

VIRGINIA:

At a recessed meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Northampton, Virginia, held in the Board Chambers of the County Administration Building, 16404 Courthouse Road, Eastville, Virginia, on the 27th day of February, 2012, at 5:00 p.m.

Present:

Oliver H. Bennett, Chairman

Laurence J. Trala

Richard L. Hubbard

Larry LeMond

Absent:

Willie C. Randall, Vice Chairman

The meeting was called to order by the Chairman.

The County Administrator shared with the Board a memorandum as set out below:

MEMORANDUM

TO: Board of Supervisors
FROM: Katie H. Nunez, County Administrator
DATE: February 24, 2012
RE: Former Middle School Property

In 2009, the School Board voted to close Northampton Middle School as a result of declining student enrollment and to consolidate operational costs. In accordance with the Code of Virginia §22.1-129, the School Board owns school property until it no longer is used for school purposes. At that time, the property must be returned to the Board of Supervisors for disposition. Since the property at Machipongo contained active and now inactive school facilities, we were required to subdivide the property and carve out the middle school facility to be formally returned to the Board of Supervisors. Enclosed is the agreement between the School Board and the Board addressing the subdivision of the property and the shared property issues (water and sewer, lighting, and parking) as well as a copy of the property map.

The school building has a significant historical importance for Northampton County which has added responsibilities for the Board in terms of the management and use of the facility. The building is very large, comprising of 51,000 square feet that includes an auditorium, cafeteria, gymnasium, 8 bathrooms that are generally sized for children, 32 classrooms (a mix of sizes and uses, such as science labs or general classrooms), and wide hallways with lockers still intact. It is vital to maintain a use and presence in the facility to limit the degradation of the building from natural causes (mold, mildew, equipment failure) and mischief (vandalism, rodent intrusion).

With the sale of the former Hare Valley School property to ESAA/CAA, the County needed to locate office space for Extension Services. The timing was fortuitous with taking ownership of the former middle school to allow Extension Services to move in immediately and ensure that the building had an occupant almost from the outset; Extension Services occupied the spaces formerly used by the middle school administration at the front of the building. The gymnasium was quickly utilized by the Parks Department and there were continual requests for public usage of the cafeteria and auditorium. The building was put into more active service as part of the County Administration renovation – the new wing in the back was converted into office space and served as our temporary headquarters for almost 18 months; we utilized 14 classrooms as well as frequent use of the auditorium as our formal meeting space. In addition, training space was needed for Emergency Medical Services and they were able to utilize 2 classrooms for this purpose and expanded to 2 additional rooms for storage needs.

With the completion of our renovation in Eastville, County Administration withdrew from the former middle school building with the exception of the permanent conversion of two classrooms into archival storage of our records. This was done to consolidate the storage of all of the County records which had been located in various buildings in Eastville (2nd floor of the Eastville Inn, 2nd floor of the Ward building/Maintenance Shop).

Parks & Recreation has been using the gymnasium but expanded into the 4 classrooms across the gym to house the summer camp program. This has enabled the summer camp program to be self-reliant and more consistent. Previously, the summer camp program was housed in either the elementary schools or the high school and was reliant upon the calendar of the school system to determine where camp would be held, a decision that was generally made in late spring which was sometimes problematic in planning out the summer camp program. This location has revitalized the summer camp program and has ensured us full occupancy for the last three years in the summer camp program and an expansion of the camp from 8 to 10 weeks.

Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has been able to host the training and certification classes for prospective EMTs as well as ongoing educational training for existing EMTs for the Eastern Shore in the former middle school building. Prior to that, classes were sparsely offered and most individuals travelled across the bay to obtain this training (most classes run about five months). This has assisted in our budget, by lessening the funds needed for educational development for the EMS staff.

EMS is currently located in leased property just south of the former Middle School. This property has space limitations and the department has outgrown the size of the building. In addition, the acquisition of a County ambulance necessitates a covered garage to regulate

temperature and storage of medical supplies on the ambulance. This is not a feature that is supplied at its current location. In researching how to best resolve the needs of the EMS department, we have examined other locations for building a new facility or purchasing and converting existing structures as well as looking at the middle school to convert space to house the department. The price considerations were relatively equal between these options so other factors became a consideration: with the eventual departure of County Administration from the former middle school, it is imperative to find uses for the premises in a substantial way to justify the continual costs of upkeep and maintenance and to ensure the building does not degrade any further; as well, the County has been compelled to meet an outstanding grant obligation from the sale of the former Sustainable Technologies Industrial Park (STIP), requiring the expenditure of funds for a community use facility equal to the grant obligation.

Based upon these reasons, the Board voted to move forward with renovating the east wing of the former middle school for the EMS Department and a budget has been established and reserved for this project from cost savings achieved under other capital projects (primarily from the landfill capping and transfer station construction and remaining courthouse and jail construction funds). However, this project has not progressed since some members of the Board had requested a delay until a requested study of EMS and Fire Services could be completed.

Since County Administration departure from the premises in October 2011, the former middle school has had sporadic use, primarily through rentals at the cafeteria and auditorium as well as the permanent home of Extension Services and the Parks programs in the gymnasium. However, problems have been developing in the form of mold and mildew in the ceiling tiles, a result of the temperature fluctuations with the heating and cooling systems. Renovation of the existing restrooms, particularly the older restrooms at the front of the building, needs to be considered if continual public use of the building is to occur and a new bathroom facility should be constructed closer to the auditorium & old home-ec rooms (a natural fit to convert to a medium size community room with available kitchen facilities; this space is identified for the new polling location for District 4). Lastly, interest has been expressed from outside agencies to rent office space in the area that County Administration had been using.

Board discussion is needed to develop and commit to a plan of re-use for this property or determine what other course of action should be pursued for the property, such as sale. If that is the preferred course of action, then we will need to develop a new plan to house Extension Services, Parks & Recreation summer camp and indoor athletic programs, and the Emergency Medical Services department.

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Also attached was a spreadsheet detailing capital projects budgets at February 24, 2012:

Description	Starting Budget	Expenses	Encumbrances	Balance	% Used
County Admin Renovations	\$4,728,000.00	\$4,247,053.44	\$ 79,902.93	\$401,043.63	92%
J&DR Court Services Construction	\$650,100.00	\$638,054.95	\$8,392.25	\$3,652.80	99%

Solid Waste -Waste Collection Centers	\$3,161,572.00	\$2,756,958.80	\$ -	\$404,613.20	87%
EMS Renovation	\$1,260,166.00	\$40,565.00	\$28,329.00	\$1,191,272.00	5%
Capital Fund Contingency	\$74,318.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$74,318.00	0%
TOTAL	\$9,874,156.00	\$7,682,632.19	\$116,624.18	\$2,074,899.63	79%

I am still closing out the County Admin renovation project and the J&DR Court Services project and will discuss further with Board what I believe will be the uncommitted funds from these projects that can be re-assigned to another project. Please note that the purchase of the former Verizon property at Stumptown Road and any improvements to said property will need to come from these funds. Staff is working on a cost estimate to the work necessary to convert the Stumptown Road property to the new home of Facilities Management/Public Works.

The Solid Waste funding is to address the construction of the final waste collection center (District 6).

The Board had previously voted the funds from other completed capital projects for the EMS Renovation project. Funds expended to date on that project have been on the feasibility study to convert a portion of the former Middle School for EMS purposes.

The acquisition of property to consolidate the operations of Facilities Management and Public Works as well as any improvements to said property have commenced with a budget confirmation forthcoming to the Board. With the cost savings from the County Administration project, it has been presumed that a portion of these savings would be assigned to address the Facilities Management project. Currently, Facilities Management occupies two buildings across from the Eastville Inn and the director's office is next to the Eastville Inn. One of the goals of the Board has been to return the block of buildings (former home of Social Services, Voter Registrar, Commonwealth Attorney, and current home of Facilities Management & leased home to the Thrift Shop) to private commercial usage but location of homes for the government services had to be addressed first.

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Ms. Hollye Carpenter, EMS Director, was recognized by the Board and shared with the Board the EMS training components between the two counties.

Mr. LeMond noted that he thought the reuse of the middle school facility could be the answer to a lot of the County's questions and feels that we need to place as many tenants as possible in the building to help offset the ongoing maintenance costs.

Mr. Hubbard asked that the County Administrator provide a better idea of the projected renovation costs and an estimate of the occupancy level needed in the building.

It was the consensus of the Board to delay action on the middle school until the additional information is received as requested.

Closed Session

Motion was made by Mr. Trala, seconded by Mr. Hubbard, that the Board enter Closed Session in accordance with Section 2.2-3711 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended:

(A) Paragraph 3: Discussion or consideration of the condition, acquisition, or use of real property for public purpose, or of the disposition of publicly held property.

(B) Paragraph 7: Consultation with legal counsel and briefings by staff members, consultants, or attorneys pertaining to actual or probable litigation, and consultation with legal counsel employed or retained by the Board of Supervisors regarding specific legal matters requiring the provision of legal advice by counsel.

All members were present with the exception of Mr. Randall and voted "yes." The motion was unanimously passed.

After Closed Session, the Chairman reconvened the meeting and said that the Board had entered the closed session for those purposes as set out in paragraphs 3 and 7 of Section 2.1-3711 of the Code of Virginia of 1950, as amended. Upon being polled individually, each Board member confirmed that these were the only matters of discussion during the closed session.

Recess:

Motion was made by Mr. Trala, seconded by Mr. Hubbard, that the meeting be recessed until 8:30 a.m., Saturday, March 10, 2012 in the Training Room (EOC Room) of the Sheriff's Office, 5211 The Hornes, Eastville, Virginia, in order to conduct the Board Retreat. All members were present with the exception of Mr. Randall and voted "yes." The motion was unanimously passed.

The meeting was recessed.

_____CHAIRMAN

_____ COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR