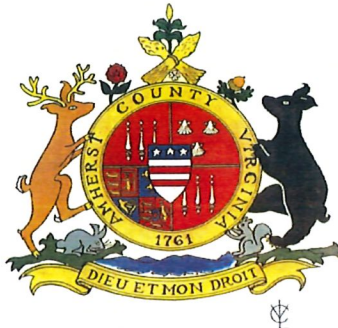


Board of Supervisors

Claudia D. Tucker, Chair
District 2
L. J. Ayers III, Vice-Chair
District 3
David W. Pugh, Jr., Supervisor
District 4
Kenneth M. Campbell, Supervisor
District 1
Jennifer R. Moore, Supervisor
District 5



County Administrator
Dean C. Rodgers

County Attorney
Michael W. S. Lockaby

AMHERST COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTES
AGENDA

August 7, 2018
Administration Building - 153 Washington Street - Public Meeting Room
Amherst, Virginia 24521
Informal Luncheon – 12:00 p.m.
Meeting Convened - 1:00 p.m.

- I. Call to Order**
- II. Approval of Agenda**
- III. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**
- IV. Citizen Comment**
- V. Public Hearing**
 - A. Parsonage Lease
- VI. Ordinance – First Reading**
 - A. Ordinance 2018-0003, amending §7-351, Chapter 7 - Licenses, Permits, Business Regulations, And Derelict Structures, Article XII. Derelict Structures, Blight Abatement & Tax Abatements, to the Code of the County of Amherst.
- VII. Consent Agenda**
 - A. Supplemental Appropriation Request 2018-2019 School Operational Budget
 - B. Minutes – June 19, 2018
 - C. Minutes – July 12, 2018
 - D. Appropriation Request – Sheriff's Office
- VIII. Special Presentation**
 - A. Presentation of ICC High Scholl Technical Training Program Certificates
 - B. Dr. Robert Arnold – Superintendent of Schools
- IX. New Business**
 - A. Joint Board Committee Proposal
 - B. Business Friendliness Discussion
 - C. 60W Convenience Center Appropriation
 - D. Commissioner of the Revenue – Personal Property Tax Relief Act Rate for 2018
- X. County Administrator's Report**
 - A. Boards/Commissions/Committees – Planning Commission District 4 vacancy
 - B. Projects Status Report

- XI. County Attorney's Report**
- XII. Liaison and Committee Reports**
 - A. Local Government Council
 - B. Municipal Planning Organization
 - C. Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance
- XIII. Departmental Reports**
 - A. June 2018 Monthly Treasurer's Report
- XIV. Citizen Comment**
- XV. Matters from Members of the Board of Supervisors**
- XVI. Adjournment**

At a Regular Meeting of the Amherst County Board of Supervisors and held at the Amherst County Administration building, Amherst, Virginia, thereof on Tuesday, the 7th day of August 2018, at 1:00 p.m., the following members were present:

BOARD OF SUPERVISORS:

PRESENT: Claudia D. Tucker, Chair ABSENT: None
 L. J. Ayers, III, Vice-Chair
 David W. Pugh, Jr., Supervisor
 Kenneth M. Campbell, Supervisor
 Jennifer R. Moore, Supervisor

STAFF PRESENT: County Administrator Dean C. Rodgers, Deputy County Administrator
David R. Proffitt; County Attorney Michael W. S. Lockaby; and Executive
Assistant Regina M. Rice

OTHERS PRESENT: Planning/Zoning Director Jeremy Bryant
Building Official Nathan Young
Dr. Robert Arnold, Amherst County Schools Superintendent
Finance Director Stacey Wilkes
Commissioner of the Revenue Jane Irby
Treasurer Joanne Carden

I. Call to Order

Chair Tucker called the meeting to order at 1:00 p.m.

II. Approval of Agenda

By motion of Vice-Chair Ayers and with the following vote, the Board approved the agenda for August 7, 2018.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore
NAY: None
ABSENT None

III. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance

Chair Tucker led the Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance.

IV. Citizen Comment

Mr. Bill Peters of Amherst, Virginia, addressed the Board and asked that both projection screens be enlarged in order for the audience to see.

Mr. Peters asked that the EDA business friendliness recommendations document be made available to the public. Mr. Peters requested that document be provided under the Freedom of Information Act and posted to the County's website. Mr. Peters further stated the public has not been provided copies of information that is being presented today.

County Administrator Rodgers said that the slides were public record and the items today, which were just received, will be made a part of public record and posted.

Mr. John Marks, Jr. of Madison Heights, Virginia, addressed the Board regarding Waukeshaw Development. **(See Attachment 1)**

Mr. Frank Campbell of Madison Heights, Virginia, addressed the Board and stated he also had a copy of the July 8, 2018 email and was saddened and disheartened by the leadership of this County.

Mr. Campbell read several sentences from an email dated July 8, 2018 from Chair Tucker to the Board of Supervisors: "...the BoS members are incompetent at best or downright unethical at worse when it comes to decisions made on capital improvements and spending measures relative to the county budget." ... "we spent thousands of tax payers dollars to response to two citizens claims that we didn't really know what we were doing." **(See Attachment 2)**

Chair Tucker asked that the record show that Mr. Campbell began reading in the middle of the sentence and did not start at the beginning of the sentence, however, it is word for word about half way through the sentence.

Mr. Alan Wood of Madison Heights, Virginia, addressed the Board regarding the future impact of current spending on the County's financial condition. Mr. Wood asked that his document be included in the minutes of this meeting. Mr. Wood asked the Board to contact him if they had further questions. **(See Attachment 3)**

V. Public Hearing

A. Parsonage Lease

Purchasing Agent David Proffitt presented a report to the Board regarding the reassessment to be conducted by Wampler-Eanes for the County's 2020 real estate reassessment. The County has offered the "Parsonage House" for its employees to use on a month-to-month basis. The rental will be \$550.00 per month for a minimum of twelve months.

The Public Hearing was opened.

Proponents: none

Opponents: none

The Public Hearing was closed.

Supervisor Pugh stated that all records currently stored at the parsonage will be under lock and key, and only a part of the parsonage will be used by Wampler-Eanes.

Mr. Rodgers commented that the main floor will be used for office space and the two bedrooms upstairs will be used for those employees.

By motion of Vice-Chair Pugh and with the following vote, the Board authorized the County Administrator to execute the lease agreement between Amherst County and the Wampler-Eanes Appraisal Group, LTD.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore
NAY: None
ABSENT None

VI. Ordinance – First Reading

A. Ordinance 2018-0003, amending §7-351, Chapter 7 - Licenses, Permits, Business Regulations, And Derelict Structures, Article XII. Derelict Structures, Blight Abatement & Tax Abatements, to the Code of the County of Amherst.

Planning/Zoning Director Jeremy Bryant presented his report to the Board regarding an amendment to Section 7-351 of County Code. This amendment would reduce the costs of building and demolition permits, therefore encouraging redevelopment and offering a tax abatement for rehab of certain structures.

Mr. Bryant advised that the Planning Commission approved Ordinance 2018-0003 at a public hearing held on July 19, 2018.

By motion of Supervisor Campbell and with the following vote, the Board authorized staff to advertise Ordinance 2018-0003 for a public hearing on September 18, 2018.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore
NAY: None
ABSENT None

VII. Consent Agenda

A. Supplemental Appropriation Request 2018-2019 School Operational Budget
B. Minutes – June 19, 2018
C. Minutes – July 12, 2018
D. Appropriation Request – Sheriff's Office

By motion of Vice-Chair Ayers and with the following vote, the Board approved the Consent Agenda for August 8, 2018.

AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore
NAY: None
ABSENT None

VIII. Special Presentation

A. Presentation of ICC High School Technical Training Program Certificates

Building Official Nathan Young advised the Board of the International Code Council's High School Technical Training Program. This program is a workforce development initiative partnering with Amherst County High School students, the Economic Development Authority and the Building and Inspections Department. All three candidates who completed the program learned about building codes, proper techniques and understanding and navigating a code book.

Chair Tucker presented certificates to three successful candidates; Mr. Matthew Cargill, Mr. Eric Pilat and Mr. Collin Cunningham.

B. Dr. Robert Arnold – Superintendent of Schools

Dr. Arnold introduced himself and thanked the Board of Supervisors for their commitment to public education. He asked the Board to return on a monthly basis to provide the Board with updates.

Chair Tucker thanked Dr. Arnold and looked forward to working with him and the Schools.

IX. New Business

A. Joint Board Committee Proposal

Dr. Robert Arnold, School Superintendent, addressed the Board and proposed the creation of a Joint Board Committee to discuss topics between the School Board and the Board of Supervisors. Dr. Arnold explained this committee would have two members from each board, the County Administrator and the School Superintendent. The committee would meet quarterly.

By motion of Supervisor Campbell and with the following vote, the Board approved the creation of a Joint Board Committee and directed the County Administrator, in conjunction with the School Superintendent, to develop a Charter for the Board's approval.

AYE:	Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore
NAY:	None
ABSENT	None

Mr. Rodgers suggested that the charter be brought back to the Board to identify those two members who would serve on that committee.

B. Business Friendliness Discussion

Economic Director Victoria Hanson addressed the Board regarding the Business Friendliness initiative. Ms. Hanson provided the Board with a ranking sheet and explanation. **(See Attachment 4)**

Ms. Hanson said the EDA has prioritized the list, which she has provided to the Board today. She said that once the Board completes the scoring, that information will be compiled into a new list and will be supplied at the September 4th Board of Supervisors meeting. Ms. Hanson said each item will be ranked and a new list will be generated that will be more manageable.

Chair Tucker stated that the Board just received this information today, and asked Board members how long it would take to do a preliminary ranking.

Supervisor Pugh said it would be appropriate to discuss this again before ranking. He said some items on the list he does not agree with and will not support.

Mr. Rodgers explained how the sheet would be ranked and the Board can plan how to prioritize these and then have a discussion.

Chair Tucker made a request to bring this back with the Board's ranking for further discussion at the next day meeting.

It was the Board's consensus to direct staff to prepare the list of recommendations for prioritization by the Board and present the results at the next meeting.

Mr. Rodgers said that at the September 4th meeting the Board and the public will see how these items are ranked.

C. 60W Convenience Center Appropriation

Finance Director Stacey Wilkes addressed the Board regarding the request for an additional appropriation of \$176,000 for costs associated with the construction of the 60W convenience center. She explained the first appropriation was to cover the original estimate for building the convenience center and purchase of the land.

Ms. Wilkes said that due to having to disturb over one acre of land, the new estimate is \$130,000 more to construct. The engineering fees of \$36,000 were not budgeted into the original estimate.

By motion of Chair Tucker and with the following vote, the Board appropriated \$176,000 from the unobligated general fund balance for costs associated with the construction of the 60W convenience center.

AYE:	Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore
NAY:	None
ABSENT	None

Supervisor Pugh commented on unmanned trash compactors located in Bedford and Nelson counties that are located on the side of the roads. He asked if the Board should consider doing the same to cut down on the costs of operating manned convenience centers.

Chair Tucker asked the County Administrator to explore this option.

D. Commissioner of the Revenue – Personal Property Tax Relief Act Rate for 2018

Commissioner of the Revenue Jane Irby addressed the Board regarding the personal property tax relief of 36.6% that she has calculated.

By motion of Supervisor Pugh and with the following vote, the Board approved the PPTR Rate for 2018 of 36.6%.

AYE:	Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore
NAY:	None
ABSENT	None

X. County Administrator's Report

A. Boards/Commissions/Committees – Planning Commission District 4 vacancy

Mr. Rodgers advised the Board there are two applicants applying for the District 4 Planning Commission vacancy, Mr. John Lange and Mr. Michael Bryant.

Supervisor Pugh suggested that both applicants be contacted for interview by the Board, which will be at the September 4, 2018 meeting.

By motion of Supervisor Pugh and with the following vote, the Board directed staff to schedule interviews of both applicants on September 4, 2018

AYE:	Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore
NAY:	None
ABSENT	None

B. Projects Status Report

Mr. Rodgers reminded the Board that the County Fair is going very well with advertisements and volunteers.

Mr. Rodgers reminded the Board of the retreat on August 10, 2018 at the Florence Elston Inn, Sweet Briar College, beginning at 9:00 a.m. This retreat is open to the public.

Supervisor Pugh asked about a VDOT "Highway Enhancement Area" sign located in the Madison Heights area. Supervisor Pugh asked the County Administrator to check with Don Austin of VDOT to find out what this is about.

XI. County Attorney's Report

XII. Liaison and Committee Reports

- A. Local Government Council
- B. Municipal Planning Organization
- C. Lynchburg Regional Business Alliance

For the Board's information only.

XIII. Departmental Reports

A. June 2018 Monthly Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Joanne Carden explained the monthly treasurer's report to the Board. She advised that the Board adopted an ordinance in 2011 requesting that the Treasurer submit a monthly report with investments and bank accounts, and all of the taxes collected in real estate and personal property. She said the percentage collection rate of taxes for both personal property and real estate is currently at 95-96%, which is very positive.

Supervisor Moore asked Ms. Carden for an explanation regarding the Real Estate Outstanding sheet.

Ms. Carden explained this sheet shows what is outstanding for that particular month. She said that prior years stay on the books for twenty years. She explained if delinquent taxes are owed two years or more, that would be turned over for a tax sale; however, she explained her office sets up payment agreements to assist folks who owe delinquent taxes and to help them avoid losing their home or property.

XIV. Citizen Comment

Mr. Bill Peters of Amherst, Virginia addressed the Board regarding economic development in the County and suggested that the Board appoint a person as an open authority working with those consultants.

Chair Tucker said that person would be the Economic Director working with the County Administrator.

Mr. Peters also asked the Board to adhere to the Rules of Procedure and to cooperate with one another working out differences.

Mr. Mike Henderson of Madison Heights, Virginia, thanked the Board on behalf of the School Board for approval of the supplemental appropriation for the School's budget this year, and the creation of the Joint Board Committee.

Mr. Henderson expressed his appreciation and response to the trash dumping at Bateau Lane and commented that Galts Mill Road is noticeably cleaner and appreciated the Board's support.

XV. Matters from Members of the Board of Supervisors

Supervisor Moore had no matter to discuss.

Supervisor Campbell had no matter to discuss.

Supervisor Pugh asked about the quarterly financial report from the Finance Department and when the Board would receive this.

Finance Director Wilkes advised the report will be available in September.

Vice-Chair Ayers had no matter to discuss.

Chair Tucker had no matter to discuss.

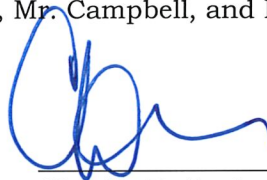
XVI. Adjournment

By motion of Supervisor Pugh and with the following vote, the Board adjourned at 2:10 p.m.

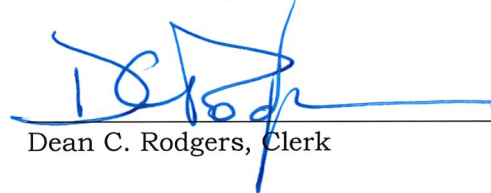
AYE: Mrs. Tucker, Mr. Ayers, Mr. Pugh, Mr. Campbell, and Ms. Moore

NAY: None

ABSENT: None



Claudia D. Tucker, Chair
Amherst County Board of Supervisors



Dean C. Rodgers, Clerk

Presentation to the Amherst County Board of Supervisors
August 7th, 2018

Good evening Board Members. My name is John A. Marks, Jr., I reside at 225 Clark Street in Madison Heights, Va.

Several weeks ago I heard a comment that made me wonder if Waukeshaw was considering exiting the Phelps Road School project by utilizing one of the options available in the Performance Agreement governing this project. Since I have addressed issues at that property on three different occasions with the Board of Supervisors I thought I should explore the matter further. I did so through the mechanism of the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA). What I received as a result of this inquiry, at the ridiculous price of \$220, was, based on the Chair's comments, a confirmation that, in fact, Waukeshaw may be considering exiting the Phelps Road School project.

Contained in the information from the FOIA was an email from the Board Chair to members of the Board of Supervisors, dated July 8, 2018, with the subject "Food for thought." Time does not allow the quoting of several long paragraphs from the email, however I will briefly summarize the perception of the email. The fact that some citizens have expressed concern to this board about spending and I have expressed concern about situations at Phelps Road School the email indicates we are trying to destabilize the county and prevent Waukeshaw from being successful at Phelps Road School and we are and I quote "a group of small minded, negative thinking, self centered individuals who want to stop progress." End of quote.

I want to set the record straight on the Phelps Road property. When the Board of Supervisors, of which I was then a member, decided to enter into a contract concerning Phelps Road School the decision was made that the county would not leave itself open to the type of situations previously experienced with this property. Hence the generation of the Performance Agreement with specific agreed to criteria. As previously stated I have spoken to the Board three times concerning issues at Phelps Road School where I felt the Performance Agreement was not being complied with. I

believe the records and the subsequent reactions will verify that I was correct in my statements each time. What I requested to be taken care of was nothing more than what the Performance Agreement required. Why did I do that? I did it because it became apparent to me that no one was paying attention to what was going on at the property, not this Board or the EDA, that we were sliding back into previous conditions and the purpose of the Performance Agreement was to prevent that from happening. As a concerned citizen and in support of the long suffering residents of Phelps Road I felt it was my responsibility to point these things out.

The implication in this email that Waukeshaw can not be successful doing business in Amherst County and will probably exit the Phelps Road project because John Marks keeps requesting that the conditions set forth in the Performance Agreement relative to Phelps Road School be adhered to, and that my doing so is an attempt to destabilize the county is, in my opinion, ridiculous. As a matter of fact promoting the story that Waukeshaw would exit the project and could not be successful in Amherst County because they were being required to comply with the criteria they agreed to in the Performance Agreement, would probably not go well with the company. What company wants it said about them that they could not be successful here because the county expected them to comply with the contract. Waukeshaw has built into the agreement four options for exiting the Phelps Road School project, and they do not need an excuse such as this.

My second issue deals with the overall perception that comes out in this email, and the responses from board members and staff. If you do not agree with what the Board is doing and question or present another viewpoint then that is, according to the Chair's email: inappropriate, an attempt to destabilize the county, you are a small minded, negative thinking, self centered person that wants to stop progress in the county. For county citizens that take the time to obtain and study budgets, agendas and take the time to attend meetings of this Board in order to participate in their county government, to learn that they are held in this type of contempt by some of the Board members and Administrative personnel is certainly discouraging. One Board member responded to this email by saying "Well stated. It may come to a point we need to take them behind the woodshed." Mr. Campbell I say to

you I would like very much to meet you behind the proverbial woodshed to discuss this matter, and I will pay for lunch. I notice the County Administrator also liked the email responding back, "This could be turned into an opinion piece (or at least a letter to the editor) about how Amherst is leaving past leaders and stereotypes behind."

I have been hearing about a "basket of deplorables" so I guess I am now one, along with any other citizen that would speak out.

Perhaps this FOIA request was worth the \$220 I was charged since the email and subsequent responses certainly provides an insight into how certain board members and staff view with contempt citizens that would dare express a different viewpoint.

1. Food for thought

From: cdtucker@CountyOfAmherst.com
To: Board_of_Supervisors%AMHERST@COUNTYOFAMHERST.COM
Cc: dcrogers@countyofamherst.com, mlockaby@CountyOfAmherst.com
Sent Date: Jul 08, 2018 17:29:14
Subject: Food for thought
Attachment:

Board members,

I've been concerned with the growing vitriol and inappropriate activities by a very small number of citizens directed at the progress being made at Phelps Road School and allegations that the BoS members are incompetent at best or downright unethical at worse when it comes to decisions made on capital improvements and spending measures relative to the county budget. While we may not vote unanimously on all budget items, I am confident that all members have done their due diligence and vote their conscience and want what's best for all of our citizens.

I ask you as the governing body for the County to remember that the remarks and actions by Mr. Marks and Mr. Wood represent a VERY small voice of Amherst County. I have made it a point over the holiday and this week to talk to an many citizens as I could about how they think the County is being run and if they like the progress that we are making. What I have heard is a resounding YES and a reminder not to let a small group cause us to question the forward momentum.

For the first time in the history of the County, we have a qualified person dedicated as a Chief Financial Officer who is in charge of our finances which allows us to know how much money we have and processes in place that allow for budgeting projections; we are aggressively setting aside money for upcoming large expenditures and have a capital improvement plan not only for the Schools but for the County as a whole. You will recall that Mr Ayres suggested and the Board approved asking Brown Edwards to conduct an analyses of our spending to respond to allegations made by Marks and Wood that we were spending at an unsustainable rate. While our books have been reviewed by our auditors and found to be in order, we spent thousands of tax payer dollars to respond to two citizens claims that we didn't really know what we were doing. That report is not yet complete, so the BoS doesn't have a copy but I expect that we will receive it soon. In the meantime, Mr. Wood contacted Brown Edwards on his own without even a courtesy heads up to the County. I'm not privy to the details of the conversation, but in my opinion it was highly inappropriate and could be interpreted as bullying or intimidation. At best, it was bad judgment on his part. Consider this...if Mark Larbardee or even a former County Administrator Rodney Taylor had tried to intercept a county directed work product, we would have all been outraged.

This has nothing to do with the budget but everything to do with power. I ask you to recall the days when Amherst County was in the paper just about every week and were called the "revolving

door County" when it came to County Administrators. What we are seeing with these activities is an attempt to de-stabilize this County. Mr. Marks and his cronies will not be happy until the County takes back Phelps Road School and spends tax payer money to tear it down. They won't be happy until all hiring of new position is curtailed, the EDA is dismantled and we cease doing anything that's creative and forward thinking in the County. This is the key point and I want all of you to think about this long and hard. Dave McCormick has worked successfully with localities all over Virginia and they have nothing but good things to say about him; but apparently Amherst is just "different" and he can't be successful here. That story will be in the paper and their goal of causing an unstable environment in Amherst will be accomplished. And it will be done without the elected officials having a thing to do with it if we don't see this for what it is right now. Lastly, with what they are trying to do, consider how that will impact the decision of Runk and Pratt or others who attempt to invest or do business in Amherst. They won't and it will be because we...as elected officials didn't stand up to a group of small minded, negative thinking, self-centered individuals who want to stop progress.

I urge you to stay the course and listen to your constituents. They like what they are seeing - we just need to up our volume on positivity.

Thank you.

Claudia

Good afternoon.

My name is Alan Wood. I reside at 297 Berg Drive.

On June 19, I came forward to provide information for you to consider regarding the financial condition of Amherst County. As I stated, tax policy and spending decisions are political issues that only you have the power to decide. Staff provides information to help you with these decisions. Citizens can only share expertise and ideas to assist you work through the options before you as you make decisions. In this case, I hoped to help you understand the future impact of current spending on Amherst County's financial condition. For those of you unaware of my knowledge of Amherst County's finances and my analytical skills, please know that I found errors in the FY19 Budget and communicated directly with a Board member and with staff about them. With respect to the information presented on July 17, I feel it is important for all of you to hear the analysis.

While it is fortunate you had previously agreed in May to get a deeper analysis of this matter, it would have been more transparent and respectful for Board members and citizens to have received the Report well in advance of your meeting so anyone could participate at that time. Unfortunately, that did not occur. Second, I understood that the purpose of this analysis was to gain an independent assessment based on current spending and current tax rates. Any changes to assumptions regarding spending or tax rates would change the results. Unfortunately, the Report is not an independent Report. It is a staff report in which Brown Edwards, by their own statements, did little more than proofread it and check the math. I hope you didn't pay them much for the little work they did.

Perhaps if they had done an independent analysis, they would have noted that the amounts you had previously appropriated for FY18 supplemental items as well as amounts that had been committed or assigned to specific purposes are not available to the Board to be spent based on current policy. As a result, the Report is flawed due to this major change in current spending assumptions.

Notably, this change itself supports the point that you must either decrease spending – as this assumption by staff accomplished – or increase revenues to delay running out of money.

Unfortunately, that is not the only issue that arose from the presentation on July 17. Mr. Pugh inquired if all of the \$3+ million identified as Funds for FY18 Supplemental Appropriations, Assigned Funds, and Committed Funds was in fact available to be spent in light of previous decisions by the Board. The response received was yes. That response is inaccurate. Let's review some examples from the list prepared by staff.

FY18 Supplemental Appropriations (we are in FY19)

Tourism

ACPS CIP

Sheriff Fine Revenue

Riveredge Grant

County Fair

Learning Lane

My first reaction is to point out it would be rather cavalier to say that you can simply change your mind about how to spend the funds in these accounts. Doing so would have real world consequences as well as political consequences. However, in this case, a more important point is that a significant share of the funds in question are either unavailable to the Board due to restrictions (e.g., lodging tax dollars in the tourism fund) or because they have already been spent.

Citizens have shared information because we are concerned about the financial impact of spending almost \$2 million more than is received annually on Amherst County's future. We shared our insights to help with your deliberations respectfully and in good faith. Yes, inconvenient facts are not always welcome. However, ours is a free society that encourages citizen participation at all levels of government. By considering all information and all points of view, the framers of our government hoped that it would ensure elected leaders were responsive to the people and would make the best decisions. I hope that a majority of you can engage in a discussion of the facts and the options and will repudiate disgusting national style political tactics such as name calling, ill-defined slogans, insults, and personal attacks that serve only to evade a discussion of the facts and choices.

I conclude by reinforcing one fact: staff's report agrees with what you heard from the citizens who spoke on this subject. On our current spending path, Amherst County will run out of money. The only difference is that staff assumed changes in spending that pushed that date further out than the timeframe I suggested. Therefore, we all agree that the current path is unsustainable.

The choices are simple, even if they are not easy. Keep spending liberally until the savings account is depleted and increase taxes a lot. Begin spending more conservatively to slow down the depletion of the savings account and to avoid, or at least minimize, increases in taxes for citizens.

Oddly enough, the presentation and discussion afterwards on July 17 support this point. The assumption that FY18 Supplemental Appropriations, Assigned Funds, and Committed Funds are still available in the General Fund because you have, in the words of staff, 'the option to change how you use these funds' is an assumption based on your not spending these funds on the prescribed uses. In other words, this assumption reduces these

expenditures and allows the general fund to last longer before it is depleted. Later, the Chair compared the current tax rate to that from 40 years earlier and said that five cents added to the tax rate would 'only cost a taxpayer with an \$150,000 home \$75.00.' In other words, the Chair feels more revenue is needed and there is an argument for raising taxes.

As you ponder these points and recognize it is necessary to begin discussions about Amherst County's financial condition, allow me to add context. You are running a deficit of almost \$2,000,000 this year alone. This is without additional funding for our schools or, obviously, putting aside funds for future needs or unexpected expenses (rather than using up previous funds accrued for such purposes). If your solution is as The Temptations sang '... more taxes will solve everything', a nickel added to the real estate tax revenue rate will not be enough.

I am providing a copy of my comments to staff and request that they be added to the Minutes. I also invite any of you to contact me if you would like to discuss this matter further.

Thank you.

County of Amherst

ID #	Recommendations	Department	Cost Est.	EDA	Moore	Pugh	Ayers	Campb	Tucker	Board	Comments
1	Policy instead of ordinances for flexibility in decision making	Board of Supervisors	Staff time								
2	Review ordinances and special exceptions and make recommendations	Community Dev.	Staff time								
3	Consultant to study the best tax structure, fees, and incentives for the County	EDA/Comm. Of Revenue	\$10,000								
4	More decision making authority for Director of Comm. Development	Community Dev.	Staff time								
5	Website review for business friendliness for County and Constitutional	EDA/IT	Staff time								
6	Industry specific start up kits, Checklist/Guide for permits/processes, offer classes and provide personal guidance through permitting/project processes	EDA	\$6000 & Staff time								
7	Administration Building entrance assistance for visitors: staff, volunteer, signage, kiosk option	Admin.	TBD								
8	Communicate with VDOT officials about County business related issues	Community Dev.	Staff time								
9	Reevaluate the drain field requirements to match State requirements	Community Dev.	Staff time								
10	Digital sign/s in key areas of the County	Chamber/Tourism	\$30-100,000								
11	Buy local campaign	Chamber	\$2,500								
12	Customer service training for County and Constitutional staff	HR	\$1,300								
13	Pre-development meetings with key departments & organizations	Community Dev.	Staff time								
14	Provide business resource & financing information to small businesses	EDA	\$2000 & Staff time								
15	Unify County merchant services for credit card fees	Finance/IT	TBD								
16	Quarterly meetings with key departments and Constitutional that interact with businesses	EDA	Staff time								
17	Produce a video of local businesses for publicity before public meetings/schools	Chamber, Tourism&EDA	\$3,500								

Additional Information - EDA Business Friendliness Recommendations

Item #

1. Recommendation: Policy instead of ordinances for flexibility in decision making.

Changes in code was ranked #1 in the Business Survey. In order for the County to demonstrate their intent to be business friendly, businesses need to see the County is committed to change. Policies, regulations, and codes should have the flexibility to say "yes" to the right project rather than uncompromising code that gives no leeway for a great project to be approved. (presentation slides 10-12)

2. Recommendation: Planning Commission begin a review process of ordinances that are over-regulatory and make recommendations of modifications to the Board of Supervisors, as well as reviewing all special exceptions and consider if they should be a by right use. A key implementation of Item #2 is for the Planning Commission to begin a thorough review process of ordinances and special exceptions, as well as reviewing cell phone tower ordinances to encourage improved cell/broadband coverage. (presentation slides 13-14)

3. Recommendation: Hire a consultant to assess the County tax structure and recommend changes, as well as recommend what local, state, or federal tax programs/designations Amherst County should create or pursue, special reduced tax districts or zones that receive grant funds to encourage development. In conjunction with the tax structure review, analyze Amherst County's current incentives and fees and recommend new incentives and grants for start-up businesses and existing businesses.

Tax breaks, grants and incentives were ranked #1 in the Business Survey and a change in tax structure was ranked #7. The community has complained about the Merchants Capital tax for years, calling it a inventory inhibitor, and specifically the ability for some business to move their inventory out of the County on Dec. 31 and avoid the tax. The business license tax on business gross receipts versus income is another issue. Incentives, tax breaks and grants are complicated and align with the tax structure so a combined review by a consultant would be most effective. (presentation slides 20-25)

4. Recommendation: More flexible zoning and allow the Planning & Zoning director more leeway to make zoning decisions. Businesses wanted quicker turnaround time for permits and less red tape. (presentation slides 13-14)

5. Recommendation: County website review for business user friendliness: Information & forms available and easily found, downloadable & fillable PDFs. Business friendly is all about making it easier to do business in Amherst County. Being able to easily find what you are looking for, understand what's needed, combined with the ability to download forms and submit paperwork and payment online, helps simplify and speed up the process. (presentation slides 10-30)

6. Recommendations: Industry specific business start-up kits; Guide/Checklist with a map for permits, projects; Inform business community of County updates and initiatives. Starting a business can be an overwhelming. Expanding businesses can also find the process for rezoning, adding on to their building, or permitting to be confusing, time-consuming, and frustrating. By providing a variety

of resources such as industry specific start-up kits, checklists, and guides, we can help achieve the goal of making it easy it is to start, operate, and expand a business in Amherst County. (presentation slides 23-25)

7. Recommendation: When people enter the County Administration building, there is no person or sign to direct them. Have an employee or trained volunteer at the entrance of the County Administration Building to assist & direct visitors. One option would be to move the information officer to the entrance. A second option would be to have an information kiosk or sign at the entrance. As business people or citizens walk through the front doors of the Administration building, especially for the first time, it is confusing as there is no signage - only a locked door. On several occasions the EDA staff has led citizens to departments that they were looking for. A friendly face, kiosk, and/or signs would help all visitors to the Administration building. (presentation slides 29-30)

8. Recommendations: Land use issues commonly require permits and review from VDOT. Often times, the regulations and policies of the Department can be difficult for professionals and citizens alike. County staff is willing to hold a monthly roundtable to help foster a climate of partnership and open communication. Planning & Zoning liaison who assists business owners with VDOT issues. Discussion with Amherst VDOT representative about willingness to be creative and flexible in approach to projects
Self Explanatory (presentation slides 31-33)

9. Recommendation: Consider reducing the drain field requirement to match the State. Amherst County requires a 100% reserve drain field when the State only requires a 50% reserve. Developers and builders have said this has had a direct effect on housing growth in Amherst as it can make a lot size significantly larger and therefore more expensive. Additionally, because of the topography it can be difficult to include a 100% reserve field. If housing lots are more expensive it has an effect on affordability for people who are buying homes in Amherst. Surrounding localities offer options to the 100% reserve requirement. Building is an industry that creates economic activity and jobs. When subdivisions are built subcontractors and suppliers are needed. (presentation slides 10-12)

10. Recommendation: Digital Sign/s at Madison Heights entryways for positive news/events and highlighting Amherst County businesses. Amherst County has great news and events but getting that information out to the community is a challenge. People are getting their news from many diverse sources (social media, internet) rather than just newspapers and TV. Digital signs would be a great way to inform the public about County events, news, and businesses and help connect Madison Heights and the northern end of the County. (presentation slides 26-27)

11. Recommendation: Buy local campaign. Businesses noted that many Amherst residents are spending their retail dollars outside of the County (retail leakage) which has a negative effect on their business and deprives Amherst of taxes. A buy local campaign will inform the community of the value local businesses provide and increase awareness of the many businesses located in Amherst County. The County government could lead by example by considering buying local when possible. (presentation slides 26-27)

12. Recommendation: Customer Service training for frontline personnel “We are excited you want to do business in Amherst County!” Self Explanatory (presentation slides 10-30)

13. Recommendation: Monthly pre-development meetings with key departments & organizations. This monthly meeting would give a business the opportunity to meet with all key departments about their development idea and find out about potential issues before the business invests a lot of time and money. (presentation slides 13-14)

14. Recommendation: Provide business resource & financing information to small and start up businesses through information at key County locations, including the Commissioner of the Revenue, Treasurer, Planning & Zoning, Inspections, Libraries, Clerk of Courts, etc. Self Explanatory (presentation slides 23-25)

15. Recommendation: Unify merchant services for lowest credit card processing fee (when updated financial software is purchased and implemented) and a uniform County credit card fee. Consider eliminating transaction fees. Each department has a separate credit card company they are working with and there is no consistency in policy or fees. In most cases a fee is charged based on the percentage of the transaction and then an additional 50 cents for each transaction. Eliminating the 50 cent transaction fee charge would simplify the charge. (presentation slides 10-12)

16. Recommendation: Regular meetings of EDA, County Departments, Clerk of Courts, Treasurer, Health Department, VDOT and Commissioner of the Revenue to get a better understanding of each other's departments and procedures regarding business interaction or issues. It is important that all departments that come in contact with businesses understand each other's procedures and how the system is connected. Regular communication can help streamline the process for businesses and reduce confusion. (presentation slides 10-11, 29-30)

17. Recommendation: Produce a video that showcases Amherst businesses and run the video at the welcome center, on social media, the County's website, at public meetings, at the high school, etc., for a reasonable fee to the businesses. Advertising is a large and expensive part of the budget for many small businesses. A video would be a way to promote Amherst County and its businesses. (presentation slides 26-27)