this out as the funds become available. We are beyond our limits on borrowing. This is a security issue so why isn't the City of Franklin offices asked to be included in the cost of security of the judges, and other areas. Why should Southampton County carry the load?

Mr. Michael Johnson stated that Franklin does pay on our courthouse needs.

Supervisor Updike said they should be asked or told. He wanted to know if they had.

Mr. Michael Johnson said they had not been told yet.

Supervisor Edwards asked what percentage comes from Franklin.

Mr. Michael Johnson said it is based on square footage of services shares with the circuit court, commonwealth attorney's office, and the clerk of court. They don't share in general court or JD R court.

Supervisor Edwards asked what share of the cost of this project would the City of Franklin help us with.

Mr. Michael Johnson said you don't have to ask. You make the decision and they pay their share. This is the way the courthouse improvements were done in 1996.

Chairman Jones said we can let them know we can't do it all, but we are trying.

Supervisor Porter said what happens if we don't have funds in the security fund.

Sheriff Stutts said it is not just about buying a generator. There is fuel and maintenance to run it that has got to be considered. He wanted to know where the funds were coming from to do those things.

Supervisor Phillips said they had to be maintained.

Supervisor Edwards asked if it was known what the cost for fuel and maintenance would be.

Supervisor Porter said we don't have the funds unless we use the security funds. He said maybe we need to work with the Sheriff to answer his questions.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that after they get the design and specifications they can decide within 90 days. His recommendation is for a generator would cost about \$240,000 and if they went with less KW's it would cost about \$175,000. His thought was they should have a security system that would backup and run longer than 60 minutes.

Chairman Jones said you bring the menu to us and we will decide what we want to eat.

Mr. Rick Francis stated that we needed to look at drawing on larger plats. He stated that when the Judge comes through the door entrance by Commonwealth Attorney Eric Cook's office they are still rubbing shoulders with the criminals. Judge Eason is asking for consideration of three or four spots where the judges can park and come directly up to their offices, but the entry way would cause loss of some work space.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said he understood. He said he could tell you that out of all his resources there

would not be an easy solution without doing a lot of things. He said there could be a door put behind the courthouse where they could have a separate entrance. You will see that is the same way all across Virginia. There is very little room. If they put a parking lot on the hill behind the courthouse they would have to build a road in and the trees would die and they were afraid that section would slump into the river.

Supervisor Edwards asked about an elevator.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said he wanted to be able to stand before you now and after this was done in five years. He said they are beyond the scope of what they were talking about. He said he guessed reading from his list that the security improvements they weren't looking for an elevator or parking lot. He was looking at making the building work more securely in the future. He said it looked like everybody was getting a parking space, but they can't see exactly who is coming and going.

Supervisor Updike said we are bombarded with taxes and debt. We are nothing short of bankruptcy at work and in a lot of homes, etc. We can't guarantee safety. People are going to just have to live and trust and accept things as they are. The parking lot is an overkill. Then there is the generator financing. We are looking at the parking lot in maybe ten to fifteen years from now. It is impossible to make everything secure.

Mr. Rick Francis stated his concern for Mrs. Belinda Jones who is usually working late, sometimes past dark. He thought they needed to increase the lighting in the parking lot maybe with a timer which would allow the security light to run for ten minutes or so people working late would be able to get to their vehicle. He stated that the key lock on the front entrance is \$300.00. He is looking too at the cost of the key for that lock if one gets lost.

Chairman Jones asked if there were any other questions.

Supervisor Phillips said he would like to get back there and see if there is no fire escape on the back.

Mr. Rich Francis stated that he will check on that.

Mr. Jay O'Berry stated that a keyless entrance was bad if they didn't have a generator for back up.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said we will have backup after this system is installed.

Mr. Rick Francis asked if we had ever had a keyless entry.

Mr. Michael Johnson stated we have had, but we went back to keys.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill stated that the emergency door on the back of the building here will be addressed.

Supervisor Phillips asked if there was an alarm.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said they will know if somebody tries to get in. That is not being done on every door, but on the doors that enter the building. He thanked the board for taking time to come and hear about the security solutions.

Chairman Jones said that we needed to make sure that we have what we need in place.

Mr. Jeff Stodghill said he would come back with a recommendation of alternatives after the bids come in, if they decide moving ahead with this is what they want to do.

Chairman Jones stated the meeting was adjourned.

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Dallas O. Jones, Chairman

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Michael W. Johnson, Clerk

