

A REGULAR WORK SESSION WAS HELD BY THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS ON THE 31ST DAY OF MARCH IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-ONE IN THE IN THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE BOARDROOM IN NEW KENT, VIRGINIA, AT 9:00 A.M.

IN RE: CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Thomas W. Evelyn called the meeting to order.

IN RE: ROLL CALL

Thomas W. Evelyn	Present
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Present
Patricia A. Paige	Present
Ron Stiers	Present
John N. Lockwood	Present

All members were present.

IN RE: PARTIAL REFUNDING OF THE FARMS OF NEW KENT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY'S SPECIAL ASSESSMENT BONDS, SERIES 2006

Preston Hollow Capital (PHC) Managing Director Ramiro Albarran indicated he didn't have a formal presentation but they had submitted a request for the Board to consider allowing PHC to move forward with the refinancing of a portion of the 2006 bonds. He stated they fully understood the Board's hesitance in regard to the proposed "new money" and assessments and this was an opportunity to keep the existing assessments as they were. He stated the County, per ordinance, was required to approve any refinancing of CDA (Community Development Authority) bonds. He suggested this would be an opportunity for PHC to continue cleaning up the aftermath since the 2006 bonds had gone into default in 2013. Mr. Albarran noted a great deal of positives had happened with the project and stated this would be an opportune time to refinance a portion of the bonds. He stated it was amazing to see the level of activity in Land Bay V and they were renegotiating and were about to sign a contract for the last phase of Land Bay IV. Recreational equipment had been installed in Land Bay IV and the design work had begun for the amenities center in Land Bay IV. He also reported site work for the amenities center in Land Bay V was underway and they were actively in discussions for a new grocer and suggested other activity and interests in the commercial section would come as a result of this store. They would also soon be submitting a site plan for an assisted living/independent living facility in Land Bay V. In summary, Mr. Albarran stated PHC was requesting they be allowed to take the assessments that were there, go through the County's ordinance process, allow the CDA to approve the refinancing and then have the PHC, CDA and County's teams work together to move forward with the refinancing. He entertained questions.

Referencing the previously mentioned assisted living/independent living facility, Mr. Stiers asked if this would be constructed in lieu of or in addition to some of the commercial development. Mr. Albarran reported PHC would like to have a discussion with the County about including some of this development toward the PUD's commercial requirements and noted the plan was for this facility to be located within the commercial area of Land Bay V. The PUD (Planned Unit Development) required that a certain amount of commercial be built at specified intervals but he noted PHC was making no presumptions.

Ms. Paige moved to direct the County Attorney and County Administrator to work with Preston Hollow Capital and their attorneys, to prepare financing documentation for the Board of Supervisors and Community Development Authority's consideration. The members were polled:

C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
Patricia A. Paige	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
John N. Lockwood	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye

The motion carried.

Mr. Albarran thanked the Board and noted he looked forward to working with them.

IN RE: SPONSORSHIP OF THE 2021 VIRGINIA DERBY

County Administrator Rodney Hathaway reminded the Board that Colonial Downs Group Executive Vice President John Marshall had spoken at the Board's March regular meeting to provide an update on activities at the track and plans for the upcoming racing season. Mr. Marshall had also requested that the Board consider having New Kent County be the title sponsor for the Virginia Derby to be held on August 31st. He reported the cost would be \$50,000 and if the Board wished to move forward with sponsorship, a motion had been prepared and was included in the meeting materials. The funding would be covered by weekly revenue received from Colonial Downs/Rosie's.

Mr. Evelyn noted Colonial Downs had been very good to the community and asked if there were any comments. There being none, Mr. Stiers moved to appropriate \$50,000 from the Colonial Downs Capital Fund Balance to the New Kent Economic Development Authority for sponsorship of the 2021 Virginia Derby event. The members were polled:

Patricia A. Paige	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
John N. Lockwood	Aye
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye

The motion carried.

IN RE: SHERIFF'S OFFICE SALARY COMPENSATION DISCUSSION FOR FY22 BUDGET

Information packets outlining a Sheriff's Office classification and compensation proposal were distributed. Sheriff Joe McLaughlin thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. He noted law enforcement and public safety had changed drastically in recent years and in addition to this, New Kent's compensation had fallen behind. He reported they currently had one officer considering employment with a neighboring locality and that officer had indicated the reason for leaving was strictly financial. He also reported his department continued to lose communications officers and in most cases the reason given for leaving had also been financial. He noted Captain Joey McLaughlin and Chief Deputy Lee Bailey had recently conducted a study involving classification and compensation plans in neighboring jurisdictions. Sheriff McLaughlin urged the Board to seriously consider the proposal Captain McLaughlin and Chief Deputy Bailey would be presenting in order for the Sheriff's Office to

be able to continue to provide safe, effective and efficient protection for the citizens of New Kent County. He turned the floor over to Captain McLaughlin and Chief Deputy Bailey.

Captain McLaughlin reviewed a PowerPoint presentation which had been included in the information packet. He reported that until recently, New Kent had been competitive with a starting salary of \$43,684. The department had been successful in recruiting and training new officers in the ways of the New Kent Sheriff's Office (NKSO). He reported the NKSO had fallen short with compensation and compression had become a major issue for tenured officers. Numerous agencies within the Richmond-Metro area had recently raised starting salaries and re-modeled compensation structures to address short falls. He suggested failure to be proactive would most likely result in recruitment issues and losing personnel to higher paying agencies with room for future growth. The presentation stated, "In essence, we bear the burden of training and preparing individuals to leave and seek higher paying employment with other jurisdictions." Performance evaluations were conducted every year but there was no incentive to go above and beyond with all receiving the same raise. In some cases, employees with tenure were paid the same as a new deputy not yet certified. The trainer was being paid the same or in some cases less than the new employee. NKSO staff were only receiving cost of living raises from the County, state budget raises or an infrequent promotion. Without tenure raises, the NKSO was approximately \$10,000 behind many agencies in Virginia for employees with five or more years of service.

Captain McLaughlin reviewed non-certified recruit starting salaries in neighboring jurisdictions including:

- Chesterfield \$47,470
- Goochland \$50,000
- Hanover \$50,500
- Henrico \$51,900
- James City \$45,674
- New Kent \$43,684

He reported certified officer salaries remained the same in New Kent for two to five years of service. A neighboring jurisdiction comparison indicated certified officers with two to five years of service were receiving:

- Chesterfield \$48,894 - \$56,682
- Goochland \$52,500 - \$55,000
- Hanover \$52,000 - \$55,000
- Henrico \$55,130 - \$59,700
- James City \$45,674 - \$71,272
- New Kent \$43,684 - \$43,684 – There was nothing in place in New Kent to allow an officer to see their salary into the future.

Veteran officers with six to ten years of service were receiving:

- Chesterfield \$58,382 - \$67,699
- Goochland \$57,000 - \$59,000
- Hanover \$57,000 - \$61,500
- Henrico \$61,010 - \$79,800
- James City \$51,503 - \$82,405
- New Kent \$43,684 - \$43,684 – There was nothing in place in New Kent to allow an officer to see their salary into the future.

Similar differences were also noted for supervisor level positions such as Sergeant (\$50,629 - \$74,702), Lieutenant (\$60,065 - \$91,258) and Captain (\$76,013 - \$112,611).

Captain McLaughlin reported New Kent was one of only a few jurisdictions in the region which did not offer a career development program. He stated New Kent was far behind other agencies in this area and suggested additional employees would be lost as a result. He reported it would cost a minimum of \$70,000 plus benefits to get a career development program started in New Kent. The program would be managed by a board that would review applications based upon established criteria. Applicants accepted into the program would have demonstrated performance above and beyond minimum expectations. Examples of above and beyond performance would include additional training classes, community events, good performance evaluations, no preventable vehicle crashes and above proficient firearms scores. The program would involve four steps with employees receiving a 5% salary increase with each step. Those reaching the highest level would be employed by New Kent for a minimum of eight years. Captain McLaughlin reported plans for a program were already in place but it had not been implemented due to the lack of funding. Providing employees with the opportunity for career development would result in a more qualified work force with employees wanting to obtain higher education and who were interested in doing more than just keeping certifications up to date.

Captain McLaughlin reported 37 emergency communications officers had left employment with New Kent in the past ten years. Three of the 37 had retired and the remainder had resigned for better paying jobs in either the public/private sector or were terminated. 48 deputies had left during the same time frame. Twelve of the 48 had retired and the remainder had resigned for better paying jobs in either the public/private sector or were terminated. He noted the cost of hiring a new New Kent deputy including training, uniforms, equipment and a vehicle was currently \$134,500. He also reported a significant decline in applications for patrol deputy positions. The information packet indicated 45 applications had been received in 2018, 82 in 2019, 45 in 2020 and 3 thus far in 2021. Captain McLaughlin suggested there were a number of factors impacting recruitment including the career choice was not seen as positively as it once was, low financial compensation, lack of growth within the department and having to do more with less.

Captain McLaughlin shared information on some of the situations a New Kent law enforcement officer may encounter on any given day. Examples included working in severe weather conditions, being with someone at the worst moment in their lives, defending themselves while waiting for backup and sometimes serving as a counselor, therapist, social worker, babysitter, parent, community leader, fortune teller or referee. New Kent did not have the luxury of having multiple units or specialty divisions to which officers were given full time assignments. Officers were often assigned collateral duties including but not limited to Marine Patrol, Child Safety Seat Inspection, Motorcycle Patrol, Project Lifesaver, Honor Guard, Vehicle Calibrations, Radar Tuning Fork Calibration, Bicycle Patrol, Commercial Motor Vehicle, Quarter Master, Firearms Instructor, Defensive Tactics Instructor, Driving Instructor, DUI/DUID Instructor, Taser Instructor and Radar Instructor.

Captain McLaughlin reported the Sheriff's Office had considered several options to achieve a solution. The first suggestion was to use funds which had already been allocated for the Sheriff's Office. Funding remaining at the end of the fiscal year could be earmarked to ensure adequate funding would be available to fund new pay scales into the future. He noted the new pay scales would be separate from the proposed career development plan. He reported the Sheriff's Office had returned an average of \$378,632 annually over the past four years. He provided a sample pay scale and pointed out staff would receive a small pay increase with every year of service. This would allow an appointee to plan their career path and give them the ability to see the advantage of being a loyal and dedicated employee.

The pay scale would also address salary compression for tenured staff. He presented the following pay scale proposals:

- Proposal #1 – Projected cost to implement was \$753,807.33 with benefits.
- Proposal #2 – Projected cost to implement was \$565,640.11 with benefits.
- Proposal #3 – Projected cost to implement was \$510,640.00 with benefits.

The following starting salaries were being recommended:

- \$51,000 for patrol deputies
- \$47,000 for civil process deputies
- \$47,000 for animal control deputies
- \$45,000 for communications officers
- \$68,000 for sergeants
- \$81,400 for lieutenants
- \$91,400 for captains

Captain McLaughlin noted new proposed FY22 funding for the Sheriff's Office totaling \$355,814 included three new positions, a proposed 3.5% salary increase and a 5% comp board position raise. If this funding as well as the average annual return to the County of \$378,632 were combined, there would only be a shortage of \$19,361 to fund Proposal #1. Proposal #2 would have a \$168,805 surplus and Proposal #3 would have a \$223,806 surplus. He noted the Sheriff's Office could definitely use the three new positions but, also noting that because the goal was to retain existing employees and to attract quality applicants, they would willingly give up the three new positions to support salaries. He also noted new vehicles associated with the new positions totaling \$195,000 would no longer be needed and vehicle mileage for replacement purposes could be increased to 120,000 if the vehicle remained safe for operation. He also noted \$250,000 had been included the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for renovating the NKSO firearms range. He suggested existing equipment, resources and manpower could be used to get the range up to safe standards at a cost of \$25,000. Some of the remaining funding could be used for e-ticket software and equipment at a cost of \$115,000 which would help with efficiency in the Sheriff's Office and the court system. Approximately \$110,00 of this CIP funding would remain unspent. He closed by stating these proposals would be an investment in the County's future. The new pay scale, coupled with addressing compression and career development, would achieve the goal of keeping the pay scale competitive and allow the Sheriff's Office to recruit and retain qualified personnel. He reported they had tried to think outside of the box for possible solutions and suggested this could be done without straining the budget. He expressed appreciation for the Board's time and entertained questions.

Sheriff McLaughlin stated he was very proud of the people he worked with and they had a great department. He noted the County was growing and the three new positions were necessary but if they could not retain current staff given current salaries, it would be difficult to fill these positions. He stated his staff were doing all they could and he could not ask for more. He also noted that not only were his staff serving the community while in uniform, many were also volunteering in a variety of other capacities in the community.

Ms. Paige noted the Board saw the salaries and asked what other benefits New Kent was providing versus surrounding localities. She also noted she would be interested in knowing the populations of the surrounding localities. Captain McLaughlin referenced Goochland County which was considered to be similar in size to New Kent and noted they were way above New Kent County in salaries. He added that Chesterfield and Henrico were huge and New Kent was losing staff to these localities. Ms. Paige asked for information on benefits other than salaries. Chief Deputy Baily noted almost every agency around New Kent was

providing staff with career development opportunities. Surrounding localities were also providing basic benefits such as contributions to VRS and healthcare. Sheriff McLaughlin noted that some of the special teams New Kent staff were volunteering for or were assigned to in addition to their regular duties were full time positions in neighboring localities and upward mobility was also available in the surrounding localities. He also noted officers responding to calls in neighboring localities were responding with multiple other officers backing them up. In New Kent one officer would likely be the only officer on the scene for a minimum of ten minutes before any other officer would arrive. He noted New Kent did not have the resources necessary to provide as large a response and as safe a response as possible but his staff took great pride in serving the citizens of New Kent to the best of their ability. Captain McLaughlin also noted officers in surrounding localities would do a report and then pass it along to another staff member. Officers in New Kent were not only responsible for preparing the report but also for following the report through to its conclusion. Sheriff McLaughlin also noted that when staff in other localities worked on holidays or when they were closed due to weather issues, they were paid time and a half. New Kent considered deputies to be essential personnel who were required to report and other staff were frequently called in during weather related situations. These individuals were paid at their normal hourly rate or in some situations, received no pay. Captain McLaughlin also reported staff members found it difficult to use their earned leave time. Frequently when staff members scheduled vacation days, they would end up working additional hours at other times during the month and the vacation time would end up going back on their record to be taken at another time. Sheriff McLaughlin reported County Administrator Rodney Hathaway had allowed staff members to carry unused leave time forward into the next fiscal year to avoid losing time.

Referencing comments made regarding the \$250,000 in the CIP for the firearms range, Mr. Stiers asked Captain McLaughlin if he was suggesting using those funds for salaries. Captain McLaughlin stated he was not suggesting these funds be used for salaries but was simply noting this was some funding which the Sheriff's Office was not planning to use that could be made available for other projects. He noted that he understood certain funding such as CIP funds could not be used for salaries.

Mr. Evelyn stated he felt the most shocking slide in the presentation was the one that reported only three applications had been received for patrol deputy positions this year. Mr. Stiers asked how this compared to other localities. Chief Deputy Bailey noted application numbers were down in most localities. He reported there was such a small pool of individuals interested in this work and individuals were drawn to localities offering higher salaries. Sheriff McLaughlin thanked the Board for everything they had done and would continue to do for the Sheriff's Office and for taking the time to hear them.

Mr. Evelyn thanked them for the presentation, noted it was evident a lot of time had been spent in compiling the information and noted the Board had a lot to look at and consider.

IN RE: FIRE AND RESCUE SALARY COMPENSATION DISCUSSION

Fire Chief Rick Opett applauded the Sheriff's Office presentation and suggested he could just say "ditto." He noted public safety positions were not as glamorous as they had once been. He stated public safety had been a lot of fun thirty years ago when he had first started but things had changed significantly. He noted there were more traumas, more deaths, more people having bad days and more firefighter suicides. He suggested society as well as social change had changed the job. He added that forty years ago kids were taught to look

up to public safety individuals but they were now looking up to athletes as their heroes and there were no longer lines of individuals seeking firefighter positions.

Chief Opett reviewed a PowerPoint presentation entitled NKFR – FY22 Regional Parity Request. He began by reviewing some of the concerns of his department including local parity, regional parity, compression, no career path, low morale and employee turnover. These concerns in his department as well as the Sheriff's Office were making the departments transitional.

- Parity - He suggested they should first look at local parity and noted the starting salary for a New Kent firefighter was \$39,739 while the starting deputy salary was \$43,684, a difference of about \$4,000. He reported his department had lost eight firefighters in the past three years to neighboring localities. He referenced flyers from several neighboring localities which advertised firefighter positions with starting salaries significantly higher than New Kent. An ALS (Advanced Life Support) incentive of \$3,000 as well as a \$5,000 incentive for paramedic were also available. A regional parity slide comparing New Kent salaries to Goochland, King William, James City, Richmond City, Hanover, Chesterfield and Henrico revealed New Kent salaries were the lowest in all cases. 70% of his staff (33 individuals) were making under \$15 per hour and 15% (6 individuals) with ALS incentives were barely making over \$15. 17% (8 individuals) were receiving officer pay.
- Compression – In New Kent, a firefighter with less than one year of service was making \$39,739 while a firefighter with twelve years was making \$42,528, a difference of \$2,789. The firefighter with twelve years had received an average annual increase of \$232.41. A firefighter with New Kent for less than one year and with the paramedic certification would be making \$44,739 or \$2,211 more than the firefighter with twelve years of employment. A Captain with seventeen years of employment was making the same salary as two other Captains with twelve years of employment. This was very disheartening for staff who had been with New Kent for many years.
- Lack of Career Path – He stated Captain McLaughlin had done a wonderful job sharing information on career paths for Sheriff's Office staff and stated he didn't think this was an issue just for public safety but for all positions in the County. He suggested the question of how the County could channel top talent to stay and grow within the departments needed to be considered. He suggested the career path would be the answer and stated the following three questions needed to be answered affirmatively:
 1. Are there real career opportunities available?
 2. Are the opportunities visible?
 3. Are there support structures that facilitate internal career moves?

He reported that his department could not answer affirmatively to any of the questions. He also noted that nothing was merit based. They were conducting annual evaluations but there was no monetary reward for good performance.

Circling back to his earlier comment regarding that the department was transitional, Chief Opett noted the department was in a vicious cycle of recruiting, hiring, training and then in two to three years the recruit would change employment. This cycle resulted in a loss of institutional knowledge, loss of incident knowledge, they were always recruiting and retraining, there were multiple comprehensive hiring processes and there were always "green" employees. He stated it was cheaper to keep an employee than to hire new and reported recruitment costs for one position including advertisement, administration time, overtime/interviews/testing, health physicals, uniforms, gear and training totaled \$12,950.

Chief Opett provided an overview of a two-year phased salary adjustment option to address some of these concerns. Phase I would include a regional salary adjustment for retention purposes for forty-seven positions. This phase would not include any chief officers. This

phase was estimated to cost \$346,819. Phase II would include all fifty-two positions and would focus on addressing salary compression and the lack of salary mobility with the current open-range compensation structure. He reviewed a Phase I chart indicating salaries in Goochland, King William and Chesterfield had been used to develop a methodology to recommend new salaries for New Kent. Under the new methodology, a firefighter EMT would start at \$45,000, with ALS they would start at \$48,000, with paramedic they would start at \$50,000. Lieutenants would start at \$55,000 and Captains at \$65,000. Phase II to address compression would begin in FY23 with staff receiving a percentage increase based on tenure. Staff with less than 5 years would receive a 2.5% increase, 5-10 years would receive 5%, 11-15 years would receive 10% and 16-20 years would receive 12%.

He closed by noting his Operations Battalion Chief Jason Bishop and Firefighter Dean Lewis who had been with the department for twelve years were in the back of the room. Mr. Lewis was also the current President of Local Union 4988 of Professional Firefighters. He reported Mr. Lewis was hearing much from firefighters and had asked him to compile a list of what he was hearing. He suggested New Kent firefighters were in an epidemic of their own, a financial epidemic. He was frequently hearing that most were supplementing their incomes with overtime and sometimes two to three part-time jobs which were taking time away from families. He reviewed the list of comments compiled by Mr. Lewis including:

"I work two part-time jobs in order to supplement my income."

"I have to work 200 plus hours a pay cycle in order to support my family."

"I am considering moving back home in order to have time off to spend time with my family."

"My mortgage and normal bills alone nearly absorb my New Kent salary."

"I'd be living pay check to pay check without part-time employment."

"I've had to make lifestyle changes in order to reduce hours at work and improve my home life."

"I'd like to live and work here permanently however I cannot afford to live in New Kent."

"I want to start a family but I fear there is no long-term future here for me."

Chief Opett suggested these statements said it all and noted this was what was being heard from firefighters on the ground. He thanked the Board for the opportunity to share this information. Mr. Evelyn thanked him for the presentation.

IN RE: FY22 BUDGET DISCUSSION

County Administrator Rodney Hathaway distributed copies of the FY22 proposed budget for outside agencies and updated the Board on where we were in the budget process. He was still working through the revenue numbers and was expecting good news regarding additional revenue that could be used to address some of the concerns the Board had just heard as well as other needs. Staff was waiting for final figures from the Commissioner of the Revenue which were expected to be available in a few days and we were about a month away from the budget public hearing process. He referenced the outside agency document and noted there had not been sufficient time to review this information at the Budget Retreat. He asked Board members to review these funding recommendations and let him know if there were any changes or adjustments they would like to make. Most requests were being flat funded and there had been a new request from New Kent Robotics. Mr. Evelyn asked if there were any comments or concerns. There were none.

- Mr. Hathaway distributed copies of the Meals Tax Summary from FY11 to FY20 and noted he had presented a recommendation at the Budget Retreat to increase the meals tax rate from 4% to 6%. The General Assembly had taken action to increase the allowable limits for localities from 4% to 6% and had also removed the requirement for a referendum. This had given localities the same taxing authority as cities and towns. The proposed 2% increase was expected to generate \$591,000 in FY22 and he was recommending that this additional revenue be set aside for future capital projects. He reminded the Board that our financial advisor Ted Cole with Davenport and Company had presented information at the Budget Retreat on the County's debt capacity and reported the County was meeting all of its financial goals. He had also pointed out that with recent borrowing, the County was getting closer to the top of its debt capacity and the additional revenue generated by a 2% meals tax increase would give the County the capacity to borrow just under \$10 million in new debt without the need to find a new source of revenue. He was seeking the Board's opinion on whether or not this recommended increase should be advertised for public hearing for the Board to consider possible adoption. Advertising the public hearing would not mean the Board had agreed to the increase. He referenced the handout on meals tax revenue which provided both monthly and yearly revenue figures. He pointed out that meals tax collection was the highest during the summer months and suggested this was being impacted by I-64 travelers passing through the County. He stated this would be an opportunity to collect a new source of revenue that would not entirely burden County residents as would a real estate or personal property increase. He entertained questions.

Mr. Stiers noted he had stated at the Budget Retreat that he was opposed to adding 2% to the existing 4% meals tax and just because the Board had the ability to raise the tax didn't mean they should. He further stated he did believe in planning for the future just as they had for the new school. He had spoken with several restaurant owners and none were in favor of the increase. He also noted the County would be getting several million dollars in additional federal funding. Mr. Hathaway reported the county was anticipating receiving a little over \$4 million in federal funding. Mr. Stiers noted that even though he was the only Board member to speak out against this increase, he was still opposed.

Mr. Lockwood respectfully disagreed with Mr. Stiers and stated there were few opportunities to increase a tax rate that did not totally burden the citizens. He further stated that because of the transient nature of the meals tax with people passing through the County, this would provide an opportunity to capture revenue from sources other than residents. He noted it was a surprise to see that meals tax revenue had gone up in FY20 with all of the difficulties restaurants had faced and it was amazing that the public had supported local restaurants so well. Mr. Evelyn agreed and noted he believed most restaurant owners had done very well in spite of the pandemic and citizens had been very supportive.

Ms. Paige reminded the Board that they had heard presentations from the Sheriff's Office and Fire-Rescue. She stated she had listened to the presentations and had considered the tax rates in the localities where New Kent salaries were being compared. She also noted she not only considered the Sheriff's Office or Fire-Rescue, but all employees and suggested a day was coming when the Board would have to have enough vision to not just look at the presentations from today but look at all employees. She stated this would come with a price and noted that as a small locality, New Kent did not have the businesses to support the budget like Hanover, Henrico, Goochland and Chesterfield. She stated the proposed 2% meals tax increase would generate revenue that would help the County plan for the future. She reported County staff were currently working from various locations for HVAC work to

be done in the Administration Building and suggested the County needed to be planning for a facility for administrative staff. She stated the Board needed to think about where they would get the necessary funding and when they would begin to start saving for future projects. She stated the need for additional compensation was not just in the Sheriff's Office or Fire-Rescue and staff members in other departments were also working part-time jobs to make ends meet and could not afford to live in New Kent County. She noted this was a concern through out the entire County and stated, "Shame on us if we don't start trying to do something to help our staff." She added she was grateful to the many committed employees and was thankful for all they were doing. She suggested the hard question was how are we going to do this. She noted she sat on several regional boards and this topic was not only an issue in New Kent but also in surrounding localities. She stated she felt the County did its due diligence and was doing a lot with what it had.

Mr. Hathaway stated the guidance he was getting was to advertise this for public hearing. He again noted advertising did not mean the Board was approving an increase. He also reported that as revenue figures were finalized in the next few days, he would be sitting down with the Sheriff's Office and the Fire Chief to discuss numbers. He stated he believed the County would be able to address many needs and noted there was the potential for a significant amount of additional revenue that could be used to fill some gaps. He would have more budget information to present at the upcoming regular meeting.

IN RE: OTHER BUSINESS – ELDERLY/DISABLED PERSONAL PROPERTY TAX
EXEMPTION

Mr. Stiers had distributed an information packet regarding elderly and disabled personal property tax exemptions which had been prepared by the Commissioner of the Revenue Laura Ecimovic. He noted the County was doing a lot for its citizens and specifically noted the construction of a new school for the children. He suggested the Board should look more into what could be done for the County's older population. He reported he had asked Ms. Ecimovic to prepare cost estimates for providing a personal property exemption for 65 or older or disabled. He noted that in order to qualify for the exemption, individuals would also need to meet certain income requirements and the value of the vehicle could not be above a certain limit. He encouraged Board members to review the information.

County Administrator Rodney Hathaway asked Mr. Stiers if he would like staff to work with the Commissioner to look at income level thresholds. Mr. Stiers confirmed and noted much of the criteria on age and income was already set out in the Code of Virginia. Mr. Hathaway stated he believed there was some flexibility and the County could make adjustments.

IN RE: OTHER BUSINESS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

NEW KENT CHAMBER OF COMMERCE ANNOUNCEMENTS - New Kent Chamber of Commerce President Sam Drewry noted he had several information items from the Chamber.

- He had spoken with the owners of a number of New Kent businesses in recent weeks and had learned many of them did not know other business owners in the County and were often sending referrals to other localities such as the City of Richmond or James City County. As a means of fostering friendships and networking among members, the Chamber would be hosting an event from 4:00 p.m. to 6:00 p.m. on April 24, 2021 at Virginia Elite Gymnastics Academy. Chamber members were encouraged to bring their families to the carnival themed event which would include nine activity stations.
- He also noted New Kent was pushing tourism and stated the owner of Rockahock Campground had reported receiving complaints about the condition of Rockahock Road.

Referencing the high cost of RVs, the campground owner was concerned RV owners would be deterred from her establishment due to the condition of the access road.

- He invited Board Members to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony scheduled for 1:00 p.m. at Cumberland Hospital on April 1, 2021. The hospital would be opening a new sixteen-bed psychiatric inpatient acute care unit.

He thanked the Board for the opportunity to speak. Mr. Lockwood addressed the concerns regarding Rockahock Road and reported Ms. Paige and he had recently met with VDOT and Rockahock Road was on their priority list. VDOT had planned to complete the work in March but had been delayed due to weather issues. Plans were to trim back limbs and patch crumbling shoulders and VDOT had indicated they would be completing this work soon.

REPORT ON SHREDDING AND RECYCLING EVENT - Mr. Lockwood reported the County had recently held a shredding and recycling event which had been well received. Paper shredding as well as electronics and tire recycling had been available. This event had been coordinated by the New Kent Clean County Committee with assistance from the Central Virginia Waste Management Authority and others. He reported Wal-Mart employees as well as other community members had volunteered and he thanked all who had been involved as well as those who had taken advantage of this opportunity to recycle unwanted items.

UPDATE ON LITTER PICK UP - County Administrator Rodney Hathaway noted he has seen a number of Facebook posts thanking individuals for picking up trash along roadways. He reported the contractor recently hired by New Kent had begun working in the Bottoms Bridge and Eltham areas the previous week and would continue working to complete the first cycle of the contract over the next few weeks.

COVID CALL CENTER - Ms. Paige reminded everyone about the New Kent County COVID Vaccine Call Center and encouraged residents to call 804-966-9677 to register. She also encouraged registration at [Vaccinate.Virginia.gov](https://www.vaccinate.virginia.gov) or with the Chickahominy Health District. She reminded everyone that New Kent was hosting vaccine clinics on Fridays at New Kent High School. She had been working in the call center and had received many calls from individuals indicating they had registered on line with New Kent County. She noted New Kent County was not taking online registrations and reminded everyone that the only way to register with New Kent County was to call 804-966-9677.

IN RE: CLOSED SESSION

Ms. Paige moved to go into closed session pursuant to section 2.2-3711A.5 of the Code of Virginia for a discussion involving Project Solstice, a prospective business where no previous announcement has been made of the business' interest in locating its facilities in the County. The members were polled:

Ron Stiers	Aye
John N. Lockwood	Aye
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
Patricia A. Paige	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye

The motion carried.

Mr. Evelyn thanked everyone for attending the meeting and noted there would be no actions taken after the closed session.

Mr. Tiller moved to come out of closed session. The members were polled:

John N. Lockwood	Aye
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
Patricia A. Paige	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye

The motion carried.

Mr. Lockwood moved to certify by roll call vote that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion to go into closed session were heard, discussed or considered in the closed session. The members were polled:

C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
Patricia A. Paige	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
John N. Lockwood	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye

The motion carried.

IN RE: ANNOUNCEMENT OF UPCOMING MEETINGS/ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Evelyn announced the Board's next regularly scheduled meeting would be held at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, April 12, 2021 and the next work session at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, April 28, 2021, both in the Courtroom of the Historic Courthouse (School Board Office).

Mr. Tiller moved to adjourn. The members were polled:

Patricia A. Paige	Aye
Ron Stiers	Aye
John N. Lockwood	Aye
C. Thomas Tiller, Jr.	Aye
Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye

The motion carried. The meeting was adjourned at 11:33 a.m.