

VIRGINIA:

At a recessed meeting of the Board of Supervisors of the County of Northampton, Virginia, held in the Board Room of the County Administration Building, 16404 Courthouse Road, Eastville, Virginia, on the 26th day of March, 2012, at 5:30 p.m.

Present:

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| Oliver H. Bennett, Chairman | Willie C. Randall, Vice Chairman |
| Laurence J. Trala | Richard L. Hubbard |
| Larry LeMond | |

The meeting was called to order by the Vice Chairman. Mr. Bennett arrived at 5:32 p.m.

2. Comments from Tourism Commission

Mr. Steve Potts, Chairman, and Ms. Lisa LaMontaigne, Vice Chairman of the Eastern Shore of Virginia Tourism Commission, answered questions from the Board and read the following comments:

“Thank you for giving the Tourism Commission the opportunity to update the Board:

- * While we can’t discuss personnel matters in public to protect the privacy of our employees, we know you have concerns and so have extended an invitation to the supervisors to meet individually to further clarify. We have already had the opportunity to meet with several of you and are always available to discuss tourism at any time.
- * Since tourism is a major component of the local economy, we know you must have confidence that the Commission continues to function and that the mission is carried on. Tourism is a partnership with the Commission, staff, partners, stakeholders and counties – if it was dependent on one person, we wouldn’t be doing our job.
- * We know you’re interested in our Interim Plan

* Conducting national search and have received nearly 60 resumes. The Tourism Commission has the support of the state in that Lynne Lochen from VTC is

assisting in the resume screening process. We're planning to conduct interviews and make a selection by April 30.

- * In the interim, the Commissioners have been designated to serve as point person on each of the media tours.

- * We've met with the ES Refuge on the Big Guns project and appointed a Commissioner to be the point person on that project.

- * Facebook continues to provide outreach promoting the Eastern Shore with the assistance of Pam Barefoot of Blue Crab Bay – a great example of one of our community partners.

- * Checking e-mails remotely and handling by staff and the Commissioners as appropriate.

- * **Media Tours**

- * With the Shore's high season approaching, staff and Commissioners are handling four upcoming media tours. These will highlight the Shore from tip to top hosting a total of 12 travel writers and providing them with first-hand experiences of the best of the Shore.

- * **Other Projects**

- * "Big Guns" project, which is bringing a 120-ton gun barrel, used in WWII aboard the USS Missouri, is on its way to the Eastern Shore arriving in Cape Charles April 6. The Tourism Commission is working with the Eastern Shore Wildlife Refuge, at the southern end of the peninsula, to highlight this historically significant event.

- * Once again, the Tourism Commission is partnering with the Eastern Shore Community College to teach customer service classes at the Chesapeake Bay Bridge Tunnel featuring guest speaker Allan Burns, Welcome Center Manager.

- * Good news for the Shore is that the Welcome Center has reported an increase in visitors over last year during the same quarter and continues to be successful in directing visitors to our towns and more importantly to our businesses.

- * As we look to the future, we'll focus increased communication with tourism partners keeping them informed of opportunities with a particular concentration on community partnerships.

- * We're developing a plan to reach past visitors to bring them back again and planning new opportunities to increase visibility for businesses on the tourism website and the new kiosk at the Welcome Center.

- * And, of course, the incredible opportunity for the Shore with space tourism.

- * The Regional Approach has proven successful and helps bring significant attention to the Eastern Shore – attention that is not available to a single county, town or entity – and protects the future of our Welcome Center.”

Mr. Randall commented on the “outpouring of concern relative to the termination of the former Executive Director” and asked if the State was supportive of the Commission’s actions. Ms. LaMontaigne confirmed that the State was supportive and referenced Ms. Lochen’s involvement as detailed earlier in the above comments. She indicated that it was “business as usual” for the Commission and noted that it has received several offers of support from the local chambers of commerce. In response to another question from Mr. Randall, Ms. LaMontaigne confirmed that the termination of the employee was acted upon in open session as required by Virginia Code.

3. FY 2011 County Audit

Mr. Paul Lee and Ms. Ann Wohl of Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates, briefed the Board on the results of the FY 2011 County Audit. They indicated that the County received an unqualified opinion on its financial statements with no compliance issues, exceptions or material weaknesses found. They discussed the various items contained in the management letter; said correspondence being on file in the Office of the County Administrator.

4. Joint Meeting with Northampton County School Board

The Northampton County School Board was present and in session. Board members as well as Superintendent Walter Clemons discussed with the Board a draft update on the 2012-2013 school budget development, noting that the District started this year’s budget development with an estimated shortfall of \$1,821,710.99. Following several proposed reductions, the School Board is tentatively looking at a requested increase in local contribution of \$643,102.45 over the FY 2011 funding level. Ms. Brook Thomas, Finance Director, discussed with the Board the School Operating Fund Balance Reserved for Capital Projects and listed several proposed projects which will, at completion, realize a remaining fund balance of \$38,185.

Much discussion was held between the Board and Dr. Clemons in reference to the position of the County's School Division in "School Improvement". This status indicates that inadequate yearly progress for two or more years has made by some of the schools, resulting in serious sanctions by the State and Federal Government. While there are several options available to the School Board to address the School Improvement status (including shutting down the facilities altogether), the School Board has chosen to work with an external partner, Edison Learning, in crafting plans and strategies to address the situation.

In responding to a question from Mr. Randall, Dr. Clemons noted that the 17 positions to be lost during the FY 2012 budget year included eight kindergarten instructional aides (funded through the disappearing Stimulus Program); six behavior support aides; and three teaching positions at the Tech Center (program is being restructured). He did stress that more community education is needed to let everyone know the seriousness of the situation. The Board concurred.

The Superintendent stated that Kiptopeke Elementary School has not been accredited for four consecutive years and the graduation rate at the high school was 69%. Both factors led these two facilities to be classified as "persistently lower-achieving schools". Occohannock Elementary School has lacked adequate yearly progress in both reading (4 years) and math (2 years).

Dr. Clemons indicated that a modified Capital Improvements Plan would be brought back to the Board in April.

Recess:

Motion was made by Mr. Trala, seconded by Mr. Randall, that the meeting be recessed until 8:00 a.m., Friday, April 6, 2012 at the Aqua Restaurant, 900 Marina Village Circle, Cape Charles, Virginia, to participate in the annual State of the County Breakfast sponsored by the

Northampton County Chamber of Commerce. All members were present and voted “yes.” The motion was unanimously passed.

The meeting was recessed.

_____CHAIRMAN

_____ COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR