

VIRGINIA:

At a recessed meeting of the Washington County Board of Supervisors held Monday, December 9, 1996, at 6:00 p.m., at the Washington County Community Services Building, 15068 Lee Highway, Bristol Virginia, the following were present:

PRESENT:

Joe W. Derting, Chairman
 Bobby D. Ingle, Vice Chairman
 Kenneth G. Mathews
 James T. Osborne
 Maurice H. Parris
 Jackson Barker
 Dulcie M. Mumpower

Mark K. Reeter, County Administrator
 Joseph B. Lyle, County Attorney
 Sandra M. Hatfield, CPS, Administrative Assistant

ABSENT:

Mark W. Seamon, Accounting/Purchasing Manager

Special guests in attendance were:

Senator William Wampler, Jr.
 Delegate Joseph P. Johnson, Jr.
 Fred Parker, Treasurer
 Russell U. Owens, Chairman, W.C. Industrial Development Authority

Invited but not in attendance were the following:

Senator Jackson Reasor
 Delegate Terry Kilgore
 Delegate John Tate
 Melvin Ritchie, Commissioner of Revenue

1 **Call to Order**

The meeting was called to order by Mr. Joe W. Derting, Chairman of the Board who welcomed everyone in attendance.

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2 **Dinner hosted by Washington County Board of Supervisors**

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3 **Presentations by Virginia State Legislators on 1997 General Assembly Session**

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4 **Round table Discussion of 1997 Virginia General Assembly Legislative Issues**

Senator Wampler and Delegate Johnson opened discussions by speculating on the to FY 1997 budget status. Senator Wampler commented that this is the second year of the budget cycle and expressed his view that he did not feel the Commonwealth will be facing involuntary budget cuts, and that education will be a high priority during the upcoming session of the General Assembly. Senator Wampler indicated Governor Allen will release his recommended FY 1997 budget by December 20, 1996. He reported the General Assembly will discuss a proposal to eliminate personal property tax and increase the sales tax from 4.5% to 6%.

Delegate Johnson emphasized the importance of the upcoming elections in determining the majority rule in the Senate. He stated the House of Delegates will remain in Democratic control. He expressed his position of not favoring the school board having taxing authority for the reason that it adds another layer of government for the people. He also expressed his view that the Commonwealth does not need to increase the sales tax because there exists a surplus of funds this year.

In concluding his opening comments, Delegate Johnson remarked on the need to close the gap that exists in the educational funding disparity, and the growing concern about providing funds for schools to employ medical personnel to issue medication to students in school.

The following topics of interest to Washington County were presented to the legislators for discussion purposes:

Finance Issues

- # **Trigon demutualization**
- # **State intergovernmental revenue**
- # **Tax certificates and personal property tax**

Chairman Derting reported Washington County will receive over 180,000 shares of Trigon stock.

Senator Wampler stated the law allows states to hold stock but not localities. He reported the Attorney General has devised language to allow localities to sell their stock by 9:00 a.m. on the day of the lockup. Senator Wampler suggested rather than liquidating the stock, the Board of Supervisors consider placing the stock in reserves to be held and used toward increased health care costs.

During discussion of Trigon stock, Treasurer Fred Parker reported the Virginia School Board Association has requested that the monies go directly to them and bypass the locality.

Delegate Johnson requested the Board of Supervisors and the School Board to submit a resolution to him prior to the opening of the General Assembly stating a position and recommendation on the disbursement of Trigon stock.

Mr. Mathews suggested representatives of the Board of Supervisors and the School Board discuss and prepare a direction to take on the matter.

There were general comments relative a proposal aimed at eliminating personal property tax and increasing the sales tax statewide by 2%. There was acknowledgment expressed throughout that because Washington County and Bristol are adjacent to a state with a higher sales tax, raising the VA sales tax will only discourage TN residents from shopping in VA.

Senator Wampler stated the subject of Tax Certificates will be presented to a study commission for deliberation and clarification.

Education Issues

- # **Independent taxing authority for local school districts**

Economic Development Issues

- # **Continued support for Governor's Opportunity Fund**
- # **Regional Competitiveness Act**

At the invitation of Mr. Mathews, Christianne E. Parker, Assistant County Administrator, explained the purpose of the Regional Competitiveness Act and how the funding formula which is based upon population only helps urban areas who are competing for these funds and precludes approving funds for rural areas who cannot meet the eligibility criteria.

Senator Wampler spoke of tributary strategies defining it as upgrading sewer treatment facilities. He stated JLARC is proposing to upgrade the sewer system flowing into the Chesapeake Bay and permitting the State to operate it. He expressed his frustration at funding this project when people in the rural areas of Southwest Virginia have to buy bottled water to drink because water sources are contaminated.

Mr. Russell U. Owens, Chairman, Washington County Industrial Development Authority, solicited the legislators support for continuation of the Governor's Opportunity Fund. He explained the funds are a good tool for attracting industry, and that Washington County has benefitted through the use of these grant funds. Mr. Owens emphasized the importance of continuing to support industrial access funds, however, he recommended that some revisions be considered for the reimbursement regulations.

Senator Wampler called attention to the Safe Drinking Water Act stating there are grant funds available and that Washington County should consider this resource.

Health and Human Services Issues

- # **Legislative support and action on study/report concerning office space needs for local Departments of Social Services**
- # **Legislative remedy concerning problem of out-of-state placements into Virginia Adult Care Residencies**
- # **Proposed proration funding formula for Community Services Act**

Mrs. Mumpower expressed her hope the legislature will provide funds for school districts to employ nursing staff to dispense medication to students, urging that the issue be addressed soon.

Mrs. Mumpower expressed her deep concern over the increasing number of out of state transfers to Virginia hospital facilities asking the legislators for their assistance in legislating some protection for in-state patients whereby there is sufficient space for placing Virginia residents.

Land-use Issues

- # **Opposition to further erosion of local land-use regulatory powers (zoning)**

Transportation Issues

- # **Increased funding for primary and (especially) secondary road improvements**
- # **U.S. Highway 58 Corridor**
- # **County's interest in new interstate interchange and access road to serve Bristol-Washington County Industrial Park**

Mr. Ingle inquired about possible new funding in the budget for secondary roads and commenting on the County's responsibility to address road needs.

7:20 p.m. Maurice Parris left the meeting.

Senator Wampler responded to Mr. Ingle stating that Virginia needs to begin thinking about using general fund monies to address road needs rather than being dependent upon the fuel tax monies.

Chairman Derting opened a discussion on the subject of the Route 58 corridor. He stated there

needs to be road improvements from Damascus to Volney and he strongly urged legislative support for four-laning from Abingdon to Damascus. Senator Wampler suggested these comments be made to the Virginia Department of Transportation at their Spring allocation public hearing for secondary roads. Discussion ensued relative to building an access road to the Glade-Highlands Industrial Park and the importance of planning for future roads.

5 Adjournment

Senator Warner and Delegate Johnson assured Washington County of their support and requested that they be kept informed of the Board of Supervisors position on matters before the 1997 General Assembly Session. They each thanked the Supervisors for the opportunity to meet about issues of mutual concern.

On motion of Mr. Mathews, second by Mr. Barker, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting.

The vote on this motion was as follows: (6-0)

Mr. Derting	Aye	Mr. Ingle	Aye	Mr. Mathews	Aye
Mr. Osborne	Aye	Mrs. Mumpower	Aye	Mr. Barker	Aye

Joe W. Derting, Chairman