

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  
THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2016 AT 5:30 P.M.

PRESENT: CHAIRMAN J.M. HIGGINS  
MEMBERS: D.W. HINTY, JR., R.R. CAMPBELL,  
R.S. FORD.  
  
ABSENT  
MEMBER: 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.  
and welcomed all in attendance.

**Scheduled Budget Meeting #1:**

Chairman Higgins explained that tonight's budget work session was an opportunity for external agencies to provide the Board information on their fiscal year (FY) 2016-17 budget requests. He also explained the protocol in addressing the Board.

Mr. Bolster followed by giving a concise explanation on how he was managing the session's proceedings. He then called on speakers in the order they had signed up.

Dabney S. Lancaster Community College (DSLCC) President Dr. John J. Rainone introduced himself, DSLCC Educational Foundation President Elaine Nelson, and DSLCC Educational Foundation Executive Director Rachel Thompson. Dr. Rainone observed that DSLCC has offered classes in the Rockbridge region for 20 years, 7 of those in its current Buena Vista location. Overall enrollment is 1,900 students, of whom about 500 are Rockbridge County residents. He added that over 600 students are using the DSLCC Rockbridge Regional Center, 75% of capacity, and that the College is looking at other options to expand in the Rockbridge area. Dr. Rainone remarked that dual enrollment of students in both local high schools has increased by 32% in the last year.

He finished his remarks by informing the Board that DSLCC was requesting level funding of \$68,384 in FY 2017 to support the Rockbridge Regional Center and an additional \$15,000 for The Dabney Promise program to support the effort to make finances a non-issue for Rockbridge County residents. Dr. Rainone then asked Ms. Thompson to make remarks on The Dabney Promise.

Ms. Thompson stated that the DSLCC Educational Foundation has supported DSLCC since 1980 and provided over \$1.5M in scholarships. She explained that The Dabney Promise applications for the following academic year were now available for interested students and that they were due back to DSLCC in Spring 2016. Ms. Thompson also relayed that The Dabney Promise is a tertiary funding source for eligible students with scholarships being the first source, financial aid being the second, and The Dabney Promise bridging any remaining financial gap to pay for DSLCC costs. She also provided some of the student requirements needed as part of funding process: minimum 2.25 GPA, 4 hours of community service, completing the Federal Student Aid application, 1-hour student development training, and two student-orientation sessions. Ms. Thompson ended by saying the community college path can save up to \$15,000 per year compared to the average cost at a 4-year college.

Supervisor Campbell asked what Rockbridge County High School students pay for dual enrollment. Ms. Thompson replied that that the high school pays 100% and that DSLCC charges \$25 per credit hour compared to the typical amount of \$150 per credit hour. Supervisor Campbell also asked if DSLCC admission staff looks at whether the high school diploma is a standard or advanced diploma when evaluating the GPA. Ms. Thompson indicated the type of diploma is not a factor when looking at a student's high school GPA.

Rockbridge County Fire and EMS Director Brandon Mitchell spoke on behalf of the fire services agencies. Mr. Mitchell remarked that representatives from the fire services community met on January 12, 2016 and achieved a consensus to request the following funding levels for FY 2017: a 5% increase in the base contribution to volunteer agencies (except Effinger and Kerrs Creek); continue funding annual testing for fire hose, ground ladder, pump service, aerial apparatus, and self-contained

breathing apparatus inspections; level funding for the Rockbridge County Firefighters Association; and level funding for variable pay. He communicated that county agencies responded to 3,535 calls during the prior year.

Chairman Higgins asked for further explanation on why the Effinger and Kerrs Creek fire & rescue agencies are not receiving increases in the base funding level in FY 2016 and now FY 2017. Mr. Mitchell stated that both agencies were part of the budget-request process the past two fiscal years and are aware of the consensus to level fund each agency both now and in FY 2017.

Mr. Mitchell then presented the FY 2017 budget requests for the EMS agencies. After stating that the EMS community responded to 1,839 incidents in the County during the past year, Mr. Mitchell explained that EMS representatives had reached a consensus to request the following for FY 2017: the County to fund 75% of agency operational budgets; level funding for the Rockbridge Emergency Response Group; adding \$25,000 in funding of annual testing of EMS equipment in a similar fashion as the Board supports fire-service agencies; and continued funding for the Ambulance Services contract. He stated that since contracted staff had started in Fairfield and Glasgow, responses in the first-due area had improved from 55 percent to 85 percent. He also said response levels for Fairfield and Glasgow units have improved to a 90% response capability. Supervisor Higgins asked why the County's cost-share for Lexington's services into the County is up 6.5% in the FY 2017 budget request. Mr. Mitchell explained that the effect of having contracted staff serving in the County will not be seen in the FY 2017 budget because it's based on data from FY 2015 and that the contracted service began in February 2015. Supervisor Ford asked Mr. Mitchell for details on the EMS contracted services budget line increase. Mr. Mitchell responded that the request for an additional \$25,000 is for funding mandatory equipment testing and re-certification, to include stretcher maintenance and cardiac monitors. Supervisor Hinty asked if the County will see the impact of having contracted staff on the County's cost-share for the Lexington Fire and EMS agreement in fiscal year 2018. Mr. Mitchell answered in the affirmative.

Rockbridge County Community Development Director Sam Crickenberger spoke on behalf of three external agencies requesting FY 2016-17 funding support. First, the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission's (CSPDC), annual assessment request - based on a formula of 70 cents per capita has risen to \$17,359 due to a slight upward change in population. He also commented that level funding for the Appalachian Regional Commission and Fields of Gold agritourism programs were included by the CSPDC. He also noted that the Fields of Gold funding request was moved from the Planning and Zoning budget to the Economic Development budget because it ties directly with advancing economic growth. Next, Mr. Crickenberger spoke for the Shenandoah Valley Partnership (SVP), whose funding request has remained level over the past several years, but is up over \$3,000 due to a formula change from 85 cents per capita to \$1 per capita in order to fund more marketing activities. Lastly, Mr. Crickenberger represented the Shenandoah Valley Small Business Development Center (SV-SBDC). He stated that the SV-SBDC funding request is level for FY 2017. The SV-SBDC is provided space in our building to assist Rockbridge County clients with business plan development.

Central Shenandoah Emergency Medical Services Council (CSEMSC) Executive Director Chad Blosser thanked the Board for their continued funding support over past several years and for the opportunity to speak to them about their FY 2017 budget request. He stated the CSEMSC request is based on the formula of \$0.45 per capita, the same over the past 17 years. As a result of a slight gain in Rockbridge County population, the request for FY 2017 is \$10,076. Mr. Blosser stated that the FY 2017 budget includes 20% for operations, to include administration and regional planning, while 80% is for training involving basic, intermediate, and advanced life support for EMTs. He remarked that all programs are accredited with the Virginia Office of EMS. Mr. Blosser also added that the more knowledge-based training has moved to an online format, while the hands-on training remains in a face-to-face medium. He additionally added that the CSEMSC supports the EMS community by maintaining operational protocols, assisting with grant writing, and aiding recruiting/retention efforts. Mr. Blosser ended by saying the CSEMSC has a good working relationship with the County and its volunteer rescue squad community.

Rockbridge Area YMCA Executive Director Alysan Raymond expressed appreciation for the Board's funding the FY 2016 YMCA request of \$1,000 and stated the FY 2017 request is at \$2,000. She indicated that the funding increase supports transportation for children in the reading and math readiness summer program.

Ms. Raymond remarked that the YMCA spent \$13,000 last year on the program and would like to keep from passing along costs to the citizens. She said the summer program uses the Rockbridge Area Transportation Service to transport the children on local field trips, to include the Safari Park, Kendall, and the Rockbridge Area SPCA. Ms. Raymond expanded her comments by communicating that the 10-week summer camp is mostly a daycare program. Supervisor Ford asked if Ms. Raymond would explain the upcoming YMCA organizational changes and what impact they may have on future budget requests. Ms. Raymond answered that nothing was final yet, but the Rockbridge Area YMCA is on the cusp of merging with the YMCA of Roanoke Valley. She expanded her comments by saying no one is losing their job at the Rockbridge Area YMCA, that local fund raising stays in the County, the YMCA of Roanoke Valley is not funding the Rockbridge Area YMCA, and that the major benefit from the merger comes in gaining support in the areas of Human Resources, Marketing, Information Technology, Legal Services, and Grant Writing.

Valley Program for the Aging Service (VPAS) Executive Director Jeri Schaff introduced the new VPAS Regional Director, Laurie Macrae. Ms. Macrae provided the Board of Supervisors a VPAS handout and thanked them for their previous funding support. She stated VPAS is seeking an \$8,394 increase in funding for FY 2017, the first funding increase in over 15 years. Ms. Macrae provided the Board a handout highlighting the impact VPAS is having in the region. She asked the Board to bring awareness to the regional Meals on Wheels program during the 3rd week of March. Ms. Macrae then provided 2015 statistical data on how VPAS is serving the community; they included: 432 individuals aged 60 and above were served; 264 received Medicare guidance, of which 91 citizens were able to realize \$87,000 in medical savings; 26 were assisted with respite care; 56 participated in social programs at the Maury River Senior Center (MRSC); 13 are helped with meals at the MRSC; 37 County residents were supported by the Meals on Wheels program; 6 people are assisted by the Rockbridge Area Transportation Services agency; and more than half of individuals served reside in Rockbridge County.

Blue Ridge Legal Services (BRLS) Executive Director/General Counsel John Whitfield informed the Board the BRLS was a legal aid society covering the Shenandoah Valley. He expressed his appreciation to the Board for their past financial support. Mr. Whitfield then provided information on how BRLS assisted local residents over the past year. He highlighted the following: 82 low-income residents were helped; 2 people were assisted with garnering back wages; 10 were helped through divorce

proceedings; 3 families were saved from foreclosure efforts; 1 person was protected from domestic violence; 2 were able to receive child support; 9 wills were completed; and 2 families moved up from sub-standard housing. Mr. Whitfield said approximately \$74,000 was spent to help local residents with legal assistance. He concluded his remarks by explaining that the BRLS requests funding at \$1 per low-income resident in the locality, resulting in a \$75 increase for FY 2017.

Rockbridge Area Hospice ("Hospice") Executive Director Teri Humphries and Finance Director Donna Conner thanked the Board for their continued funding support for Hospice. Ms. Humphries explained that their non-profit organization's mission has provided support to terminally ill patients and their families since 1984. She stated that during 2015 Hospice provided comprehensive care to 225 patients and offered grief support to over 260 bereaved family members. Ms. Humphries remarked that Hospice provides a critical safety net to Rockbridge County citizens where 12% of the population is below the poverty level and 13% have no health insurance. Hospice is requesting level funding in FY 2017 (\$4,800) for their Good Neighbor Fund. Ms. Humphries remarked that in 2015, the Good Neighbor Fund gave \$6,600 in financial support to those clients either uninsured or under-insured. She also added that the funding provides real, tangible support to clients and helps relieve fundamental stress for patients going through difficult times. Chairman Higgins and Supervisor Hinty expressed their appreciation for the excellent services Hospice provides to our citizens.

Rockbridge Area Relief Association (RARA) Executive Director Kitty Brown stated RARA has served the community for 44 years. She briefly relayed their mission of providing basic human needs of food and safe, warm shelter to those needing assistance. Ms. Brown provided 2015 data: 476 Rockbridge County families were provided assistance with rent and utilities; and 526 families, 52% from the County, were assisted one or more times per month with the food pantry program - this program includes meat and in-season produce. Ms. Brown stated that RARA is asking for a \$1,000 funding increase in FY 2017 (\$12,000 total). She ended by thanking the Board for past, current, and future assistance in helping fund RARA. Chairman Higgins and Supervisor Hinty expressed their thanks for the support RARA provides to our citizens.

Rockbridge Area Occupation Center (RAOC) Executive Director Roy Funkhouser thanked the Board for their previous years of funding support. Mr. Funkhouser stated that RAOC is a non-profit organization that provides employment opportunities to local

citizens with special needs. He indicated that 19 of their employees are Rockbridge County residents. Mr. Funkhouser remarked that RAOC provides transportation to the place of employment for 16 of the 19 County residents. He continued by saying transportation routes run to the northern and southern portions of the County; the RAOC bus transportation cost \$46,000 in FY 2015. Mr. Funkhouser ended his comments by stating RAOC is requesting \$15,747 in funding support in FY 2017 - the same level as FY 2016.

Lime Kiln Theater Executive Director Spencer McElroy introduced their Grant Committee Chairman Brian Dearing and Board Member Grace Crickenberger. Mr. McElroy informed the Board that the Lime Kiln Theater's efforts to revive the organization/venue has resulted in its once again becoming a cornerstone in the community. He added that over the past two years they've invested \$65,000 to make repairs and correct other liabilities after starting 2014 with \$5,000 in their bank account. Mr. McElroy stated that the hard work of volunteers and an active Board helped generate over 10,000 attendees at events in 2015 - 50% of concert goers were from outside of Rockbridge County. He expressed his hope of continued support in local funding, as those dollars are matched with \$6,000 from the Virginia Commission for the Arts Local Government Challenge Grant (50/50 match).

Lexington-Rockbridge County Tourism Program Executive Director Jean Clark expressed her appreciation to the Board members for providing external agencies an opportunity to address them. Ms. Clark explained how the Tourism Program supports economic development for the three local partners. She further commented that the print and digital program is the heart of the tourism function; the printed guide, which is partially grant funded, is almost complete for the upcoming tourism season. Ms. Clark also remarked that quality of life is a key driver in the decision-making process for start-ups, and not the tax rates. She went on to provide updates on funding efforts to connect the Chessie Trail in Rockbridge County, the Woods Creek Trail in Lexington City, and the Buena Vista River Walk; the repurposing activities for the former Bontex property; and the partnership work to secure grant dollars to expand the James River Water Trail from Botetourt County to the Town of Glasgow. Ms. Clark ended her presentation by saying tourism is economic development's first date. Supervisor Campbell asked if the Welcome Center location is suitable to their mission. Ms. Clark responded that they've looked at other locations but found the parking at the current space works well. She added that she hopes VDOT will come up with funds in the future to complete the

Wayfinding Signage project. Chairman Higgins asked if the Tourism organization paid enough in rent to purchase a location of their own. Ms. Clark said they have spoken with representatives about the rent level. Supervisor Campbell then remarked that a Welcome Center appears to have better potential if located near Highway 60 and 11. Chairman Higgins followed by asking if they are budgeting for facility upgrades while renting the current building space. Ms. Clark stated that a location on Route 60 or 11 would allow visitors a better visibility to a welcome center.

Rockbridge Area Habitat for Humanity ("Habitat") Marketing and Development Director Ray-Eric Correia introduced their Executive Director, Lynn Leech. Ms. Leech discussed their mission in serving the Rockbridge community: affordable housing solutions for low-income residents; and making critical house repairs to ensure homes are safe. She went on to provide an update on activities completed during 2015: phase 2 development for the Greenhouse Village project (3rd home of 15); vital maintenance and repairs for low-income residents; and financial training for program participants. Ms. Leech communicated their FY 2017 funding request at \$3,500, a \$1,000 increase over FY 2016; she added that they receive no funding from Habitat's Headquarters or the United Way. Ms. Leech said that ninety cents of every dollar goes directly to their housing programs - they have low overhead. Supervisor Ford asked if the Thompson's Knoll project problems had any negative impact on Rockbridge County. Ms. Leech stated there was no negative impact because Habitat has fulfilled their responsibilities on this project; she added that the Greenhouse Village project is on schedule.

Talking Books Center Supervisor Lisa Eye thanked the Board for the FY 2016 funding which made a huge impact on their budget. She explained that the Talking Books program has provided services for 35 years to the blind and physically handicapped - all clients are provided special equipment for audio books which are sent via free postage. Ms. Eye stated their FY 2017 request is for \$5,884, or \$316 less than FY 2016. She ended by saying that the 2015 cost for serving 49 Rockbridge County residents with approximately 1,800 books was \$3.24 per item.

Rockbridge Regional Library System Director Julie Goyette thanked the Board for their continued funding support. She indicated their FY 2017 funding request is \$588,636, which is down \$14,963 from FY 2016. Ms. Goyette spoke about the Library's mission to power education, cultivating opportunities for learning, fostering the fun in reading, and serving the regional

communities as information professionals. She ended by saying that online services, the mobile library program, and overall circulation are up.

Lexington-Buena Vista-Rockbridge County Chamber of Commerce ("Chamber") Executive Director Tracy Lyons thanked the Board for the FY 2016 funding support and participation with the Chamber. She stated that she's been the Chamber Director for a year. Ms. Lyons explained some of the initiatives they've implemented to build a strong community and to bring businesses into the area: strategic planning development; marketing matrix to determine what to focus on and where to improve services; a balanced budget that increases membership dues for the first time in 10 years; and plans to execute their budget with sound financial management so they don't dip into their reserves. She ended by asking for the Board's support to fund the \$5,000 increase in FY 2017 - a total of \$10,000.

Rockbridge Area Transportation System (RATS) Executive Director Betty LaRock thanked the Board members for their on-going support. Ms. LaRock communicated that RATS has been serving the community for 21 years. She added that during 2015 they transported clients over 340,000 miles; made 17,280 trips (39% of client trips originated in Rockbridge County); served approximately 670 citizens (25% of riders use wheel chairs); supported the YMCA and VPAS programs; with results in a cost per trip total of \$1.54 per mile. Ms. LaRock ended by stating that RATS is asking for level funding in FY 2017 (\$11,763). Chairman Higgins asked how the YMCA gets funding to RATS. Ms. LaRock answered that RATS bills the YMCA summer youth camp, which is heavily transportation-driven program. She also added that RATS has a working relationship with RAHC and other non-profit organizations in the community. Supervisor Hinty asked how emergency policies have progressed since last year's budget presentation. Ms. LaRock answered that RATS has partnered with the Emergency Management Advisory Group to develop multi-layered policies for community, building, and vehicle response procedures. Supervisor Hinty requested written information on the building evacuation response for RATS. Mr. Bolster indicated he would provide Ms. LaRock the email address for Mr. Suter.

Commonwealth's Attorney Chris Billias asked for the opportunity to address the compensation levels for his staff as it relates to his FY 2017 budget request. Mr. Billias stated that in his line of work he fights injustice and that he has injustice in his own office when it comes to local supplementing of wages. He went on to list a number of other local governments in the region that provide a supplement to the Commonwealth's

Attorney offices. His examples included citizen populations served, and the dollar amount and percentage of supplement provided by these local jurisdictions. Mr. Billias explained his request for supplemental wages to equalize pay for his staff in comparison to other regional offices. He added that he didn't want to lose any of his staff to other opportunities in our area. He communicated that Rockbridge County is one of two localities, among 126, that don't provide a supplement to the Commonwealth's Attorney offices. Mr. Billias then reviewed the region's compensation levels for personnel serving in Victim-Witness Coordinator positions. He indicated that the current Rockbridge County-Lexington City coordinator is paid \$2,000 less than others in our region. Supervisor Campbell asked if Mr. Billias had completed a salary survey for our region to ensure it's a compatible comparison. Mr. Billias confirmed that all the data points he communicated were verifiable numbers from the Compensation Board. Supervisor Hinty asked Mr. Billias to provide data on Victim Witness Coordinators in the region. Mr. Billias confirmed that our local coordinator made less than the others and provided a copy of the information to Mr. Bolster. Chairman Higgins asked Mr. Billias if he had provided these funding requests to Lexington City. Mr. Billias responded that he has not approached Lexington City because he believed they would pay a cost-share to the County as part of his office's function. Chairman Higgins stated that we need clarification on whether any compensation increase will involve additional funding support from Lexington. Supervisor Campbell added that we need the answer to this question before making a decision. Supervisor Ford added that the Board will take some time think about Mr. Billias' request as the budget cycle proceeds. Chairman Higgins thanked Mr. Billias for his presentation.

Rockbridge Area Community Services (RACS) Interim Executive Director John Young indicated that RACS was requesting level funding in FY 2017 (\$147,654). Mr. Young provided a breakdown on some of the RACS programs supported by local funding (psychiatric and substance abuse counseling; medical, occupational, and speech therapy). He also explained that 60% of their budget relies on fees generated from the services they provide.

Main Street Lexington Executive Director Stephanie Wilkinson discussed some of the programs, projects, and activities linked to her organization. Ms. Wilkinson remarked that Main Street Lexington offers a public-private partnership for economic well-being in the community; they've been active as an organization for three years; they have involvement on the design committee for downtown Lexington City; they lead the

effort on the semi-annual downtown clean-up days; and they promote visitors to downtown with a goal to put down roots to stay. She ended by stating the Main Street Lexington funding request for FY 2017 is \$750.

Rockbridge SPCA Executive Director Tara Rodi informed the Board that the SPCA is requesting \$177,887 in funding for FY 2017, a \$7,062 increase over the current fiscal year. Ms. Rodi explained that their budget provides for the care and feeding of lost or abandoned dogs and cats, veterinarian services, and vaccinations. She indicated that the SPCS had an increase in adoptions over the past year along with additional animals coming into their facility. Ms. Rodi also discussed how they managed an upper-respiratory virus that impacted cats over the last summer. She indicated staff were able to isolate their feline population and were going to clean out air ducts, which hasn't been done in 5 to 7 years. Several Board members and Mr. Suter expressed their appreciation for the extended time spent in managing on-going citizen concerns. Mr. Suter asked what was the best option for a Rockbridge County citizen to take in order to spay or neuter a cat they've caught. Ms. Rodi answered that Rockbridge Spay, Neuter, and Outpatient Clinic offers those services every other week. Supervisor Campbell asked how feeding cats at unstaffed collection centers impacted the feline population in the County. Ms. Rodi stated that it contributes to the County's overall problem in both their population and diseases. Supervisor Ford remarked that the County will probably have to create a cat ordinance going forward. Ms. Rodi commented that the SPCA would like to be a part of the cat ordinance development.

The Board then discussed budget-related topics after the last presentation. They included:

- Correcting department budget requests discovered during the budget presentation.
- Addressing specific funding requests
  - DSLCC - The Dabney Promise
  - Habitat for Humanity
  - Talking Books Center
  - Chamber of Commerce
  - Lime Kiln Theater
  - Commonwealth's Attorney
  - Sheriff
  - Treasurer
  - Commissioner of the Revenue

- Clerk of the Circuit Court
- Full-time County employee compensation considerations
- As a result of any adjustments, recalculating the overall funding gap between requested expenditures and anticipated revenues for the FY 2017 draft budget

**Adjourn:**

It was announced that the next scheduled budget meeting would take place on February 25th at 5:30 p.m. in the County Extension Meeting Room. With no further business, the budget work session was adjourned by unanimous roll-call vote.