

HIGHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTES

MEETING DATE – January 2, 2024

The Highland County Board of Supervisors held its regular meeting on January 2, 2024, at 7:30 p.m. at the Highland Modular Conference Center, 89 Highland Center Drive, Monterey, Virginia 24465.

| PRESENT: | ABSENT: | STAFF / GUESTS: |
|--------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|
| Henry A. Budzinski, Jr. | | Jerri Botkin, Assistant County Admin. |
| Harry B. Sponaugle | | Melissa A. Dowd, County Attorney |
| Paul S. Tribble | | Nicholas J. Fialo, IV, EMS Chief |
| | | R.W. Kelly, Sheriff |
| | | 22 members of the public |
| | | |

Vice-Chairman Sponaugle called the meeting to order.

The first item on the Board's agenda for the January meeting was the annual organizational meeting of the Board including the election of officers. Supervisor Tribble made the motion to nominate Supervisor Budzinski as Chairman. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Sponaugle and carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Henry A. Budzinski, Jr. | Yes |
| Harry B. Sponaugle | Yes |
| Paul S. Tribble | Yes |

The next order of business was to elect a Vice-Chairman, Chairman Budzinski nominated Supervisor Sponaugle to be the Vice-Chairman. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Sponaugle and carried with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|--------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Harry B. Sponaugle | Yes |
| Paul S. Tribble | No |

RULES OF PROCEDURE

Mrs. Botkin gave the Board the Rules of Procedure used in years past. Chairman Budzinski asked that there be an addition concerning closed meetings be added. County Attorney Dowd advised that it could be added to the current Rules of Procedure.

Supervisor Tribble made the motion to adopt the Rules of Procedure as amended. This motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Sponaugle and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

**the amended Rules of procedure will be attached with these minutes.

CHAIRMAN

Pursuant to Robert's Rules of Order for small boards, Vice-Chairman Sponaugle moved to adopt a rule authorizing the Chairman to make motions and to vote on all questions. The motion was seconded by Supervisor Tribble and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETINGS AND WORK SESSIONS

Supervisor Tribble asked if the proposed schedule prepared by Mrs. Botkin could be modified due to scheduling conflicts. County Attorney Dowd advised this could be done with proper notification. Subsequently, Supervisor Tribble moved to adopt a Resolution establishing the date, time, and place for the Board's regular monthly meetings as the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Highland Modular Conference Center, Spruce Street, Monterey, Virginia and the Board's monthly Work Sessions as the third Wednesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. at the Highland Modular Conference Center, Spruce Street, Monterey, Virginia. This motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Sponaugle and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

PRESENTATIONS

Chief Fialo provided the Board with an update on staffing and the number of calls for the 2023 year. He also thanked the volunteers for helping fill in during staff call outs due to illness.

Sheriff Kelly congratulated the Board on the outcome of the election and welcomed them into their new positions. Sheriff Kelly gave the Board an update on the School Resource Officer position. He stated that after some thought and budget considerations the Sheriff's office was willing to sacrifice a road deputy to fill the School Resource Officer Position with Deputy Beth McGuire. Deputy McGuire went back to

work in the schools on January 2, 2024. Vice-Chairman Sponaugle inquired about what Deputy McGuire would be doing when school was not in session and Sheriff Kelly explained that Deputy McGuire would be responsible for animal control and also administrative work. Supervisor Tribble inquired in how losing a road Deputy would affect the Sheriff's office and was advised that the Highland County Sheriff's office has been short staffed for some time and currently has 2 new recruits enrolled in the Academy with an expected graduation date in May.

PUBLIC COMMENTS ON AGENDA ITEMS

None

ITEMS FOR ACTION, DISCUSSION, REVIEW OR INFORMATION

Old Business

None.

New Business

Comprehensive EMS Plan for Highland County

Chairman Budzinski presented a Comprehensive Plan for Highland County Emergency Medical Services that includes one organization made up of volunteers and County employees, acting under one agency number. After this presentation, County Attorney Dowd advised that portions of this plan go against the current EMS Ordinance and Chief Fialo's job description, and advised the Board that there would need to be a complete review of all three items together.

Sheriff Kelly spoke up and advised the Board that the Sheriff's office is currently working under a temporary FCC license for all emergency and law enforcement radios and is in the process of getting a more permanent solution.

Supervisor Tribble stated that his goal is to get the best EMS Service for the lowest cost and this would need to include a volunteer component with one leadership structure, one organization, working as a team to address the needs of the county residents.

County Personnel and Staffing Needs

Chairman Budzinski stated the Board would be conducting a comprehensive review of County organization and staffing needs to better understand how the County employees are organized and identify any staffing needs.

County Discretionary Spending

The next item on the agenda presented by the Board was to halt all discretionary spending for 60 days. County Attorney Dowd advised the Board that it has no control over money from the Commonwealth that funds Constitutional Offices. County Attorney Dowd also advised the Board that most expenditures for the County Administrator's office are not discretionary, but are obligations that have already been put in the respective budgeted for. After discussion between the Board members and County Attorney Dowd, Supervisor Tribble made the motion to freeze all discretionary spending of County funds for 60 days. Mrs. Botkin was directed to send a Memo to all department heads and Constitutional Officers explaining this temporary policy. This motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Sponaugle and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

PRESENT

Chairman Budzinski
Vice-Chairman Sponaugle
Supervisor Tribble

VOTE

Yes
Yes
Yes

County Hiring Freeze

The next item on the agenda presented by the Board was to freeze all County hiring for 60 days. County Attorney Dowd advised that this hiring freeze would not affect Constitutional offices and also advised the Board that the spending and hiring freezes were only motions and could be rescinded by the Board at any time. Supervisor Tribble made the motion to freeze all County hiring for 60 days. This motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Sponaugle and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

PRESENT

Chairman Budzinski
Vice-Chairman Sponaugle
Supervisor Tribble

VOTE

Yes
Yes
Yes

County Administrator's Reports, Requests and Recommendations

Mrs. Botkin advised the Board that it needed to appoint a signatory for the County's Federal Tax Form. Mrs. Botkin told the Board that typically the individual that completes the documents is the signatory since that individual is required to be able to answer questions from the IRS. After discussion among the Board members, Vice-Chairman Sponaugle made the motion to appoint Mrs. Botkin as the signatory for the Highland County tax documents. This motion was seconded by Supervisor Tribble and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

PRESENT

Chairman Budzinski
Vice-Chairman Sponaugle
Supervisor Tribble

VOTE

Yes
Yes
Yes

Mrs. Botkin asked the Board to appoint a Supervisor to represent Highland County on the Central Shenandoah Planning District Commission. Vice-Chairman Sponaugle made the motion to appoint Chairman Budzinski. This motion was seconded by Supervisor Tribble and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

PRESENT

Chairman Budzinski
Vice-Chairman Sponaugle
Supervisor Tribble

VOTE

Yes
Yes
Yes

Mrs. Botkin asked the Board to appoint a Supervisor to the Highland County Department of Social Services Administrative Board. Chairman Budzinski made the

motion to appoint Vice-Chairman Sponaugle. This motion was seconded by Supervisor Tribble and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

Mrs. Botkin then advised the Board she would need members to complete signature cards for each bank with which the County does business. The Board completed these documents.

Consent Agenda

The Board reviewed the monthly list of expenditures. Vice-Chairman Sponaugle made the motion to approve the warrants as submitted. This motion was seconded by Supervisor Tribble and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

Following the review of the monthly appropriations Supervisor Tribble made the motion to approve the monthly appropriations. This motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Sponaugle and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

Next, Mrs. Botkin explained to the Board that certain appropriations needed to be made at the request of outgoing Treasurer Lois White. Typically, these appropriations are made at the June closeout meeting. Since Mrs. White is retiring, she would like to see a balanced budget before she leaves on December 31, 2023. Mrs. Botkin also explained to the board that these appropriations and supplemental appropriations have already been budgeted and spent, and this is just a technicality that needs to be performed for Mrs. White to balance the budget at this time. After discussion, Supervisor Tribble made the motion to approve the appropriations as presented by Mrs. Botkin. This motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Sponaugle and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

Board Comments

Chairman Budzinski made the following statement:

"The County is conducting an investigation into the misappropriation of county funds. A county employee has been placed on administrative leave with pay during the investigation. The Board of Supervisors will have no comment regarding this matter at this time and will not entertain any questions concerning this matter. Please respect this request."

Supervisor Tribble commented that his purpose for being on the Board is to make sure that all spending that Highland County does is necessary and that what resources that Highland County has are used wisely. Supervisor Tribble also thanked his wife, Capt. Debbie Tribble with the Highland County Volunteer Rescue Squad, and the other volunteers in the community for their service and dedication to Highland County.

Chairman Budzinski then thanked the community for the opportunity to serve this county and stated that he looks forward to working with them. He also thanked the previous Board for all its hard work and the County staff for working in this tough time period. He stated that the County is very fortunate to have the staff that we currently have. He also asked the public to please come to the Board meetings with questions instead of posting possible misinformation on social media.

Vice-Chairman did not have any specific comments to make.

Open Public Comments

Betty Mitchell, who was present through Google Meet, raised a question about the Economic Development Authority's grant award and the spending freeze adopted by the Board. After discussion between County Attorney Dowd and Mrs. Botkin the Board said the funding was approved for the EDA grant.

Emily Malcolm, the Director of Social Services, introduced herself to the current board and said she was looking forward to working with the Board.

Closed Session

Vice-Chairman Sponaugle made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to Virginia Code §2.2-3711-A (1), personnel, to discuss the performance, discipline and dismissal of a specific employee.

Supervisor Tribble seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

County Attorney Dowd advised Tammy Minnigh with the Recorder this was for an investigation of an employee and if any action was taken, she would be notified.

The Board entered its closed session.

After the closed session, Chairman Budzinski reconvened the Board meeting in an open meeting. Supervisor Tribble moved that the Board certified to the best of each

member's knowledge, only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements and only such public business matters as were identified in the motion by which the closed meeting was convened were heard, discussed or considered in the meeting by the Board of Supervisors.

Vice-Chairman Sponaugle seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

Supervisor Tribble then made a motion to enter into a contract with Robinson Farmer Cox to complete a credit card fraud investigation of the Board of Supervisors' credit card, not to exceed \$5,000.00, looking at the period from July 1, 2022, to January 1, 2024. This motion was seconded by Vice-Chairman Sponaugle, and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |

In further business, the Board also agreed to allow Mrs. Botkin to continue with her current enrollment at JMU, with her continuing on paid leave to attend classes and the County reimbursing her for mileage.

Supervisor Tribble made a motion to authorize Jerri Botkin to complete all necessary paperwork within the County Administrator's office. Vice-Chairman Sponaugle seconded the motion and the motion carried unanimously with the following vote:

| <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>VOTE</u> |
|-------------------------|-------------|
| Chairman Budzinski | Yes |
| Vice-Chairman Sponaugle | Yes |
| Supervisor Tribble | Yes |



Supervisor Tribble moved to continue the Board meeting until the Work Session on January 17, 2023, Vice-Chairman Sponaugle seconded the motion, and it passed by unanimous vote.

Respectfully submitted:


Jerri Botkin, Asst. County Administrator

Minutes of the January 2, 2024, meeting are approved:

2/6/2024
Date



Chairman Henry A. Buzinski, Jr.