

VIRGINIA: At a Special Meeting of the Board of Supervisors for the County of Accomack held in the Metompkin Elementary School Cafetorium, Parksley, Virginia on the 28th day of August, A.D., 2017 at 5:00 p.m.

Members Present: Robert D. Crockett, Chair
Laura Belle Gordy, Vice Chair
William J. "Billy" Tarr
Grayson C. Chesser
Ron S. Wolff
Harrison W. Phillips, III
Paul E. J. Muhly
Donald L. Hart, Jr.
C. Reneta Major

Others Present: Michael Mason, County Administrator
Cela J. Burge, County Attorney
Jessica L. Taylor, Administrative Assistant
Mr. Ed Heckler, Riverside
Shirley Boswell, Riverside

Call to Order

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

Discussion of the closing of Riverside Shore Rehabilitation Center in Parksley, VA

Chairman Crockett opened the meeting with the following statement:

"I want to thank everyone for being here this evening concerning an issue none of us thought we would be dealing with a week ago.

This work session is for the Board of Supervisors, as a group, to receive information concerning the closing of Riverside Shore Rehabilitation Center and what happens with the residents, their families, and employees. At this time, the Board probably does not know any more than the public does.

The Board's goal this evening is to gain information from Riverside representatives concerning the announced closing of the center so that we may go forward in addressing the issues on behalf of those affected and to address it as an Economic Development issue. To help facilitate this initiative, I have appointed a task force consisting of Senator Lynwood Lewis, Delegate Rob Bloxom, Jr. Supervisor Tarr, Supervisor Muhly, and Riverside representatives Ed Heckler and John Peterman.

The mission of the task force is to gather information about possible strategies that would enable County residents to continue to receive long term care services in a local setting. The task force will be staffed by Accomack County Administrator Mike Mason and Director of Planning and Economic Development, Rich Morrison.

The news of the closure was indeed a shock to everyone, especially residents, their families and employees; and to learn the closure would take place in 60 days created an atmosphere of panic. In light of their decision, I would encourage Riverside to extend their 60 day a closing date. It is our expectation that even though Riverside has decided to close the center, they will cooperate with community efforts to bring another long term care facility to Accomack County which is so desperately needed. Thank you.”

Mr. Mason expressed that he is aware of the concerns and hoped that all concerns could be addressed during the meeting through the County Attorney’s findings, statements from Riverside, and discussion between Riverside and Supervisors.

Mrs. Burge informed the Board that it has no authority in the matter as the closure of nursing facilities is governed by Federal and State agencies. Mrs. Burge did encourage the Board to work with Riverside staff on behalf of citizens and from an economic stand point.

Mr. Heckler thanked the Board and reviewed Riverside’s announcement related to the closure of Riverside Rehabilitation Center. He stated that the decision to close the facility was due to safety issues as the building has outlived its life expectancy. Riverside is working with patients and their families individually, as well as Social Services to relocate each patient.

Mr. Heckler, on behalf of Riverside, offered to donate the facility to Accomack County, if the County was willing to take over the capital and operating maintenance of the facility, as well as enter into a management agreement with Riverside or another company. Mr. Heckler also expressed that Riverside would be open to selling the facility to a qualifying company.

During the Question and Answer period, the following questions and remarks were made:

To hear the meeting in completion, refer to the meeting audio which may be found at:

<https://accomackcountyva.swagit.com/play/08312017-818>

1. Was the facility in jeopardy only due to the flooding incident in July 2017?
There was a power surge which cause a well and pump failure; leading to a complaint that was filed with the State which triggered an inspection. Riverside was able to achieve a temporary fix through an emergency filtration trailer to avoid immediate closure of the facility.
2. How old is the building?
The building was built in 1967; Mr. Muhly expressed that many buildings and houses within the County are much older than the facility. Supervisors agreed and expressed that maintenance of a facility is key.
3. Does insurance not cover flood, well pump, or fire panel damage?
Riverside has invested over \$1.8 million in the facility and still faces the risk of immediate closure by the State.

4. What are the differences of fee structure between cities and rural areas?
Medicaid pays an increased rate for patients in cities; Legislature sets the rates.
5. Patients with no representation – relocation
Riverside is working with Social Services and each family individually.
6. What is the plan for employees?
Riverside has offered positions to the employees at its other locations, companies have reached out to Riverside to offer jobs, and Riverside has brought in assistance to help employees find jobs. If any employees are not able to secure jobs, they will be provided with a transition packet.

Mr. Wolff and Mr. Heckler entered into an in-depth conversation related to the letter from Riverside to its patients and staff.

Board members asked Mr. Heckler to realize the difference between the Eastern Shore and other rural areas and the city; the Shore is a close knitted community and patients at the facility receive visitors daily. If patients are relocated to Hampton Roads, family members will not be able to visit daily. If patients are relocated to Maryland, there are few slots available and Medicaid waivers would have to be approved as the patients will be considered ‘out-of-state’ in Maryland.

The Board expressed disappointment in Riverside’s action and arbitrary decision to close the facility in a short period, without working with the County for a solution prior to closing, and questioned Riverside’s previous mention of constructing a new nursing home facility near the new hospital. The Board also commended staff at Riverside Rehabilitation Center for their level of cleanliness, care, and effort shown to both patients and the facility.

Chairman Crockett stated that he had high hopes for the Task Force to help address this matter in the best way possible for the patients, employees, community, and from an economic development stand point.

The Board asked Mr. Heckler to express their plea with Riverside to reconsider the timeframe to close the facility.

On a motion made by Mr. Phillips and seconded by Mr. Muhly, the Board of Supervisors voted to express its thanks to Mr. Heckler for his attendance and expressed its hope that a solution could be found. Mr. Wolff also requested that the Board send a letter to Riverside to request an extension of the 60 day time frame and request a meeting to hear public comments on the matter.

Mr. Hart announced that on behalf of the Emergency Services Board, he would take the opportunity to inform the public of the pending storm expected to hit; the storm is being monitored closely.

Chairman Crockett thanked all residents in attendance and expressed that the Board will do all that it can.

Adjournment

On a motion made by Mr. Wolff and seconded by Mr. Muhly, the Board of Supervisors voted to adjourn the meeting. The meeting was adjourned at 6:23 p.m.

Robert D. Crockett, Chair

Date