

MINUTES
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
COUNTY OF YORK

Regular Meeting
August 3, 2021

6:00 p.m.

Meeting Convened. A Regular Meeting of the York County Board of Supervisors was called to order at 6:00 p.m., Tuesday, August 3, 2021, in the Board Room, York Hall, by Chairman W. Chad Green.

Attendance. The following members of the Board of Supervisors were present: Walter C. Zaremba, Sheila S. Noll, W. Chad Green, G. Stephen Roane, Jr. and Thomas G. Shepperd, Jr.

Also in attendance were Neil A. Morgan, County Administrator; Mark L. Bellamy, Deputy County Administrator; James E. Barnett, County Attorney; and Heather L. Schott, Legislative Assistant.

Chairman Green announced that the Board would first consider and act on the Consent Calendar which consists of a purchase authorization for new Fire and Rescue apparatus replacement and recognition of those York County employees who worked on the Virginia Task Force 2, Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) Team that was recently deployed to the structural collapse in Surfside, Florida. He then called on Fire Chief, Stephen Kopczynski, to come forward to provide the Board with the details on both of the consent calendar items.

CONSENT CALENDAR

The Consent Calendar was considered and **approved on a vote of 5:0.** A summary of actions taken are below.

Chief Kopczynski stated that approximately 25 years ago, the County established a routine replacement plan for fire rescue apparatus that reaches or exceeds its useful life. He explained how critical it is to the Fire and Life Safety Department to have apparatus that provides the necessary quick, appropriate response in emergency situations while safeguarding the health and well-being of the employees using the apparatus. He pointed out that this is not about adding additional equipment, but rather ensuring that the equipment is fully operational when needed. Regarding the FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Task Force 2 Team, Chief Kopczynski stated that three employees of the County's Fire and Rescue Department, Captain Robert Kudley, Captain Reginald Rivera and Captain Justin LeDuc, serve as members of this team. As such, he stated that they were deployed in July to Surfside, Florida for the purpose of recovering the remains of the unfortunate victims of the collapsed building. In closing, he stated that he is very proud of these three men who served honorably in that deployment.

Mrs. Noll expressed her sincere gratitude to the three Captains for the difficult job they did in Florida and she also thanked Chief Kopczynski for his fine leadership of the Fire and Life Safety Department.

Mr. Zaremba concurred with Mrs. Noll's comments and also expressed his pride in the Fire and Life Safety Department. Regarding the purchase of apparatus replacement, he asked what happens to the old equipment that is replaced.

In response, Chief Kopczynski stated that sometimes the equipment is placed into reserve status as backup equipment; however, in this specific case the old equipment is traded into the dealership who will either recycle it or dispose of it appropriately.

Mr. Roane voiced his appreciation to the three Fire and Life Safety employees who as part of the Virginia FEMA team helped in the recovery effort at the collapsed building site in Florida. He

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also asked about the replacement schedule for fire/rescue equipment and how long is the lifespan of such equipment.

Chief Kopczynski stated that the typical lifespan is usually 10 years frontline and five years reserved. However, he stated that in a few cases they have been able to use a piece of equipment for 20 years, which is dependent upon availability of parts and maintenance costs. He also noted that they rely heavily on the Vehicle Maintenance Department to help in determining when equipment needs to be replaced.

Mr. Shepperd sought confirmation that the Virginia Task Force 2 is composed of a total of 80 firefighters and Emergency Medical Services (EMS) members.

Chief Kopczynski confirmed Mr. Shepperd's statement and added that the Virginia Task Force 2 is one of two FEMA Urban Search and Rescue Teams in Virginia. He stated that one operates out of the Fairfax area and the other out of Virginia Beach. He noted that typically the teams are comprised of firefighters that are rescue specialists, hazard material specialists, dog handlers, canines, engineers, vehicle operators and other very talented individuals, most of whom are members of fire and rescue agencies.

Mr. Shepperd then asked if the three team members, who were deployed to Florida, volunteered or how were they selected for this assignment.

Chief Kopczynski stated that it is a highly competitive process in order to be a member of the Task Force Team. He explained that the departments submit names of interested personnel that have indicated they want to serve on this team. They are then interviewed by the team leadership and afterwards it is decided if they are selected. He added that currently York County Fire and Life Safety have 11 personnel who have gone through the process and have been selected to serve on this team. However, in this case they only requested three team members from the County to serve on this specific assignment in Florida.

Mr. Shepperd asked if the three personnel were selected based upon their specific expertise.

Chief Kopczynski, in response, stated that the team is composed of members with various specialties. In this case, he stated he believed they requested two rescue specialist and one hazard materials specialist from our department. However, he added that it is not uncommon for the team to cross utilize the members in other roles when they deploy.

Mr. Shepperd surmised that this conversion occurred for the team that went to Florida as a rescue team, but ended up being a recovery team.

Chief Kopczynski stated that the team knew this would likely occur when they went. He added that the FEMA Team has assisted in emergency situations around the world.

Mr. Shepperd commended the Chief on his exceptional department and particularly on its awesome level of experience, and its unprecedented response to the community's needs. With the eleven York County personnel who are members of this team, he asked if the state and/or federal government provide any additional resources to help in maintaining their level of proficiency.

Chief Kopczynski stated that team members benefit and gain greater expertise when they respond to an incident. However, he also stated that when they are trained they are paid by the federal government and if the County has to backfill an employee slot during a training event or deployment, they cover the costs. He explained that the County has its own technical rescue team comprised of employees who have served on teams that deal with confined space collapse, such as when a vehicle hits a structure and is partially collapsed, etc. These are the sort of events that our own technical team is trained to address.

Mr. Shepperd stated that most York County residents likely do not realize the extent of training and regional protection in which the Fire and Life Safety Department are involved. He pointed out that the County also has a chemical training facility which is utilized by many other Virginia

localities as well as the federal government which uses it to obtain specific certifications. He stated that this facility, located behind the Seaford Fire Station, is a joint Virginia Department of Emergency Management and York County hazardous materials training facility. Moreover, he noted that hazardous materials technicians from across Virginia must come to this facility to be trained and certified by the state in hazardous materials response.

In conclusion, Mr. Shepperd stated that the County is so blessed to have Chief Kopczynski and the entire Fire and Rescue Department to support the citizens of York County, the region and beyond.

Chief Kopczynski thanked Mr. Shepperd for his commendation but added that he is very fortunate to work with the men and women of the County's Fire and Rescue Department who make our organization what it is.

Mr. Shepperd moved that the Consent Calendar be approved as submitted, Items Nos. 2 and 3, respectively.

On roll call the vote was:

Yea: (5) Zaremba, Noll, Roane, Shepperd, Green
Nay: (0)

Item No. 2. PURCHASE AUTHORIZATION – FIRE AND RESCUE APPARATUS REPLACEMENT: Resolution R21-103

A RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR TO MAKE ARRANGEMENTS AND DO ALL THINGS NECESSARY FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF REPLACEMENT FIRE AND RESCUE APPARATUS

Item No. 3. RECOGNITION EFFORTS OF FEMA VA TASK FORCE 2: Resolution R21-104

A RESOLUTION TO COMMEND PERSONNEL OF THE YORK COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF FIRE AND LIFE SAFETY FOR THEIR EXTRAORDINARY EFFORTS AS MEMBERS OF THE FEDERAL EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY VIRGINIA TASK FORCE 2 URBAN SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM WHILE DEPLOYED TO THE STRUCTURAL COLLAPSE IN SURFSIDE FLORIDA

WORK SESSION

WILLIAMSBURG TOURISM COUNCIL

Victoria Cimino, Chief Executive Officer and FOIA Officer for the Williamsburg Tourism Council (WTC), provided a brief presentation which highlighted the following points:

- The WTC was established in July 2018 by state statute and increased sales tax by one percent for Williamsburg and James City/York Counties.
- The primary object for the Council is to increase overnight visitation, but also to increase tax revenue, unify the region under the Destination Marketing Organization's tourism brand and strategy, improve reporting, analytics, and data driven optimization.
- York County Chair, W. Chad Green, serves on the Council's Board of Directors.
- The *Visit Williamsburg* publication has greatly influenced the growing number of visitors to the region as well as a noticeable increase in visitor spending.
- A positive trajectory was begun in 2019, but halted when COVID was declared a national emergency in March 2020.
- In May 2020, WTC launched a bridge campaign entitled "We'll be Together Again Soon" to assure everyone that the future was bright and that Greater Williamsburg will be ready and waiting when people are able to travel and socialize once again. This effort was quickly followed by a similar local campaign.

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- In June 2020 we launched a new media effort that encouraged people to visit this area when it becomes safe to travel again.
- “Life. At Your Pace.” was launched and targeted towards mature adult Gen X and Millennial couples/families. The platform was created so that when restrictions eased and people felt more comfortable they could visit our region.
- During the lock-down period a Cooperative Marketing Program was created which offers a one-to-one match for those wishing to advertise via this program which ranges from \$2,500 to \$5,000 to participants.
- July 2020 a Social Media Influencer Program was launched which included many well-known individuals thus far resulting in 544,000 engagements with the visit Williamsburg brand.
- Other partnerships in which they have engaged, such as the one with *Golf Magazine* and the *National Geographic* have and continue to assist in advertising the Historic Triangle area as an excellent vacation spot.
- An economic dashboard has been created which provides a litany of data regarding visitor volume, visitor spending, and employment figures for each of the three municipalities.

In conclusion, Ms. Cimino stated that she would be happy to answer any questions or elaborate on any of the information provided in her presentation.

Mrs. Noll thanked Ms. Cimino for her comprehensive report on the WTC.

Mr. Zarembo inquired whether hotels in the region are, in addition to the collective advertising provided by the WTC, paying for additional advertising for their specific hotel especially since the pandemic.

Ms. Cimino stated that for the larger brand hotels such as Hilton or Marriott, additional advertising is dictated by corporate. However, she confirmed that she has noticed a tightening of the purse strings since the pandemic. She reiterated that for a modest amount of \$2,500, one of our two vetted partners will match the amount to assist the hotels in advertising.

Mr. Roane commended Ms. Cimino on her in-depth presentation and asked for clarification on the distinction between York County and southern York County noted in the Space Travel Research Report. He also inquired as to the WTC budget.

In response, Ms. Cimino explained that a lot of southern York County are not necessarily traditional visitors to the area and they may be there for other reasons such as stationed on military bases, etc. She stressed the importance of focusing on where a traditional visitor to the region would stay. She also stated that WTC’s fiscal budget for 2022 is just over \$15 million which is funded by sales tax, transaction tax and maintenance of effort funds. Ms. Cimino pointed out that the maintenance of effort funds are provided by the three participating municipalities.

Mr. Roane asked Ms. Cimino how confident she is in the data regarding origin markets as he noted many people retain their cell numbers even after moving to a different state.

Ms. Cimino stated that she is quite confident in the data since a high percentage of people actually live in their respective area code region.

Mr. Roane then inquired as to the region’s top two attractions.

Ms. Cimino responded by stating that it is Colonial Williamsburg, Busch Gardens, Jamestown and Yorktown. She added that through their advertising efforts they try to introduce to visitors less known attractions also offered by these three localities.

Mr. Shepperd also expressed his appreciation for Ms. Cimino’s comprehensive presentation. He pointed out that one of WTC public relation strategy partners is a journalist by the name of Harry Nodwell. He noted that Mr. Nodwell is also the Operations Manager for Virginia Company located in York County called MyGolfSpy which has a media platform with nine million subscribers.

Ms. Cimino confirmed Mr. Shepperd's comments and stated that this is the kind of partnership they seek out, that is those who have a large following.

Chairman Green thanked Ms. Cimino for her excellent, in-depth presentation on the WTC. He remarked that the County's funding for this initiative is a great investment and pays great dividends as tourism is such an important aspect of the County. In conclusion, he thanked her again and encouraged her and WTC to continue the good work.

GRAFTON ANNEX DISPOSITION (Formerly Fire Station 1)

Chairman Green then asked Mr. Morgan to provide an update on the old Fire Station No. 1, now known as the Grafton Annex.

Mr. Morgan reminded the Board that they had authorized the purchase of some land a few years earlier and had subsequently authorized the construction of a new Fire Station Number 1. To avoid any confusion, he stated that the old Fire Station Number 1 was renamed the Grafton Annex. Currently, he noted that the Annex is being used as a storage facility for the Yorktown Library which is currently being renovated. As such, Mr. Morgan stated that staff is seeking the Board's guidance as to what should be done with the Annex when the Library no longer needs this facility, which will likely occur next fall. He noted that the old fire station had become dysfunctional for a variety of reasons; small parking lot, old building systems and hazardous entry and exit to the building due to the widening of Route 17. He pointed out that an historic marker was erected on site at the old Grafton voting place, which is adjacent to the old fire station. As such, whatever the Board decides to do with this property/old fire station facility consideration must be given to protect/preserve this historic voting building. He added that the property in question is actually composed of three parcels with a total measurement of slightly less than one acre. Since a variety of uses for the old fire house and the associated parcels have been suggested, he recommended that the Board authorize a request for proposal process to see what type of submissions are provided. Should some interesting proposals be submitted, Mr. Morgan stated they will be brought to the Board for your consideration; however, should nothing of interest be submitted, previous suggestions might be reconsidered. In conclusion, he stated that staff is seeking the Board's authorization to initiate a request for proposal process regarding the subject property.

Mrs. Noll inquired about the County retaining ownership of the parcel that includes the historic voting place.

Mr. Shepperd suggested that should the Board approve retaining the old voting place that it should be moved to a more visible location so that others might recognize its historical significance.

Chairman Green stated that he was certain that it was not the Board's desire to demolish and turn the property into green space, but rather to investigate selling it for a private use and get it back on the tax rolls.

Mr. Zaremba stated that he saw this matter as something the County's Economic Development Authority (EDA) should actively consider and pursue. He then inquired whether the EDA had been assigned this task.

Mr. Morgan stated that the task of disposing of the property had not been given to the EDA. He noted that the minimal size of the property could limit the options for its use. He pointed out that there may be other desirable proposals for the property that are not necessarily business but rather for use by a non-profit organization in the County. He added that staff is looking for the Board's direction in this matter.

Chairman Green concurred with Mr. Shepperd's earlier suggestion that the old voting place could be moved to a better, more visible site since it has historical significance.

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Chairman Roane expressed his support for disposing of the property so that it will generate some tax income for the County. He also asked if there are any environmental challenges that accompany this property.

Mr. Morgan stated that there were no significant environmental issues related to this property. In conclusion, he stated it appeared that the Board's consensus is to initiate a request for proposal process by casting a wide net, report to the Board of any interest, and then have the Board narrow down the submittals and decide what the next steps are.

OPEN DISCUSSION

Mrs. Noll stated that she had recently taken a tour of the County's community gardens and remarked on how well they are maintained. However, she noted also that there is a waiting list of residents who would also like to participate in the community gardens, but there is insufficient land on which to do so. In conclusion, she asked if staff would see if it is feasible to expand the garden to give others an opportunity to garden as well.

Mr. Zaremba read a brief excerpt from an article found in the Epoch Times regarding LGBT and the Marxist movement. Furthermore, the article stated that the real goal of this movement's agenda is to destroy the nuclear family as the foundation of civilization. He encouraged the Board members to read and listen to the dialogue on the York County School reopening Facebook page, the Stop the Critical Race Theory (CRT) in Hampton Roads Facebook page and Stop CRT Nationwide Facebook page. In closing he stated that he thought the Board should be in tune with our constituents on such subjects.

Mr. Roane noted that York County schools will be reopening soon and many parents are wondering about the school environment and the safety of their children. He encouraged parents to get involved in the discussion on this matter, attend the applicable meetings and let your voice be heard. It noted that tomorrow evening at 6 p.m. at York Hall the School Board will hold a meeting to consider these issues.

Mr. Shepperd stated that the reasons he is masked at the meeting is based upon the CDC's announcement that people who have had both vaccinations can still carry what is known as a viral load for the Delta variant. As such, many of us who have had the vaccine could be potential carriers. He remarked on how much information is being circulated about wearing masks, the Delta variant, but noted that he relies on the science behind the CDC's recommendations. He noted that schools, various companies and organization, and the military are having to make decisions regarding mask requirements. In an effort to better understand the risks involved, he performed research that found that the CDC Director says that vaccinated people can still spread the virus and in areas that are rated as substantial (50 to 99 new cases per 100,000 residents) or high risk for the virus are advised to wear masks indoors. In conclusion, he recommended that people who have not yet been vaccinated should visit and discuss the matter with their personal physician so that they can make an informed decision.

Chairman Green announced that a meeting of the Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee would be held the next evening at five o'clock at the Senior Center. He stated that the meeting is open to the public and encouraged anyone interested in the plan to attend and listen to the discussion.

Meeting Adjourned. At 7:29 p.m. Chairman Green declared the meeting adjourned sine die.

Neil A. Morgan
County Administrator

W. Chad Green, Chairman
York County Board of Supervisors