

THE REGULAR SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING BETWEEN THE NEW KENT COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS AND SENIOR COUNTY STAFF WAS HELD ON THE 15th DAY OF AUGUST IN THE YEAR TWO THOUSAND EIGHT OF OUR LORD AT FIRE STATION NO. 1, PROVIDENCE FORGE, VIRGINIA, AT 12:00 NOON.

IN RE: ROLL CALL AND CALL TO ORDER

Thomas W. Evelyn	Present
David M. Sparks	Absent
James H. Burrell	Present
Stran L. Trout	Present
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Present

Chairman Burrell called the meeting to order, and gave the blessing of the meal.

County Administrator John Budesky thanked Fire Chief Hicks for hosting the meeting and providing lunch. It was explained that Mr. Sparks was unable to attend because of a business commitment.

Mr. Budesky confirmed that the focus of the meeting would be on accomplishments and goals. He commented that it was important to celebrate what had been accomplished and to make sure that the Board was in support of the goals.

IN RE: REVIEW OF FY08 ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND FY09 GOALS

Mr. Budesky indicated that one of the goals of County Administration was to continue to be supportive of all of the departments. He spoke about the tough economic climate for both County government and the citizenry, and how it was important to assure residents that their tax dollars were being spent wisely. He added that another goal was to find ways to improve the level of communications between staff and the Board members to avoid surprises.

He advised that Administration was continuing to analyze whether there would be any operational savings or benefits to the residents by changing to a four-day work week for County government offices.

Mr. Budesky cited accomplishments to include New Kent University, State of the County, the quarterly newsletter, improvements to the Boardroom audio/visual systems, an increase in the number of press releases, and continued excellence in responding to FOIA requests. He indicated that customer service remained an important goal, as well as Board training and development activities. He noted that efforts were being made to upgrade the purchasing policy, which included ensuring competitive practices and development of a bidders' list.

He indicated that the new position approved for Human Resources would enable several improvements, including establishment of a training calendar, development of an orientation program, a compensation study and completion of an updated Personnel Policies manual.

He noted that improvements had been made in records management by better management of storage space in the basement, and that compliance with the State retention and destruction policies would continue to be encouraged and facilitated.

Under Utilities, Mr. Budesky pointed out that several groundwater withdrawal permits were pending and that the County would continue to identify long-term future water sources.

Under Building and Community Development, he indicated that it continued to be important to make sure that staff was meeting the goals of the Board, noting that the County would soon start to work on an update of the Comprehensive Plan. He spoke about other goals, including development of guides for citizen events and completion of the implementation of the permitting software.

Under General Services, he spoke about recycling upgrades and long-term planning for use of the old middle school facility.

He noted that Financial Services staff was working on a citizens' guide to understanding the budget, as well as updating some of its policies and procedures.

Human Resources Specialist Darla Stanley spoke about an emphasis on employee wellness, which included improved benefits and lower premiums, as well as a waiver of copayments for yearly exams. She reported implementation of a new evaluation process; improved processing of workers compensation claims; more training in computer skills and customer service; and continuation of "lunch and learn" sessions.

Financial Services Director Mary Altemus reported that New Kent had received for the fourth year in a row the Excellence in Financial Reporting award from the Government Financial Officers' Association. She spoke about the work of the Finance Committee, who was continuing to review policies for update; fully justified line items in budget requests; and acceptance of credit card payments online for utility connections. She indicated that it was their intention to again apply for the GFOA award and spoke about plans to start the budget process earlier than normal with the hope that the audit could be presented earlier as well. She added that other goals included development of a Revenue Manual; hosting "lunch and learn" sessions; and development of a citizens' budget brochure.

Airport Manager Bill Kelly reported that their accomplishments included completion of the hangar project, primarily funded with federal and state funds. He noted that the Airport continued to be compliant with all regulations. He also reported that he was working closely with the Economic Development Director to attract commercial businesses to the Airport, shifting the focus from recreational.

Mr. Burrell asked how high fuel costs had affected activity at the Airport. Mr. Kelly advised that it had affected fuel sales as well as hangar rentals. He indicated that the new hangars were full but that there were some vacancies in the older hangars. He stated that it was his plan to send out a mailing to all regional pilots within 40 miles, letting them know that hangar space was available.

County Attorney Jeff Summers advised that his department had implemented a case management system to measure response time, noting that reviews of homeowners association documents would still take about a month. He indicated that one of his goals for the upcoming year was to better anticipate questions from the Board and try to give advice ahead of time. He spoke about the work that could be performed by the new part-time Assistant County Attorney, and emphasized that his main goal would be to continue to decrease the amount paid to outside counsel.

Mr. Davis asked if his department was at a point where it could serve as an ombudsman for citizens. Mr. Summers advised that if authorized by the Board, he could act as an outside

ombudsman for community associations. Mr. Davis commented that he felt that it might save staff time in the end if citizens received proper information at the beginning. Mr. Summers agreed that such a process might save time but would be more work for his department. Mr. Davis indicated that he was not thinking of homeowner associations, but more of a role reviewing old road maintenance agreements and giving advice. Mr. Summers advised that he would caution the Board to think carefully before offering those services but he would look further into the matter and report back.

Treasurer Herb Jones, Jr. advised that the customer service goals for his office had been met with the implementation of credit card payments and acceptance of online payments. He thanked all of the departments for their support, especially IT Director Jonathan Stanger. Mr. Jones advised that the Treasurer's Office was continuing to focus on collection of delinquent taxes and he reported that a third customer window was planned to be added to his offices which would increase efficiencies.

Mr. Burrell asked what percentage of tax payments were made with credit cards. Mr. Jones estimated that less than 10% were by credit card, but he expected that rate to increase as people became aware of the capability. He indicated that the County was still using Attorney Elliott for delinquent tax collections.

Mr. Evelyn asked if Mr. Jones expected more delinquencies in light of the increased tax rate and the current economy. Mr. Jones predicted that residents would likely have a more difficult time paying their taxes and he was continuing to encourage anyone with problems to contact his office to work out a payment plan. He reported that the collection rate for the past year was 97%.

Commissioner of Revenue Laura Ecimovic advised that the past year's goals for her office included getting through the general reassessment and implementation of the new real estate department. She reported that goals for the upcoming year revolved around staff training, and development and documentation of procedures and policy, as well as the review of other functions in her office to make sure that they are doing things as efficiently and as customer-friendly as possible.

Mr. Davis spoke about the State budget shortfall and the possibility that the personal property tax relief program would be rolled back. Ms. Ecimovic confirmed that the State could stop that funding all together. She reported that the relief to New Kent taxpayers during the previous year was 56% and although she did not have a figure for the upcoming year, she anticipated that it would be lower, as the revenue would stay the same but would have to be spread out among an expanding base.

Mr. Jones reported that New Kent received \$1.9 million from the State for personal property tax relief in the last fiscal year.

Mr. Budesky thanked both Mr. Jones and Ms. Ecimovic for their participation as members of the Finance Committee, stating that New Kent was blessed to have such good relationship between departments and constitutional offices.

General Services Manager James Tacosa reported that it had been a good year for the operating systems in both the Court buildings and the Administration building and spoke about the savings in the cost of operations. He reported that the County had exceeded the target reductions in the number of pulls at the Refuse Centers, and credited those reductions to increased compacting. He also reported increased revenues from recycling and stated that the challenge was to make sure that the County had the ability to collect

what the citizens were bringing in to recycle. He indicated that installation of another compactor at the main site was behind schedule because of delays by the power company, and once that was installed, they hoped to further reduce the number of pulls. He reported that the next target area would be increased and improved corrugated cardboard recycling.

Mr. Tacosa indicated that the building projects were on or under budget. He noted that the savings realized from the Sheriff's Annex had been rolled over into the Courthouse renovation, which had been delayed because of some design issues. He spoke about the continued savings from the use of the design construction method. He indicated that although construction of the human services building was a little behind schedule, it was starting to gain ground. He stated that the Vehicle Maintenance Facility was close to being turned over to the Schools. Regarding the central county park property, he indicated that design for the entranceway was 100% complete and that a Request for Proposals would soon be issued. He noted that the approval from the Army Corps of Engineers would give the County five years to proceed with construction and would exempt the County from any change in the regulations if it had started the project.

Mr. Davis reported continued complaints from County residents who were not being allowed to dump their household trash if they were using their business vehicles. Commissioner of the Revenue Laura Ecimovic reminded that if a vehicle was routinely garaged in New Kent, then it should be registered with the County, be assessed on the personal property tax rolls, and have a County decal, even if the business was located in another locality.

Mr. Davis noted complaints that a new business to the County had not been permitted to dump cardboard boxes and wire. Mr. Tacosa reminded that the County's ordinance prohibited the dumping of commercial, demolition and landscaping (CDL) wastes and that the truck in question was trying to dump duct work and similar materials. There was discussion regarding the high price for scrap metal and whether the County should consider accepting that from businesses as a revenue maker. Mr. Tacosa commented that it would be a "fine line" but that it would be of benefit to the County if businesses brought in steel and nothing else.

Mr. Evelyn asked about the frequency of complaints regarding CDL wastes. Mr. Tacosa advised that they had decreased until recently, noting that tonnage was decreasing because of the ban on CDL wastes.

Building Official Clarence Jackson advised that better customer service had been one of Building Development's accomplishments, with an increase in the number of forms that could be completed online, maintaining a telephone log to ensure that calls were being returned within 24 hours, and having an online customer service survey. He also spoke about the quarterly meeting for contractors and developers that was very successful and well-attended.

Mr. Jackson predicted that the new permitting software would improve operations. He reported that inspectors were averaging 10-12 inspections a day, noting that things were not as slow in New Kent as in some of the other jurisdictions and numbers were a little higher than last year at the same time. He indicated that there were a lot of parcels ready to build homes on in the \$200,000 to \$280,000 range, and he expected demand on his office to pick up when construction was started on those homes.

Public Utilities Director Larry Dame reported that the Courthouse utility system was up and running, serving the schools and the government buildings. He indicated that the Chickahominy pump station was 50% complete. He stated that their new office location

had much-needed storage space for materials. He reported that goals for the upcoming year included completion of the force main project and Chickahominy pump station, as well as installation of a generator at Parham Landing well #2, at which time all wells would be on generators.

Mr. Dame also gave a report on the status of the various groundwater withdrawal permits on the County's systems. He spoke about the tightening up of the permitting procedure because of the continued concern about groundwater supply, noting that the County was working with the Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) on a Water Conservation Management Plan which would be brought to the Board for adoption and implementation in the near future. He indicated that it was felt that the Plan would help the County with some of the permitting issues and would roll into the Water Supply Plan mandated by the State by 2009. He indicated that they were finishing up design for the Parham plant expansion and staff was excited about a reclaimed water program and the possibility of generating revenue. He noted that Brickshire golf course and Colonial Downs were already receiving reclaimed water from the County and that they hoped to expand the program and offer it to Royal New Kent golf course as well. He indicated that they were still working on a new well for Whitehouse Farms and were starting a maintenance program that would include repainting many of the fire hydrants. He reported that he would be making some recommendations to improve operations of the utility system and increase revenues.

Economic Development Consultant Mark Kilduff recounted the accomplishments from the year, which included revamping of the Economic Development Authority's (EDA) website and development of a tourism website; creation of an EDA logo; weekly updating of the sites and building files on both websites; installation of a Visitors Center sign on the interstate; opening of the Visitors Center seven days a week; creation and broadcast of a commercial for the Virginia Derby as well as for local television as a public service announcement; establishment of an incentive program and the award of the first grant, with three others grants being close to award; and implementation of a cooperative sign program. He spoke about the barge terminal study, the first phase of which had been completed, and admitted that economics were not as good as they had hoped for. He pointed out that the study had only counted one-way traffic and if the project was able to work through the Virginia Port Authority, as a true inland port, it would generate runs both up and down the river, and would make the project more economical. He reported that one of their goals for the upcoming year would be to continue to work on and market that proposal and they were still very hopeful that it would move forward. He said that the proposed reduction in truck traffic had gotten the attention of VDOT and they would continue to work with them on the project. Mr. Kilduff said that they were also working on a good commercial prospect for the Airport and he thanked the County Attorney and the Commissioner of the Revenue for their assistance.

Under Tourism, Mr. Kilduff noted that they would continue to work on development of some public industry-specific brochures (such as golf), an online community events calendar, and travel infrastructure information (hotels and restaurants), as well as participating in the upcoming Sesquicentennial event. He indicated that it was anticipated that the EDA would soon adopt its Façade Improvements Program guidelines, noting that they had their first application.

In the interest of time, Community Development Director George Homewood submitted his report in writing and yielded his time to others.

Social Services Director Michelle Lauter submitted her report in writing as well, but did highlight the groundbreaking of the new human services building; the fact that all positions

were now filled with fully-qualified staff; being 100% compliant with timely processing in all areas for the last six months; hosting of the first Senior Fair; installation of the Thomas Brothers accounting system to streamline processes; and fully-trained CP service workers. She advised that SNAP was the new name for the food stamp program and pointed out that their department no longer served just the impoverished. She reported on the benefits paid to New Kent residents, as well as the Energy Assistance Program. She assured that they would continue to work with and educate the Schools in an effort to curtail spending under the CSA program, pointing out that last year was the first time that they had not exceeded their budget. She thanked the County Attorney for his continued assistance.

Ms. Lauter spoke about the anticipated move into the new human services building in the upcoming year, and that they were looking to develop a complete Standard Operating Procedure so that it would be in place before the move. She indicated that they were hoping to hire a full-time eligibility screener for the proposed "one-stop shopping" environment, and they were excited about their capability to have room for training and classes at their new location. She also reported that they were undergoing a complete "refresh" of their computer equipment, courtesy of the State.

IT Director Jonathan Stanger stated that his department's major accomplishment had been the work performed at the Sheriff's Annex. He noted that they would continue to upgrade equipment and maintain service.

Parks & Recreation Manager Kim Turner indicated that she felt it had been a good year for her division in the area of parks, recreation and programming and fiscal management, and they would continue to look for ways to improve services and programs.

Fire Chief Tommy Hicks reported that call volumes continued to increase, but that they had been able to decrease response time from 23 minutes to below 8½. He indicated that, as a cost savings measure, they had installed tankless hot water heaters in all of the fire stations. He talked about an increase in grants, obtaining resources from the Virginia National Guard, and car pooling to training. He indicated that the ambulance billing system was working well and had provided revenue to increase staffing at Stations 2 and 3.

Deputy Clerk Connie Nalls spoke about the improved comments received from the public regarding customer service.

Mr. Budesky stated that staff "made his job easier", warned that the upcoming year would be financially challenging, and thanked the Board for its continued support.

IN RE: COMMENTS BY BOARD MEMBERS

Mr. Trout indicated that he was impressed by the accomplishments of the past year and staff's readiness to deal with the tough economic times ahead. He commended staff for helping to make New Kent a safe and great place to live and he expressed his appreciation for all of their efforts.

Mr. Evelyn indicated that it was his goal to visit every office and he spoke about how he continued to be impressed with how professional and competent the staff was and how much they cared about their work. He stated that he was proud to be a part of the process and expressed his thanks.

Mr Burrell echoed those comments.

Mr. Davis stated that as citizens became more educated about County services, they were asking better questions and expecting more. He noted an improvement in communications between staff and the Board and talked about the challenges to be faced in the future with rising costs. He spoke about the community embracing the New Kent University program and encouraged staff to keep up the good work.

Mr. Burrell spoke about the tough economy. He also thanked Jim Tacosa and his staff for their efforts, noting that New Kent was among the top five jurisdictions in the State in the area of recycling. He also recommended that the County consider implementing a suggestion box on ways to save money.

IN RE: ADJOURNMENT

Mr. Davis moved to adjourn the meeting. The members were polled:

Thomas W. Evelyn	Aye
David M. Sparks	Absent
Stran L. Trout	Aye
W. R. Davis, Jr.	Aye
James H. Burrell	Aye

The motion carried.

The meeting was adjourned at 1:50 p.m.