

**MEMORANDUM:**

**TO:** Board of Supervisors  
**FROM:** Katie H. Nunez  
County Administrator  
**DATE:** July 18, 2013  
**SUBJECT:** Northampton Middle School

While the Board has previously taken action to provide a capital budget specific to the subject building, recent discussions by various Board members indicates that there may not be a unified position on the actual usages and intended future occupants of this property. Therefore, I have delayed moving forward to provide opportunity for the Board to continue to discuss, deliberate and determine the best course of action for the County relative to this property.

The questions that I believe need to be addressed and answered are as follows:

(1) How do you reuse this space? Possible uses include:

(a) *community facilities/rental space* [gymnasium, auditorium, cafeteria, classrooms]

(b) *government purposes.*

(i) This facility is the current home of the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service, current home for the Parks & Recreation summer camp, fall/winter basketball program for adults & children, spring/summer/fall home of the volleyball program, current home of County archives for all County departments except Social Services and the Courts.

(ii) Emergency Medical Services (EMS) has outgrown its current space and needs to expand either at its existing location or a new location. There are zoning

challenges that prevent such expansion at the current location. In particular, it is essential that we address the needs of EMS including the need for a temperature-controlled garage facility to park the ambulance and the two response vehicles with their associated medical equipment and supplies.

(iii) This location is the current District Three polling place. We need to provide proper, appropriately-sized, ventilated and handicapped-accessible space to meet this need 2-5 times per year.

(2) What are the other potential uses that have been expressed?

(a) Conversion of the cafeteria into a commercial kitchen either for a training location for the community college for a culinary arts program or as a commercial rental kitchen for one or more vendors for food production.

(b) The community college at this point has expressed interest in offering certain classes at this location such as development of a computer lab and the potential for some adult education offerings such as painting, languages, etc.

(c) Future interest has been expressed by state/federal agencies seeking to consolidate their operations on the Eastern Shore. One of those agencies is also seeking space that would provide secure storage facilities for its trucks/boats and other equipment (Game & Inland Fisheries); i.e., a fenced yard.

(3) Other points of discussion:

(a) consideration to return the property to the school to reactivate as a middle school.

(b) consideration to rent space to the School Board to move school administration to the property and dispose of the current school administration home.

(c) consider some reuse in one or more manners described above and demolish the portions of the building that may be too costly to retain.

(d) sell the property. If this is the direction of the Board, provisions would have to be made with regard to the shared water and sewer systems that link the former school with the school administration offices as well as to locate a new home for the Extension Service.

(e) The current condition of the building has visible deficiencies that would have to be addressed through mold remediation, new HVAC systems that provide zone capabilities,

improved electrical systems, updated plumbing and appropriately-sized bathrooms for all ages as well as consideration of a new bathroom location to better serve the auditorium, some roof improvements particularly over the library, and other cosmetic improvements that need to occur including flooring, painting, windows, etc.

(f) The last item for consideration is the County's outstanding obligation to USDA to repay almost \$600,000.00 which represents prior funds provided to the County for the former STIP project from several grants. To refresh your memory, when the County sold the STIP property, USDA indicated that the County was in non-compliance of the grants; however, they provided the option for the County to not directly repay USDA the \$600,000.00±, but to apply County funds to a qualified project meeting USDA approval within the County which would comply with the terms of the original grant(s). They have previously indicated that the renovation of the middle school project, which includes elements of emergency medical service, continued community use of the cafeteria/auditorium/gymnasium and conversion of classrooms for higher educational offerings as well as community rental space, was sufficient; however, since we have not moved forward in a sufficient time line to show our intent and good faith in meeting our obligations with USDA, currently, they are indicating to the County that we need to repay these funds. I have not been able to confirm if USDA will allow us any additional time under the original agreement or are we truly required to repay these funds at this time.

(g) Source of Funding: Within our originally-approved capital fund, we have approximately \$1 million identified and reserved for this project. These funds come from our bonding just refinanced through VRA and are stipulated to be used on County-owned property and assets. If we are required to repay USDA, these capital funds cannot be the source. There are two sources of funding that the County can use to meet this obligation:

- (i) capital fund. Restriction: *Must be county property*
- (ii) undesignated fund balance.

If you have any further questions, please advise.