



Ralph S. Northam
Governor

R. Brian Ball
Secretary of
Commerce and Trade

COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Erik C. Johnston
Director

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

TO: Members of the Commission on Local Government
FROM: DHCD Staff
DATE: December 28, 2021
SUBJECT: Draft Agenda and Meeting Materials

Please find enclosed the following:

1. Draft agenda for your regular meeting to be held in person on Thursday, January 6, 2022, at 11:00 a.m. in the Board Room of the Henrico County Economic Development Authority (4300 E. Parham Road, Richmond, VA 23228);
2. Draft Minutes from the November 4, 2021 Regular meeting of the Commission;
3. Articles of interest to the Commission;
4. 2022 Adopted Schedule of Meetings;

Please note that the Winter 2021 Municipal Utility Data Report will be presented to the Commission for retroactive consideration at this meeting. Due to reporting deadline requirements set forth in the budget, this report falls outside of the Commission's regular meeting schedule. The report, which will be finalized and submitted to the General Assembly on December 30, will be emailed to the Commission shortly thereafter.

If you have any questions or require additional information, please feel free to contact us at (804) 652,9302, or cody.anderson@dhcd.virginia.gov.

We look forward to seeing you on January 6th!

Enclosures

Partners for Better Communities



www.dhcd.virginia.gov



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AGENDA

**Commission on Local Government
Regular Meeting: 11:00 a.m., January 6, 2022
Henrico County Economic Development Authority
Board Room
4300 E. Parham Road
Richmond, Virginia 23228**

**For the public,
Commission on Local Government Meeting
Thursday, January 6, 2022 · 11:00am – 1:00pm
Google Meet joining info**

**Video call link: <https://meet.google.com/bvz-ibzf-gkf>
Or dial: (US) +1 617-675-4444 PIN: 409 783 890 8201#**

1. Occupancy for the meeting space is limited, so the Commission encourages members of the public to observe the meeting through the Google Meet link provided above. Please contact Cody Anderson (cody.anderson@dhcd.virginia.gov) for information on how to connect to the meeting using this method.
2. Members of the public viewing the meeting through the Google Meet option are required to mute themselves during the meeting unless called upon by the Commission Chair to speak. The CLG reserves the right to remove from its virtual meetings anyone who does not abide by these rules.
3. Access to meeting materials for members of the public is available on the corresponding meeting page of the [Virginia Regulatory Town Hall website](#) and on [Commonwealth Calendar](#).

I. Call to Order

II. Election of Officers

III. Administration

- | | |
|---|-----------------|
| A. Approval of the Draft Agenda | (Ms. Linderman) |
| B. Approval of Minutes of the Regular Meeting on November 4, 2021 | (Ms. Linderman) |
| C. Public Comment Period | (Ms. Linderman) |
| D. Staff's Report | (Mr. Anderson) |

IV. Municipal Utility Data Report

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| A. Staff Presentation | (Mr. Anderson) |
| B. Commission Deliberation and Action | |

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- V. **FY20 Fiscal Stress Report Status Update**
 - A. Staff Presentation (Ms. Wheaton)
- VI. **2022 General Assembly Session**
 - A. Staff Presentation (Ms. Wheaton)
- VII. **2022 Regular Meeting Schedule**
 - A. Staff Presentation (Mr. Anderson)
- VIII. **Other**
- IX. **Adjournment**

DRAFT



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DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Commission on Local Government

November 4, 2021

11:00 A.M.

Henrico, Virginia

Members Present

Stephanie Davis, PhD, Chair (virtual)
Diane M. Linderman, PE, Vice Chair
Ceasor T. Johnson, D.Min
Rosemary M. Mahan

Members Absent

R. Michael Amyx

Call to Order

The Commission on Local Government (CLG) Chair, Dr. Stephanie Davis, called the meeting to order at 11:00 a.m.

Ms. Davis noted that she was participating in the meeting virtually pursuant to and consistent with the Commission's Electronic Participation Policy. She noted that her participation was from her home and it was for personal reasons.

Administration

After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Linderman and seconded by Ms. Mahan to amend and approve the draft agenda. The motion passed.

A motion was made by Ms. Linderman and seconded by Ms. Mahan to approve the minutes of the Special Meeting on October 15, 2021. The motion passed.

Dr. Davis opened the floor for public comment.

Mr. Scott Mayausky, Commissioner of the Revenue for Stafford County offered gratitude to the Commission and staff for their work on the Property Tax Exemption Study. Mr. Mayausky noted that while he supported much of the recommendations laid out in

the Study, he opposed a recommendation that would limit relief to fiscal stressed localities. Mr. Mayausky explained that many of the localities more adversely affected by mandatory property tax exemptions, such as Stafford County, do not fall within the above average or high fiscal stress categories and therefore would not see relief under the recommendation.

No other members of the public appeared before the Commission. The public comment period was closed.

Mandatory Property Tax Exemption Study

Staff provided the Commission with a comprehensive overview of the Property Tax Exemption Study. This study, which was required of the Commission by legislation, examined how state tax exemptions such as mandatory property tax exemptions affected localities abilities to raise revenue and provide services to their constituents.

After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Linderman and seconded by Ms. Mahan to approve the Mandatory Property Tax Exemption Study with amendments. Such amendments expanded the factors that could be considered for offering reimbursement to localities affected by the exemptions. The motion passed.

2021 Cash Proffer Survey and Report

Mr. Cody Anderson, Policy Analyst at DHCD, presented a summary of the Cash Proffer Survey and Report. Mr. Anderson noted that very little deviation had occurred in comparison to past reports with the exception of a large increase in local government spending on Parks, Recreation, and Open Space. Mr. Anderson explained that this large increase was entirely due to activities taken on by a single locality.

A motion was made by Mr. Johnson and seconded by Ms.Linderman to approve the 2021 Cash Proffer Report. The motion passed.

FY2019 Fiscal Stress Report

Ms. Grace Wheaton, Policy Analyst at DHCD, provided an in depth summary of the FY2019 Fiscal Stress Report. Ms. Wheaton noted that the Commission adopted the Report at the September 9

meeting and that this presentation was purely for informational purposes.

Municipal Utility Data Reports

Mr. Anderson provided a comprehensive summary of two Utility Arrearage Reports which were required as part of amendments to the State Budget. These reports included collection of arrearage data from every utility provider in Virginia not regulated by the State Corporation Commission. Each of the two reports detailed the amount of arrearages customers accrued statewide, as well as arrearages offset by various different state and federal funding sources.

A motion was made by Ms. Linderman and seconded by Ms. Mahan to approve the Municipal Utility Data Reports as presented. The motion passed.

Schedule of Regular Meetings

Mr. Anderson provided a variety of different scheduling options for meetings for the calendar year 2022. After deliberation, the following dates were considered:

- January 6th
- March, 10th
- May 12th
- July 14th
- September 8th
- November 3rd

After discussion, a motion was made by Ms. Mahan and seconded by Mr. Johnson to approve the proposed meeting schedule. The motion passed.

Upcoming Events of Interest

Mr. Anderson noted that the Virginia Governor's Housing Conference was scheduled to take place from November 10 through November 12. Mr. Anderson also noted that the Virginia Association of Counties Annual Conference will also be in Norfolk from November 13 through 16.

Other

There was no other business.

Adjournment

A motion was made by Ms. Linderman and seconded by Ms. Mahan for adjournment. The motion passed.

DRAFT



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DEPARTMENT OF
HOUSING AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Commission on Local Government

Adopted 2022 Meeting Schedule

All meetings held at 11:00 a.m. on the 2nd Thursday in odd-numbered months unless otherwise noted.

- Thursday, January 6, 2022
- Thursday, March 10, 2022
- Thursday, May 12, 2022
- Thursday, July 14, 2022
- Thursday, September 8, 2022
- Thursday, November 3, 2022

Meetings will be held at the Henrico Economic Development Authority Building in the Board Room (4300 E. Parham Road, Richmond, Virginia, 23228). The meetings are also broadcast electronically by way of Google Meets.

https://martinsvillebulletin.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/county-rejects-reversion-and-city-strikes-back/article_803e0466-5dae-11ec-940c-a3d361b6f048.html

FEATURED TOP STORY BREAKING

County rejects reversion and City strikes back

Bill Wyatt

Dec 15, 2021



Martinsville Deputy Chief Rob Fincher serves Henry County Administrator Tim Hall notice from Mayor Kathy Lawson out of the reversion agreement, Martinsville will take legal action.

Bill Wyatt

Bill Wyatt

The Henry County Board of Supervisors voted on Tuesday afternoon to reject an agreement it had negotiated with Martinsville regarding the City's plans to revert from a city to a town — and Wednesday morning the City struck back.

Outgoing Iriswood District Supervisor David Martin on Tuesday proposed a motion that the Board not approve an ordinance adopting a voluntary settlement agreement (VSA) with the City, and it was seconded by Collinsville District Supervisor Joe Bryant. The motion passed 4-2, with Chairman Jim Adams and Reed Creek District Supervisor Tommy Slaughter voting against Martin's motion.

“The state is bullying us,” said Martin. “We almost turned our backs on the future of the City and the County.”

On Wednesday morning Martinsville Deputy Police Chief Rob Fincher arrived at the Henry County Administration Building with a letter signed by Mayor Kathy Lawson and delivered it to Henry County Administrator Tim Hall.

The letter puts Henry County on notice that the City intends to pursue legal action to have the agreement enforced, and if that fails, the City will pursue reversion without an agreement and sue the County for “relief for damages incurred as a result of our detrimental reliance upon a settlement subsequently shown to have been negotiated in bad faith by the County.”

People are also reading...

- 1 **Henry County Administrator Tim Hall announces retirement**
- 2 **Fentanyl suspected in drug overdoses of three Martinsville inmates**
- 3 **UPDATE: Bassett man turns himself in after narcotics and cash seizure**
- 4 **Martinsville pays tribute to Virgin Mary**

Fincher also had a copy of the letter to serve Henry County Attorney George Lyle, but office personnel told him that Lyle was in court at the time.

Martinsville Assistant City Manager and City Attorney Eric Monday told the Bulletin the purpose of having County officials served by a uniformed police officer was to drive home the point.

“Between the memorandum of understanding (MOU) and subsequent VSA, the agreement has now been approved three times by public votes of City Council and twice by public votes of the County Board,” the letter states. “The Commission on Local Government has issued its report finding the VSA is in the best interests of both City and County, and the Commonwealth.”

The letter notes that the City had “received repeated assurances” that the Board would approve the ordinance adopting the VSA and is aware that the County plans to try “for at least the fourth time” to have the General Assembly pass a law that will stop Martinsville from reverting from a city to a town.

“Such a dramatic change of course at this late stage indicates a deliberate repudiation of the jointly pursued process which we have relied upon, which both parties have now substantially performed, and which has entailed significant expense,” the letter states.

The City accuses the County of violating its own resolution indicating their intention to adopt the agreement and breaching the VSA when it promised “to take no steps to undermine in any way whatsoever the obligations and agreement in the VSA.”

At the Tuesday meeting, Bryant said, “We had a so-called meeting between the City and the County and no information was passed on to Council members or Board members other than those at the meeting, and no information was passed out to the public. Out of this meeting came this MOU, and we had no input. I didn’t have any input on what is in the MOU. I think we can come up with a better resolution.”

The City has now indicated the time for further discussion has passed and the matter will be settled in court.

“We anticipate that such a contested reversion, although painful for the parties, ultimately will result in an outcome more favorable to the City and less favorable to the County than the results already obtained in the VSA,” the letter states. “Litigation will of course also result in significantly increased legal expenses being borne by the taxpayers of both City and County.

Hall left the room and offered no immediate comment after receiving Lawson’s notice from Fincher, but later on Wednesday Board Chairman Jim Adams issued a statement through Henry County’s Public Information Officer Brandon Martin.

“If 2021 showed us anything, it showed us that we as a community should be on the same page before we enact anything as consequential as reversion,” the statement said. “Community members in both the City and County made it crystal clear to the Commission on Local Government that they would like to see the process involve more citizen engagement and more input from the two school systems.”

By not voting to move forward with the VSA approval, Adams said, all members of the County and the Board along with school officials and constitutional officers could negotiate a fair settlement.

“We can allow our communities time to truly understand the weight of this decision, the opportunity to get this right,” the statement said. “Let us be driven by the consent of those who we represent.”

Arguably the most significant concession the City made to the County in the VSA was to agree not to pursue any annexation of land in Henry County for the next 10 years. State law regarding reversion provides for annexation within two years without an agreement.

“We are confident that the additional expense will not, however, alter the inevitability of reversion, or of annexation two years thereafter,” the letter from Lawson says. “The entirely avoidable responsibility for all of this is yours alone.”

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 2360. Follow him @billdwatt.

By Bill Wyatt

Reporter

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Eliminating the grocery tax would leave some local governments looking to replace that revenue

RADIO IQ | By [Michael Pope](#)

Published December 6, 2021 at 5:00 AM EST



LISTEN • 1:20



On the campaign trail, the Republican candidate for governor said he wanted to eliminate the sales tax on groceries. Now that Glenn Youngkin's about to take office, lawmakers are about to start considering how to make that happen.

Eliminating the grocery tax used to be a liberal idea, something that progressives argued for because it would help mainly low-income people. Then Republican candidate for governor Glenn Youngkin campaigned on it. Now lawmakers from both parties appear poised to make it happen. Commonwealth Institute senior policy analyst Chris Wodicka:

"By eliminating this revenue source without adequately replacing it," Wodicka says. "A lot of local governments may be in a situation where they would need to raise other taxes in response or cut services to make up the difference."

Radio IQ

All Things Considered

Eliminating the sales tax on groceries would be a big hit to cities and counties across Virginia. 20% of the revenues go to education, and another 20% goes directly to local governments. Center on Budget and Policy Priorities senior analyst Eric Figueroa:

"What I would caution is to be very deliberate about making up the revenue in progressive ways," Figueroa explains. "And that would end up being maybe higher income tax on high earners or sort of different types of property tax to make up that difference."

Several options are on the table for making up that difference, including broadening the sales tax for digital products, allowing more local taxing authority and reducing unfunded pension liability.

This report, provided by [Virginia Public Radio](#), was made possible with support from the [Virginia Education Association](#).

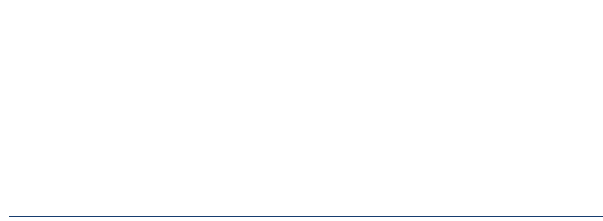
Tags

[News](#)[Local News](#)[Glenn Youngkin](#)[Grocery Tax](#)

Michael Pope

Michael Pope is an author and journalist who lives in Old Town Alexandria. He has reported for NPR, the New York Daily News and the Alexandria Gazette Packet. He has a master's degree in American Studies from Florida State University, and he is a former adjunct professor at Tallahassee Community College. He is the author of four books.

[See stories by Michael Pope](#)



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All Things Considered

https://martinsvillebulletin.com/news/local/govt-and-politics/henry-county-fails-to-approve-reversion-ordinance/article_3d0bae94-4e06-11ec-a584-4f5a57fadcb5.html

FEATURED

TOP STORY

Henry County fails to approve reversion ordinance

Bill Wyatt

Nov 25, 2021



Henry County Board of Supervisors fail to approve reversion ordinance.

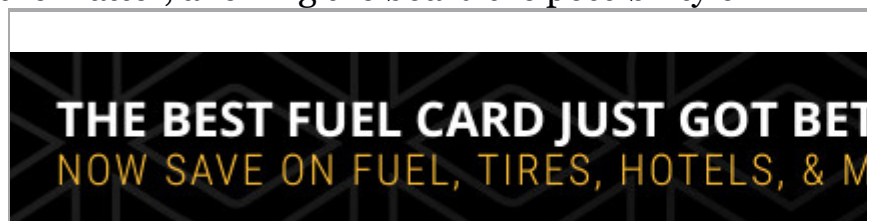
Bill Wyatt

Bill Wyatt

The reversion process has hit a snag.

The Henry County Board of Supervisors failed to approve an ordinance adopting a voluntary settlement agreement with Martinsville regarding reversion after a public hearing Tuesday night.

The lack of a vote effectively tabled the matter, allowing the board the possibility of reviving it at a later time.



“Following the public hearing the chairman solicited a motion to adopt the ordinance and there was no motion,” said County Attorney George Lyle by email. “I believe the chairman said the matter was ‘tabled’ for the time being, which means there was no action taken.”

But Lyle said that doesn’t mean the board can’t vote for it at a future meeting.

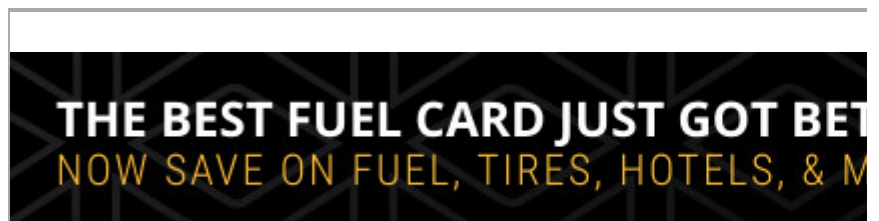
“The matter can be considered at a subsequent meeting,” said Lyle. “The next scheduled meeting of the board is Dec. 14. No agenda has been set for that meeting at this time.”

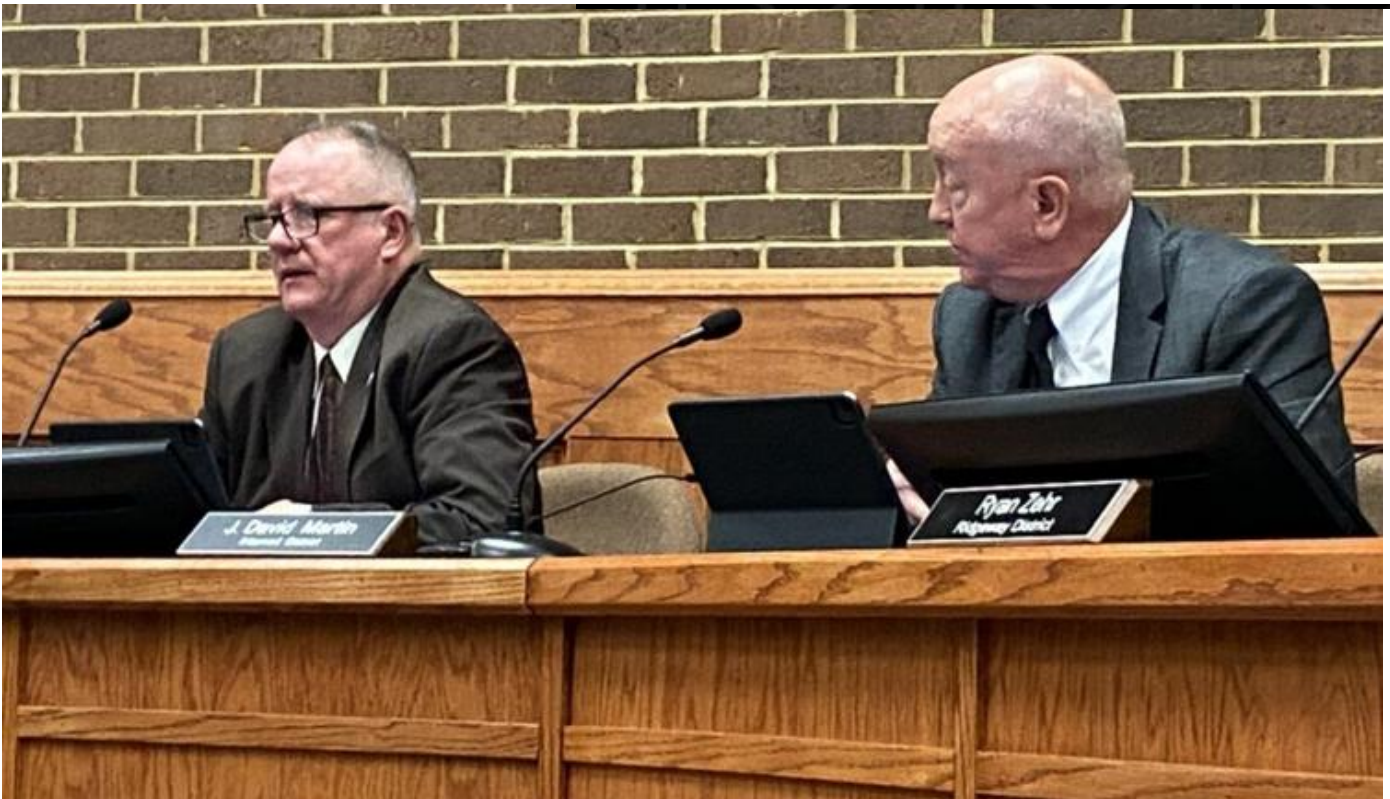
Asked about the procedure for possibly voting on the ordinance at a future meeting, Chairman Jim Adams said it would first take a consensus of the board members to request that it be added, and he didn’t expect that to happen.

“You heard what was said here tonight,” Adams said. “I’m not an expert on Robert’s Rules of Order, but I don’t see that happening.”

At the meeting, all board members spoke about Martinsville reverting from a city to a town in Henry County but subsequently failed to respond to a request from Adams for a motion to approve the ordinance.

“My big concern: There is no way we can merge schools in a year and a half,” said Ridgeway District Supervisor Ryan Zehr. “It’s a lot to take in.”





Board members Joe Bryant (left) and David Martin talk about the reversion process.

Bill Wyatt

Iriswood District Supervisor David Martin did not seek re-election, and unless a special meeting is called, Dec. 14 will be his last meeting on the board.

“I never thought that five individuals could take a vote and change the course of history for an entire community,” said Martin, speaking of the five city council members who voted unanimously almost two years ago to pursue reversion. “This process ... was not a collaborative process.”

Collinsville District Supervisor Joe Bryant had voted against the approval of the agreement that was presented to the Commission on Local Government (COLG) in August and approved by the commission in September.

“It’s not all about reversion; it’s about annexation,” said Bryant. “I don’t think it’s fair for a city to come in and take over property in the county.”

Horsepasture District Supervisor De... approval of the agreement that went

“Five city council people not allowing the community to vote on this is wrong,” said Buchanan. “There are good professional people that will lose their jobs. It’s a process that’s not fair.”



Board member Tommy "T. J." Slaughter speaks about the reversion process.

Bill Wyatt

Said Reed Creek District Supervisor T.J. “Tommy” Slaughter: “Do we fight and spend a lot of money or do we try to get the best we can and go for it? I”m not for it, but I know it’s going to have to happen.”

Adams was the last to speak, and he said reversion was a “tremendously unfair deal” and the “county had little or no input.”

“But if we vote against this we will lose everything we’ve negotiated,” Adams said.

“What is the desire of this board: Is there any motion?” Adams asked, three times.

After a brief silence, Adams said: “This matter is tabled for lack of a motion.”

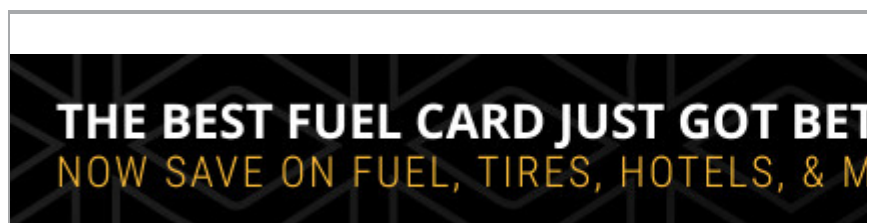
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After the meeting, the Bulletin asked for a comment from city officials. Mayor Kathy Lawson and City Attorney and Assistant City Manager Eric Monday were out of the office for the Thanksgiving holidays, but City Manager Leon Towarnicki relayed a brief comment from Lawson and added both he and Monday agreed with the statement.

“Of course I am very disappointed that the board of supervisors chose not to vote as had been given the indication from their prior meeting,” Towarnicki’s relay of Lawson’s comment stated. “While I cannot personally speak for all the members of council, I believe reversion is the right path for our community.”

Council member Danny Turner said they had been told by their reversion legal team that the county was permitted to take up to 180 days to vote on the ordinance.

“I don’t blame the county at all. They’ve got 180 days, so I guess they’ve got about 140 left before they have to make a decision,” Turner said. “The General Assembly will have gotten their business done, so Henry County, I guess, is seizing the opportunity to go to the General Assembly and try and get better terms.”





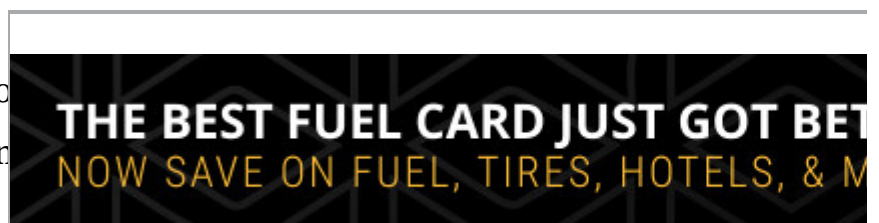
Former Iriswood District Candidate Eric Phillips says the General Assembly may be able to help Henry County oppose the reversion process.

Bill Wyatt

Four people spoke at the public hearing on the ordinance Tuesday night, and among them was Eric Phillips, who campaigned unsuccessfully for Martin's seat representing the Iriswood District.

"Delegate Danny Marshall and [State Senator Bill] Stanley could bring up new legislation allowing people to have a voice," Phillips told the board. "There is also the opportunity for the city to have candidates [to run in November] who are opposed to it."

Asked what the county intends to do to
mount a legal fight against reversion



“I cannot discuss legal strategies of the county, but the last vote of the board in this matter was to pursue the voluntary settlement agreement in August,” said Lyle. “The county continues to believe the best implementation date of any reversion would be July 1, 2024.”

The city had requested an effective date of July 1, 2023.

Regardless of what course the county takes, current law provides for Martinsville to pursue reversion with or without an agreement with the county.

In other matters, the board:

- Awarded a \$203,398 contract to Motorola Solutions Inc. for the purchase of 90 portable radios for the Sheriff’s Office. The radios will be assigned to officers assigned to the new Adult Detention Center.
- Awarded a \$169,000 contract to Tek84 Inc., for the purchase of a second Intercept Contraband Detection Scanner for the Sheriff’s Office. The Board approved the use of American Rescue Plan Act funds for the scanner.
- Awarded a \$1,089,350 contract to English Construction Company Inc. for improvements to DuPont Road leading into the new Adult Detention Center. Funding for this work is included in the budget for the Adult Detention Center project and will be eligible for 25% reimbursement from the Commonwealth of Virginia.
- Approved an additional appropriation to the Sheriff’s Office of \$16,743 received from the Edward Byrne Memorial Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) to be used to pay for overtime hours of high impact law enforcement activities in areas that are experiencing increases in crime.
- Approved an additional appropriation to the Sheriff’s Office of two separate grants from the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles. The first grant of \$26,400 will go towards the enforcement of alcohol- related traffic laws and the second grant of \$17,831 will be used for the enforcement of speed- related traffic laws.

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- Approved an additional appropriation to the school board of \$1,371,949 received from the Virginia Department of Education through the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Coronavirus and Local Fiscal Recovery Fund (CSLFRF). The funds are intended to be used for the replacement of the heating, ventilation and air conditioning system at Laurel Park Middle School.
- Approved an additional appropriation to the Department of Public Safety of \$216,172 received from the Virginia Fire Programs Aid-to-Localities fund. In combination with \$929,000 of previously allocated funds, the Board then awarded a contract of \$1,136,761 to Blue Ridge Rescue Suppliers for a new aerial fire apparatus for the Bassett Fire Department. Including the purchase of a \$203,542 tanker-style fire truck for the Patrick-Henry Volunteer Fire Department in September, this will be the second fire truck purchased within the year.
- Approved the carryover of \$51,136,064.58 in committed funds from the fiscal year (FY) 2021 budget to the current FY'22 budget. Items on the carryover list are committed items encumbered or obligated from the prior budget year, but the item was not received, or the service was not performed prior to June 30.
- Adopted a resolution authorizing the County's participation in a proposed settlement agreement to recover damages associated with prescription opioid abuses.
- Approved an amendment to the FY21-22 budget related to the sale of the Patriot Centre Shell building. The building was sold to Schock, NA for \$1 million as part of an economic incentive package. The total loan value of the building was \$3,461,955.
- Held a public hearing in regards to a Community Development Block Grant application for the restoration of the Historic Fieldale Recreation Center. Following the public hearing, the Board adopted a resolution in support of the application, which could provide up to \$1 million for renovation costs.
- Approved a resolution in support of adding Airport Road to the secondary road system and the abandonment of the old portion that used to lead to the Blue Ridge Regional Airport.
- Approved a rezoning request for Professional District (B-3) for p

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Collinsville. The owner wishes to convert the existing residence into an office for a counseling business.

- Approved a rezoning request from Suburban Residential (S-R) to Mixed Residential (M-R) for property located at 2541 Bassett Heights Road in the Reed Creek District. The applicant wishes to place a double-wide manufactured home on the property with a permanent masonry foundation.
- Approved a rezoning request from Commercial District (B-1) to Agricultural District (A-1) for property at the intersection of Carver Road and Parkway Drive in the Horsepasture District. The applicant wishes to expand the adjacent cemetery into the property. A special use permit will also be required.
- Approved a rezoning request from Suburban Residential (S-R) to Rural Residential (R-R) for property located at 107 Carson Drive in the Reed Creek District. The applicant wishes to place a single-wide manufactured home on the property.
- Heard from County Treasurer Scott Grindstaff about 2020 delinquent tax collection efforts. Approximately \$26,830 of 2020 personal property taxes were collected during the month of October. Another \$99,960 of 2020 real estate taxes were also collected during the month.
- Heard from Sarah Hodges and Valerie Harper, of the Martinsville-Henry County Economic Development Corporation, regarding new marketing and promotional materials for the County.
- Reappointed Vivian Hairston to the Public Service Authority for a four-year term to expire Jan. 5, 2026. The Board also reappointed Jim Adams and Tommy Slaughter to the West Piedmont Planning District Commission for four-year terms to expire Dec. 31, 2025.

Bill Wyatt is a reporter for the Martinsville Bulletin. He can be reached at 276-638-8801, Ext. 2360. Follow him @billdwyatt.

Bill Wyatt

Reporter

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A promotional banner for a fuel card. The background is black with a subtle geometric pattern. The text is in white and yellow. The top line reads "THE BEST FUEL CARD JUST GOT BET" and the bottom line reads "NOW SAVE ON FUEL, TIRES, HOTELS, & M".

THE BEST FUEL CARD JUST GOT BET
NOW SAVE ON FUEL, TIRES, HOTELS, & M

LIVE

35°

66°

70°

Search Site

Martinsville reversion hits another setback after Henry County rejects agreement

by Brenna McIntosh
Tuesday, December 14th 2021



FILE PHOTO - Martinsville city flag (WSET)

HENRY COUNTY, Va. (WSET) — For months, Martinsville and Henry County leaders have debated the reversion of Martinsville from city status to town status.

LIVE

35°

66°

70°

DETAILS: Martinsville doesn't want to be a city anymore; county, city leaders negotiate

Search Site

In a four to two vote, the Henry County Board of Supervisors failed to approve a voluntary settlement agreement.

Sponsored Links

Take This Quiz To See If You Can Retire Comfortably

SmartAsset

Board members that voted in favor of not moving forward with the agreement include:

- Vice-chairperson Debra Buchanan
- Joe Bryant
- David Martin
- Ryan Zehr

Board members that voted against not moving forward with the agreement include:

- Chairman Jim Adams
- Tommy Slaughter



Daniel Crews 
@DCrewsNews



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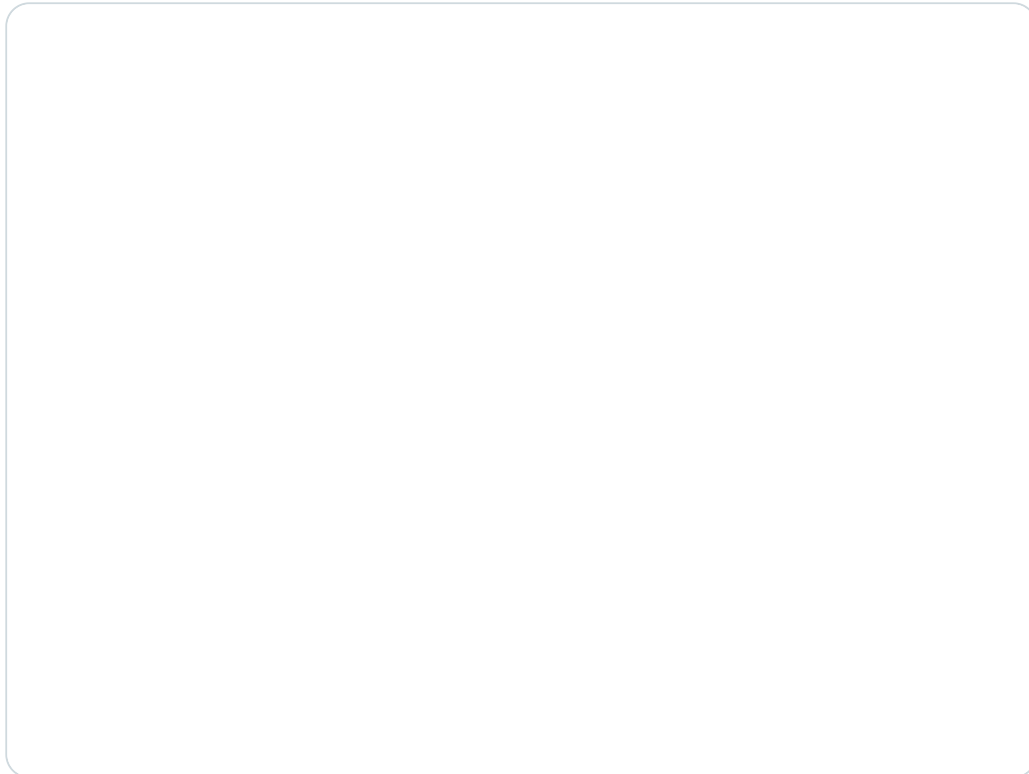
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LIVE

agreement rears... Martinsville Reversion Supervisors

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motion to NOT approve the agreement. @ABC13NEWS



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"There's so much unanswered that I would like to have answered before I can make that decision that I would like to see reversion happen," said Bryant.

As a former school superintendent, Martin felt not only that both the city and county school districts were being left out of the process.

But the state was essentially bullying the county into accepting the terms of reversion, according to Martin.

n, discuss then

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The biggest disagreement between town and city officials seems to be an effective date.

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The city wanted the reversion to take effect in 2022, the county wanted to push it off until 2024.

Some of the changes from being an independent city to being a town in Henry County could include tax rates and services.

RELATED: [Martinsville reversion could impact what happens to city, county school system](#)

Supervisors Tommy Slaughter and Chairman Jim Adams voted against the motion.

"We've had expert advice all around and when you have an issue, let's say it's health, you'd call on the experts. I'm following the expert's advice," said Chairman Adams.

"For them to fail to do so tonight, not only fail to pass it, to vote it down is really a repudiation of promises that they have made," said Stephen Piepgrass, legal counsel for the city of Martinsville.

According to Piepgrass, the city and county will now have to meet before an arbitrator to try and move the process forward.

"Following the arbitration, it's likely that this would then go to a contested reversion proceeding," said Piepgrass, "I think it is safe to say that whatever the outcome is, it will be worse for the county now than it would have been if they had followed through on their promises."

If this process were to revert back to a contested reversion, all of the agreed-upon terms of this reversion, up to this point, would no longer be considered.

The reversion plan would essentially start over with an entirely new, much more expensive, process.

With the settlement agreement rejected, the Martinsville reversion is still up in the air.

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HOT

Middletown Town Council optimistic that county will OK boundary line adjustments

By JOSH JANNEY The Winchester Star
Dec 9, 2021

MIDDLETOWN — Town Council is optimistic about the Frederick County government approving three “friendly boundary line adjustments” — including one that would bring a planned Sheetz within the town limits.

Sheetz wants to build a convenience store and gas station at the corner of Reliance and North Buckton roads, near Interstate 81 exit 302. According to county tax maps, the approximately 20-acre property is zoned B2 General Business District. The land is in the county’s Opequon District, just outside of Middletown.

Frederick County officials are currently in discussions with Middletown officials about adjusting the boundary line to incorporate the 20 acres into the town limits. If the boundary adjustment occurs, Sheetz would pay the town \$600,000 in impact fees — \$300,000 for a new wastewater pump station and \$300,00 for upgrading water and sewer lines.

Another boundary adjustment would incorporate Lord Fairfax Community College, Middletown Elementary and a 101.25-acre property owned by trustees for Brian J. Hester and Jason G. Hester.

The third boundary adjustment would incorporate Shaffer’s BBQ at 8140 Valley Pike into the town limits. Despite being a significant component of the Middletown community, the restaurant sits just outside of the town limits. Owner Matt Shaffer has wanted to be a part of the town for many years.

During a council work session Monday night, council member Carolyn Aliff said Frederick County approving the boundary adjustments “looks promising” and told the other council members to “keep your fingers crossed.”

The Board of Supervisors on Nov. 10 voted 6-1 to begin discussions with Middletown about implementing the proposed boundary adjustments. Chairman Charles DeHaven Jr. was the sole dissenting vote. At that meeting, Back Creek Supervisor Shawn Graber said it was his understanding that Sheetz is coming “whether they are a part of the town or not.” Graber added that the Middletown government has provided various services — including sewer — to LFCC and Middletown Elementary without receiving any revenue.

Several residents who live near the proposed Sheetz location have expressed concerns about the possibility of increased traffic, noise and crime that such a development might bring. The residents most affected would be those on Reliance, North Buckton, and South Buckton roads and in the Kendall Mills development.

North Buckton Road resident Robert Clark — who has spoken at both Middletown and Frederick County government meetings — has said the boundary adjustment would not benefit the county residents who live near the proposed Sheetz. He’s argued that if the land becomes part of Middletown, the site would no longer be under the supervisors’ purview, and the residents would not have the supervisors to turn to should problems arise.

Also at Monday’s meeting, council member Jeff Pennington said the town is seeking applicants for the Planning Commission as member Dennis Fusaro intends to resign at the beginning of next year.

It was also announced that the council is seeking a new planning and zoning administrator. Harbaugh told The Star after the meeting that the previous administrator — Eric Bittner — left the position for a job in Orange County.

Near the end of the meeting, council member Shayla Rickard said she feels the town doesn’t utilize its park enough for public events. She suggested that the town hold outdoor movie nights in the spring.

Attending the meeting at the Town Office at 7875 Church St. were Mayor Charles Harbaugh and council members Jeff Pennington, Stephanie Mitchell, Scott Fink, Carole Snyder Jones, Shayla Rickard and Carolyn Aliff.

— Contact Josh Janney

at jjanney@winchesterstar.com

JJanney

Middletown Town Council optimistic that county - Northern Virginia Daily (Strasburg, VA) - December 9, 2021

December 9, 2021 | Northern Virginia Daily (Strasburg, VA) | Josh Janney For The Northern Virginia Daily

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https://roanoke.com/business/local/montgomery-county-supervisors-ok-boundary-adjustment-for-business-park/article_6f8f426a-52e6-11ec-a314-8f4e47d8350e.html

MONTGOMERY COUNTY

Montgomery County supervisors OK boundary adjustment for business park

Yann Ranaivo
Dec 5, 2021



The Falling Branch Corporate Park will soon grow in size.

FILE, The Roanoke Times

Yann Ranaivo



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The Montgomery County Board of Supervisors has voted in favor of a measure to bring roughly 68 acres of Falling Branch Corporate Park land into the Christiansburg town limits.

The move effectively paves the way for further development and expansion of the business park, now more than 300 acres. The county rezoned the roughly 68-acre parcel in 2017 to facilitate the park's expansion — and business park land that's been rezoned has historically been taken into town limits for development, according to county documents on the matter.

Falling Branch Corporate Park is located just off the section of Interstate 81 that passes through Christiansburg. The property is home to a number of large-scale employers, including some that are involved in the rapidly growing science and technology fields.

In return for the county agreeing to bring the parcel into the town, Christiansburg will provide \$300,000 to help with the cost of extending town utilities to the first pad developed on the property.

The parcel is currently vacant and is located in a manufacturing zoning district, according to county documents.

Among the employers in the park is a distribution center for Backcountry, an online retailer that specializes in outdoors recreational apparel and gear.

Moog Inc., which specializes in motion control products for various industries, announced during the early part of the year plans to vacate its facility on South Main Street in Blacksburg and establish an operation inside the nearly 102,000-square-foot Falling Branch park building previously occupied by Dish Network.

In addition to giving Moog substantially more space for its work, the project called for the creation of 75 new jobs.

The park has long been touted as a major employer, particularly in the high-demand field of

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“The one thing is it’s going to attract companies that are going to employ people within our town,” Christiansburg Mayor Mike Barber said about the latest developments at the business park. “There’s a lot of high-tech stuff there and good paying jobs going into that thing.”

Barber said more technology jobs can contribute significantly to the town’s economic growth. He said he hopes to see more of those kinds of companies eye the area, especially given the way the overall economy is changing.

Barber also touted the park’s long-term planning, which he said is key to its survival.

Yann Ranaivo

Yann Ranaivo covers local government and politics in the New River Valley, including Christiansburg, Blacksburg, Radford and Montgomery County.

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https://richmond.com/news/state-and-regional/govt-and-politics/put-up-or-shut-up-time-for-state-on-school-modernization-commission-says/article_e06d2748-2e74-5bb6-902a-bd3ddf4e47c8.html

BREAKING TOP STORY

Put up or shut up time for state on school modernization, commission says

Michael Martz
Dec 1, 2021



Sen. Jennifer McClellan, D-Richmond

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Michael Martz

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RTD A1 - Dec. 1, 2021

A legislative commission is proposing more than a half-dozen ways to help Virginia's school divisions replace or renovate outdated public school buildings, including a new fund that would be dedicated to providing grants to localities for school modernization improvements they otherwise couldn't afford.

The Commission on School Construction and Modernization said Wednesday that it also will push the General Assembly to consider changes to the state Literary Fund to make more money available to school divisions in loans that could carry lower interest rates than currently prescribed by law. Those changes include more than tripling both the minimum amount of money in the revolving loan fund and the maximum loan to school divisions.

The commission also wants the assembly to allow all localities in Virginia to impose a 1% increase in their sales tax, subject to voter approval and to be used solely for school construction or renovation.



It wants localities to let school boards keep unspent money at the end of the fiscal year to carry over for one-time projects and it wants the state Board of Education to create standards for school divisions to follow in maintaining and upgrading their buildings, with the state helping to assess their needs.

“We need to do many, many different things,” Del. Shelly Simonds, D-Newport News, said during a commission meeting on Wednesday to prepare recommendations for the General Assembly. “We have a huge problem.”

Scope of the problem

The Department of Education is still defining the scope of the need. With more than half of the state’s public school buildings more than 50 years old, it would take up to \$25 billion to replace all of them. On Wednesday, the department identified 322 projects, outside of school capital improvement plans, that would cost \$3.2 billion to fund, many of them in localities with high fiscal stress.

The commission didn’t have a ready answer for where to get the money to create the grant fund and expand the Literary Fund loan program. That will depend, in part, on the two-year budget that Gov. Ralph Northam will propose in two weeks as he prepares to leave office in January after the assembly convenes for a 60-day session.

“You’ve got to find where the money is coming from,” said Jim Regimbal, a veteran fiscal consultant for local governments, which are looking for the state to play a larger role in helping them pay for new and renovated schools.

Sen. Jennifer McClellan, D-Richmond, who chairs the commission, hopes Northam will include money in his parting budget for school modernization, but she said, “We are looking for any and all sources of funding, and are open to everything.”

McClellan said the state must play a role in helping to pay for new schools and renovations, even though some lawmakers have suggested the responsibility is local



“We can’t live up to our responsibility as a state to give every child a quality education if there are children in buildings that are falling down,” she said in an interview after the meeting on Wednesday.

Del. Jeff Bourne, D-Richmond, a former member of the city’s School Board, said, “It’s long past time for the state to invest in school construction and modernization.”

“At the end of the day, we’re going to just have to put our money where our mouths are,” Bourne said.

Proposed grant fund

While much of the \$2.6 billion revenue surplus from the fiscal year that ended June 30 is accounted for, Regimbal said the legislature could divert a sizable chunk of the excess funds to the proposed new school modernization grant fund.

The state constitution requires a \$1.1 billion deposit into the state’s rainy day fund, but the assembly and governor have legal discretion on whether to require a potential “super-deposit” of \$564 million into the reserve fund, said Regimbal, a former fiscal analyst for what is now called the Senate Finance and Appropriations Committee.

The assembly and governor could put the money into the new school modernization fund “with the stroke of a pen,” he said Wednesday. “Everyone on the [General Assembly] money committees knows the money is available if they want it.”

The legislature and Gov.-elect Glenn Youngkin, who wants to use some of the surplus for tax cuts, also have about \$1.1 billion in unspent federal aid from the American Rescue Plan Act.

Traditionally, the House of Delegates has been less inclined than the Senate for the state to pay for local school buildings, but House Appropriations Chairman Luke Torian, D-Prince William, expects the issue to become a challenge for Youngkin and the assembly, with the House poised to make requests pending in two races.



“It’s certainly going to be an issue they’re going to have to address,” Torian said Wednesday.

Northam and legislators already appropriated \$250 million of \$4.3 billion in federal aid to help school divisions replace heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems and other health-related upgrades that have become essential in the COVID-19 pandemic. They’ve also informally set aside about \$350 million to continue critical spending initiatives, such as increased compensation for law enforcement and direct-care staff at state behavioral health facilities.

The next budget appears flush with money, with as much as \$3.5 billion projected in additional revenues this year over the current forecast, which Northam will update formally on Dec. 16. One option to free up money in the Literary Fund for school loans would be to use other revenues to pay the state’s share of contributions to teacher retirement plans, one of the primary purposes of the fund.

‘A dedicated bucket’

Superintendent of Schools James Lane and State Treasurer Manju Ganeriwala made the point in a letter to Northam and the leaders of the House Appropriations and Senate Finance committees on July 27 that outlined ways to make the constitutionally established Literary Fund “more competitive and attractive to school divisions as a funding source for school construction projects,” as well as improve the health of the fund.

“Since its inception, the foundational element of the Literary Fund has been the revolving construction loans it makes to support public schools, prioritizing those localities that cannot easily access debt markets or are unable to do so at interest rates that make their loans unaffordable,” Lane and Ganeriwala wrote.

“Unfortunately, fewer and fewer loans are being made out of the Literary Fund,” they said. “For the past several decades, o
teacher retirement benefits, with a p



The commission endorsed the recommendations in the letter, which include: increasing the minimum size of the fund from \$80 million to \$250 million; raising the maximum loan from \$7.5 million to \$25 million; and easing the current loan interest rates, which are tied to a locality's ability to pay, but within a range of 2% to 6%, putting the loans out of reach for many localities.

But the panel also wants to create a separate fund for grants, recognizing that some localities can't afford loans even at zero interest.

Making the Literary Funds more accessible would help, but Bristol School Superintendent Keith Perrigan said many localities "don't have the capacity to take on more debt."

"We also have to provide grants and other incentives to school divisions that can't afford to take on those loans," Perrigan said.

The commission agreed that the grant fund should be separate from the Literary Fund and used solely for school construction and modernization.

"It should be a dedicated bucket," Sen. Bill Stanley, R-Franklin County, told the commission by conference call.

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Warrenton seeks to expand town boundaries by 60%

By Peter Cary/Piedmont Journalism Foundation

Dec 15, 2021

The town of Warrenton wants to absorb five parcels of county land totaling 1,750 acres on its perimeter that would expand the town's area by more than 60%. The targeted areas came to light at Thursday's Fauquier County Board of Supervisors meeting when the board agreed to respond in writing to the town's request and released maps that until now had been the subject of secret town-county meetings.

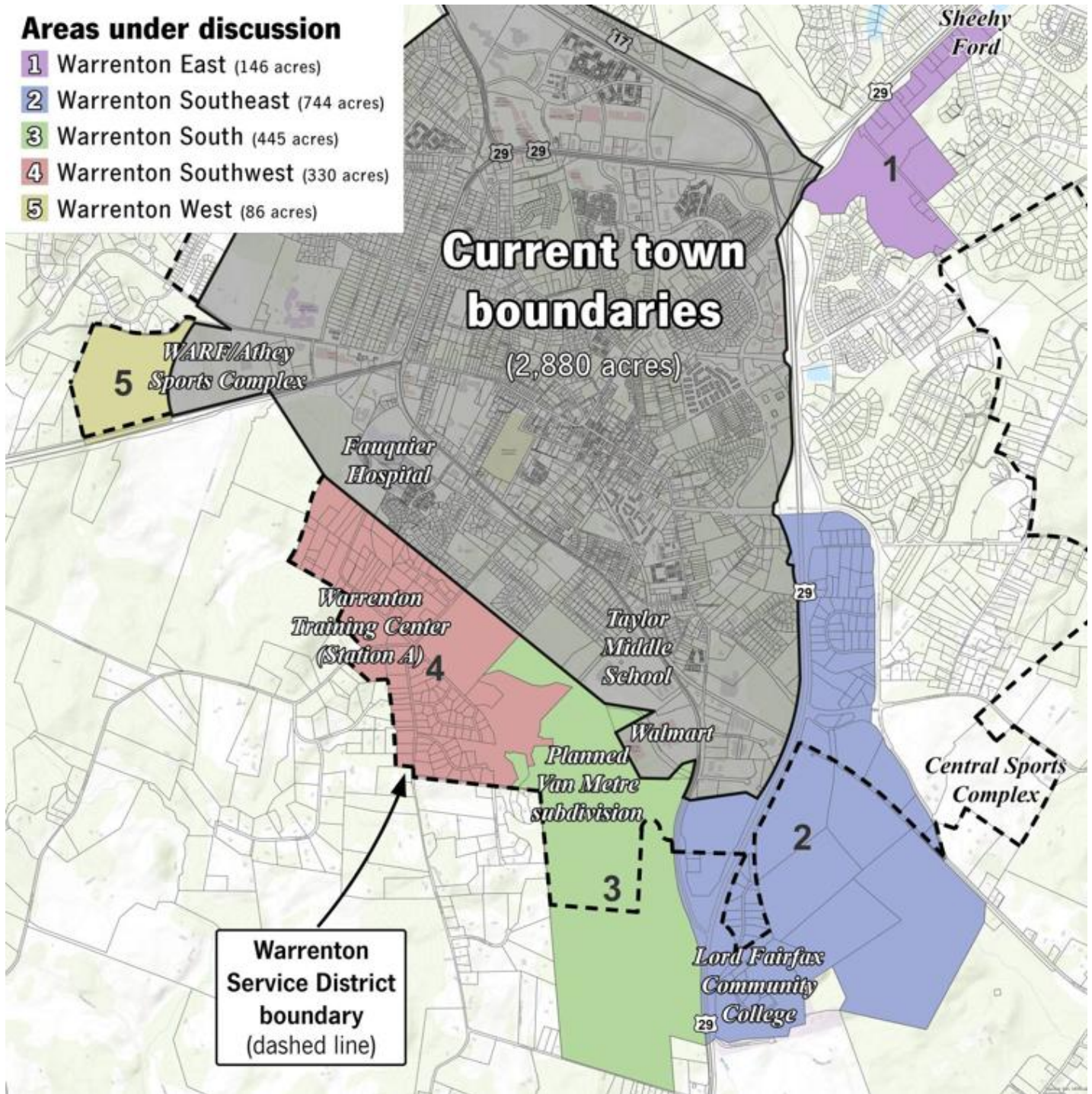
"We don't govern well when we do it on our own. It's much better when we have informed citizen input ... and this is obviously going to be significant to a lot of folks," said supervisor Holder Trumbo after the meeting.

The five areas that would be absorbed surround the town's existing boundaries, but are heavily weighted toward the southern end of town on both sides of U.S. 29, where 1,518 acres are targeted.

Warrenton Mayor Carter Nevill did not respond to several requests for comment. But Board of Supervisors Chairman Chris Granger (Center District), in an interview, guessed that the town's reasons for wanting to absorb the five parcels included giving the town a bigger voice in its future and improving its revenue stream.

Supervisors expressed hope that their response would launch discussions with the town over the pros and cons of the transfer of the various parcels, as well as stimulate input from affected parties and the public. The town is asking for a "boundary adjustment" to allow it to take in the properties; the town could also move to annex the parcels, but that legal process is more time-consuming and could be contentious.

Granger said the supervisors' letter includes the county's desire for more public conversations on potential revenue sharing arrangements, economic development opportunities, proffers for county services and establishment of a joint planning group for the area surrounding the town's borders.



Background

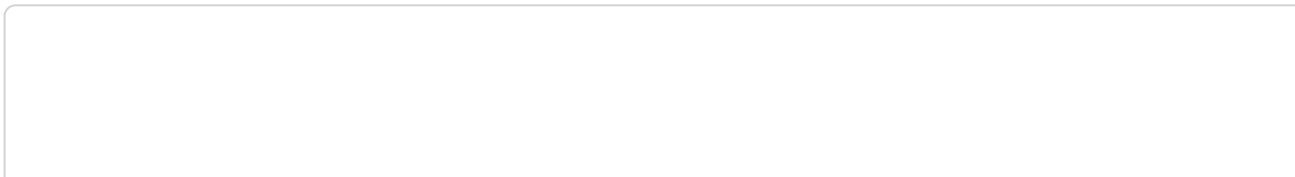
Public discussions have taken place since 2019 regarding the town's interest in absorbing two parcels. One is the so-called panhandle along U.S. 15/29 north of town that includes numerous auto dealerships; the other is an area to the south between Meetze Road and the Eastern Bypass that includes Lord Fairfax Community College.

What wasn't publicly discussed was that the town is also targeting the 444-acre Arrington property where Van Metre Homes is planning a new development — approved six years ago by county supervisors — and another 330-acre parcel to the north of that.

These maps had been the subject of closed-door meetings between the town and county dating back at least two years, but one supervisor said they stopped during 2020 because of the pandemic. They took on some new urgency with their mention at the town-county liaison meeting on Nov. 16 and then a surprise move at a planning commission meeting on Nov. 18.

At that meeting's work session, the board was considering a **request** from Van Metre to move 28 acres adjacent to its planned development into the town's service district to provide more space for sewer drainfields, when Commissioner Diane Roteman (Center District) asked for a 60-day postponement. She questioned making the town take on more drainfields and mentioned ongoing "boundary line discussions." Commissioner Bob Lee (Marshall District) objected, saying the county had approved an "exemplary" plan for this development in 2015 and the board needed to move things along.

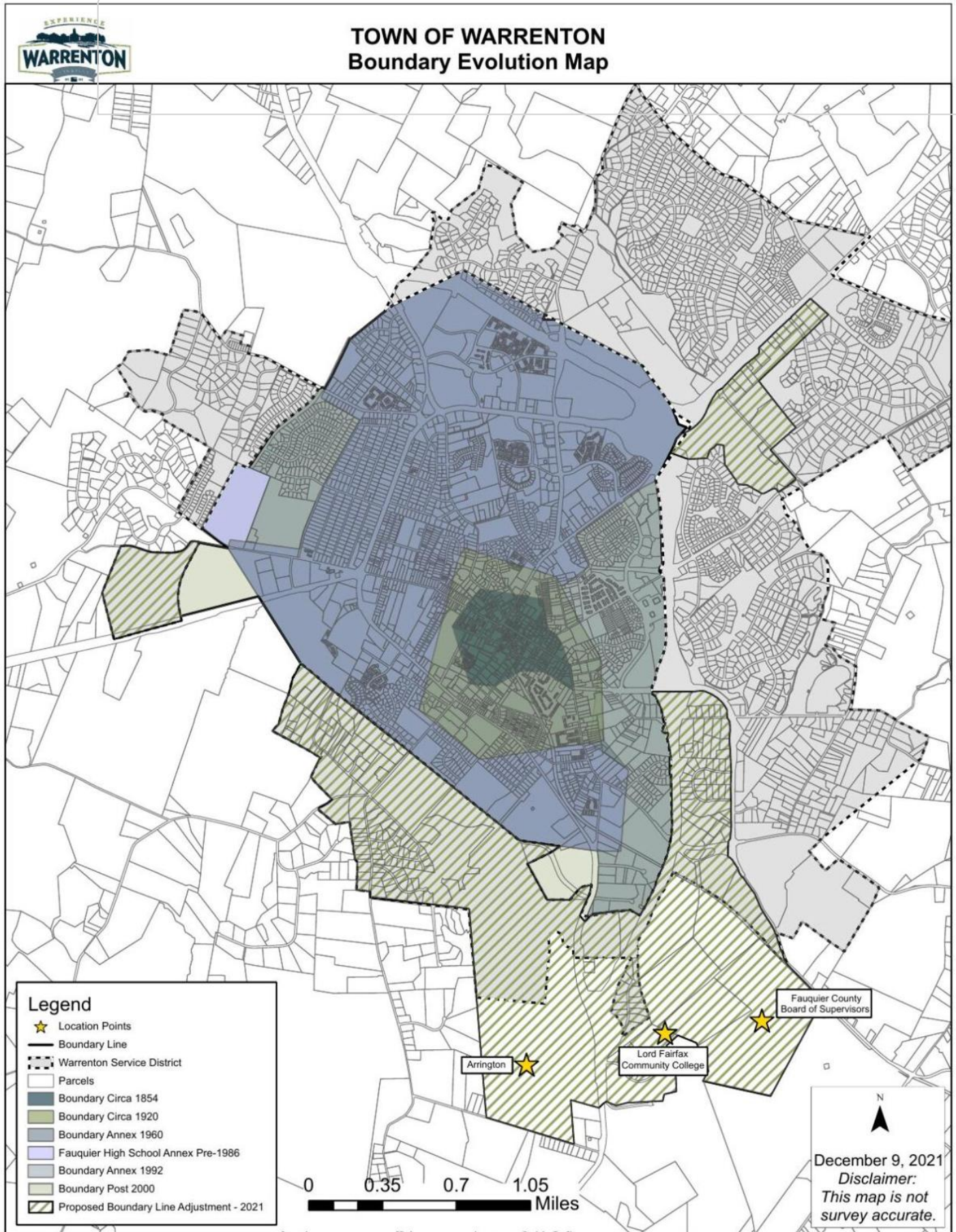
At the evening meeting, Chief of Planning Adam Schellenberger said that "staff" had been contacted by Supervisor Chris Granger who also asked that the move be postponed. Schellenberger said on Monday that Granger had talked with county attorney Tracy Gallehr who asked him to pass Granger's thoughts along. Granger said that he did not support putting the 28 acres into the town's service district, nor did Roteman.



At that meeting, Roteman asked that the move be delayed because, she said, the town was not aware of the 28-acre transfer issue. "The mayor only learned of this at 5 o'clock today," she said. Other commissioners expressed skepticism since their agenda had been published, but agreed to postpone discussion until January.

On Thursday, when the maps were released, it became clear that the property was among those that were being discussed in closed sessions by the supervisors and town council.

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Arrington property

A boundary line move may have significant impact on the Van Metre development. The property was approved for a 227-home development by Alwington Farm Developers, LLC in 2015. Under the arrangement, Warrenton would provide water but not sewer, and nearly all of the homes would be limited to owners 55 and older.

That plan stalled, the developer claimed, because financing was hard to obtain for an over-55 subdivision. In August, 2019, Alwington's president Russell Marks asked the supervisors at a public meeting to change the over-55 requirement, but the board delayed action. Mary Leigh McDaniel, the supervisor in whose Marshall District it rested, has said her constituents insist that the project remain over-55.

When the project stalled in 2020, Van Metre signed a contract with Alwington to take over development. Van Metre has not said publicly where it stands on reducing the over-55 requirement.

Granger said in an interview that the town's growth had stalled and that it needs more people. He said he was skeptical of the Arrington development as a whole, but said he was immediately opposed to adding drainfields to the town's service district. When he heard Van Metre needed 28 acres so it could improve its drainfields, he said, "I'm like, 'No way, you guys need to go back and talk to the town about getting sewer.'"

"If there's going to be 200 houses there, I would much prefer they're going to be on public water, I would much rather they be on public sewer. And we not have these drainfields out there that we all know are going to fail," he said. "In the end, if Arrington ends up in the town, it fixes a whole lot of stuff."

But he noted that the process for changing the boundary lines is a "long road." "There's a whole lot of stuff that has to be sorted out," he said.