

**VIRGINIA:**

At a joint meeting of the Washington County Board of Supervisors and Abingdon Town County held Wednesday, September 22, 2010, at 6:30 p.m., at the Virginia Highlands Small Business Incubator in Abingdon, Virginia the following were present:

**PRESENT:**

Dulcie M. Mumpower, Chair  
Odell Owens, Vice Chair  
Phillip B. McCall  
Nicole M. Price  
Kenneth O. Reynolds  
Joseph C. Straten  
Thomas G. Taylor

Mark K. Reeter, County Administrator  
Lucy E. Phillips, County Attorney  
Christianne E. "Christy" Parker, Assistant County Administrator  
Mark W. Seamon, Accounting Manager  
Naoma A. Norris, Recording Clerk

**Abingdon Town Council:**

Edward B. Morgan, Mayor  
Cathy C. Lowe, Vice Mayor  
Jason N. Berry  
Richard E. Humphreys  
Robert M. Howard

Gregory W. Kelly, Town Manager  
Cecile M. Rosenbaum, Town Clerk  
Deborah C. Icenhour, Town Attorney

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**1. Call to Order**

- a. Washington County Board of Supervisors

Ms. Mumpower stated the Board of Supervisors is pleased to have a joint meeting with the Abingdon Town Council, and expressed appreciation for the dinner provided by the Town.

At this time, Ms. Mumpower called the recessed meeting of the Washington County Board of Supervisors to order.

b. Abingdon Town Council

Mayor Morgan called the worksession meeting of the Abingdon Town Council to order. He thanked the Board of Supervisors for meeting with the town council and for the opportunity to communicate and work closer with the Board of Supervisors.

**2. Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance**

Supervisor Nicole Price gave the Invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

**3. Approval of Agenda**

a. Washington County Board of Supervisors

*On motion of Mr. Owens, second by Mr. McCall, it was resolved to approve the agenda as presented.*

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

<i>Mr. McCall</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Ms. Mumpower</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Owens</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Ms. Price</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Reynolds</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Straten</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Taylor</i>	<i>Aye</i>

b. Abingdon Town Council

*On motion of Mr. Berry, second by Mr. Howard the Council members approved the Agenda as presented.*

*The roll call vote was as follows:*

<i>Mr. Howard</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Humphreys</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Berry</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mrs. Lowe</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Morgan</i>	<i>Aye</i>

**4. General Business:****a. Topic(s) of Interest for Discussion as Identified by Abingdon Town Council:****1. Proposed King College Medical School Project**

Mayor Morgan provided an update on the most recent developments with the proposed King College Medical School Project. Recently a meeting was held with legislators, Dr. Greg Jordan (via telephone) and key town/county officials to determine the status of the project; where it is at and where it is going. At this meeting, it was determined with the concurrence of Dr. Jordan that the focus of the project would be on trying to obtain the Johnston Memorial Hospital (JMH) property in Abingdon for the medical school. Subsequently, a letter was drafted and sent to the JMH Board of Directors. Mayor Morgan noted that he, Ms. Mumpower and town/county staff recently met with the JMH medical staff to discuss the project. The invitation had been extended by Mr. Sean McMurray, CEO for JMH, to have the opportunity to talk about the general concept of the project and give the medical staff an opportunity to be brought up to speed on the project, and in turn the group answered questions asked by the medical staff.

Ms. Mumpower commented that the presentation to the JMH medical staff was well received. Good questions were asked by the physicians. She has received a lot of positive feedback. Ms. Mumpower commended Ms. Phillips and Mayor Morgan for the outstanding job they did with presenting the project to the medical staff. She added that it is believed the JMH property is the appropriate site for the medical school; therefore, a decision was made to petition the JMH Board of Directors for the hospital property so that the county/town can go forward with securing funds from the Virginia Tobacco Commission. Time is running out to obtain these funds. The town/county is now waiting for an answer from JMH about the use of the hospital property for the medical school.

Mr. Morgan added that he understands the JMH Foundation Board of Directors will be receiving a report from consultants hired to advise them on the disposition of the property around the 15<sup>th</sup> of October. They will have an opportunity to consider that report and perhaps make a decision fairly quick on the town/county's request. The Tobacco Commission meets on October 28, and hopefully there will be some positive things to report to them.

Mr. Morgan asked town/county staff if there were progress reports on other aspects of the project that they would like to update the council/board with.

Mr. Kelly pointed out there have been ongoing discussions on this project and everything looks positive in terms of moving forward with the JMH property. Other properties that have been discussed and looked at are still out there. However, everything seems to be moving more directly toward the JMH property.

Discussions ensued among the board, council and staff concerning issues relating to the suitability of the JMH property to be adaptively reused for the medical school. Some members of the board raised questions about a feasibility study being conducted along with other due diligence steps prior to making a final decision on the hospital property.

## 2. Proposed Town Sports Complex Project

Mr. Morgan commented that the town and county worked together in the past on a sports complex project and hope in the further can work together on this project again. The town appointed a committee to look at potential sites for a sports complex.

Mr. Howard explained the Town Sports Complex Committee (members are Mr. Howard, Dan Matthews and Eddie Icenhour) has identified four properties in and around Abingdon that may be suitable for a Town Sports Complex. Property was preliminary evaluated on size (40-50 acres), topography, road access, water supply, alternate uses and expansion possibilities. He made a PowerPoint Presentation that reviewed in some detail the four sites identified. The sites identified are as follows:

### Site #1 - Cumbow Property

A 40 acre site located on the west end of Abingdon. This property would accommodate four softball/baseball fields and two soccer fields. The disadvantages include the width of the road.

### Site #2 - Booker Property

A 22 acre site located on Nicholas Street in Abingdon. This property is flat and there would not be a lot of site development required. The disadvantages are there is not a good source of water supply and the property price is out of range.

### Site #3- Dr. Jim Moore Property

A 38.5 acre site located behind the Fairview property. The topography of the property is sloped and would require a lot of site development. Other disadvantages include lack of visibility and road access.

### Site #4 - Former Pratt Property (now owned by Jim Brown)

A 74 acre site that includes a residential structure that would remain and has additional land for future expansion. This property would accommodate six softball fields and five soccer fields.

Mr. Howard explained that the committee has not gotten to the point of conducting a needs study on the properties. However, the committee concluded that the former Pratt Property would be the best site for the Town Sports Complex. The property is located in the middle of town; is highly visible, meets the acreage needs; has water on site; borders the Virginia Creeper Trail, less site work would be required; would not cause light/sound issues for surrounding neighbors. The property could be used as a possible site for the Virginia Highlands Festival. Also, the residential structure could be converted to meeting rooms or other revenue producing venues.

Mr. Howard commented that Scott Wilson has provided a preliminary drawing for this site to get an idea of what would fit on the property. The house would remain because it has historic implications. A portion of western side of the property could be sold for a hotel. There is enough property to develop a new roadway to connect the part of Abingdon south of Interstate 81 by allowing an alternative to Exit 17.

Mr. Howard explained the committee is trying not only to meet the recreational needs of the town and county, but to develop the sports complex as a regional venue for soccer/baseball tournaments that would be a revenue source for both the town/county.

Mr. Howard mentioned that the committee has looked at the Havilland property on the eastern end of town. The property is located in the county, but adjoins the town. The committee concluded this site was not feasible.

Mr. Morgan commented that he understands the committee has looked at and given some evaluation to five or six sites, but no detailed studies have been completed to determine feasibility. He asked Mr. Howard for clarification.

Mr. Howard explained the committee looked at sites that would meet the needs for a sports complex. No engineering studies have been completed, or contracts negotiated for such studies.

Discussions ensued among the board and council concerning the need for a sports complex.

Mr. Reeter encouraged board and council members to take a trip to Damascus to see the progress being made to the Beavercreek Sports Complex. The project is now about 75% complete. The County is very proud of this facility and hopes it will be up and running next spring.

Mr. Morgan commended Mr. Howard and the committee for their hard work.

### **3. Tourism at Heartwood Artisan Center**

Mr. Kelly explained the Heartwood Artisan Center will be opening in mid to late summer 2011. Mr. Todd Christensen, Director for the Heartwood, has asked the town to provide tourism related staff for Heartwood because they do not have staff to handle the tourism needs. Mr. Christensen's objective is to promote the downtown area to people coming off of Exit 14 to visit the Heartwood, and in turn get folks visiting downtown to go to Heartwood. Mr. Kelly reported that he discussed with town council and staff the possibility of providing some staff to Heartwood. Subsequently, the town offers to provide one full time position and two part time positions. The issue now is the town does not have the tourism staff hired to meet the present needs of Heartwood. If the town were to hire the positions at this time they would have to secure the funding. Mr. Kelly presented a proposal to the Board for the county to partner with the town in providing staff to Heartwood. He commented Heartwood not only benefits Abingdon, but all of Washington County and the entire region. Mr. Kelly stated this is a good opportunity for the town and county to partner to continue its partnership in Heartwood.

Mr. Reeter explained that he is a member of the Southwest Virginia Cultural Heritage Committee Board of Directors. To his knowledge, the proposal of providing tourism related staff to Heartwood has not been presented to the board of directors. Mr. Reeter commented that the board of supervisors recently acted to adopt a Resolution to request legislative action to allow by ordinance an increase in the County's Transient Occupancy tax up to five percent. By law, counties are limited to two percent. A county can increase to five percent if authorized legislatively to do so. He advised the additional three percent increment must be used for promotion of tourism in the locality. Delegate Joe Johnson has indicated a willingness to file the legislation. There is no guarantee the county's request will be approved. If the county is granted legislative approval, the board would have to enact an ordinance and conduct a public hearing to increase the Transient Occupancy Tax from two percent to five percent. The additional revenue would be used to promote tourism in the county, and could be used to pay for the requested positions for Heartwood. This would be up to the discretion of the board. Mr. Reeter commented that the

town and county have to keep in mind that Heartwood has a regional focus. There will be other localities that will benefit.

Discussions ensued among the board of supervisors, council and staff regarding the proposal to provide tourism related positions to Heartwood. Discussion was also devoted to the recent Resolution adopted by the board of supervisors relating to an increase in the County's Transient Occupancy Tax.

Mr. Kelly commented that Todd Christensen would like the positions to be in place a couple of months before the opening of Heartwood for training purposes. He stated a decision on the proposal is needed soon for the purposes of budgeting for the next year.

Mr. Reeter stated he would contact Mr. Christenson to discuss the proposal.

**b. Topic(s) of Interest for Discussion as Identified by Board of Supervisors**

**1. Former County sheriff's Office Property on Park Street**

Mr. Owens (member of the County Facilities Committee) explained the County plans to dispose of part of the former Sheriff's Department property located on Park Street. The property includes five buildings, including a jail and small building. The County does not have a need for some of the office buildings. Discussions have been held by the Facilities Committee about how to dispose of the property, and a possible use of the Treasurers Building once the Treasurer's Office and Commissioner of Revenue are relocated to the new County Government Office Complex (Alpha Natural Resources Building). Before the Facilities Committee makes a decision to place the former Sheriff's Office and Jail on the market or up for auction, the committee wishes to make the town aware the property is available, and the town can let the County know at a later time if they have interest in the property.

Mr. Straten (member of the County Facilities Committee) added that the County is ending up with a lot of real estate. The Treasurer's Building will become available when the Treasurer's Office and Commissioner of Revenue move to the Alpha Natural Resources Building. The building on Valley Street that houses central dispatch and the Washington County Extension Office will be available in the near future when central dispatch is moved to the Public Safety Building. The Facilities Committee is studying the best use for this real estate and would like to see if the town has interest in any of the buildings.

Mr. Morgan commented the town would take the matter under advisement. There may be a variety of possible uses that may be of interest to the town. Time is needed to look at the matter and do some planning.

Mr. Berry commented that the Cave House has moved into the old Sheriff's Office and invested \$10,000 of town funds on renovations. This particular building is most urgent for the town to consider. It is doubtful the arts group has the funds to purchase the building.

Mr. Owens commented the Facilities Committee is in the preliminary stages of putting together a plan to dispose of the former Sheriff's Office property. One of the five buildings is being used by the County for storage and may keep this building.

Discussions ensued among the board and council regarding possible uses for the former Sheriff's Department property, Treasurer's Building and Valley Street Office building.

Mr. McCall asked the proposal to move the Washington County Extension Office from the Valley Street Office Building be discussed with Phil Blevins.

Mr. Straten commented that the Facilities Committee has talked with Mr. Blevins about this issue.

Mr. Owens added that the Facilities Committee has asked Thompson and Litton to meet with Phil Blevins to discuss his needs and make a report to the committee.

Ms. Lowe commented that a possible use of the Treasurer’s Building and Valley Street Office building would be for library programs to alleviate some of their problems.

Ms. Mumpower commented that an item of discussion for the next joint board and council meeting could be a joint venture for a new location for the library.

**5. Adjourn or Recess**

**a. Washington County Board of Supervisors**

Ms. Mumpower commented that the lines of communication between the town and county need to be kept open. It is wonderful to get together as governing bodies to discuss issues important to citizens of the town and county. She thanked the town for hosting the meeting.

Mr. Morgan commented is a pleasure to have the joint meetings and a step a positive direction to hold this type of meeting.

Mr. Humphreys invited council/board members to the dedication of the Muster House on Colonial Road in Abingdon being held tomorrow, September 23 at 6:00 p.m. Refreshments will be served.

*On motion of Ms. Price, second by Mr. Owens, it was resolved to recess to 6:30 p.m. on September 23 for a joint meeting with the Washington County Industrial Development Authority.*

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

<i>Mr. McCall</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Ms. Mumpower</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Owens</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Ms. Price</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Reynolds</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Straten</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Taylor</i>	<i>Aye</i>

**b. Abingdon Town Council**

*On motion of Ms. Lowe, second by Mr. Howard, the Council adjourned their meeting.*

*The roll call vote was as follows:*

<i>Mr. Howard</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Humphreys</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mr. Berry</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mrs. Lowe</i>	<i>Aye</i>
<i>Mayor Morgan</i>	<i>Aye</i>

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**Prepared by:**

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Naoma A. Norris, Recording Clerk

**Approved by the Washington County Board of Supervisors:**

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Dulcie M. Mumpower, Chairman