

## **Board of Supervisors - March 6, 2008 Workshop Meeting**

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The Wise County Board of Supervisors met in a Workshop meeting on Thursday, March 6, 2008 at 6:00 p.m. in the Board of Supervisors meeting room located in the Wise County courthouse. The following were present;

Honorable Robert R. Adkins – Chairman  
Honorable Virginia Meador – Vice-Chair  
Honorable Fred Luntsford  
Honorable Ronald L. Shortt  
Honorable Steve Bates  
Honorable Robert E. Robbins  
Honorable Dana Kilgore  
Honorable J. H. Rivers – members of said Board and  
Glen A. Skinner – County Administrator  
Shannon C. Scott – Assistant County Administrator  
Karen T. Mullins – County Attorney  
Annette Underwood – Executive Secretary

### PRAYER

Bob Adkins led in prayer.

### PLEDGE

All led in the pledge of allegiance to the flag.

### AGENDA

Chairman Adkins read the following changes for the agenda:

#### Under Presentations

Delete: Improvements to the Dotson Recreational Park on Airport Rd.

Move: Recycling Plan Update to March 13 @ 6:00 p.m.

Add: March 6 @ 6:00 p.m.: Wise County School Bd – School Financing

Add: March 13 @ 6:00 p.m.: Wise County Firefighters Association-Funds request

Add: March 13 @ 6:00 p.m.: Update on Big Stone Gap Tornado Event

#### Under New Business

Add: Resolution Ratifying Declaration of state of Local Emergency for Wise County

### IN RE: WISE COUNTY FOOD BANK

Bill Cole and Lann Malesky, representing the Wise County Food Bank, expressed their appreciation to the Board of Supervisors for its continued financial support and explained the goals and mission of the

Food Bank. Mr. Malesky stated that the Food Bank of Wise County is a 501©3 nonprofit organization and is exempt from state sales tax. All workers are volunteers, and all donations go to purchase food or to pay necessary overhead cost such as utility bills. A Fact sheet with the number of families served on an annual basis was provided for further information.

#### IN RE: JUNCTION CENTER FOR INDEPENDENT LIVING

Cindy Mefford, representing the Junction Center for Independent Living, stated that the Center's mission is to assist people who have significant disabilities to live independently in the least restrictive and most integrated community environment possible.

The Junction Center for Independent Living is a nonprofit organization established by and for people with disabilities. JCIL works with consumers who have significant disabilities, their family members, other service agencies, and the community to increase disability awareness and advocacy systems.

Ms. Mefford thanked the Board for its financial support which has made a difference in helping those individuals with disabilities.

#### IN RE: COURTHOUSE INTERIOR "NEEDS ASSESSMENT"

Bill Thompson, representing T&L, addressed the Board regarding space needs issues and safety and security needs within the courthouse. After meeting with the judges, Jack Kennedy and staff of the County Administrator's Office, it was agreed that a full assessment of judicial and other needs of the courthouse was in order. The following needs were reviewed:

- There is a an over flow of people in the hallway due to limited space in the General District courtroom
- A second Circuit Court judge will be coming on board in the near future
- A new Circuit Court room should accommodate a high level of information technology needs – price range \$100,000
- Short falls in the recently renovated JD&R office regarding security concerns
- Court Service Unit is located inconveniently from the court and no metal detector is in place for security
- Some recommendations from the U.S. Marshall's Office have not been implemented which may be addressed within the renovation process

The following most important security issue has to do with the circulation systems within the building:

- (1) The public circulation system
- (2) Restricted circulation for judges, court staff, and support personnel
- (3) Secure circulation for prisoners

Upon review by T&L, it was noted, from a structural stand point, that the renovations that have been suggested are feasible.

Mr. Thompson stated that after speaking with the judges, reviewing the situation in the courthouse and the magnitude of the proposed renovations, it would be wise to take an overview of the whole courthouse and ascertain what the needs assessment might be for all the offices within the courthouse. These needs if gone unchecked for a long period of time will only excel in price. A long term plan, made on the County's time table, with some forethought as to the needs, would hinder any serious issues that may arise with security or space needs.

Mr. Thompson noted that T&L has done this type of courthouse restoration for neighboring counties. Thompson and Litton are available and have the experience and expertise to assist the County in its endeavor to meet the courthouse needs. He further noted that he had provided this preliminary review of the interior needs at no cost to the County and his firm will be available to respond to the RFP should one be done.

There was some discussion on possible grant funding and/or the use of historic tax credits for renovations to a historical facility such as the courthouse. This type of funding is available with strict guidelines.

#### IN RE: SCHOOL FINANCING – WISE COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD

Ron Vicars, Director of Business/Finance, addressed the Board regarding a change of financing that has been approved by the Board for the Coeburn Middle School and the PV Primary School gymnasiums and associated classroom additions. The School Board took the County's recommendation to file for Literary Loans for these projects which the County can get at a 2% interest rate. At the time the School Board filed, there were some direct loans from the Literary fund that had been given out. Since then, the Literary funds directly from Literary loan have not been forthcoming.

The State has created a Virginia Public School Authority (VPSA) Bond and Subsidy Program to alleviate schools on first priority waiting lists to continue to stay there. This Program is for projects and school divisions that are on the first priority waiting list as it pertains to Literary loans. These two projects for Wise County are on the first priority waiting list. The VPSA allows the County to sell general obligation bonds to the Virginia Public School Authority. Those bonds are sold at market. The Subsidy Grant is given through the Literary loan through the Department of Education to purchase down the market price and interest rate to the interest rate that would have been available with the Literary loan. Basically, the financial impact on the County is the same as it would have been with the Literary loan. These two projects will be financed at the 2% interest rate with the debt service schedule being the same. This is another avenue by which financing for these two projects can be obtained and still have the funding in hand by mid May. The Literary loans at the present time from the governor's budget will not be funded directly as they have been a couple of years ago.

Mr. Vicars asked the Board to consider at its meeting next week a resolution giving the School Board permission to proceed with selling the general obligation bonds to the Virginia Public School Authority.

Supervisor Robbins stated that it was his understanding that the \$7.5 million that was set aside for these two projects were to be placed in an interest bearing account for such a time it was needed.

Mr. Scott and Attorney Mullins noted that the funds had been held in the general fund which earns interest daily.

#### IN RE: PUBLIC HEARING –CONDITIONAL CHANGE OF ZONING

A public hearing was duly advertised for this date to receive citizens' comments regarding a request from Johnny & Janet Chandler for a Conditional Change of Zoning on 0.90 acres located at 711 Orby Cantrell Highway in Big Stone Gap for the purpose of placing an additional manufactured home on said property.

There was no public opposition to the proposed Conditional Change of Zoning.

There being no comments, the public hearing was closed.

#### IN RE: PUBLIC EXPRESSION

Bob Harrison, representing the St. Paul IDA and the voice for community schools, noted that it is very difficult to get business to the St. Paul community since the area is currently without cell service, wireless technology, hotel or motel and many other amenities that larger areas in our County take for granted. He further noted that when a call is made to Wise, it is a long distance call for the St. Paul residents.

Regarding schools, Mr. Harrison asked that the "wish" list for the high schools be dismissed and a "needs" list be created. The School Board has been encouraged to place the high schools back on the capital outlay priority list and renovate high schools with the most need which should be done in phases with the oldest been first.

Mr. Harrison voiced his support of the power plant.

Betty Cornett, a resident of the Big Stone Gap area, thanked the towns and the county for coming together during the devastation left by the tornado that came through Big Stone Gap. She thanked Jackie Darter and his crew for the removal of debris from her property.

Cathy Selvage, a resident of the Stephens area, spoke briefly on the article that was in the Bristol paper which stated facts on the chemicals that would be emitted into the air from the power plant. She provided information as to the affect mercury has on children even to the fetus of the mother's womb.

James Lawson spoke on the 457 Deferred Compensation plan for employees, which is payroll deductible. An informational packet was given to each Board member for their review and consideration. Mr. Lawson stated that an office will be opened in Wise for the convenience of the employees. He asked that he be placed on the list as a provider for this service for County employees.

Jaclyn Harahan, a resident of Coeburn, invited the Board to a Saturday event which is a gathering of church leaders and local parishioners of all different denominations in the County to have a day of discussion and reflection on God's great love for the poor and of creation. She made a point that God's creation is in our hands and our decisions makes an impact on creation; whether it be good or bad.

Diane Withen, a resident of Wise, agreed with Mr. Harrison that St. Paul is a very unique and wonderful school as are all the other schools. She agreed that student needs are met better in smaller schools and that all high schools remain open for that reason. Since the proposed power plant is being located near the St. Paul School, concern has been raised since mercury is one of the pollutants that will be produced by the plant. She asked the Board to make Dominion use the technology they have to reduce these pollutants. This technology is expensive but the health of Wise County citizens is more important.

There being no further comments, the public expression period was closed.

#### IN RE: ROADS AND HIGHWAYS

Residency Administrator T. G. Branson provided the Board with responses to their requests from the last meeting.

Mr. Branson made the following notations:

- There will be a reduction in the revenue forecast for the Six Year Plan and the Secondary Construction funds of approximately 44%.
- A Bill has passed the House and the Senate that will revise Revenue Sharing if signed by the Governor. This will have some bearing on the Revenue Sharing when approved. The funding will probably be available in the fall rather than July 1.

Board members expressed their appreciation to Mr. Branson for all the work he and his staff do for Wise County citizens. Requests were made for VDOT review and consideration.

#### IN RE: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS

- Administrative Agreement for Bold Camp Sewer Project
- Resolution Authorize the Treasurer to open a new checking account
- Set public hearing (April 3 @ 6:00 p.m.) on the proposed bond issuance by Wise County

#### IN RE: FIRE DEPARTMENT AND RESCUE SQUAD FUNDING

Supervisor Luntsford questioned the methodology that has been recommended for funding the fire departments and rescue squads. This method would seemly place a burden on volunteers that already give their time and energy to these two departments. Even though this is for audit purposes, it seems there could be a more simple method of accounting for the \$21,000.

Administrator Skinner explained that the two departments are being asked to forward any invoices to the County for payment which provides the County an audit trail on the expenditures from each department up to the \$21,000. With the new guidelines established for audit purposes and as a part of the new Internal Financial Controls of the Wise County Board of Supervisors, it is necessary that some method of responsibility be established where County funding is involved.

There was some discussion on different options that could possibly meet the audit needs and maintain the Internal Financial Controls.

#### IN RE: COURTROOM INTERIOR NEEDS – ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

Assistant County Administrator Shannon Scott stated that there have been several meetings held to look at the current and anticipated courtroom needs both for Circuit and General District Courts. The concerns are both for spatial and security needs. At present, there is not enough room in the current General District courtroom to accommodate all those who need to be inside for court. There is some concern regarding the General District Court Judge having to maneuver through the hallway that is congested with family and friends of those individuals sentenced by the judge. Although no decision has been made, it appears that Wise County will have a second Circuit Court Judgeship that will require a constant use of a second circuit courtroom.

Mr. Scott noted that after meeting with Judges, Carico, Dotson, Wills and Circuit Court Clerk Jack Kennedy, and Bill Thompson, it was determined that a needs assessment of the present courthouse needs should be done. Thompson & Litton has performed this service for several neighboring courthouses and others in Southwest Virginia and is available to assist the County in this endeavor if needed.

Authorization from the Board is being requested to allow the County to move forward to select an architect and contractor to meet these needs. The procurement of these services would be under the legal guidance of County Attorney Karen Mullins who would assist in the RFP advertisement and estimate of cost.

#### IN RE: COURTHOUSE EXTERIOR - ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES

Attorney Mullins stated that the County Administrator and the Assistant County Administrator, after receiving approval for funding the exterior repairs to the courthouse from the Board of Supervisors at its December 13, 2007 meeting, have after due deliberation of procurement requirements, determined that Thompson & Litton, Inc., is only one source practicably available for the architectural and engineering

historical design services and construction contract administration services that is required for the courthouse repairs.

In accordance with Section 2.2-4303 (E) of the Code of Virginia, as amended, the determination and the basis for the determination shall be in writing issued by the Board listing the person or firm awarded the contract, the services procured, and the date on which the award is awarded.

IN RE: OTHER ITEMS REVIEWED

- Conditional Change of Zoning
- Amendment to Board of Supervisors Rule of Procedure – Section 3-1 Order of Business
- Resolution Setting the Property Tax Rates for FY 2008-2009
- Budget Amendments #67 thru #71
- Good Friday, March 21st (Day off for County employees)
- Resolution ratifying Declaration of State of Local Emergency for Wise County
- Appointments
- County Attorney's Report – Update on tornado
- County Administrator's Report – Cleanup with County crew and neighboring communities in Town of Big Stone Gap

BOARD COMMENTS

Board members voiced their appreciation for all the assistance that has come forth from the surrounding areas to help with the needs of those individuals that lost everything during the recent disaster in Big Stone Gap. There were also comments on the proposed multi-trail concept and the interest that is being shown in that endeavor.

Supervisor Robbins asked the Board to consider appropriating \$1,000 toward the multi-trail concept .

Supervisor Rivers asked the County Administrator to ascertain if there is something the County can do to assist St. Paul in getting the Wise area as a local call for them.

ADJOURN

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 9:05 p.m.

ATTEST:

WISE COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

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Glen A. Skinner, Clerk

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Robert R. Adkins, Chairman