

HIGHLAND COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

MINUTES

MEETING DATE – OCTOBER 21, 2020

The Highland County Board of Supervisors continued its regular meeting on October 21, 2020, at 7:30 p.m. at the Highland Modular Conference Center, Spruce Street, Monterey, Virginia.

October 21, 2020 Meeting to be held by Video through Google Meet

Due to the threat to public health and safety from the Coronavirus for public gatherings, the Highland County Board of Supervisors regular meeting on October 21 at 7:30 p.m. will be held by video through Google Meet.

Pursuant to the Freedom of Information Act, *“Any public body may meet by electronic communication means without a quorum of the public body physically assembled at one location when the Governor has declared a state of emergency in accordance with § 44-146.17, subject to the following procedures and conditions:*

- a. The catastrophic nature of the declared emergency makes it impracticable or unsafe to assemble a quorum in a single location.*

In addition, the public body must: make arrangements for public access to such meeting.

For purposes of this section, the public may join in on the video at Google Meet.

To join by Google Hangout Meet:

meet.google.com/woj-rmce-mxj

Join by phone

[+1 443-776-0845](tel:+14437760845) (PIN: 472230548)

PRESENT:	ABSENT:	STAFF / GUESTS:
David Blanchard		Roberta Lambert, County Administrator
Harry Sponaugle		Melissa A. Dowd, County Attorney
John Moyers		Ronald Wimer

Chairman Blanchard called the meeting to order.

ITEM #1

OLD BUSINESS

a. Cares Act Funding

Ms. Lambert provided an update on funding requests that have been received but not acted on and suggested that the Board set a work session to review expenditures, requests and available funding.

The Board agreed to start its regular meeting scheduled for November 3 at 6:00 pm instead of 7:30 p.m.

ITEM #2

NEW BUSINESS

Chairman Blanchard advised that the County had purchased the Highland Auto Wash building located in Monterey at a public auction of the real property of the Jerry Rexrode Estate. He stated that the County did not go into this transaction lightly. The County has been working on ongoing efforts to help provide EMS services. He continued saying that the County had to move sooner than expected and that the building had two large bays and could be used for staff. He advised that this will not work without the tireless efforts of volunteers. He advised that he felt there were growing pains but everyone was trying to do a good service. He said the County needs facilities and equipment as they move forward with what has been a nine year effort so far. The volunteer rescue squad has graciously provided space for County staff. Chairman Blanchard advised that he had been hearing comments and did not like to hear people say that we don't need any rescue squad.

Chairman Blanchard then began a discussion on the recently enacted EMS fee. Debbie Tribble, an attendee at the meeting, interrupted to make a comment and County Attorney Melissa Dowd, as parliamentarian for the Board, interrupted to advise that this was not an open discussion. Paul Tribble, also an attendee at the meeting, stated that Ms. Dowd was not a member of the Board. Chairman Blanchard asked everyone to hold up since the Board was trying to get some clarity on a question. Mr. Tribble advised Ms. Dowd to never speak to him or his wife in that tone again. He also stated that they paid her salary. Supervisor Sponaugle advised that this was not the right place for this discussion and that it should be taken outside. Chairman Blanchard advised that there were kinks in the EMS fee that needed to be worked out but wouldn't get resolved tonight. He apologized for the disagreement.

ITEM #3

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Paul Tribble commented that his wife was president of the volunteer rescue squad and she had asked him to make some comments. He stated that there seemed to be a push to run out the volunteer agency and that there was problem with the coordination of the volunteers and paid staff. He continued by saying that it was his understanding that

the paid staff was hired to assist the volunteers as one of their primary purposes. He also stated that we do not need an ambulance for HCEMS because we already have five ambulances in the County and we don't need a building that the county attorney bought while two volunteer members went racing out on a call. He advised that a substation was needed in Blue Grass. He stated he felt the volunteers had been deceived. Mr. Tribble said they needed an EMS agency that will support the volunteers; however, it appeared the county leadership and paid EMS staff are trying to eliminate HCVRS.

Beth Armstrong asked if her request along with Harmony Leonard for changes in their office building would be discussed at the November 3 meeting. Ms. Lambert advised it would be included.

ITEM #4
CLOSED MEETING

Supervisor Blanchard moved for a closed meeting pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A) 8 Legal Advice. The motion carried. Motion, from Supervisor Sponaugle to come out of the closed meeting, carried. Chairman Blanchard reconvened in open session. On motion of Supervisor Sponaugle and carried, the Board approved the following resolution:

RESOLUTION
Return to Open Session

<u>PRESENT</u>	<u>VOTE</u>
David W. Blanchard	Yes
Harry Sponaugle	Yes
John Moyers	Yes

WHEREAS, the Highland County Board of Supervisors has convened a closed meeting on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of The Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712.1 (D) of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by this Board of Supervisors that such closed meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Highland County Board of Supervisors hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered by the Board of Supervisors.

ITEM #5

ADJOURN / RECESS

There being no additional business, the meeting was continued at 9:14 p.m.

APPROVED:

Chairman