

AT A SPECIAL CALLED MEETING of the Nelson County Board of Supervisors at 2:00 p.m. in the Former Board of Supervisors Room located on the fourth floor of the Nelson County Courthouse, in Lovingston, Virginia.

Present: Jesse N. Rutherford, East District Supervisor –Chair
Robert G. “Skip” Barton, South District Supervisor – Vice Chair
Thomas D. Harvey, North District Supervisor
Ernie Q. Reed, Central District Supervisor
J. David Parr, West District Supervisor
Candice W. McGarry, County Administrator
Amanda B. Spivey, Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk
Linda K. Staton, Director of Finance and Human Resources
Dr. Amanda Hester, Superintendent of Nelson County Public Schools
Shannon Irvin, Assistant Superintendent
Margaret Clair, School Board Trustee – Central District

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Rutherford called the special meeting to order at 2:03 p.m. with five (5) Supervisors present to establish a quorum.

II. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS WORK SESSION

Mr. Rutherford introduced Mr. Gary Harvey and Mr. Jim Vernon of Architectural Partners and thanked them for being present for the meeting. He then turned the meeting over to Ms. McGarry.

Ms. McGarry welcomed everyone and thanked them for taking time to meet. She noted that Mr. Vernon and Mr. Harvey would run through the Recreation Center concepts presented last December and provide the updated costs of the current concepts. She explained that there would be time to discuss the project vision, priorities and phasing, followed by a discussion of other potential uses of the property and a review of the current debt capacity. Ms. McGarry explained that the property purchase was financed with a note for five years, on a tax-exempt basis, which meant that the County was contemplating using the property for government use. She noted that the current discussion was to use the property for a recreation center and recreation fields. She noted that they could change to taxable financing in the future if they wanted to develop the property for a use other than governmental.

A. Recreation Center Presentation

1. Current Concepts
2. Updated Costs of Current Concepts

Mr. Vernon congratulated the County on the purchase of the Larkin property and noted the potential that property had to serve the County and citizens. He referenced the PowerPoint presentation that had been given to the Board in December of 2021. He noted the cost estimate included on each slide and reported that costs had increased by 12-15% or more. He also noted that as part of their job, they worked with budgets and numbers to make projects work. He explained that the options ranged from anything and everything down to an outdoor pool and support building. He noted there had been six building options previously presented, along with several site options that had been paired down since improvements had been made at the high school/middle school.

Mr. Rutherford commented that the review of the material from December was more for information gathering and noted that the Board could change their minds completely on some items. He noted that they may send Mr. Vernon and Mr. Harvey away with more questions. Ms. McGarry reminded everyone that they were currently working on the comprehensive plan and public engagement sessions. She noted that it was Important to remember that they be receiving feedback within the next month or so and asked that they keep that information in mind when envisioning the recreation center and any other uses for the property.

Mr. Vernon presented Option 1, noting it had anything and everything possible. He listed the amenities to include:

- 8 lane competition pool with play and diving areas
- 4 multi-purpose rooms for meetings, activities, programs and child watch
- Gymnasium with full basketball court and multiple cross courts
- Multi-lane interior walking track, gymnastic
- Gymnastics Room
- Climbing Wall

- Fitness Area
- Free Weights area
- Aerobics room
- Wrestling Team Practice Room
- eSports room
- Rental room with kitchen

He reported that the original estimate was \$30.1 million, which had increased to \$34.6 million.

Mr. Vernon then reviewed Option 2 which was a reduced scope program. He highlighted the amenities noting it had been paired down to:

- 2 Multi-purpose rooms
- Interior pool
- Second floor eliminated
- No indoor walking track
- No climbing wall
- No fitness area
- No free weights area
- No eSports room
- No rental room

He reported that the original cost estimate was \$23.3 million, which had increased to \$26.9 million.

Mr. Vernon then discussed Option 3 as a further reduced program with an exterior pool instead of an interior pool. He noted that the original estimate was \$16.7 million and the updated cost increased to \$19.2 million. He explained that a pool was much like a house, noting it could be customized in any way. He explained that the pool size and offerings had not changed in any of the Options presented.

Mr. Vernon then presented Option 4 as a building for an interior pool and necessary support spaces only. He noted the original cost estimate was \$11.9 million and it had increased to \$13.7 million.

Mr. Vernon provided Option 5 as an exterior competition pool with a support building. He noted the cost had been \$4 million and was now \$4.7 million.

Mr. Vernon then discussed Option 6 which was an exterior pool and support building but also included an inflatable enclosure for year round use of the pool. He noted that this option did not save any money. He explained that the original estimate was \$4.8 million and it had increased to \$5.6 million. He noted that in speaking with a pool consultant, the maintenance for the inflatable cover would be hard to keep up with.

Mr. Vernon noted the three needed items discussed from the beginning were recreational fields, a multi-purpose sports facility and a pool. He explained that the costs just given with the options were for a recreation center only.

Mr. Vernon then discussed site development options, which were costs in addition to the recreation center costs. He presented Site Option 1 which proposed developing a recreation center complex to the north of schools, partially on existing school property and partially on the purchased property adjacent to Route 29. He reminded the Board that there had been some debate during the prior work session on whether the complex should be visible from the road. He then noted that the recreational fields were proposed on purchased property to the south of the schools. He explained that the development of the two sites was originally estimated to cost \$26.3 million and had increased to \$30.2 million. He added that if the Board chose to develop the recreational facility with all of the options along with the all of the proposed recreational fields, they would be looking at a total project cost of about \$64.8 million.

Mr. Vernon mentioned Site Option 2, which was an attempt to put the recreation center and fields all on existing school property, but he felt it was a moot point as the County had added lights to the existing ballfields. He noted that the goal with Site Option 2 at the time was to fit everything on existing property at the time. He explained that Option 3 involved some reconfiguration of the ball fields with use of school property and some private property. Mr. Vernon noted that all of the options were there and any combination the Board chose. He explained that since the property had been purchased, it was a matter of knowing their ability to use the purchase property and they needed to have a discussion on how to move forward.

3. Discussion of Vision, Priorities and Phasing
4. Discussion of Other Uses

Mr. Rutherford noted it was time to look at the vision and priorities.

Mr. Reed asked if the total cost was the building costs plus the field costs. Mr. Vernon confirmed that they were, if they wanted to do both a building and fields. He noted that they could do any range of options for recreation center buildout and as many or few fields as they wanted. Ms. McGarry noted they were high level estimates and once the plans were more defined, they could start fine tuning costs. She noted they could evaluate building material options to save money.

Mr. Rutherford noted Board dreams and noted that the Board should consider who they are trying to have as benefactors. He also pointed out that the need for more housing was a big factor. He asked what could be done about children, noting they needed to retain their pupil population and hopefully have a sustainable population increase in the future. He noted that the Board needed to look at what the County needed. He mentioned the concept of a daycare and whether that would YMCA associated. He noted that could also incorporate recreation. He noted that the youth did not have a lot of recreation options in Nelson and a recreation facility could be centrally located in close proximity to schools. He pointed out that this could be an asset for children and adults. Mr. Rutherford noted the lack of housing inventory in the County. He suggested that the County may want to evaluate land trust participation similar to housing projects in the region. He noted the need to keep housing affordable.

Mr. Vernon interjected that part of the development of the recreation center concepts was based on work with Timmons on a business park development as well.

Mr. Rutherford asked for thoughts from the Board.

Mr. Reed agreed with Mr. Rutherford and Ms. McGarry that the conversation was not so much about the details or specifics, but the goals and what they wanted to achieve with the purchase of the property. Mr. Reed spoke to Mr. Rutherford comments on housing, noting he was not sure to what degree the County wanted to be in real estate development but there were agencies like the Nelson County Community Development Foundation, Habitat for Humanity that the County could partner with. He felt it was most important to focus on immediate needs of the county and the needs of the county going forward. He noted that they needed to consider the demographics and trends, including housing, the age of the population, and goals for the schools. Mr. Reed did not think that the County currently had the ability to staff and facilitate a business park. He thought that the County was at the forefront of having a work at home population. He noted that he was interested in re-envisioning what mixed use might be, something that would include facility services/businesses and housing on one piece of property. He thought they needed to look at each parcel separately and see what best suits the location.

Mr. Barton felt it was time to dive into the details. He stated that the fields were very important. He described what he envisioned as a swimming area: a park for people of Nelson County, where parents and grandparents can take their children after work, a place with trees for shade and grass for kids to play. He felt it was silly to build a fancy structure on Route 29 to show off to rest of world, noting it was for the people of Nelson County. He noted they could have a place for tetherball and horseshoes. He did not think there were currently enough kids to do competitive sports at the high school, so he did not think they needed an 8-lane swimming pool. He felt they needed a few lanes for people to swim laps, and area for kids to have fun in the pool. He noted that an indoor facility would be great, but he was concerned with the costs. He pointed out that in the Winter there were Winter things to do, and in the summer, summer things. Mr. Barton stressed that the County needed a park for children to play together, which would allow for parents to get to know each other. He noted that the Board needed to step forward and do something for the people. He thought that the addition of daycare would be a great option. He felt that this was something that the Board could do, and should do, now.

Mr. Harvey didn't see any of what they were discussing would benefit the people in his district at all. He noted his district's proximity to Waynesboro and other places that it would be hard to get his district involved. He stated that they couldn't just look after one part of the County. Mr. Vernon asked if there was one aspect of the opportunities that would be able to draw them in. Mr. Harvey did not think so. He noted they had so many opportunities that were much closer in Crozet and Waynesboro.

Mr. Parr stated that he agreed with Mr. Barton and disagreed with Mr. Harvey. He felt that with this located at the campus of the high school and middle school, it would be a draw to the North end of the County, particularly if they went with a full build of the facility. He felt that a full build out would attract people to come in and the kids could be on site every day and just walk over after school. He suggested they look into whether a YMCA connection was possible. Mr. Parr noted Mr. Barton's vision of an outdoor pool, and commented that he would love to see that at the old Rockfish school. He felt that it would be a great addition to what they offered to the community there. Mr. Parr felt that the best of both worlds would be to have the recreation center next to the high school and middle school, and the outdoor pool at the old Rockfish school. He noted that was all a matter of funding. He like having the fields

separate from the school fields for Parks and Recreation. He noted that by keeping the fields separate, they wouldn't have to worry about overlapping schedules for field use. He felt that it would provide opportunities by having more for the kids to do in the County, and noted they couldn't overlook the added benefit of attracting residents to the County. He pointed out the fact that the County had a huge advantage of internet service availability. He noted that people could have jobs in D.C. and live in Nelson County and be able to work from home. He noted that if they could attract people to Nelson County with the type of recreation facility and fields they were considering, it might help improve the student population and the overall population of the County.

Ms. Clair noted had questions regarding the cost of operating a recreation facility and how they would be taken into consideration. She noted that the build costs were one aspect and the operational costs were another. She stated she was happy to get more recreational facilities in Nelson. She noted she was also glad to hear that the Board was looking at the future of the County in terms of population. She pointed out that UVA's population numbers for the County looked flat through 2050. She noted that housing was a challenge and there were other things that could be done to make housing better and more accessible. She commented that she was always willing to work as part of Nelson County Community Development Foundation (NCCDF) collaboratively with the County on land trust opportunities. She noted that from a school perspective, she wanted to sustain the school population and keep the quality of schools high, even when facing challenges like the pandemic. She thought recreation was an easy way to start use of the new property.

Dr. Hester thanked the Board for the opportunity to be a part of the conversation. She noted that she was one of the people who was drawn to live and work in Nelson. She said it was exciting to discuss the potential of a recreation center and wanted to hear more about next steps. She noted they could have the potential to draw in events as they were situated between two areas with larger populations. She indicated that they Schools also had some views and ideas for use of the land at the Schools and asked how that may collaborate and mesh with the County. She noted they were considering an outdoor agriculture lab with cows, goats and chickens and expressed the importance of planning together for the best placement on the property. She also pointed out the advantages and services that could be offered by large recreation facility for older citizens as well as the little ones. She noted that the schools were currently battling an afterschool care issue, so having accessible and affordable services to families was a great thing. She noted these services could bring more families to Nelson. She agreed that the housing piece was an obstacle, but they could draw and build on that if the other pieces are in place. Dr. Hester thought it would be really need to see how they would be able to do it and how it would be sustained.

Ms. McGarry commented that when a work group previously convened to discuss having a large recreation facility, Mr. Greg Mullins, NCHS Athletic Director, provided some good insight on needs. She noted that Mr. Mullins thought the schools could have a competitive swim team and be able to host some swim meets if they had a competition pool. She did not know if that thought had changed since that discussion. She agreed with Mr. Barton's comment that it seemed the competitive teams at the High School were struggling to have participants. Dr. Hester noted it would be good to have Mr. Mullins back in the mix to provide insight.

Mr. Jerry West, Director of Parks and Recreation, indicated that his office received phone calls all the time regarding the currently fields that the recreation leagues are using. He noted that none of the fields currently in use were County owned. He explained that they paid an annual rental/donation fee for the use of Rockfish Ruritan Park. He explained that Soccer and Basketball were played at Tye River Elementary and they had basketball at Rockfish Elementary. He noted that they used the Nelson Center for flag football. He reported that the Dixie fields were not currently in use but they continued to maintain them. Mr. West noted that if the County building a big recreation center and fields at central location, it would still be good for the kids to have practice during the week in their own area of the county and then hold the games at the facilities. He wanted to still make it convenient for families. He pointed out that the draw of complex like the one proposed would allow for hosting tournaments from all over. He noted that if they located the center right on Route 29, it could help draw opportunities to Nelson. Mr. West reminded the group that they could scale the indoor facilities in any way they wanted. He noted that something new was always better than what the County currently had. He felt that a recreation facility would raise property values and could increase the quality of living. He reminded the group that this could be start of something big and may attract businesses to the area.

Ms. McGarry noted the comprehensive document put together by Mr. West which outlined the current facilities in use. She noted that he had included some new proposed outdoor facilities and the operating requirements along with potential revenue opportunities from those new facilities. She suggested that everyone take time to review and digest in the information provided. Mr. West noted that the projected revenues were based on the average of other facilities operating in the area. He noted that if the County did open a facility, they would need to revisit the fees to catch up to the current standards at that time.

Ms. Clair wanted to keep in their conversation the need for facilities close to home. She thought that keeping smaller things in each area like spot parks was important. She pointed out the skate park at RVCC. She also noted efforts of the Heritage Center and Fleetwood. She didn't want to take away from the work of the other facilities. Mr. West noted his focus was more on the athletics side but indicated that shelters and playgrounds were important as well. He pointed out that people were always looking for somewhere to take their kids.

Ms. Maureen Kelley, Director of Economic Development and Tourism, explained that an amenity like a recreation center was an important part of recruiting businesses. She noted that businesses asked about workforce, the schools and the amenities in the area. She reported that Virginia Tourism had sports marketing programs that Nelson had not been able to tap into because there were no facilities to host events. She noted that Virginia Tourism had a hard time finding places to host events in Virginia. Mr. Rutherford noted that South Hill was known for hosting sporting events and was still a small town. Ms. Kelley noted that Lynchburg also had a great sports tourism program.

Ms. Irvin noted that the discussion was exciting. She explained that they had a lot of interest in a wrestling program but struggled to start a program due to the lack of space for it. She thought it would be nice to have a facility within walking distance of the schools so that students could participate in activities there. She asked if the footprint of the project infringed on cross country track. She also noted the Agriculture program's interest in starting a land lab with live animals. Mr. Vernon indicated that it may impact cross country trails. He noted the importance of everyone being at the table for the discussion and working together. Dr. Hester noted that there could also be an opportunity for afterschool jobs for students at a recreation facility. Mr. Rutherford noted that the topography allowed for flexibility for development on either side of the property.

Ms. Staton noted the list of options and asked about a timeline for completion of the options. She felt it was important to know the timeframes they were working with so they may pick whether to begin a recreation center build or outdoor recreation. She suggested that the Board look at short term goals that could be achieved while other things are in process. She explained that if it could take three years to complete the project, some of the rising high school students would graduate by the time it was finished and may not have an opportunity to enjoy the recreation facility unless they choose to move back.

Ms. McGarry noted the goal was to develop the overall vision so they could begin to talk about phasing of the project. Mr. Barton noted they now had a great piece of land and they didn't have to do everything all at once. Ms. McGarry noted that they needed to have a vision for where things would go on the site so they could utilize the property in the best way possible. Mr. Barton believed that an outdoor swimming pool would energize the community. Ms. McGarry noted that if the Board decided to start with an outdoor pool, they could choose the best location and then determine where to place other facilities around that.

Ms. Spivey referenced the information provided by Mr. West, noting that the Board would find it helpful. She felt that athletic fields were an immediate need and noted that when they had a lot of rain, they weren't able to use certain fields. She noted that there weren't enough fields for teams to practice. She thought it would be good to get feedback from the Comprehensive Plan and see what the community wanted to have in Nelson.

Dr. Hester asked if the fields would have turf or grass. Ms. McGarry noted that it had not been defined yet. Mr. Vernon noted that the field costs were calculated with having grass fields.

Ms. Kelley pointed out that local businesses were embracing outdoor recreational trends. She felt it was important to note that Blue Mountain was talking about having volleyball and dodgeball. She noted that Wood Ridge was looking at wiffle ball and other activities. She explained that Mr. West had been really great about creating partnerships with businesses. Ms. McGarry noted the driving range addition at Wood Ridge. Ms. Kelley reported that Wintergreen had revamped their recreational assets. Mr. West noted programming collaborations are great relationships to have and very unique to Nelson.

Mr. Rutherford noted the need for collaboration of certain concepts to include people from Recreation, Athletics, the School Division and possibly an outside person with a sports tourism background. He thought it would help the needs and future uses. He noted they should consider whether the high school had ambitions of a swim team in future. He suggested they look at what other communities have done when adding a swimming pool. He pointed out that the housing piece was another thing that could easily add \$10-\$15 million in costs to add infrastructure like water, sewer and roads. He noted that if they were to do housing, they needed to think about where it might go on the property. He guessed that 80% of the property could be developable for residential housing.

Mr. Rutherford noted the business side as mentioned by Mr. Reed and Mr. Parr, and reminded the group that they had demographics with certain needs. He pointed out that the County had an aging population and asked to consider what facilities they might need. He also mentioned the notion of a business mixed

use capacity and whether that might be able to exist on the property. He suggested they all get together and determine the highest and best use of the property for fields and then work backwards from there.

Ms. Clair felt it would good to expand upon some of the work Mr. West had done and look at assets available Countywide and what they could offer to recreation. She noted that RVCC had a walking trail, playground and a skate park. She felt that they may have room for a pool. She noted that she could take out the field at the Nelson Center to put in a pool. She mentioned the idea of putt-putt golf or a grant to fund a playground at the Nelson Center and noted that she was happy to look into it. Ms. Clair suggested that they look at what was already in place and see what could be complimentary. Mr. Rutherford suggested that the Schools determine their stakeholders and Ms. Kelley could determine a sports tourism person. Mr. Rutherford noted that the most important part was getting input on what the community wants. He suggested that they may need more direct participation than just the comprehensive plan.

Ms. Kelley reported that a Request for Proposals (RFP) was issued for outdoor recreation plan but they quickly learned they couldn't afford the plan with the money they had been awarded. She noted they did still have the scope of work information which may be a good starting point. Ms. Kelley asked if there was a Recreation chapter in the Comprehensive Plan. Ms. McGarry and Mr. Rutherford did not think that Recreation had its own chapter. Ms. McGarry noted that any relevant studies had been provided to the consultants but not the Outdoor Recreation Plan response. She said that if it might be helpful, they could look at providing that information also.

Mr. Barton asked what would be the greatest benefit to the people of the County who need it most. He agreed that the Board needed to be thoughtful but he thought it was time to move forward with a park like facility with swimming available for the people of Nelson County. He suggested they find the best location on property to have it and do it. He commented that he was tired of talking about it, they needed to do it. Mr. Rutherford noted the land was now owned by the County.

Ms. McGarry pointed out that the Board really couldn't reach a consensus at present and be able to consider the results from the Comprehensive Plan. She noted that the Board may be a few months out from having a meeting to set priorities. She pointed out that they would then be able to move forward with those agreed upon priorities. Mr. Rutherford noted the initial meeting was early in the process and pointed out that much had been accomplished in the past year. He felt it was important to allow the sports conversation to take place between Ms. Kelley, Mr. West, the Schools and County staff. Mr. Rutherford suggested having site visits to view the property.

Ms. McGarry asked about next steps and suggested possibly meeting November for another work group session. She noted they would have some feedback from the Comprehensive Plan and indicated that some of the discussions and site visits could happen in the meantime. Mr. Rutherford suggested that they should set a goal to make some decisions in November. He asked the Board's thoughts on empowering a sports committee. The Board was had consensus for a sports committee. Mr. Rutherford suggested that the sports committee be comprised of Recreation, Ms. Kelley, representatives from the School Division, Architectural Partners, Ms. McGarry and a staff person of her choice, and possibly one Board member. Mr. Rutherford noted that Mr. West would serve as the sports committee chair. Mr. Parr asked about the sports committee also having conversations with the leaders at the Nelson Center, Heritage Center, Fleetwood and RVCC. Mr. Rutherford agreed noting that Mr. West's report was very helpful.

Mr. Rutherford asked if Timmons would be needed. Mr. Vernon noted it may depend on use of property if they wanted to consider a business park in the future. He pointed out that the purchase of the property allowed for development in phases. Mr. Rutherford noted that the business park shouldn't be taken off but it was not a priority in phase 1. Mr. Reed noted they would receive data from the Comprehensive Plan during the first week of October and then a joint work session with the Planning Commission later that month. He noted they could have some preliminary work done and pick a few dates in November to meet. Mr. Rutherford noted that they needed to have input from the public. He asked how they could engage the public. He suggested putting out a survey and encouraging the public to provide input at Board meetings. Mr. Reed noted the vision of having everyone present at the meeting that day meant they were steps ahead where he thought they would be. The Board thanked Ms. McGarry for bringing the group together to discuss the future. Mr. Harvey noted that he would like to participate on the sports committee and the Board was in agreement.

Mr. Rutherford asked if they needed to engage with Timmons. Ms. McGarry and Mr. Vernon noted they could reach out to Timmons when needed. Mr. Rutherford suggested that they have some 2x2 Board tours of the property.

Mr. Gary Harvey of Architectural Partners also suggested visiting other localities to see what their programming looks like. He noted that Danville had the slogan "Destination Recreation" to use recreation to draw people in. Mr. Rutherford and Ms. McGarry welcomed ideas and suggestions from Architectural Partners.

5. Review of Current Debt Capacity

Ms. McGarry reviewed the debt capacity for 2023-2024. She noted that a study had not been done to determine operational costs. She explained that the Board made some decisions which provided for a \$57 million debt capacity as of 2023-2024. She reminded that Board that some approximated amounts had been committed - \$3.9 for the Social Services/Building Inspections/Planning & Zoning building, and then \$2.6 million for the Larkin property purchase which was a total of about \$6.5 million so far. She noted there was a balance of about \$50,500,000. She reported that some items looming in future were the school roof and brick project. She then noted that some funds had been committed by both Boards to cover those project costs but they needed to meet with Ms. Irvin and Dr. Hester to see where things stand and if the Board needed to help bridge the financial gap on the project. She further noted that they may not need any financing to complete the roof and brick project but that was to be determined.

Mr. Reed asked if it was possible to look at ballpark operational costs that could be factored in. Mr. Vernon noted it could be tied in, once the options were narrowed down. Mr. Rutherford suggested looking at partnerships with YMCA for childcare. He stated that there may be some staffing issues that the School Division was more familiar with. Dr. Hester noted that YMCA was experiencing similar issues with staffing as elsewhere. Ms. Clair noted that had been looking at having a Boys and Girls Club at RVCC. Ms. McGarry noted she would work to determine who to contact regarding those partnership opportunities.

Mr. Rutherford suggested starting to work on the surveys to outreach to the community. Mr. West noted they would start working on the survey and have paper copies and digital copies. He pointed out that they had a large data base of people to reach out to for distribution. Mr. Rutherford also suggested sending them to the Schools for distribution.

III. OTHER BUSINESS (AS PRESENTED)

The Board had no other business to discuss.

IV. ADJOURNMENT

At 3:26 p.m., Mr. Reed made a motion to adjourn and Mr. Barton seconded the motion. The Board approved the motion without objection and the meeting adjourned.