

At the regular meeting of the Accomack County Board of Supervisors, held on the 18th day of September 2024, in the Board Chambers of the County Administration Building, 23296 Courthouse Avenue Accomac, Virginia at 5:00 p.m.

The Board of Supervisors' minutes are a general account of the September 18, 2024 meeting. For full details of discussions, meeting audio can be located on the County of Accomack's website at <https://www.co.accomack.va.us/how-do-i/listen-to-meeting-audio>.

1. Opening of Meeting

MEMBERS PRESENT AND ABSENT

Board of Supervisors Present:

Robert D. Crockett, Chair
H. Jackie Phillips, Vice-Chair
Roger L. DeGeorges
Donald Hart
Vanessa Kay Johnson
C. Reneta Major
Jeffrey A. Parks, Sr.
William J. "Billy" Tarr
Calvin L. Washington, Sr.

Board of Supervisors Absent:

None

Others Present:

Mr. Michael T. Mason, County Administrator
Ms. Jan Proctor, County Attorney
Ms. Chicnika Weatherley, Administrative Assistant II

There being a quorum, Chairman Crockett called the meeting to order at 5:00 p.m.

1.1 Invocation

Chairman Crockett gave the invocation.

1.2 Pledge of Allegiance

The pledge of allegiance was made.

1.3 Adoption of Agenda

A motion to approve the agenda was made by Supervisor Hart and seconded by Vice-Chairman Phillips. The motion was approved unanimously.

1.4 Consider Allowing Remote Participation of Board Member(s) (if warranted)

Remote participation was not warranted.

2. Public Comment

2.1 Public Comment Rules

County Attorney Jan Proctor read the Public Comment rules into the record.

Chairman Crockett informed the Board that one person signed up for public comment. He then recognized the Bayside Community Revitalization Group who was in attendance in support of their community.

Myra Riley-Taylor of 19387 Dogwood Drive, Melfa, Virginia, the President of the Bayside Community Revitalization Group, commented that the last time they briefed the Board was in July of 2018 and since then a lot of efforts to improve the Bayside area had taken place. She distributed an information packet to the Board that included an article published in 2000 that answers the question the Board previously asked concerning the naming of White Rabbit and an overview of the community and its accomplishments since the organization was established in 2018.

Ms. Taylor requested the Board select the Bayside community as the next area to benefit from the County's Derelict Building Removal Program. Ms. Taylor recalled to the Board that in October of 2022, when the Whitesville Project was underway, Chairman Crockett, their district supervisor, commented that he would like to see Bayside as the next community to benefit. Ms. Taylor informed the Board that there was a total of 27 derelict structures within the community's three-mile stretch and, without any solicitation, five owners of these had already verbally agreed to have derelict structures on their property removed. As indicated in the housing study and accordance with the need for housing, the community requested the removal of the structures, with the possibility of the parcels being sold to support housing on them. Ms. Taylor asked the Board for its support of their proposal to be the next community to have the derelict structures removed without having to compete for the funding since Bayside was ready to proceed.

Chairman Crockett requested that the Bayside Community Revitalization Group and members of its community stand to be recognized.

3. Consideration of Minutes

3.1 Approval of August 21, 2024 Meeting Minutes

A motion to approve the August 21, 2024 meeting minutes was made by Supervisor Hart and seconded by Supervisor Tarr. The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Recognitions

None.

5. Consent Agenda

5.1 Approval of Consent Agenda

A motion to approve the consent agenda was made, by Supervisor Hart and seconded by Supervisor Major, the Accomack County Board of Supervisors voted to approve the following items on the Consent Agenda as presented: The motion was approved unanimously.

5.2 Consider Consenting to Northampton County's Enterprise Zone Incentives Amendment.

5.3 Consider Approving a Proclamation Recognizing the 50th Anniversary of East Coast Migrant Head Start.

5.4 Consider Award of IFB 764-Johnson's Landing Drive on Dock Replacement.

5.5 Consider Approving the 2025 Holiday Calendar for Accomack County.

5.6 Consider directing the County Administrator to send a letter of appreciation to the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Company for allowing the County to use their facility for the Board's Strategic Planning Session held on September 7, 2024.

5.7 Consider Rescheduling the Public Hearing on two amendments to Chapter 106-Zoning (Poultry and CAPA Ordinances).

5.8 Consider approval of the contract with the Virginia Auction Company, Inc. for nonjudicial sales of tax-delinquent real properties.

5.9 Consider a request from ESPL Trustees to name the granite bench located on the lawn of the Eastern Shore Public Library/Heritage Center.

6. Items Removed from the Consent Agenda

No items were removed from the Consent Agenda

7. Report of Public Officials

7.1 Receive Report from Robbie Lewis, Virginia Department of Forestry.

Robert Lewis of the Department of Forestry reported to the Board that the Department of Forestry Office in Tasley had two employees including himself and Forest Technician Kenny Midgett both of which cover the entire Eastern Shore. Mr. Lewis informed the Board that every ten years the Department of Forestry restructures its agencies. He stated the following services are provided and conducted by the Forestry Department:

- Management Assistance to Private Forest Landowners' Timber
- Forest Resource Education
- Wildlife Suppression
- Water Quality Enforcement on logging projects
- Tree Planting
- Timber Marking
- Set up harvest with natural regeneration on harvest land to ensure vegetation was growing.
- Precommercial Thinning
- 9 Prescribed Burns on 900 acres
- Aerial Release by helicopter
- Buffer establishment Tree Planting

- Written in-depth Forestry Management Plans
- 20 Different Events 2 included Smokey the Bear
- Responds to Forest Fire Calls

Mr. Lewis informed the Board that he would not be discussing all of the acreage as he has done in the past, instead, he reported that the department received 158 fire calls between 2012 and 2020 with 153 fires started by people and 6 lightning fires. All 6 lightning fires were in Accomack County. As of September of last year a total of 191 projects were conducted on 4,548 acres.

Supervisor Parks commented his property was one of the 6 lightning strike fires last year and thanked Mr. Lewis and Officer Midgett for a great job monitoring the fire for over two weeks and for being very accessible. He said you would have thought it was a team of twenty folks.

Supervisor Hart inquired about ditches and water quality and if the Forestry also monitored the loggers to ensure that ditches were not being closed. Mr. Lewis replied yes and informed Supervisor Hart that they monitor the logging docks which can cause the most problems.

7.2 NASA Wallops Director, Dave Pierce, will be available for Board Questions regarding the transfer of NASA Wallops P-3 aircraft and Mission to NASA Langley.

County Administrator Mike Mason addressed the Board and provided a segue into the agenda item before turning the podium over to Mr. Pierce. Mr. Mason reminded the Board that at their August 2024 meeting, the Board was briefed on NASA's decision to transfer its P-3 Aircraft Operation Mission from NASA Wallops to NASA Langley. There were several questions regarding the announcement culminating with the Board directing him to write a letter to Mr. Pierce expressing the Board's concerns and requesting his presence at the Board of Supervisors' September 18th public meeting.

Dave Pierce, Director of the NASA Wallops Flight Facility, thanked Chairman Crockett and the Board for having him. Mr. Pierce stated on behalf of the men and women at the Wallops Flight Facility, he thanked the Board for their ongoing support to its mission at NASA and more importantly the people here on the Shore. He also thanked the County Administrator and his team for their partnership and support. Mr. Pierce reiterated the reason this action was being taken and that he would provide an update to the Board, through the County Administrator, as more information became available. He assured the Board that Wallop's future was bright and secure.

Listed below is the letter from Accomack County to NASA Wallops concerning the P-3 mission transfer to Langley.

ELECTION DISTRICT 1
WILLIAM J. "BILLY" TARR
CHINCOTEAGUE, VA 23336

ELECTION DISTRICT 2
ROGER L. DEGEORGES
ATLANTIC, VA 23303

ELECTION DISTRICT 3
VANESSA KAY JOHNSON
SANFORD, VA 23426

ELECTION DISTRICT 4
JEFFREY A. PARKS, SR.
PARKSLEY, VA 23421

ELECTION DISTRICT 5
CALVIN L. WASHINGTON,
SR.
MODEST TOWN, VA 23412

COUNTY OF ACCOMACK BOARD OF SUPERVISORS



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ELECTION DISTRICT 6
ROBERT D. CROCKETT
CHAIR
ONANCOCK, VA 23417

ELECTION DISTRICT 7
H. "JACKIE" PHILLIPS
VICE CHAIR
ONLEY, VA 23418

ELECTION DISTRICT 8
DONALD L. HART, JR.
KELLER, VA 23401

ELECTION DISTRICT 9
C. RENETA MAJOR
PAINTER, VA 23306

August 26, 2024

Dave Pierce, Director
NASA, Goddard Space Flight Center
Wallops Flight Facility
david.l.pierce@nasa.gov

Dear Director Pierce,

I want to thank you and your team for providing me with a preliminary briefing on August 20, 2024, regarding the NASA Aircraft Management Advisor Board's decision to relocate the NASA Wallops P-3 aircraft and its mission to Langley Research Center. I understand the complexities of sharing such confidential information with the County in advance of sharing it with impacted employees. It's a delicate balance between keeping NASA's local government partners fully informed of events such as this and keeping employment information confidential. Certainly, more lead time would have been beneficial given the circumstances but I do appreciate the briefing I received.

Once NASA's decision on the fate of the P-3 and its support personnel became public, the Accomack County Board of Supervisors was contacted by a number of concerned citizens. Some of these citizens chose to voice their concern at the Board's August 21, 2024, public meeting. Having factual information directly sourced from NASA to share with the Board on August 21st and to offer to the public was extremely valuable to me for such a delicate issue. It certainly does not make this outcome acceptable for anyone but at least everyone had the facts.

The concerns of the Accomack County Board of Supervisors, upon learning of NASA's directive, are twofold. First, the Board is concerned with the local individuals and families adversely effected by NASA's decision to consolidate its aircraft fleet by transferring resources from Wallops to Langley. It is my understanding that twenty-three NASA Wallops local positions are impacted. It is the Board's hope that during the P-3's transition period, NASA will make every attempt to find and offer equivalent vacant NASA Wallops positions to these employees allowing them a choice as to whether to relocate or remain on the Eastern Shore. The Eastern Shore is a tightknit community and the employees whose jobs are being eliminated are not just employees to us. They are our friends, neighbors and community leaders so we hope that every opportunity to keep them local will be pursued. Second, NASA's choice to consolidate Wallops aircraft operations at Langley brings into question the future viability of the NASA Wallops airfield. With

the removal of the P-3 and its mission, NASA Wallops will have no mission critical need that requires immediate use of the airfield. NASA's departure will leave the U.S. Navy's Field Carrier Landing Practice program as the only significant active use of the runway. Even this use has a defined term as specified by agreement between NASA and the Navy. This is particularly troubling to the Board of Supervisors since access to the Wallops Research Park by air is dependent on operation of the NASA airstrip. In total, the County and Commonwealth of Virginia invested over \$8M to develop this park with one of its prime amenities being access to the Wallops airfield. The Board hopes that NASA does not lose sight of the importance of its airfield to its local and state partners and to the future economic development of this region.

The Accomack Board of Supervisors would like you to be available at their September 18, 2024 public meeting so that they can share these concerns regarding the transition of the Wallops flying mission to Langley and for you to take questions regarding this matter. Please contact me if your schedule can accommodate this request.

Sincerely,

Michael
Mason

A digital signature block for Michael Mason. It includes the text "Digitally signed by Michael Mason" and "Date: 2024.08.28 10:03:26 -04'00'".

Michael T. Mason, CPA
County Administrator

Supervisor Parks thanked Mr. Pierce for attending the meeting and, for clarity purposes, he asked if the Navy's contract was good until 2033 and if the maintenance of the airfield would continue. Mr. Pierce replied yes to both questions and also added that operations and maintenance provided NASA with \$2 million yearly for the airfield alone.

Supervisor Parks also asked for clarity so that the Board understood that Mr. Pierce was just a messenger to report back to NASA's decision-makers and what had been communicated was that NASA was walking away from a free air operation to move an aircraft and 23 people 100 miles.

Mr. Pierce replied that what was being communicated was that NASA has an institutional budget that it currently could not support and was looking for efficiencies in how to operate. He said imagine having just one airplane at the facility. It is not as efficient as having it collocated with other airplanes and squadrons operated at another hanger about two hours away.

8. Committee Reports

No committee reports.

9. Old Business

No old business.

10. Appointments

10.1 Appointments

No new appointments.

10.2 Attendance Report

Attendance reports were included in the Board's agenda packet.

11. New Business

11.1 Receive 4th Quarter County Summary Financial Report (unaudited)

County Administrator Mike Mason introduced the County's new Finance Director, Mrs. Leslie Lewis, to the Board informing them that Mrs. Lewis came to the County with a vast amount of experience in both the private sector and public sector. He stated she previously served as the finance director for Northampton County, Wicomico County and, on an interim basis, Accomack County when the County was in-between finance directors. He stated he was happy to have her and looked forward to working with her.

Chairman Crockett and the Board welcomed Mrs. Lewis aboard.

Accomack County Finance Director Leslie Lewis reviewed the County's summary financial report for the quarter that ended June 30, 2024. She reported to the Board that the County's top three taxes: real-estate taxes, personal property taxes, and local sales and use taxes exceeded the budget for the year, ending on a high. The real estate taxes on public service corporations (PSC) were budgeted at \$2.3 million but actual was \$1.5 million. She stated this variance was out of the County's control because the taxable values of these entities are determined by the State Corporation Commission (SCC) as opposed to the County Assessor. She also stated the SCC utilizes an assessment ratio calculated by the Virginia Department of Taxation to compute taxable values. She said the assessment ratio was lower than usual but expected it to rebound next fiscal year.

Chairman Crockett addressed Mrs. Lewis informing her that Mr. Mason warned the Board of the possibility of the County taking a hit on their assessment ratio due to last year's low real estate assessments and that the County was in effect being penalized due to these low values in the form of reduced PSC taxes. He then stated the 2024 county-wide reassessment has brought the County's real estate values up to where they should have been.

Mrs. Lewis agreed with Chairman Crockett and informed the Board that the assessment ratio was almost back to where it should be.

The Board packet included a copy of the County 4th Quarter Summary Financial Report. Shown below is page one of this report which was used by Mrs. Lewis in her presentation to the Board.



County of Accomack, Virginia
Summary Report of Major Revenues (All funds)
For the Fiscal Years 2024 and 2023

| Revenue | FY 2024 Estimate | As a % of Total County Revenue | Quarter 4 | | | Fiscal Year-To-Date | | | % Annual Growth Required by 2024 Estimate | ↑ or ↓ |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|----------------------|----------------------|-------------|---|----------|
| | | | FY 2024 | FY 2023 | % Change | FY 2024 | FY 2023 | % Change | | |
| Property Taxes: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Real Estate Tax | \$ 23,939,271 | 33.2% | \$ 12,092,522 | \$ 12,671,058 | -4.6% | \$ 24,360,320 | 24,749,876 | -1.6% | -3.3% | ↑ |
| Personal Property Tax | 12,028,113 | 16.7% | 8,053,842 | 6,438,878 | 25.1% | \$ 15,744,140 | 13,684,882 | 15.0% | -12.1% | ↑ |
| Real Estate Taxes-Public Svc Corp. | 2,333,495 | 3.2% | 799,424 | 1,154,734 | N/A | 1,560,956 | 2,241,801 | -30.4% | 4.1% | ↓ |
| Other Revenues: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Local Sales & Use Tax | 5,362,857 | 7.4% | 1,350,740 | 1,412,016 | -4.3% | \$ 5,458,305 | 5,411,143 | 0.9% | -0.9% | ↑ |
| Vehicle License Fees | 700,000 | 1.0% | 494,105 | 491,849 | 0.5% | 667,050 | 701,178 | -4.9% | -0.2% | ↓ |
| Recordation Tax | 460,000 | 0.6% | 125,315 | 115,998 | 8.0% | 442,021 | 516,500 | -14.4% | -10.9% | ↓ |
| Communication Sales Tax | 740,004 | 1.0% | 162,517 | 172,017 | -5.5% | 670,381 | 713,368 | -6.0% | 3.7% | ↓ |
| Cigarette Tax | 1,250,782 | 1.7% | 238,036 | 153,108 | 55.5% | 1,044,291 | 657,108 | 58.9% | 90.3% | ↓ |
| Consumer Utility Taxes | 1,085,000 | 1.5% | 221,458 | 212,024 | 4.4% | 1,058,307 | 1,018,057 | 4.0% | 6.6% | ↓ |
| Building Permits | 305,000 | 0.4% | 118,923 | 93,542 | 27.1% | 388,620 | 369,369 | 5.2% | -17.4% | ↑ |
| Transient Occupancy Tax | 930,000 | 1.3% | 350,207 | 315,158 | 11.1% | 1,199,990 | 1,135,775 | 5.7% | -18.1% | ↑ |
| Landfill Tipping Fees | 3,680,000 | 5.1% | 1,019,543 | 1,008,600 | 1.1% | 3,719,748 | 3,731,598 | -0.3% | -1.4% | ↑ |
| Meals Tax | 930,000 | 1.3% | 280,656 | 194,444 | 44.3% | 1,019,168 | 1,062,636 | -4.1% | -12.5% | ↑ |
| Shared Expense Reimbursements | 4,834,206 | 6.7% | 1,327,780 | 1,159,541 | 14.5% | 4,614,911 | 4,305,308 | 7.2% | 12.3% | ↓ |
| Total | \$ 58,578,728 | 81.3% | \$ 26,635,066 | \$ 25,592,968 | 4.1% | \$ 61,948,206 | \$ 60,298,599 | 2.7% | 0.45% | ↑ |

11.2 Consider Ordinance Establishing a Community Revitalization Fund & Scheduling the associated public hearing.

County Administrator Mike Mason stated he had briefed the Board multiple times on the development of the County’s derelict building program. He said the County was in the final stages of getting it scoped out and ready to deploy. Establishing a community revitalization fund was a prerequisite to this deployment. Mr. Mason pointed out to the Board that at the request of Accomack County, the 2024 General Assembly amended Virginia Code Section 15.2-958.5 to allow any locality to establish a "Community Revitalization Fund.” Previously, this authority was only reserved for the City of Richmond. The County sought to expand the scope of this code section to include Accomack because of his recommendation to competitively deploy, via grants, the previous Whitesville Pilot Project to other communities using the community revitalization fund as the vehicle. Mr. Mason informed the Board that establishing a community revitalization fund would allow the County to offer grants to nonprofit organizations for the purpose of demolishing derelict residential structures. Under the proposed program, the County would invite nonprofit organizations to apply for grant funds to improve the community by removing uninhabited derelict structures that they select. Submitted applications would be scored using the following criteria:

- The number of structures proposed for demolition and their condition;

- The projected average demolition cost per proposed structure;
- Location and density of the structures chosen for removal.
- Projects located in disadvantaged areas would receive bonus points (per the Federal Government's Climate and Economic Justice Screen Tool) and/or areas determined to be a high priority for DHCD-funded housing projects by the Accomack County Board of Supervisors are preferred as are projects located close to inhabited areas or public use areas.
- The demonstrated ability of the applicant to administer the program
- The requested amount of overhead to administer the project is expressed as a percentage of actual cost (maximum of 10%).

In total, the County has \$300,000 currently budgeted for the program. Staff proposed to cap the maximum amount of grant funds available to an applicant at \$150,000, which would allow two applicants to be awarded this fiscal year. Successful applicants would be required to enter into a grant agreement with the County detailing the terms and conditions of the grant.

Mr. Mason asked the Board if they agreed with this approach, to send the draft ordinance establishing the community revitalization fund to public hearing on October 16, 2024.

A motion to schedule a public hearing at the Board's October 16th meeting to obtain comments from the public on the attached draft to consider an ordinance to establish a Community Revitalization Fund was made by Supervisor Major and seconded by Supervisor Parks. The motion was approved unanimously.

Chairman Crockett informed the Bayside Community Revitalization Committee that the Board could not vote on this item at that time because, by law, the ordinance had to go to a public hearing before the Board could take final action.

**AN ORDINANCE AMENDING CHAPTER 26 OF THE ACCOMACK COUNTY CODE,
ENTITLED "COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT," TO ADD SECTION 26-2 THERETO,
ESTABLISHING A COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION FUND TO PREVENT
NEIGHBORHOOD DETERIORATION**

WHEREAS, Section 15.2-958.5 of the Code of Virginia authorizes any locality to provide for the creation of a community revitalization fund for the purpose of preventing neighborhood deterioration, said fund to be composed of appropriated local funds; and

WHEREAS, Section 15.2-958.2 further provides that a community revitalization fund may be used to (i) make loans or grants to for-profit and nonprofit organizations for the construction, renovation, or demolition of residential structures in the locality; (ii) make infrastructure improvements; and (iii) acquire blighted structures in accordance with Section 36-49.1:1 of the Code of Virginia; and

WHEREAS, the Board of Supervisors of Accomack County ("Board") desires to create a community revitalization fund to be used for the purposes permitted under Virginia Code Section 15.2-958.2, with the initial focus being the establishment of a grant program for non-profit organizations to demolish delapidated residential structures within qualifying communities; and

WHEREAS, the Board further wishes to authorize the County Administrator to develop grant and loan revitalization programs, including establishment of (i) qualifying income guidelines for participants and the communities in which revitalization funds may be expended, and (ii) criteria for participation by for-profit and nonprofit organization that may be eligible for loans and grants from the community revitalization fund.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT ORDAINED by the Accomack County Board of Supervisors that Chapter 26 of the Accomack County Code, entitled "Community Development," be, and is hereby, amended and reordained to add Section 26-2 thereto, to establish a community revitalization fund under Virginia Code Section 15.2-958.5 to prevent neighborhood deterioration, as follows:

CHAPTER 26 – COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Sec. 26-2. – Community Revitalization Fund.

(a) *Establishment of Fund.* There is hereby created a community revitalization fund as authorized by Virginia Code § 15.2-958.5 for the purpose of preventing neighborhood deterioration in the County. The Board of Supervisors shall appropriate local funds to the community revitalization as it deems necessary and proper.

(b) *Use of Funds.* The funds deposited into the community revitalization fund may be used to (i) make loans or grants to for-profit and nonprofit organizations for the construction, renovation, or demolition of residential structures in the locality; (ii) make infrastructure improvements; and (iii) acquire blighted structures in accordance with Section 36-49.1:1 of the Code of Virginia.

(c) *Administration.* The County Administrator is hereby authorized to develop and implement grant and loan revitalization programs, including establishment of (i) qualifying income guidelines for participants and communities in which revitalization funds may be expended, provided that income is deemed an appropriate factor in assessing the need for revitalization; (ii) additional criteria, such as community health and housing, deemed relevant in determining whether a community is in need of revitalization; and (ii) criteria for participation by for-profit and nonprofit organization that may be eligible for loans and grants from the community revitalization fund. The County Administrator shall present each grant or loan revitalization program to the Board of Supervisors for approval and appropriation of funds, if necessary, prior to implementation of the program.

This ordinance shall be effective immediately upon adoption.

VOTE:

AYES:
NAYS:
ABSENT:

Accomack County Board of Supervisors

By: _____
Chairman

Dated: _____

I hereby certify that the foregoing is a true and correct copy of the Ordinance approved _____, 2024, at a meeting of the Accomack County Board of Supervisors, Accomack County, Virginia.

A COPY TESTE:

Michael T. Mason, County Administrator/
Secretary to the Board

11.3 Consider Setting Legislative Priorities for the 2025 General Assembly Session.

County Administrator Mike Mason informed the Board that agenda item 11.3 referred to the legislative priorities for the upcoming General Assembly Session. Last year, the Board established several legislative priorities to share with Senator DeSteph and Delegate Bloxom so that they could champion these priorities during the upcoming General Assembly Session. This year the process is essentially the same but is being started earlier. Last year's priority review meeting was held in December which was too late to craft legislation to be considered by the upcoming general assembly. This year the priority review meeting will be held in October. He added that representatives from Northampton County, the Town of Chincoteague, and the A-NPDC, who organizes this meeting, will be in attendance along with our state legislators. The framework of the meeting is that all localities are asked to provide priorities in advance to share. Mr. Mason presented to the Board a list of 13 legislative priorities for the Board to consider.

Chairman Crockett asked Mr. Mason if the items listed 1-13 were in the order of his preference. Mr. Mason stated they were not. A discussion ensued which ended with the Board selecting the following five priorities as the Board's top priorities for the 2024-2025 General Assembly session.

- 1. Teacher Salaries/Retention**
- 2. Wastewater Treatment Improvement Initiatives**
- 3. First Responders Recruitment, Retention, Training and Support**
- 4. Route 175 Improvements**
- 5. Attainable Housing Funding**

Mr. Mason suggested to the Board that in order not to lose sight of the other priorities, the list of 13 items remain intact with the Board's top priorities being flagged as the most important.

Supervisor Hart asked that the Board send a copy of the Legislative Priorities for the 2025 General Assembly Session to VACo to show Accomack County's priorities.



List of Accomack County Legislative Priorities 2024-2025

September 18, 2024

1. Teacher Salaries/Retention:

- a. Teacher salaries and teacher retention efforts continue to be Accomack's top priority. The following is an excerpt from the Commonwealth's adopted budget bill:

41. Supplemental Support for Accomack and Northampton

Out of this appropriation, \$1,750,000 the first year and \$1,750,000 the second year from the Lottery Proceeds Fund shall be disbursed to provide support to Accomack and Northampton school divisions for teacher recruitment and retention efforts, including adjustments to salary scales to minimize the misalignment to salary scales of adjacent counties.

Accomack is certainly appreciative of the efforts made by our state legislators to secure this funding for fiscal year 2025 and fiscal year 2026. We realize that with the funds already embedded in both budgets, there is no immediate need for action. Our concern is of course FY27 and beyond. These funds previously enabled the Accomack County Public Schools (ACPS) to complete a comprehensive teacher salary scale study and comparison to address inequities in the ACPS teacher scale and to properly distribute these funds through scale corrections to teachers and other qualifying employees. The ground gained on making teacher and related position salaries more competitive with surrounding areas will be lost if funding is not made recurring.

2. Environmental Health: Alternate On-site Septic Systems (AOSS) Monitoring

- a. Pursue policy changes that would require the Virginia Department of Health to take a more proactive and recurring role in notifying owners of alternative on-site septic systems of the required maintenance needed to maintain these systems. The County is concerned about the negative environmental implications and cost to homeowners when these systems fail due to a lack of proper maintenance.

3. Wastewater Treatment Improvement Initiatives:

- a. Support efforts by Hampton Roads Sanitation District (HRSD) to provide services at the northern end of the County and to the Town of Parksley
 - i. The HRSD Commission authorized a NORTHERN ACCOMACK COUNTY SERVICE AREA STUDY. Discussions are on-going with stakeholders which include NASA, County and HRSD. This study will evaluate strategies to address both short-term and long-term wastewater treatment and disposal needs for northern Accomack County. It includes examining options that potentially could allow HRSD to take over operation of the NASA wastewater treatment plant if all parties agreed. Ideally, HRSD control of this plant would allow the plant to be leveraged for meeting treatment needs originating from outside the confines of NASA's property. Consider this a long-term option due to the complexities involved with transfer/use of federal property. A short-term solution is needed which, at this point, is likely going to involve some type of public private

partnership given HRSD's current prohibition against owning or operating small treatment plants. State funding could help both these options move forward at a more rapid pace.

- ii. Seek funding to extend HRSD's current sewer transmission line from Wharton Road to the Town of Parksley to serve this area (6 miles +/-). Funding is also needed to assist Parksley with connecting to this line.

4. Increase Commonwealth Funding of the Forest Sustainability Fund.

Accomack County supports increasing state funding allocations to the Forest Sustainability Fund, established in 2022 by the General Assembly for the purpose of incentivizing the establishment and maintenance of local forest land use valuation programs. Such programs preserve prime soils for food production and protect important forest land and environmentally sensitive areas. Accomack receives only \$5,553 in state funds through this program which is far less than the over \$400K the County provides in tax relief for forested lands.

5. SOQ Support Position Cap Elimination

Accomack supports eliminating the provisions contained in Virginia SOQ formula that cap the number of educational support positions the state will fund. This cap was approved as a state budget control mechanism back in 2009 during the Great Recession. With the State's revenue surpluses, there is no longer a valid reason to keep this cap in place.

6. Tax Policy and State Mandated Property Tax Exemptions

The County opposes any imposition, expansion, or extension of state-mandated exemptions on local property taxes or on any new state tax policy that reduces sales tax or personal property taxes the County will collect without a true hold harmless provision that is applicable in both the short-term and long-term.

7. Local Housing of State Responsible Inmates

The County supports a requirement for the Department of Corrections to accept state-responsible inmates into the state correctional system unless a local or regional jail agrees to continue holding such inmates at the applicable per diem rate. The Department of Corrections is better equipped than local and regional jails to provide intensive re-entry programming, offering more than academic, job training, and therapeutic programs to offenders who are in prison and individuals under community supervision. The Department of Corrections reports that state-responsible inmates who spend their entire sentences in local or regional jails recidivate at a higher rate than offenders who spend at least part of their incarceration in a Department of Corrections facility (26.9 percent and 21 percent, respectively).

8. Modernization of Communications Sales and Use Tax Structure

Accomack supports updating the Communications Sales and Use Tax to ensure that it reflects the modern telecommunications landscape, which has evolved since this tax took effect in January 2007. This revenue is the primary source of local funding provided to operate and maintain the Eastern Shore's 9-1-1 system. Accomack opposes any further diversion of Communications Sales and Use Tax Trust Fund dollars beyond the uses already specified in statute.

9. First Responder Recruitment, Retention, Training, and Support

Accomack urges the General Assembly to provide additional resources that would assist local governments with the recruitment, retention, training, and support of first responders such as law enforcement, fire and EMS personnel, and 9-1-1 dispatchers.

10. Mandated Workers Compensation Presumptions

Accomack opposes any effort to expand workers' compensation presumptive illnesses eligibilities for public employees that is not done in concert with additional state funding assistance to local governments to offset additional insurance liabilities.

11. Funding for Barge Landing on Wallops Island and Associated Dredging

Recent discussions about establishing a back-up option for barging rocket components onto the beach at Wallops Island highlights the need for a permanent dedicated barge landing to be constructed on Wallops. Having such a landing would eliminate the environmental and foul weather concerns that exist with proposed beach landings. Obviously, dredging would be a prerequisite.

12. Route 175 Improvements – The County has submitted a total of three VDOT Smart Scale applications to have Route 175 widened which is needed because of both safety and economic development concerns. The first two applications did not score high enough within the Smart Scale Program to receive funding. The third application has been submitted and is currently in process. Support from our state legislators is requested.

13. Attainable Housing Funding – The 2022 Eastern Shore Housing Study confirmed what we already know, there is shortage of attainable housing on the Eastern Shore. State funding is requested to develop strategies to encourage and incentivize developers to construct attainable housing in areas suitable for residential construction and supported by the County's Comprehensive Plan.

12. County Administrator's Report

County Administrator Mike Mason did not provide a report.

13. County Attorney's Report

Ms. Proctor did not have a report. Chairman Crockett informed those in attendance that the County Attorney regularly provides the Board with detailed reports.

14. Board of Supervisors Comment Period

- ❖ **Supervisor Hart:** No comment.
- ❖ **Supervisor Major** commented on the recent completion of the reconstruction of Cemetery Road, an item listed in the VDOT Six-year Plan 30 years ago and championed by her late mother Accomack Board of Supervisor Member Julia Major. She said it was beautifully done. Supervisor Hart added that at the same meeting when Cemetery Road was added to the six-year plan, he added Redwood Road and was still working on it.
- ❖ **Supervisor Washington** mentioned that he attended the East Coast Migrant Head Start Project's 50th anniversary celebration at Sawmill Park and was able to meet and talk with staff and learn of the wonderful things they were doing. He added that one of the things he does to measure whether something has a major impact on a community is to ask the question "if it were to go away would anyone miss it". He then added if Head Start went away it would be greatly missed. He commented they do a wonderful job and he planned to take the opportunity to visit their center. He went on to say that he left the celebration enlightened and felt it was a great program on the Shore.

- ❖ **Supervisor Johnson:** No comment.
- ❖ **Supervisor Parks** commented that he had the honor of attending the Eastern Shore of Virginia Planning Commission Revitalization workshop in Eastville. Also in attendance at this workshop were DEQ, the University of Virginia, the Nature Conservancy, and representatives from local towns on the Eastern Shore. He shared with the Board that during the discussion on climate change and coastline deterioration, the question came up of why aren't the people on the Shore more interested in drainage. He informed the Board of the drainage survey done by some of the towns in Northampton County which he believes should be conducted shore-wide. Supervisor Parks informed the Board that he will continue to be an advocate for a regional approach to drainage which he believes would have a positive impact on receiving federal funding.
- ❖ **Supervisor DeGeorges:** No comment.
- ❖ **Supervisor Tarr:** No comment.
- ❖ **Vice Chairman Phillips:** No comment.
- ❖ **Chairman Crockett:** used his comment time to thank Supervisor Tarr for arranging the Board's Strategic Planning Meeting on Chincoteague, he also thanked the Chincoteague Volunteer Fire Department for providing lunch. He also added that the consent agenda included a thank you letter from the Board to the fire department for their kind gesture.

15. Budget and Appropriation Items

15.1 Consider Approving Resolution to Amend the FY25 Budget.

A motion was made to approve the resolution to amend the FY25 Budget by Supervisor Hart and seconded by Supervisor Parks. The motion was approved unanimously.

RESOLUTION TO AMEND THE FISCAL YEAR 2025 ACCOMACK COUNTY GOVERNMENT BUDGET

WHEREAS, it is the responsibility of the Accomack County Board of Supervisors to approve and maintain the budget for Accomack County; and

WHEREAS, on April 1, 2024, the Board of Supervisors finalized the Accomack County Fiscal Year 2025 Budget; and

WHEREAS, during the course of the fiscal year certain unanticipated events occur that compel amendments to the budget be made; and

WHEREAS, staff has reviewed the following requested budget amendments and recommends that it be approved; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Supervisors of Accomack County, Virginia, that the Fiscal Year 2025 County budget be amended by the amounts listed below and the amounts appropriated for the purpose indicated.

| Fiscal Year | Requesting Department | Fund/Function | Purpose | Funding Source | Total |
|--------------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------|-------------------|
| FY25 | Public Works | General Fund/Parks and Recreation | To allow transfer of budget funds between Buildings and Grounds Operations and Docks and Ramps. | To Docks and Ramps | \$ 100,000 |
| FY25 | Public Works | General Fund/Public Works | To allow transfer of budget funds between Buildings and Grounds Operations and Docks and Ramps. | From B&G Operations | \$ (100,000) |
| FY25 | Planning & Economic Development | General Fund/Economic Development | To appropriate funding for Community Impact Grant Innovation Project awarded. | State | \$ 496,968 |
| FY25 | County Administrator | Rehab Projects Fund | To allow transfer of budget funds between County Administrator and Makemie Park CDBG Project. | To Makemie Park CDBG | \$ 7,000 |
| FY25 | County Administrator | Rehab Projects Fund | To allow transfer of budget funds between County Administrator and Makemie Park CDBG Project. | From County Administrator | \$ (7,000) |
| FY25 | County Administrator | Rehab Projects Fund | To record SERCAP funds passed through from PDC for Makemie Park CDBG Project. | From A-NPDC | \$ 10,000 |
| FY25 | Social Services | Welfare Fund | To recognize various State, Federal and Local budget adjustments. Approval of these adjustments is needed to bring the local Social Services' department budget in line with the State's approved budget. | State=\$196,606; Federal=\$97,107 | \$ 293,713 |
| Total | | | | | \$ 800,681 |

Robert D. Crockett
Chairman, Board of Supervisors

ATTEST:

Michael T. Mason, CPA
County Administrator

Adopted by the Board of Supervisors of Accomack County, Virginia, this 18th day of September 2024.

16. Payables

16.1 Consider Payables

County Administrator Mike Mason certified the September payables as presented.

A motion to authorize payment of September payables was made by Vice-chairman Phillips and seconded by Supervisor Tarr. The motion was approved unanimously.

17. Closed Meeting

17.1 Closed Meeting

No closed meeting was held.

18. Adjournment

A motion to adjourn was made by Vice-Chairman Phillips and seconded by Supervisor Tarr; the Accomack County Board of Supervisors voted to adjourn the meeting at 6:50 PM. The motion was approved unanimously.

19. Informational Item

- Regional Library and Heritage Report to the Board of Supervisors (September)