

VIRGINIA ASSOCIATION OF COUNTIES REGIONAL MEETING

March 29, 2007

A meeting of the Campbell County Board of Supervisors reconvened at 3:00 p.m. on the 29th day of March, 2007 in the Pittsylvania County General District Court, Chatham, Virginia, for a Region 10 Virginia Association of Counties Courthouse Meeting.

The members present were:

J. D. Puckett, Chairman	Brookneal Election District
Charles W. Falwell	Timberlake Election District
Eddie Gunter, Jr.	Concord Election District
Hugh T. Pendleton, Jr.	Rustburg Election District

The members absent were:

Rick Boyer	Sunburst Election District
Calvin P. Carter	Altavista Election District
Hugh W. Rosser	Seneca Election District

Staff present were:

R. David Laurell, County Administrator
Catherine H. Moore, Clerk

Also present were:

Larry Moore, County Administrator, Franklin County	Senator Roscoe Reynolds
William Fitzgerald, Chairman, Halifax County	Senator Charles Hawkins
Doug Bowman, Supervisor, Halifax County	Dean Lynch, VACo
William Claiborne, Supervisor, Halifax County	Mike Edwards, VACo
Wayne Conner, Supervisor, Halifax County	Wendy Jenkins, VACo
Bryan Foster, County Administrator, Halifax County	
Paula Burnette, Supervisor, Henry County	
Benny Summerlin, County Administrator, Henry County	
Mike Burnette, County Administrator, Patrick County	
Robert W. Scarce, Jr., Supervisor, Pittsylvania County	
William H. Pritchett, Supervisor, Pittsylvania County	
Kate Berger, Supervisor, Pittsylvania County	
Hank Davis, Supervisor, Pittsylvania County	
Dan Sleeper, County Administrator, Pittsylvania County	
Lonnette Marsh, Virginia Cooperative Extension	

The meeting was called to order by Hugh T. Pendleton, member of the Virginia Association of Counties (VACo) Board of Directors. Mr. Pendleton explained the regional meetings was an idea of the Board of Directors to connect VACo more closely with the regions and gain more information regarding the legislative issues affecting each area.

Invited to this meeting were the Boards of Supervisors, Administrators, and legislators of the counties of Appomattox, Campbell, Floyd, Franklin, Halifax, Henry, Montgomery, Patrick & Pittsylvania. Each County present was given an opportunity to identify their key issues. From those comments the key issues were identified as follows:

- Re-regulation of electricity
- Transportation
- Costs to phase out touch screen voting machines
- Comprehensive Services Act funding
- Compensation Board formula for deputy funding – using population totals is a detriment for large, less populated counties

- For Halifax County, they incurred a tremendous financial burden when South Boston reverted from city to town status
- Inability of counties to adopt meals tax without referendum (Pittsylvania County going to place meals tax referendum on ballot this year for third year in a row)
- Unfunded mandates – suggest sunset clause that when funding ceases, mandate would cease as well
- Moratorium for annexation
- Restructured utility tax (911 tax) – seems most counties have experienced lower receipts than projected. The new telecommunications tax is a flat 5% on all means of telecommunications (calling cards, pagers, cable, satellite television and radio, wireless phones as well as land line phones). The tax is collected by the State and then passed back to the localities based on its FY 2006 receipts. Mr. Edwards asked localities to be patient as it may take six months of receipts to know how the system is working. If there is a major shortage, it would go back to the legislature.
- Land application of biosolids (current issue in Appomattox, Bedford and Campbell counties). Legislation to move oversight from the Health Department to the Department of Environmental Quality will be helpful. More legislation is needed to allow local governing bodies control on the citing of biosolids.
- Internet sales tax – having a sales tax on internet sales would make it more fair and equitable to those operating brick & mortar stores
- Need Compensation Board to work more with localities before approving additional positions for Constitutional Offices
- Amend state code to provide for a rollback period of 10 years rather than the current 5 years when property changes use that has been in the County's land use program
- Appropriate additional funds for localities that fund conversion and maintenance of the navigation aid system on Smith Mountain Lake (and Leesville Lake)
- Appropriate additional funds for Smith Mountain Lake Water Quality Monitoring Program
- Approve mandatory boating education bill for Commonwealth
- Pass-through of 100% of boat sales and use taxes to the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries
- Support legislation that would enable small wineries to sell their product directly without requiring a distributor
- Concerns regarding state standards of animal pounds (Henry County noted their inspection said they had to have heated and air-conditioned cages)
- Funding approved to complete Route 58 all the way to interstate

Mr. Edwards responded that the phase out of touch screen voting machines is a federal issue, and he encouraged the counties to contact their federal legislators. As he understood the legislation, after 2008 no county or city could require touch screen machines, but the current machines could be used for their useful life.

Benny Summerlin of Henry County asked VACo for information regarding the new accounting requirements for retiree expenses. Mr. Edwards indicated a bill passed to require these costs to be amortized and an investment pool or trust established.

Senator Hawkins appreciated this meeting and thought it was always good to hear the concerns at the local level. Senator Reynolds also enjoyed coming to meetings like this to find out what was important to local government. He had concerns the State should be doing more for education and transportation funding. He voted against the bills concerning the Comprehensive Services Act and the change in voting machines. As far as biosolids, he did not know the answer. There was a byproduct of sewage treatment plants that had to be disposed of in some way. Senator Reynolds commented on the re-regulation of electricity. The legislation was made to guarantee profitability of generation and distribution of electricity, but that rates to consumers would increase especially as the costs of petroleum increase. The State Corporation Commission received an enormous number of comments on AEP's rate increase and has recommended a lower increase.

There was more discussion concerning biosolids. Mr. Falwell expressed the need for testing by a neutral party for heavy metals, pharmaceuticals, etc. Senator Reynolds commented it was difficult to discourage out-of-state trucks hauling biosolids or garbage because of federal interstate commerce laws.

Mr. Lynch of VACo advised that all the items addressed at this meeting would be compiled and added to the lists from the other 12 regions to begin work on the legislative agenda.

CHAIRMAN J. D. PUCKETT

Approved: _____