

VIRGINIA:

At a joint meeting of the Washington County Board of Supervisors and Washington County Planning Commission held Monday, June 24, 2002, at 7:00 p.m., at the County Administration Building in Abingdon, Virginia, the following were present:

PRESENT:Board of Supervisors:

Joe W. Derting, Chairman
John B. Roberts, Sr., Vice Chairman
Jack H. Barker
Bobby D. Ingle
Phillip B. McCall
Anthony S. Rector
Dulcie M. Mumpower

Mark K. Reeter, County Administrator
Naoma A. Cook, Administrative Supervisor

Planning Commission:

Mickey E. Tyler, Chairman
Walter F. Doss, Vice Chairman (arrived at 7:10 p.m.)
J. Ruddy Duty
Joe Hutton
W. D. Young, Jr.

Cathie E. Freeman, County Zoning and Subdivision Official

ABSENT:Board of Supervisors:

Lucy E. Phillips, County Attorney

Planning Commission:

Bill S. Canter, Jr.
Stephen L. Fisher

1 Call to Order

Chairman Derting called the Board of Supervisors to order.

Chairman Tyler called the Planning Commission to order.

2 Approval of Agenda

- a. Washington County Board of Supervisors

On motion of Mr. Ingle, second by Mrs. Mumpower, it was resolved to approve the agenda as presented.

The vote on this motion was as follows: (7-0)

<i>Mr. Derting</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Barker</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Ingle</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. McCall</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mrs. Mumpower</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Rector</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Roberts</i>	<i>Aye</i>

- b. Washington County Planning Commission

On motion of Mr. Hutton, second by Mr. Young, it was resolved to approve the agenda as presented.

The vote on this motion was as follows: (4-0)

<i>Mr. Tyler</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Duty</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Hutton</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Young</i>	<i>Aye</i>

3 Statement of Purpose of Joint Meeting

For the benefit of the audience, Mr. Mark Reeter, County Administrator, stated the purpose of the joint meeting with the Washington County Planning Commission, as follows:

“This joint meeting of the Washington County Board of Supervisors and Washington County Planning Commission is being conducted for the purpose of a joint public hearing on the matter of an Application for Special Exception Permit by Pratt Investments, L.L.C. on behalf of the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority. The Planning Commission shall conduct the public hearing on behalf of both bodies. The Applicant or his/her representatives shall be invited to address the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission first and are requested to limit their initial presentation to 20 minutes. Following this initial presentation the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors may direct questions to the Applicant. The public hearing shall then be opened with those wishing to speak in favor of this matter first, followed by those wishing to speak against. Speakers are requested to limit their remarks to three minutes. Upon conclusion of speakers the Planning Commission shall close the public hearing. The Planning Commission may then direct additional questions to the Applicant prior to taking action in recommendation for or against granting a Special Exception Permit. The Board of Supervisors shall then consider the matter and may direct additional questions to the Applicant prior to taking action to grant or deny issuance of the Special Exception Permit.”

For the benefit of the audience, Mr. Mickey Tyler, Chairman of the Washington County Planning Commission stated that upon adjournment of the joint meeting, the Planning Commission would conduct their regular monthly meeting.

4 Planning and Zoning Public Hearing

Request for Special Exception Permit:

(1). Pratt Investments, L.L.C. on behalf of Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority, Property Tax Map # 085-A-77A: Request for a Special Exception Permit pursuant to County Code Section 66-362 (16) for the location of a Regional Jail Facility to be owned And operated by the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority on property located on The South side of State Route 609 near the intersection of State Route 609/879 in an A-2 (Agricultural, General) zone, Harrison Magisterial District.

Mr. Tyler opened the public hearing on behalf of both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors and invited comments both in support of and in opposition to a request from Pratt Investments, L.L.C. on behalf of Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority for a Special Exception Permit pursuant to County Code Section 66-362 (16) for the location of a Regional Jail Facility to be owned and operated by the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority on property located on the South side of State Route 609 near the intersection of State Route 609/879 in an A-2 (Agricultural, General) zone, Harrison Magisterial District.

Mr. Bill King, Vice-President of Project Management for Thompson and Litton Engineers, and the Project Management Consultant for the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority, appeared before the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission to make a presentation on the application for the Special Exception Permit for the Regional Jail Facility. Accompanying Mr. King was Mr. Tim Mullins, also of Thompson and Litton, who assisted with preparation of the application.

Mr. King began his presentation by giving background information related to the need for the Regional Jail project. He stated that many studies show need throughout all of Southwest Virginia for major improvements to existing local jail facilities. Mr. King explained that the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority was comprised of the counties of Buchanan, Dickenson, Lee, Russell, Scott, Smyth, Washington, Wise and the City of Norton. These localities currently own and operate eight local jails.

Mr. King reviewed major problems regarding existing local jails, as follows:

- The number one problem is the age of the local jails. They average about 50 years in age with one being built in 1917. Because of the age, the jails have become outdated and have many problems complying with contemporary correctional standards and building codes.
- In addition, the local jails are overcrowded. In FY 2001 they averaged 156% of the rated capacity with maximums about 190%. The trends are increasing to 200% and above. The jails lack space internally, which complicates operations and makes meaningful correctional programs problematic. Site limitations make expansion of the local jails difficult, and in some cases, impossible.

Mr. King said that the nine localities had to determine whether to address these problems with an individual or regional approach. He stated that much time and effort went into studies that concluded that a regional jail system offers the most economic and effective solution.

Mr. King reviewed some of the major justifications in choosing a regional jail system. First, he stated that Virginia has a proven track record that shows jails operate more cost effectively on a regional basis because of the economies of scale. Mr. King said that if the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail system is approved and moves forward, it will become the 21st regional jail system in Virginia. Second, Mr. King explained that the Commonwealth of Virginia offers up to 50 percent reimbursement for total eligible project construction costs for a regional jail system. In contrast, if the localities chose to construct new or make improvements to their existing local jails, current state law does not provide for state funding or reimbursements. Therefore, the project costs would be funded 100% by the individual localities. Therefore, the localities realize major savings when regional jail projects are pursued. He said that these justifications led the Regional Jail Authority to recommend a regional jail system.

Mr. King described two studies that were required to make the proposed project eligible for the 50% reimbursement of project costs from the State. First, a Community-Based Corrections Plan was undertaken to develop justifications for an overall plan of the regional jail system. The Corrections Plan was approved by the Virginia Department of Corrections in April of 2001. The plan concluded there is a need for a regional jail

system in Southwest Virginia. In addition, it concluded that the future inmate population of the service area is projected to be 780 inmates; therefore, the project would be best served by a multi-facility, interdependent regional jail system. The Southwest Regional Jail System would consist of three facilities as follows:

1. Abingdon area facility- serving Russell, Smyth and Washington Counties rated with an inmate population of 365.
2. Duffield area facility- serving Lee, Scott and Wise Counties and the City of Norton rated with an inmate population of 270 inmates.
3. Haysi area facility- serving Buchanan and Dickenson Counties rated with an inmate population of 145.

Mr. King stated that, among other factors, the three-jail system is designed to provide convenience and ease for all functions that interact with the jail such as the court system, Sheriff's Department, and most importantly the public. During the discussions regarding the locations for the three jails, the Regional Jail Authority determined that no locality should have more than a 30-minute drive to its jail.

The second study was a Planning Study, which was primarily an architectural and economic analysis. It provided a proposed floor plan for the facility and determined an estimated total project budget of \$74.45 million, of which the state will reimburse 50% or \$37.23 million plus interest. This study was approved by the Virginia Department of Corrections in August of 2001.

Mr. King presented to the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission more specific information about the Abingdon Regional Jail facility, which will serve Washington, Russell and Smyth Counties. The following is a summary:

- The proposed Abingdon Regional Jail site was chosen largely because Washington County has the largest average local jail inmate population, therefore making it the best choice from an economic standpoint. In addition, the geographic location of the proposed site is a central, approximately equidistant location for Russell and Smyth Counties.
- The Regional Jail Authority considered the highways and roads that would be used to access the jail. For the Abingdon Regional Jail site, Smyth County would use Interstate 81, Russell County would use US Route 19 and Interstate 81. Washington County would use Interstate 81 and Hillman Highway (State Route 609).
- The proposed Abingdon Regional Jail site, which is located near Exit 22 off of Interstate 81, has public water and sanitary sewer infrastructures already available proximate to the site.
- The site topography and its natural features, which include a ridgeline and natural barriers with a significant vertical elevation difference from the building pad to Hillman Highway, lend itself well to minimize visibility of the regional jail from existing residents and industrial establishments located near the proposed facility.
- The surrounding land use has existing industrial developments to the north and east of the site, and vacant farmland from the south and west.

The following local considerations were taken into account:

- The proposed site plans were designed to minimize the visibility of the site, and the building was designed to look like an office structure.
- The proposed Abingdon Regional Jail facility would not have guard towers, extensive high mast lighting, or visible inmate movement from building to building. Instead, it would be self-contained with inmate movement internalized and most services taken to the inmates within their cell blocks. The intake and processing of inmates would be in secured enclosed areas.
- A traffic study was completed using Virginia Department of Transportation guidelines. The study concluded that the access road could connect directly to Hillman Highway without improvements and

could handle the increased traffic flow without a problem. Mr. King stated that despite the conclusions of the traffic study, his firm recommends construction of turning lanes at the intersection of the proposed access road and right hand taper and a left hand turning lane on Hillman Highway to promote uninterrupted traffic flow.

- The Abingdon Regional Jail site will require outside parking lot lighting; however, design steps were taken to minimize the affects on the surrounding area. The parking lots would have the turndown, “shoebox” lights mounted on poles that will minimize lateral dispersion of the lights. The perimeter lighting around the facility would consist of flood lights mounted adjacent to the facility to shine light directly on the building.
- The completed jail facility would generate a minimal amount of ambient noise during normal operations from heating and cooling systems and/or outdoor inmate recreational activity in the areas interconnected with the building. With the significant buffer zone between the facility and the nearest existing residential dwelling, the noise should go unnoticed.
- The security system will be designed in accordance with the latest Virginia Department of Corrections standards, and the most modern security technology available would be used at the jail facility. Significant internal security systems would be installed as well as external cameras. The service of a professional security consultant with over 40 years of experience has been obtained to guide the design of the facility’s security systems.
- When compared to the costs of upgrading the existing jail in Washington County there are major savings because the burden of the debt service goes from the County to the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority, with the Commonwealth of Virginia reimbursing 50% of the project costs. If the existing jail in Washington County were to be improved to Virginia Department of Corrections standards, a new site would have to be found because of site limitations at the existing Washington County jail facility.
- The local and regional economy will benefit from the Abingdon Regional Jail site. There will be a number of construction jobs created. In addition, there will be many business opportunities provided for local suppliers, manufacturers and businesses. Once the jail is complete, significant jobs will be created for the area because the number of employees that it will take to operate the facility exceeds the number of jail-related positions present in the Washington, Russell and Smyth County jails.

Mr. King concluded his remarks by giving a brief summary of his presentation.

Mr. Joe Hutton, member of the Planning Commission, asked Mr. King if an additional traffic study had been conducted on the road coming from the Abingdon area to Hillman Highway. He stated that his concern regarding traffic coming from the Abingdon area is the railroad overpass across Old Saltworks Road and the intersection of Old Saltworks Road and Hillman Highway. Mr. Tim Mullins with Thompson and Litton addressed Mr. Hutton’s question and stated that the traffic study looked at the intersection at Exit 22 off I-81 and the Hillman Highway/US Route 11 intersection for traffic flows to the east and west of the jail site and did not look at additional areas.

Mr. Mickey Tyler, member of the Planning Commission, asked if the traffic was counted in both directions. Mr. Mullins replied that traffic was counted in both directions.

Supervisor Phillip McCall asked about where the jail would be situated on the property. Mr. King stated that the facility would be located on the southeast corner on the opposite side of the 4-H Center and near Joy Manufacturing. He further stated that the actual building will take sixteen percent of the site and will be located 1300 feet off of Hillman Highway.

At this point, Mr. Tyler asked for other persons who wish to speak in favor of the application for Special Exception Permit. Hearing none, Mr. Tyler asked for comments from those persons in opposition to the application.

The following people spoke in opposition to the Special Exception Permit:

Mr. Patrick Mannix addressed the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission in opposition to the Special Exception Permit for the Abingdon Regional Jail site. Mr. Mannix read from the 1950 Code of Virginia.

Mr. Bill Hayter addressed the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, explaining that he owns property to the west of the proposed Abingdon Regional Jail site. He stated that the vacant farmland, which has been referenced tonight, is where he intends to build his house and raise his children. Mr. Hayter is concerned about the jail being located near the 4-H Center and is concerned for the safety of his family. Mr. Hayter stated that it is the Board's responsibility to protect the interests and security of the families in Washington County.

Mr. James Stroupe, who owns property in front of proposed facility, addressed the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission. He owns a manufacturing plant that operates 18 hours a day. Mr. Stroupe is concerned with the increase of traffic on State Route 609 that the Abingdon Regional Jail site will create. He stated there are better sites available for the proposed jail such as land the County currently owns in the one of their industrial parks. Mr. Stroupe expressed his concerns about the proximity of the regional jail site with the 4-H Center. He said the jail would affect the value of property owners within a five-mile radius, as well as, have an impact on future industry and tourism in Washington County and Abingdon.

Mr. Robert L. Phillips, Jr., addressed the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, and thanked them for opportunity to voice his views about the Abingdon Regional Jail site. He stated his opposition to the project and presented a petition with 115 signatures of people who are also opposed. Mr. Phillips further stated that 95% of the signatures were obtained from residents on Hillman Highway. He said that it is his belief that locating the regional jail close to the 4-H Center would be detrimental to the 4-H Program. Mr. Phillips asked the Board to delay taking action on this issue for 90 days and to do a study on the impact the jail could have on the 4-H Center.

Mr. Chip Barker, addressed the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, asking them the following questions:

1. Is the County prepared for the increased crime and social services of the families of the criminals that will move into the area?
2. With the current economic situation in Smyth County, why not place the regional jail there?
3. Is there not a more remote location in the eight county region?
4. What will happen to tourism in Washington County and Abingdon?
5. What happens when a criminal breaks into the 4-H Center?

Mr. Gene Keeps addressed the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission, asking them to use common sense in making their decision.

There being no further comments, Mr. Tyler declared the public hearing closed.

Discussion ensued among the Planning Commission regarding the Special Exception Permit for the regional jail facility.

On motion of Mr. Duty, second by Mr. Young, it was resolved that in consideration of the information presented both in favor and in opposition to the proposed regional jail, in the written materials provided to the Planning Commission, the oral presentation made on behalf of the Regional Jail Authority, and the public comments heard at tonight's meeting, that the Planning Commission find that the proposal is in the best interests of the public health, safety, and welfare, and recommend to the Board of Supervisors that it grant the application for a Special Exception Permit for construction of the Abingdon Regional Jail Facility, with the stipulation that construction be completed within 48 months of the date of Board of Supervisors approval.

The vote on this motion was as follows: (4-1)

Mr. Tyler	Aye
Mr. Doss	Aye
Mr. Duty	Aye
Mr. Hutton	Nay
Mr. Young	Aye

The matter having been acted on by the Planning Commission, the Board of Supervisors thus commenced its consideration.

Supervisor Jack Barker asked if the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority could delay the project for 90 days as requested by Mr. Phillips. Mr. King replied that due to the type of soil and the climate, a three-month delay would effectively push the project back a year.

Discussion ensued among the Board regarding the information received from those in favor and in opposition to the proposed regional jail site.

On motion of Mr. Roberts, second by Mr. McCall, it was resolved for the same reasons stated by Mr. Duty's motion for the Planning Commission action to accept the recommendation of the Planning Commission, and grant the request of Pratt Investments, L.L.C. on behalf of Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority, for a Special Exception Permit pursuant to County Code Section 66-362 (16) for the location of a Regional Jail Facility to be owned and operated by the Southwest Virginia Regional Jail Authority on property located on the South side of State Route 609 near the intersection of State Route 609/879 in an A-2 (Agricultural, General) zone, Harrison Magisterial District with the stipulation that construction be completed within 48 months of the date of approval.

The vote on this motion was as follows: (5-1-1)

<i>Mr. Derting</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Barker</i>	<i>Nay</i>
<i>Mr. Ingle</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. McCall</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mrs. Mumpower</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Rector</i>	<i>Abstained</i>
<i>Mr. Roberts</i>	<i>Aye</i>

5 Adjourn/Recess

- a. Washington County Board of Supervisors

On motion of Mr. Ingle, second by Mr. Barker, it was resolved to adjourn the meeting of the Washington County Board of Supervisors.

The vote on this motion was as follows: (7-0)

<i>Mr. Derting</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Barker</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Ingle</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. McCall</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mrs. Mumpower</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Rector</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Roberts</i>	<i>Aye</i>

- b. Ten Minute Recess - Washington County Planning Commission

It was consensus of the Planning Commission to take a ten-minute recess prior to beginning their regularly scheduled meeting.

Prepared by:

Naoma A. Cook, Recording Clerk

Approved by the Washington County Board of Supervisors:

Joe W. Derting, Chairman