

## MEETING #29– July 28

At a Workshop Meeting of the Madison Board of Supervisors on July 28, 2011 at 2:00 p.m. at 302 Thrift Road:

PRESENT: James L. Arrington, Chairman  
Jerry J. Butler, Vice-Chairman  
J. Dave Allen, Member  
Eddie Dean, Member  
Pete J. Elliott, Member  
V. R. Shackelford, III, County Attorney  
Lisa Robertson, County Administrator  
Jacqueline S. Frye, Secretary

Chairman Arrington called the meeting to order and established the presence of a quorum, noting that all members are present.

Chairman Arrington then commenced the meeting with the Pledge of Allegiance and a Moment of Silence.

Chairman Arrington asked if there were any additions or corrections to the agenda.

### **1. Workshop Agenda Items:**

#### **a. Economic Development Committee Presentation: Russell James:**

Russell James and all members of the Economic Development Committee were present for today's session.

Mr. James proceeded to provide a report of the Committee's findings and advised that most citizens would like to see an effort made by the County to assist with economic development that coincides with the County setting. Recommendations from the Committee include:

- 1) Reforming new members to the existing IDA (Industrial Development Authority) and rename the committee as the Economic Development Authority;
- 2) Once formed, the first priority of the Committee will be to assist existing businesses in the County and approach owners to determine how they can expand;
- 3) The existing comprehensive plan is in place but should be more proactive, and should also be sent to the conservatives of the Blue Ridge and Shenandoah foothills;
- 4) The County should become more involved in the Thomas Jefferson Economic Partnership Development;

Mr. James also suggested the County become more active in the TJPED and also explained the process and what types of businesses should be assessed. Additionally, he urged the County to provide a monetary donation to the entity and participate in the upcoming survey. In closing, he advised that most localities have agreed to contribute \$10,000.00, but feels any monetary donation of \$1,000.00 (or less) will be gratefully accepted and only those who contribute will have privy to the survey results.

The County Attorney stated that the IDA Board hasn't been active, but have some open bonds that are still in place for Woodberry Forest School. In closing, he advised that he was unsure whether any changes can be made to the existing guidelines for the IDA Board, as they are a separate political entity and are formed pursuant to the State of Virginia code.

The County Administrator advised that the Economic Development Committee can be re-started, but will be an independent entity that makes its own decisions, policies, and will not be governed by the Board.

Mr. James advised that most localities call their committee an Economic Development Authority and not an Industrial Development Authority.

Supervisor Dean suggested some research be implemented to determine the guidelines in place for the IDA and when it was created.

The County Attorney advised that he would review his files and provide an update at the August Joint Meeting.

Supervisor Butler asked if the term for the Economic Development Committee has expired, as the Board is currently dealing with an issue regarding pump and haul.

Mr. James advised that the Committee's term expired at the end of June 2011.

The County Administrator advised the Board didn't refer the matter onto the Economic Development Committee, but has asked to receive more information on the issue.

In closing, Mr. James advised that the Economic Development Committee would like to see some of its recommendations come to fruition.

Chairman Arrington questioned if the County will be joining the TJPED, to which Supervisor Butler advised will need to be assessed first.

Supervisor Allen questioned whether there would be a membership fee.

The County Administrator advised that the County was a part of the TJPED in the past, but pulled out to keep from having to pay the membership fee.

Mr. James advised that the Director is trying to revamp the membership fees; however, only those who provide a monetary donation will be allowed to participate in the upcoming survey.

Bob Kane was present and questioned the list of Ordinance changes that was referred by the Economic Development Committee.

Mr. James advised that recommendations on the above referenced issue were provided to the Madison County Board of Supervisors during the month of December 2011. In closing, he thanked the Board for the opportunity that was provided to the Committee.

Bill Gentry was present and suggested the County try to find ways to strengthen the fabric of the community. Additionally, he suggested the County also look at how 'change' will impact the citizens.

**b. Discussion of Price Quote for Replacement of Emergency Communications System:**

The County Administrator advised that the existing emergency communications system has been outdated since 2008 and a quote has been attained for the purchase of a digital system.

Robert Finks, Director of Emergency Communications, was present and stated that the level of coverage has declined since 2007. Also, a study was performed by Motorola, Inc. and the State which yielded the price of a newer system that would cost about \$3,600,000. Additionally, narrow banding was required by the FCC during the past year and that really affected local coverage. Furthermore, since 2008, there have been new technologies developed (i.e. digital) and Motorola has this equipment called "Mototrbo" which has been tested and yielded great results throughout the County. However, there will still be a few areas in the county where the hand-held units and walkie talkies will not work, no matter what type of system is used, but the vehicle units provided exceptional coverage with the digital system. The suggested system has several safety features and has everything that is needed, and will include replacing all hand-held and mobile units.

Mr. Finks advised that the existing repeaters are upgradeable to the digital system; therefore, new infrastructure will not need to be purchased. In closing, he stated the price for the digital system is \$490,000.00, which includes all equipment (i.e. for

dispatch, turnkey system, and back-up generator), replacement of the building at Blakey Ridge which will be like the shelter situated at the Radiant tower location, but will provide temperature control features. The county will be required to provide the propane tanks and propane, which has been excluded from the final price.

Supervisor Elliott questioned the existing infrastructure and whether the new equipment will last for a while, or will this be something that will need to be replaced in the future.

Mr. Finks stated the sites that will be upgraded consist of the same equipment of what's being discussed today, as they have been replaced; however, there are three (3) older models at the Woodberry site that consist of an analog system only and is utilized as a back-up system during emergencies.

Supervisor Butler asked if adding additional repeaters to bad reception areas could be a viable option, and if so, what about at the Criglersville Elementary School and would this help the Etlan area.

Mr. Finks stated the above referenced request isn't included in today's price quote. In closing, he advised that additional repeater sites will require acquisition of land, building a tower, and purchasing all new equipment, which is costly, and erecting a tower at the old school will not help that particular area. Also, he advised the worst area for reception is the Middle River area of the county (surrounded by mountains).

Supervisor Butler asked if it would be possible to erect a repeater on the tower located in Standardville, Virginia to allow for better reception in the Wolftown area.

Mr. Finks advised that a study would need to be done to determine whether the aforementioned suggestion could be attained.

The County Administrator questioned the findings for the area when testing was done.

Mr. Finks advised that good coverage was provided with the mobile units, but the digital system would greatly improve communications with fire, rescue, and law enforcement, although coverage will still not be received through hand-held devices.

Jeff Jenkins was present and provided input as to the area of Middle River in which he was unable to attain reception, but coverage was greatly improved by using the digital system.

Donnie Michael was also present and advised that he had no problems receiving exceptional coverage with the digital unit.

Supervisor Allen questioned if there narrow banding will be required again within the next two (2) to three (3) years.

Mr. Finks stated at this point, the county is compliant and the FCC hasn't established a date for future narrow banding; however, there is a proposal to further require narrow banding. In closing, he stated if that does happen, the system being discussed today is already compliant with the request being proposed, as denoted in today's handout.

The County Attorney advised that he finds it extraordinary that during the past three (3) years, the price of communications equipment has dropped from \$3,600,000.00 to \$490,000.00.

Mr. Finks advised that much success has been attained with the digital system and upgrades are constantly being done; however, it might be possible for the county to go to a 'simul-casting' system in the future, if desired.

Supervisor Elliott stated he feels if the county waits to see if the pricing will reduce, he's afraid an incident will take place and emergency services will be unable to provide emergency service to the citizens.

Mr. Finks reiterated that the digital system isn't 100% full proof, 100% coverage 'everywhere', although it's a very good system and is much better than what the county currently has; however, there will still be some 'dead spots'. In closing, he stated that every system will encounter some 'dead spots' so he doesn't want the Board to feel this system is something that it isn't, and it's uncertain why 'dead spots' exist...they just do. Additionally, Orange and Greene are having the same problems as Madison County with narrow banding, and Culpeper is having problems with their 800-system.

Supervisor Elliott advised that he was advised that the radios don't work in the courthouse, and whether today's system will improve that factor.

Mr. Finks advised that he toyed with the equipment yesterday, and it worked in the courtroom; however, he didn't have much success within the holding cell area, so he feels that metal must be a deterrent.

It was also denoted that changing the channel on the hand-held units sometimes helps with reception.

Mr. Finks also advised that communications within the courthouse are going directly to the E911 Center and not through Blakey Ridge tower.

Chairman Arrington questioned the competition, to which Mr. Finks advised if the county goes with another system, the county's existing equipment cannot be used, which will inflate the pricing.

Mr. Finks explained that the county already has Motorola repeater sites and this digital system will only require an upgrade, but if another vendor comes in, the county will have to pay for everything to be replaced, as Motorola equipment can't be connected with other types of equipment. Additionally, he researched pricing on the internet and found the prices to be relatively close, excluding shipping charges. In closing, he advised that of the \$490,000.00 being charged for the digital system, about \$460,000.00 is for equipment to be situated at the Blakey tower site.

Supervisor Dean asked about the difference between the two (2) systems.

Mr. Finks advised the technology is different and works off the main repeater site and offers a back up. Also, the simul-cast system is able to be broadcast through all repeater sites at the same time if they are all linked together, with the exception of the Middle River Area (as denoted in the study).

The County Administrator advised that the system offered by Motorola in 2008 could've been financed over a ten-year (10) period, and would've cost about the same as the equipment being discussed today.

Chairman asked if the Motorola credit plan would be a viable option.

The County Administrator advised there is a rebate with today's offer (i.e. every radio traded in yields a credit of \$100 per radio, in groups of eight [8]).

Supervisor Elliott questioned how long the system is anticipated to last.

Mr. Finks stated unless something drastic happens with technology, he anticipates the system will last a good "ten-plus" years, or the equivalent of the life expectancy of a radio system. In closing, he stated the system has been upgraded and is designed to work 'everyday' twenty-four (24) hours daily.

Supervisor Dean questioned whether Motorola is looking to add some features to this system and whether it will be an upgrade rather than a replacement factor.

Mr. Finks advised the company is constantly striving to develop new technology; however, even with an add-on, the cost would be very expensive.

Supervisor Butler asked if Klear Communications performed the studies.

Mr. Finks advised that a study was performed by the engineers at Motorola and one by VIDA's radio personnel.

Supervisor Butler advised that he has a friend who has offered to look at this system and perform and validate its credibility; therefore, he questioned whether this is something the Board would be agreeable to having done to assess whether this purchase is acceptable, or if an alternative system should be sought instead.

The County Administrator asked if there would be a fee for the aforementioned services.

Supervisor Butler advised there will be no fee and the individual personally designed, installed, and regularly maintains a system for two (2) other entities. In closing, he advised the individual is a part-time resident of Madison County and would be happy to offer his service and expertise.

Supervisor Elliott asked if the county has the funds to make today's purchase.

The County Administrator stated she agrees that something has to be done to provide emergency services personnel with the type of system they need. Additionally, she verbalized displeasure in the fact that:

- 1) These types of discussions aren't taking place during the budget process;
- 2) Money is taken out of line items and cash is being used to cover items;
- 3) Requests are made after the first few months of the fiscal year, thereby being unable to be covered by other funding sources other than 'cash;'

Furthermore, she has verbalized the aforementioned concerns for the past several years and stressed the fact that the county can't continue to utilize cash to pay for high dollar items. Also, she strongly suggested the county start utilizing the CIP as a budget tool to help identify needs during the budget process and refrain from cutting line items. In closing, she stated that once the fiscal year has begun, there is no way to generate any type of resource to increase revenue.

The County Administrator also advised there is a total of \$436,000.00 in the contingency fund and these funds must be used to:

- 1) Cover the Line of Duty Act;
- 2) Cover the County's obligation for leave balances (as suggested by the auditors);

Furthermore, there is still some revenue in the capital improvement line item, but she advised these funds may be needed to offset the closeout of the courthouse project; therefore, she suggested these funds remain intact.

In closing, she feels if financing can be sought for the purchase of the emergency communications equipment that would yield a low monthly payment, this plan may be viable.

Chairman Arrington asked how long the independent assessment will take, as he would like to see the process completed.

Supervisor Butler advised that in speaking with Mr. Finks regarding what will need to be reviewed, he anticipates the process might take a week or so. In closing, he advised that the individual understands the County is on a very tight budget and has agreed to offer his services free of charge.

Chairman Arrington also questioned whether the individual would have information on available financing.

Supervisor Butler stated he feels that should be a decision made by the Board and that he would have to recuse himself because of a personal conflict.

Supervisor Elliott advised agreement with getting the 'best bang for our buck.' Additionally, he has no problem with allowing the County Administrator to investigate financing options; however, he doesn't want emergency personnel to inform the Board that they were unable to assist a citizen during an emergency because of being unable to radio for emergency assistance. In closing, if the emergency personnel aren't given the necessary tools to perform their job, they are unable to help the citizens. Therefore, he would like to see the Board take care of this issue as soon as possible.

Supervisor Butler asked Lewis Jenkins, Director of Emergency Medical Services, if two (2) EMS vehicles go out, are they able to communicate back and forth.

Lewis Jenkins, Director of Emergency Medical Services, was present and advised although there are some spots within the County that pose some difficulty, there is no system that will provide full coverage 100% of the time. Additionally, he advised his staff is able to utilize the emergency button, text messaging and voicemail.

Supervisor Butler asked if most emergency personnel know where the 'dead spots' are located throughout the County.

Mr. Jenkins advised that new EMS personnel are made aware of the 'dead spots' throughout the County (i.e. Middle River, Graves Mountain Lodge), and advised that narrow banding only made communication worse in these locations.

Mr. Michael also advised that he has been able to use the mobile unit throughout the Middle River area, but not the hand-held units.

Mr. Finks stated when deputies currently go into the Middle River area, they can utilize the portable unit and the vehicle is tracked through the E911 Center; however, with the proposed system, the E911 Center will have the capability to hook up a microphone and

maintain direct contact with law enforcement. In closing, he advised there are many safety features built into the digital system that don't exist with the current system.

Bob Kane was present and asked how long will it take for the County to have the proposed system up and running.

Mr. Finks advised the County will need licensure from the FCC; he has spoken with a representative and feels it will take at least three (3) months to get the application in place and an additional three (3) months afterwards.

Supervisor Allen advised that he doesn't have an issue with having an independent study performed as long as it doesn't delay the project; however, he is more concerned about what the 'users' have to say. In closing, there seems to be unanimous consensus amongst the 'users' that the proposed system is appropriate.

Supervisor Butler advised the county is looking at possibly spending a substantial amount of money, and feels additional input will be a good factor.

Supervisor Dean asked what needs to be in place before the County can apply for the FCC license and the cost.

Mr. Finks advised the county will need to hire somebody and he can contact the vendor to assist with this request. In closing, he stated the license will cost about \$600 to cover the FCC's frequency coordination fees.

Supervisor Elliott asked if there was any state or grant funding available.

Mr. Finks stated that all federal grant funding has to be used for equipment that is "P25 compliant" (i.e. series of advanced specifications imposed by the interoperability requirements). Also, Culpeper County currently has a "P25" system and they are still unable to communicate with Madison County because they operate on 800 megahertz. In closing, he feels that until the federal government requires all localities to operate on the same band, there will always be difficulties communicating among the localities.

Chairman Arrington verbalized concerns that the proposed system will not be compliant with the federal government's standards.

Supervisor Allen advised 'not in compliance with a standard that does not work.'

Supervisor Dean suggested the Board initiate the FCC license for \$600 in order to eliminate an additional three (3) months of wait time, and take action on this item at the August Joint Meeting, or by consensus today. In closing, he believes the amount is within the approved range for the County Administrator to act upon and suggested the Board allow her to do so.

The County Administrator advised the Board can take action by consensus to allow her to investigate financing and also allow Mr. Finks to review all documents. In closing, she suggested the individual be asked to sign a statement of confidentiality before he begins assessing any documents prior to presenting any findings to the Board.

After discussion, all members verbalized consensus to moving forward and allow the County Administrator to investigate financing for the proposed communications equipment and allowing the individual to sign a statement of confidentiality

Mr. Finks reiterated that the "P25" requirement is a guideline the federal government invented, but is ineffective.

Supervisor Elliott asked Mr. Jenkins about the recent vacancies in his department.

Mr. Jenkins advised that he will meet with a candidate later this afternoon. In closing, he advised the one (1) part-time vacancy has been filled.

Mr. Michael advised the Sheriff's Department is still short of deputies.

**b. Review of Proposed Advertisement for Abandonment of Shotwell Road:**

The County Attorney advised that he is working on the ad for the newspaper and that he met with the County Administrator to discuss this publication. Additionally, he advised that the county can request the road be abandoned and can also petition the Commonwealth Transportation Board to discontinue the road. In light of the fact that the Commonwealth Transportation Board voted not to discontinue the road, the Madison County Board of Supervisors. After research, he has found that the County can't discontinue a roadway, but can petition this request of the Commonwealth Transportation Board. In closing, he and the County Administrator suggest the Board move forward and prepare a petition for abandonment at the September Regular Meeting and advertise this request. Additionally, he advised of the following options:

- 1) Abandon Route 611 (Shotwell Road) within four (4) months of the Public Hearing;
- 2) If Route 611 (Shotwell Road) is abandoned, it should be from the section on near the 'tree farm' portion of the Kardos/Yowell property to Route 231;

As he doesn't anticipate the county wants to intentionally cut off access to the property.

Supervisor Butler asked if the above suggestion covers both roadways that are involved.

The County Attorney advised that the suggestion will be brought forth no matter where the area actually is. In closing, he has reviewed all the documentation regarding the

case and he believes the original route was what was denoted during the first round of discussions. Additionally, the suggestion will be described in a manner so there will be no confusion as to the county's intentions.

Chairman Arrington advised he thought the county wasn't going to suggest abandonment of the roadway, but discontinuance so that VDOT will not maintain the roadway.

The County Attorney advised this option will be pursued, but the county doesn't have the authority to discontinue a roadway, as that's up to the Commonwealth Transportation Board.

The County Administrator explained the advertisement for the public hearing will be to attain input as to whether or not there should be an abandonment of the roadway. Additionally, the idea behind this suggestion is due to the fact that the Commonwealth Transportation Board voted on a request for discontinuance during the past year, but didn't follow through with the action. Therefore, both options (i.e. abandonment and discontinuance) will be advertised for consideration and discussion. In closing, nothing has been heard from the VDOT representatives that were corresponded to; however, Mr. Cabbage of the Warrenton Office called and advised that he will stop all work orders, etc. that have been scheduled to report to Route 611 (Shotwell Road) unless otherwise advised by his superiors.

Supervisor Elliott questioned if the county takes action to abandon the road, does VDOT have the right to ignore the request.

The County Attorney advised that the Board can request that a road be abandonment based on existing statutes.

## **2. Adjournment:**

With no further discussion or action being required by the Board, on motion of Supervisor Butler, seconded by Supervisor Allen, Chairman Arrington adjourned the meeting, with the following vote recorded:

James L. Arrington	Aye
Jerry J. Butler	Aye
J. Dave Allen	Aye
Eddie Dean	Aye
Pete J. Elliott	Aye

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James L. Arrington, Chairman  
Madison County Board of Supervisors

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Lisa A. Robertson, County Administrator  
And Clerk to the Board

Date Adopted by the Board: August 9, 2011

Copies: James L. Arrington, Jerry J. Butler, J. Dave Allen, Eddie Dean,  
Pete J. Elliott, V. R. Shackelford, III & Constitutional Officers

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