

AT A SCHEDULED BUDGET WORK SESSION OF THE BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
OF ROCKBRIDGE COUNTY VIRGINIA, HELD IN THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATION
BUILDING, 150 SOUTH MAIN STREET LEXINGTON, VIRGINIA ON
WEDNESDAY, MARCH 5, 2014 AT 5:30 P.M.

PRESENT: CHAIRMAN J.M. HIGGINS
MEMBERS: D.W. HINTY, JR., R.R. CAMPBELL,
R.S. FORD, A.W. LEWIS, JR.
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
AND CLERK TO BOARD: SPENCER H. SUTER
FISCAL SERVICES
DIRECTOR: STEVEN J. BOLSTER

Call to Order:

Chairman Higgins called the meeting to order at 5:31 p.m. Supervisor Lewis led the invocation and the Pledge of Allegiance.

Budget Work Session (#1):

Chairman Higgins explained that tonight's budget work session was an opportunity for external agencies to provide the Board information on their FY 14-15 budget requests. He also explained the protocol in addressing the Board.

Mr. Bolster followed by giving an explanation on how he was managing the session's proceedings.

Rockbridge Area YMCA Executive Director Alysan Raymond thanked the Board for their funding support during FY 13-14. Ms. Raymond communicated that her request for \$1,000.00 in FY 14-15 level funding. These funds were primarily associated with transportation linked to child care for summer programs (chiefly for children of working adults).

Rockbridge County Firefighters' Association President Ben Wilmer explained each of the increases the association was advocating for. They included: 1) Increase allotment to each volunteer fire department by \$10,000; 2) Increase variable pay for volunteer fire departments to \$151,000; 3) Increase the purchase of foam by \$2,500 because the type of foam they have switched to is more expensive; and 4) Increase the funding to the association by \$10,000. Supervisor Lewis questioned why the purchase of foam funding line reflected \$7,500 and not the additional \$2,500. (Note: the purchase of foam request increase

was updated and displayed in subsequent budget work sessions to reflect \$10,000).

Rockbridge Emergency Rescue Group (RERG) representative Steve Reese communicated each of the increases the group submitted in their FY 14-15 budget request. The three requests included: 1) Institute a variable pay program with no less than \$30,000 split among the rescue squads; 2) Raise the annual rescue squad allotment by 7% except for the units supported by separate agreement; 3) Increase the contribution to the RERG by \$10,000.

Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission Executive Director Bonnie Riedesel informed the Board that the regional planning organization was created 40 years by the General Assembly. Ms. Riedesel highlighted some of the efforts the commission was working on: 1) All hazards mitigation plan; 2) Fields of Gold (Ag-tourism); and 3) the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC). She explained that for every dollar invested, they bring 30 dollars back into the community. Supervisor Ford asked about the County's eligibility to receive ARC funding. Ms. Riedesel stated the funding match is based on a locality's categorization - the County falls within the transitional zone (50/50 match).

Rockbridge County Community Development Director Sam Crickenberger spoke on behalf of the Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP) and the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center (SVSBDC). The SVP request in FY 14-15 is calculated using a population-based formula, resulting in a \$18,777 ask. The SBDC continues to use the small conference room in the County Administration building twice per month. Their request is level funding at \$2,500 for FY 14-15.

Central Shenandoah Emergency Medical Services Council (CSEMSC) Executive Director Chad Blosser informed the Board that a funding formula is the basis for their request (\$0.45 per capita). Mr. Blosser explained that the CSEMSC represents District 6, which includes Rockbridge County and the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista (there are 11 districts within the State). CSEMSC provides 80 percent of their services in the form of training and education for EMS providers. Mr. Blosser expanded his comments by stating that the CSEMSC is leading EMT courses at the Virginia Military Institute and the Southern Virginia University. CSEMSC also supplies counseling to first responders. In addition, CSEMSC manages instruction and protocol training for EMS responders, with the goal of a consistent

standard of care among all first responders. Further, they are developing a paramedic program at Blue Ridge Community College with a goal to begin in the Fall of 2015. Mr. Blosser notified the Board that CSEMSC received a Virginia Department of Health grant of \$125,000 to assist with recruitment and retention efforts in the region. The CSEMSC would begin their recruitment and retention campaign in late Spring/early Summer of 2014. Supervisor Lewis asked if the marketing program was geared toward individual squads and departments. Mr. Blosser indicated that at its March 29th meeting, CSEMSC would initiate the development of the campaign by focusing on the needs of the region as a whole and then determine what special efforts were needed to assist each community in the region.

Blue Ridge Legal Services (BRLS) Executive Director and general counsel John Whitfield described his organization, which provides free legal advice for low-income residents. He said 53 low-income families were helped last year with civil and domestic violence cases, three citizens were assisted with foreclosure avoidance proceedings, and 27 residents were aided via answers to legal questions, for an estimated \$43,000 in legal services provided. The BRLS is asking for level funding based on one dollar per low-income population (\$2,705). Mr. Whitfield expressed his appreciation for the continued funding support, which he said is still needed.

Natural Bridge Soil and Water Conservation District (NBSWCD) Board representatives included Ken Mohler and Jay Gilliam. Mr. Mohler thanked the County for their annual contribution of \$7,500 over the past several years. Mr. Gilliam discussed the mission of the NBSWCD: providing services to help farmers implement the best land and water management practices. He stated that oversight of the conservation districts was moving to the Department of Environmental Quality. He praised the NBSWCD staff, whose tenure has resulted in proven capabilities and earned an excellent relationship with Rockbridge County citizens. Supervisor Lewis expressed his support and appreciation for well-done programs associated with the Hayes Creek watershed.

Maury River Senior Center (MRSC) Director Jeri Schaff represented the Valley Program for Aging Services (VPAS) FY 14-15 budget request. She communicated that the mission of VPAS was to serve County citizens aged 60 or older. Ms. Schaff described VPAS' ability to go into the farthest reaches of the County to provide counseling, socialization programs, and more. She noted that VPAS is asking for level funding for FY 14-15.

These funds will be paired with additional fundraising dollars which assist with bridging potential gaps from shortfalls in federal funding.

Total Action for Progress (TAP) representative Kristen Moses thanked the Board for its previous years of funding support. She provided an overview of the TAP program, which is regionally managed to serve Rockbridge and 10 other localities. TAP serves approximately 5,000 people through 30 programs in the region. Most of their support comes from federal grants, but local funding represents the most flexible source of monies and helps generate local matches to federal grants. TAP provides support to domestic violence victims; Ms. Moses stated 103 County citizens have been served by that program, at a cost of an estimated 132 dollars per person. TAP's Early Headstart and Headstart programs include 84 children in the region. Their weatherization assistance program was able to leverage an additional \$58 in other funding sources for each dollar invested by local contributions. Supervisor Hinty asked how many Rockbridge County children are enrolled in Headstart. Ms. Moses stated she would research that figure and provide it to staff.

Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity Director of Marketing and Development Jane Dunlap described her organization's mission of providing housing solutions for low-income households in Rockbridge County since 1989. Ms. Dunlap stated that 23 new homes have been built in Rockbridge County since 1989 - properties which are now on the County tax roles for real property. She explained that each potential homeowner receives financial training to ensure the long-term success of the homeowner. Ms. Dunlap mentioned the Greenhouse Village project, which now has seven completed homes. She commented that Habitat and the County have partnered on a grant to receive infrastructure funding. Habitat will build an additional 15 homes once the infrastructure project is complete. She also spoke about their partnership with Rockbridge County High School (RCHS) whose Building Trades students build homes for Habitat. Habitat is requesting an additional \$2,500 for a total of \$5,000 in FY 14-15 because of increased construction costs. Chairman Higgins asked if the RCHS students build the homes on site. Ms. Dunlap replied that the homes are built at RCHS and then transported to their permanent location. Supervisor Hinty asked if Habitat re-evaluates a homeowner's eligibility if their financial standing changes. Ms. Dunlap replied that they don't re-evaluate homeowners once they take possession of the home. She stated the financing is a standard mortgage; there is no way to change the mortgage once it is issued. However, the mortgage

is structured so that "flipping" of a property cannot occur. Ms. Dunlap ended her presentation by informing the Board that the owner of the very first home is getting to the point where the home will soon be paid off.

Rockbridge Area Community Services (RACS) Executive Director Dr. Dennis Cropper informed the Board that 1,121 residents were served by RACS over the past year - the second highest level in history. Dr. Cropper explained that this year RACS was looking at outcomes instead of numbers served by programs, with the overall goal of getting folks back into the community. Dr. Cropper provided the example that RACS services resulted in an average stay at Western State Hospital of 97 days, which is considerably lower than the norm. He explained that each RACS staff member is serving over 40 clients. Dr. Cropper explained aspects of the funding formula which govern the 90/10 match. The local increase in the funding request is associated with the potential for higher funding coming from the state. Dr. Cropper commented that 60% of RACS revenues come from fees linked to clients served.

Rick Kirgis from the Rockbridge Area Transportation System (RATS) stated that RATS is asking for level funding in FY 14-15, but noted fuel prices have caused their operating costs to go up. He added that RATS provides transportation for the elderly, disabled, and infirm. Mr. Kirgis commented that a good deal of RATS' operational needs is covered by Medicaid, but it needs help to continue serving private pay customers not subsidized by the federal government. Mr. Kirgis ended by saying the FY 14-15 level funding request is made with the recognition that limited funds are available from local governments. Supervisor Hinty asked how many accidents RATS has had. RATS Executive Director Betty LaRock answered that in light of 15 vehicles traveling over 400,000 miles annually, they've had very few accidents (all minor fender-benders). She stated their insurance premiums stay low because of their outstanding driving record. Ms. LaRock attributed their success to long-standing employees (low turnover), training (40-hour certification process), and maintaining safety as a number one priority.

Rockbridge Area Occupational Center (RAOC) Executive Director Roy Funkhouser introduced himself to the Board as the new RAOC director. Mr. Funkhouser gave an overview of the RAOC program that mentioned that it is a non-profit entity with 40 years of service in the community employing those with disabilities, to include severe disabilities. RAOC provides rehabilitation training, goal development instruction, life-

skills education (reading, writing, etc.), and soft-skill guidance (punctuality, followership, etc.) to their employees. It also provides transportation for employees. Mr. Funkhouser informed the Board that RAOC has 41 employees, and that 19 are residents of Rockbridge County. He stated some employees leave the program because their initial employment opportunity results in permanent, long-term employment. Mr. Funkhouser communicated that RAOC is requesting level funding, and he thanked the Board for its continued partnership in helping adults with disabilities.

Rockbridge Regional Library Board Executive Director Julie Goyette thanked the Board for its long-standing support of the library system and the use of a de-commissioned school bus for further outreach in the community. Ms. Goyette stated the Rockbridge Regional Library was asking for an increase in funding of \$32,519 to cover higher health insurance premiums, employee compensation increases, and transitioning a part-time position to full-time. Chairman Higgins informed Ms. Goyette that the County's health insurance increase was confirmed at having a 4.1% increase in FY 14-15 and asked that the Library adjust their budget submission to account for the known change. Ms. Goyette replied that she would provide the update to Mr. Bolster the next day.

Virginia Cooperative Extension Unit Coordinator Tom Stanley commented about how much he had learned tonight by sitting through this budget work session. He explained that the County Extension Office served five counties. Mr. Stanley informed the Board that they have a new 4-H Agent, Amanda Newton. He went on to communicate the value of the funding invested in the program: Rockbridge County pays for one-third of the salaries and provides office space. This funding results in superb programs in the County: 1) agents/specialists serve the County's citizens; 2) assistance with economic development in the agriculture sector; 3) 4-H camping program, which continues to see growing participation; 4) the Master Gardner program, with tremendous activity throughout the County - 10,000 volunteer hours conducted mostly at the schools; and 5) Kristen Springer's providing financial guidance to lower-income citizens. The Extension's FY 14-15 budget request includes a small increase associated with higher compensation and fringe benefit costs. Chairman Higgins commended the 4-H based on a meeting he attended; he was impressed with how youngsters ran their meeting. He could clearly see future leaders were getting a great opportunity to develop their skills. Supervisor Hinty asked how the funding breakdown was applied for the Rockbridge

County office. Mr. Stanley stated that the County funds 37% of his salary and 50% of Ms. Newton's salary, while the state covers 100% of Ms. Helen Leslie's salary. Mr. Stanley ended by expressing his appreciation to the County for providing the office space and the recently installed new carpet.

Rockbridge Area Health Center (RAHC) Executive Director Suzanne Sheridan reviewed the grant recently received to assist with transitioning from a "free clinic" to a federally qualified health clinic. All changes had to be completed within 120 days, with an "active date" of March 1, 2014. Ms. Sheridan explained their two-part request. The first funding request involved level funding for operating the RAHC in FY 14-15. The second fiscal request was for a one-time \$25,000 contribution toward the RAHC building renovation. Ms. Sheridan went on to inform the Board that 12% of County citizens are below the 100% poverty level. She stated that the RAHC is a 501-[3]C entity with a charitable mission to serve low-income citizens. She detailed that the County's one-time contribution in 2013 towards the purchase of dental equipment resulted in a 70% increase in dental visits. She commented that there's a tremendous need in Rockbridge County for access to health care. If the Board funds the building renovation in FY 14-15, RAHC expects to increase patient rooms from four to eight. Chairman Higgins asked if the \$250,000 received for improvements was a grant or line of credit. Ms. Sheridan stated it was a line of credit. Supervisor Hinty asked what impact RAHC might have on pulling away citizens from the Health Department's services. Ms. Sheridan stated that she's not an expert on the Health Department's customer base, but thought children with Medicaid were the primary focus in the Health' Department's two days per week of operation. Chairman Higgins asked if the RAHC accepted clients with Medicare or Medicaid. Ms. Sheridan said that, as a "health center", they do. She further commented that a prior needs assessment showed that a health center could meet a need in the community. Chairman Higgins asked if research on the functions of the Health Department and RAHC could be completed to find some partnering opportunities to meet the needs of our citizens. Ms. Sheridan replied in the affirmative and added that she's interested in collaboration opportunities to meet needs in the County. Supervisor Ford explained that the Health Department dental program is gradually phasing out as RAHC expands its own dental programs into the public schools. Chairman Higgins concluded by stating the that we not only want to provide excellent education for our children, but we also want them to be healthy and well cared for.

Lexington and Rockbridge Area Director of Tourism Jean Clark told the Board that her organization's annual funding is based solely on local government agreements. She went on to relay that Lexington City Manager Jon Ellestad had recently expressed that one of the things he's most proud of during his tenure was the establishment of a regional tourism program. Ms. Clark also conveyed her appreciation for all the efforts put forward to assist with the final sale of the Natural Bridge. Chairman Higgins asked how much cash Tourism has in reserve. Ms. Clark stated \$360,000 was on hand. Chairman Higgins followed by requesting an explanation as to why that level is so high. Ms. Clark explained that one never knows when the economy might dip down; the savings allows her to market tourism in the event future funding levels are lowered. Chairman Higgins asked how their funding level was impacted in 2008. Ms. Clark responded that funding levels flat-lined. She followed up by informing the Board that she is working on generating a new website for the Tourism Program and looking into what is needed to complete the Wayfinding Signage effort along with Mr. Crickenberger and Ms. Riedesel), and ended by commenting on the need to improve the tourism-related signs on the interstate. Supervisor Lewis commented about the need for major renovations at the Visitor Center, and that the center space is currently leased from Century Link which will not even authorize a broadband connection with another carrier. Supervisor Ford observed that the Rockbridge Area Conservation Council has requested a tourism corridor study, which seems like a great opportunity for the Tourism program to assist with the project via their reserves. Ms. Clark replied that visitor centers should be where people congregate and have an opportunity to spend money. Mr. Suter wrapped up the discussion by expressing his appreciation for Ms. Clark's assistance and funding towards the County's new website. He also mentioned the potential opportunity to have a satellite tourism office at the Natural Bridge.

Mr. Bolster informed the Board that representatives from the Summer Enrichment Program and Talking Books organizations could not attend tonight's budget work session due to scheduling conflicts. Supervisor Hinty asked for confirmation on the funding request from the Summer Enrichment Program.

Chairman Higgins noted that the RACS Board had \$1,000,000 in reserves and asked that future budget submission by external agencies reflect how much they have in reserves. Supervisor Campbell asked that research be completed on how RACS is funded.

Supervisor Ford asked how much of the recent Virginia Horse Center debt service payment remains outstanding and the status on their past-due accounts payable. Mr. Suter indicated that he would contact their Finance Director to get that information.

Adjourn:

It was announced that budget work session #2 was scheduled for March 12, 2014 at 5:30 p.m. in the County Extension Office. With no further business, the budget work session was adjourned by unanimous roll-call vote.