

*“Initial” Draft Accomack County Board of Supervisors Minutes of March 7, 2012*

VIRGINIA: At a Recessed Meeting of the Board of Supervisors for the County of Accomack held in the Board Chambers in Accomac on the 7th day of March , A.D., 2012, at 4:00 p.m.

Members Present: Laura Belle Gordy, Chair  
Wanda J. Thornton, Vice Chair  
Ron S. Wolff  
Grayson Chesser  
John Charles “Jack” Gray  
Kay W. Lewis  
Robert D. Crockett  
Donald L. Hart, Jr.  
C. Reneta Major

Others Present: Steven B. Miner, County Administrator  
Shelia Goodman, Administrative Assistant  
Mark B. Taylor, County Attorney

**Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by the Chair and opened with a prayer by the Miss Reneta Major, after which the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was recited.

**Emergency Funding Request from Accomack County Sheriff Department**

Lieutenant Billy Murphy from the Accomack County Sheriff’s Department appeared before the Board and informed members that one of the dispatch consoles was no longer working leaving the Sheriff’s dispatch with only one console and no backup plan. He stated the recordings were definitely needed because of FOIA requests and recordings that are needed on a day-to-day basis and the console was vital to operations. Lieutenant Murphy responded to questions and a discussion continued.

Mr. Hart made a motion to approve the request with funding not to exceed \$80,000 from contingencies in the FY12 Budget. Mr. Wolff seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously.

**Board of Supervisors Budget Work Session**

Chairman Laura Belle Gordy recognized Finance Director Michael Mason. Mr. Mason gave a brief update on budget matters and stated the purpose of the work session was to continue the process of developing the FY’ 13 budget and Capital Improvement Plan. He updated members on new issues significantly impacting the proposed budget and presented information and responded to questions that had been requested at the last work session.

*Draft Accomack County Board of Supervisors Minutes of March 7, 2012*

Mr. Mason informed members of State budget issues occurring in Richmond and stated there was an impasse on the budget in Richmond and the County would not really know what the State revenues were going to be for a while or how this would impact the schools. Mr. Mason spoke briefly on the following topics and responded to questions:

- 1) Brief State Budget Development Update (SB497/Aid to locality reductions/Salary Increases)
- 2) County Building Complex Water & Sewer Rate Increase warranted (13.5%)
- 3) Star Transit funding request letter
- 4) Electoral Board equipment
- 5) Employee Health Insurance
- 6) Revised Budget Request Summary

Mr. Mason explained options for the rates of the single subscriber and family health insurance premiums and discussed matters relating to the differential in take home pay for the employees and the budget impact. A discussion ensued. Mr. Mason urged the board to increase health insurance benefits for employees in the next FY'13 budget and discussed an option that would cost \$54,000 and stabilize the 18 per cent anticipated rise in health insurance. A discussion continued.

**Departments/Agencies Additional Staffing Requests**

The following Departments/Agencies appeared before the Board and gave justification why additional staffing was needed and responded to questions:

**Matthew Brenner**, Deputy Commonwealth's Attorney – Request for full- time Secretarial Position

**Samuel Cooper**, Clerk of Circuit Court - Request for a Part-time Deputy Clerk I to become full time

**Stewart Hall**, Public Works Director – Request of a full-time Litter Labor and a full-time Litter Crew Leader

**Jason Loftus**, Public Safety Director/**C. Ray Pruitt**, Acting Public Safety Director – Request for more full-time EMS Personnel and they briefly discussed FLSA and responded to questions. Mr. Pruitt stated initially he had requested \$230,000 for more employees but with the ability to now hire people who can still volunteer decrease the request by \$100,000.

**Mike Mason**, Finance Director – Request full-time Deputy Finance Director

**Wayne Burton**, Parks and Recreation Manager – Request for part-time Sports Coordinator. Mrs. Thornton requested an attendance report showing the names of the members and how many meetings they have attended. Mr. Burton responded to questions from the Board.

**Barbara Haxter/Airport Commission Representative** - Roy Custis, Chairman of the Airport Commission spoke on behalf of the Airport Commission and requested an employee for 9 additional staff hours.

**Star Transit** – Submitted a letter explaining their request for an increase for fuel.

**911 Commission** - Mr. Miner spoke on behalf of the Commission for the Capital Grant match request.

**Johnson Grass, Gypsy Moth** – Request for \$1,600 transportation.

**ESRC&D** – Request of \$1,300 for lost revenue.

**Recess**

Mrs. Thornton made a motion to recess until 6:00 p.m. and Ms. Major seconded the motion. The motion was approved.

**Call to Order**

The Chair called the work session back to order.

**Budget Work Session on Fire Tax**

Chairman Gordy thanked everyone for coming to the work session on the fire tax and stated that no one would be allowed to speak and noted that they would be able to speak at the upcoming Public Hearing on the budget when scheduled.

County Administrator Steve Miner stated in the County system the fire tax was a district tax and the districts were established by the Board of Supervisors. He continued to discuss same and responded to questions.

As Chincoteague District Supervisor, Mrs. Thornton offered comments regarding the town's opposition to the proposed county-wide fire tax and its effect upon the citizens of Chincoteague. She gave a brief synopsis of the contributions that Chincoteague had made to the County in prior years.

Mrs. Thornton asked County Attorney Mark Taylor to review the County's local ordinance which had created the district levy on fire tax. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Crockett offered comments regarding the uniformity which should exist between all fire companies. A discussion ensued.

Mr. Crockett made a motion that the County's proposed Accomack County FY'2013 budget include for publication a fire tax which is to apply uniformly throughout Accomack County consisting of 3.5 cents per \$100 value on real estate and 5 cents on personal property and all revenue from this tax would be distributed equally to all companies. Mr. Wolff seconded the motion. The motion passed 8 to 1 with Mrs. Thornton opposing.

Option 4 required a 1 cent increase in the real estate tax rate for Lee and Metompkin, a 3 cent increase in the real estate tax rate for Chincoteague, a 3 cent decrease in the Atlantic personal property tax rate and a 5 cent increase in the personal property tax rate for Chincoteague. All rates would then be equal and all revenue distributed equally among all companies including Chincoteague.

**Board of Supervisors Comments on Fire Tax**

Mr. Wolff spoke on the idea of a county-wide service and felt it didn't seem fair to pick and choose taxes you want to pay and still be part of a whole and noted the change would not affect the response districts.

Mr. Chesser stated he once had a fire and all the stations showed up to respond (Bloxom, Saxis, New Church and Atlantic) and continued by saying we were all in the same boat and felt like everyone in the county needed to pay the same and all stations get the same amount of money.

Mr. Gray stated Chincoteague did pay for the high school, however, Metompkin District (Bloxom, Parksley) paid for Parksley High School. Pungoteague paid for Central High School and Atlantic paid for the Atlantic High School. He continued and stated that years ago the districts paid for their own schools. Mr. Gray said he would have to vote in favor of Option 4 because that is what the people in his district wanted.

Mr. Hart told the Board he had been on the Board of Supervisors over 30 years and gave a history of fire and rescue district taxes and stated it was not the first time a discussion on county-wide tax had come up. He went on to say more that 20 years ago when there were only 5 districts, the issue had been voted down. (Chincoteague, Metompkin and Atlantic voted against it) He stated that Lee and Pungoteague districts wanted it and started taxing themselves. Mr. Hart said later down the road Atlantic and Metompkin enacted the tax and when the county went to 9 districts things changed. He explained the proposals that had been presented and then next time the census would be taken stations would be shifted to other districts it would become a nightmare. Mr. Hart felt it was not anyway but to accept a countywide tax and this was not an easy decision to make.

*Draft Accomack County Board of Supervisors Minutes of March 7, 2012*

Ms. Major said she had to go with what her constituents wanted and they were willing to pay the same tax and the Painter Fire Company was in favor of Option 4 and that would be the option she would be voting for.

Ms. Lewis stated she and Mr. Gray had met with Parksley, Bloxom and Saxis in her district and it was not a pleasant experience. She stated she did not see much unity in the Fire Commission. Ms. Lewis felt it was not right to pull Chincoteague in the middle of the fire tax, but does see both sides of the issue. Ms. Lewis stated she felt she had to vote in support of Mr. Crockett's motion because the companies in her district were in favor of Option 4.

**Recess**

The Board of Supervisors recessed for 5 minutes.

**Call to Order**

Chairman Gordy called the meeting back to order.

**Amendment to County Code**

County Attorney Mark Taylor to amend the County Code to repeal the existing Fire Tax Districts and replace them with a single county-wide Fire and EMS District. Mr. Taylor said the Board should hold a Public Hearing on the amendment when they hold the budget Public Hearing.

Mr. Wolff made a motion to amend Chapter 42 Fire Prevention and Protection Article 3 Fire and Rescue Districts Division 1 of the Accomack County Code and that the amendment be advertised along with a statement that the Accomack County Fire Service Districts would remain in tact. Mr. Crockett seconded the motion. The motion passed 8 to 1 with Mrs. Thornton opposing.

**Adjournment**

Mr. Wolff made a motion to recess to Monday, March 12, 2012 at 4:00 p.m. and Mr. Crockett seconded the motion. The motion passed unanimously. The meeting adjourned at 7:15 p.m.

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Chair

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Date