

Virginia:

AT A CONTINUED MEETING of the Nelson County Board of Supervisors at 5:00 p.m. in the Thomas D. Harvey Meeting Room located on the fourth floor of the Nelson County Courthouse, in Lovingston, Virginia.

Present: Dr. Jessica Ligon, South District Supervisor - Chair
Jesse N. Rutherford, East District Supervisor – Vice Chair
Ernie Q. Reed, Central District Supervisor
David Parr, West District Supervisor
Cameron Lenahan, North District Supervisor
Candice W. McGarry, County Administrator
Amanda B. Spivey, Administrative Assistant/Deputy Clerk
Grace E. Mawyer, Director of Finance and Human Resources

Absent: None.

I. CALL TO ORDER

Dr. Ligon called the meeting to order at 5:03 p.m., with all five (5) Supervisors present to establish a quorum. She announced that they would be rearranging the agenda order slightly to accommodate guests.

II. 2/25 WORK SESSION FOLLOW-UP

This subject was discussed later in the meeting.

III. FY27 BUDGET WORK SESSION – AGENCY REVIEW

A. Jefferson-Madison Regional Library – David Plunkett

Jefferson-Madison Regional Library (JMRL) Director David Plunkett addressed the Board and introduced Aleta Childs, the County’s appointed trustee on the JMRL Board and its current president.

Mr. Plunkett reported that the County’s first library service was located on Front Street in the former Presbyterian church, where the Nelson County Garden Club curated the collection with donated books honoring servicemen from World War II during the 1940s and 1950s. He stated that in 1972, after new Virginia legislation enabled regional library systems, the Nelson County Board of Supervisors chose to join with neighbors for better funding and resources, leading to the opening of the Nelson Memorial Branch in the same church building. Mr. Plunkett reported that the Grow Nelson Library Organization won the 2021 Virginia Library Association George Mason Award for distinguished library support and advocacy. Mr. Plunkett noted that Ms. Childs as a member of Grow Nelson. Mr. Plunkett stated that in 2022, JMRL was named Virginia Library Association’s Library of the Year; in 2023, the Regional Friends of the Library received the Virginia Library Association’s Friends of the Library of the Year award.

Mr. Plunkett reported that in the 1980s, the Chamber of Commerce and Board of Supervisors built the original structure at the current site because the old church could no longer serve the growing needs; he reported that funding from the sale of *Torn Land*, a book about Hurricane Camille, supported the new library’s construction. He stated that the 4,300-square-foot library opened in May 1988 and was dedicated to the memory of the Nelson County victims of Hurricane Camille, serving as a lasting memorial to the dreams, dedication, and hard work of the people of Nelson County.

Mr. Plunkett said the renovations, completed in 2021, blended the community atmosphere with advanced information technology for Nelson County. He showed a photo of Branch Manager Yulita Ellis demonstrating the laser cutter and engraver in the library’s makerspace and business center. Mr. Plunkett said the makerspace was funded mainly by Grow Nelson Library and features book and film scanners, a laminator, a large scale poster printer, and VHS-to-digital conversion. He stated that in the same year, JMRL added a hold pickup locker to the renovated building, extending service hours and allowing patrons to pick up holds outside regular hours. He said that using a library card and the website, patrons can place holds for pickup at the Nelson Locker and receive email notifications when they are ready.

Mr. Plunkett stated that these efforts show how JMRL has worked to bring library services to the entirety of the County, not just in the physical building in Lovingston, including support for two “story walks” at the Rockfish Valley Foundation Natural History Center and the Rockfish Valley Trail. He said staff

changes out the story walk books so families can enjoy reading while exploring the outdoors. Mr. Plunkett noted that there was also a story walk at the Piney River Trail but it needed to be updated. Mr. Plunkett said that Grow Nelson Library and JMRL also partnered to provide an outreach sprinter van known as “Violet,” which was used in making school visits, refilling book kiosks, and attending outreach events around the County. He noted that another JMRL-Grow Nelson library collaboration opened a new kiosk in Nellysford in 2024, which he described as a Red Box for library books and materials, and he reported that there is no additional cost to the County for this kiosk. He noted that holds could now also be picked up at the kiosk in Nellysford.

Mr. Plunkett reported that a major recent addition was the bookmobile service. He noted his thanks to the Board of Supervisors. He explained that the bookmobile service, which began in Fall 2023, operates every other Friday on two routes. He said one route travels down 151, stopping at the Rockfish Valley Community Center and the clubhouse at Stoney Creek, with the other route’s visits consisting of Gladstone, Piney River, Roseland, and Faber, with the bookmobile carrying its own collection and with the ability to bring any of the half-million books available from all eight JMRL branches.

Mr. Plunkett reported that in the last fiscal year, Nelson County patrons checked out over 75,000 items; about 25,000 of those were virtual items such as eBooks, and of the roughly 50,000 physical checkouts, nearly 40% came from other JMRL branches—facilitated by daily delivery or pickup at other branches. He said there are about 28,500 physical items in the Lovingston library, checked out over 50,000 times last year, resulting in nearly two checkouts per book, which is a good turnover rate. He noted that Nelson County library cardholders have access to the full regional physical collection of about half a million items, and around 40% of checkouts came from outside Nelson’s library. He added that cardholders can also check out about 350,000 digital library items.

Mr. Plunkett reported that last fiscal year, Nelson Memorial had over 40,000 visitors, more than 1,600 public computer sessions, 3,000 Wi-Fi users, 483 items checked out from the pickup locker onsite, 480 public meetings, 122 staff programs attended by 1,900 people, and a 260% increase in annual summer reading program participation over the prior year. Mr. Plunkett said last year’s regional circulation was nearly 1.89 million items, just below 2001’s 1.91 million. He attributed the earlier high in 2001 to the way cassettes and CDs were counted individually even though they were part of a set, and noting that digital checkouts are now included in totals. He reported that usage trends remain strong.

Mr. Plunkett reviewed the wide variety of resources available:

- Books and other informational resources, in all formats
 - Other media, both physical and digital
 - JMRL curated online databases for research, car repair, foreign language learning, local newspapers, business info, genealogical research, and consumer reports.
 - Digitization support
 - Health literacy kits
 - Book Club kits
 - Toy library
 - Reader’s advisory
 - STEM materials and programming
 - Early literacy programming
 - Lifelong learning programming
 - Teen programming
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- Digital inclusion support and programming
 - Digital navigation and support
 - Workforce development support
 - Public computer use
 - Printing and fax services
 - Public WiFi
 - Public meeting rooms
 - Notary service
 - Free interlibrary loan with UVA
 - Music garden
 - Upcoming Nelson Memorial Seed Library

- Blood pressure monitoring stations
- 1000 Books Before Kindergarten challenge
- 100 Books Before Graduation challenge
- Library of Things (STEM kits, WiFi hotspots to check out, bread making kit, foods of the world, even a ukelele!)
- Virginia State Park passes to check out
- Makerspace/Digital Media Lab
- Cooling and warming centers, and other social fabric resources
- Streaming media with Kanopy
- Ask-a-Librarian chat
- Discovery Museum Passes
- Online homework help (HelpNow database)

He noted that the library receives positive feedback for being a peaceful, well-equipped environment with helpful, knowledgeable, and courteous staff. He showed examples of the summer reading tote bags and said they were very popular and drove increased participation in the program.

Mr. Plunkett discussed the budget request being brought to the Board. He reported that most of Nelson County's library expenses are for the salaries of the staff working at Nelson Memorial Library. He noted that the building belonged to the Nelson County and its ongoing facilities costs are in the County's budget, separate from the library budget. He indicated that additional library expenses included a share of bookmobile. He noted that the County's share of regional costs, calculated by circulation averages equaled 4.43 percent, which include administrative, technical, IT, and regional reference services. He stated that all books and materials are funded through state aid, with JMRL's being the second highest in Virginia; this year, that totaled \$1.1 million. He noted that equipment, including all IT hardware, is paid for by JMRL; all programming is funded by the Regional Friends of the Library through biannual book sales, with regionalization providing cost savings and greater state support. He mentioned that state aid is available for non-regional library systems but at a much smaller level.

Mr. Plunkett reported that the current fiscal year's \$11.3 million flows in and out of JMRL, with \$9.6 million coming from the five participating jurisdictions and most of it going to salaries and benefits at \$7.7 million and \$2 million to operate the regional library system. Mr. Lenahan asked if the County paid the employees at the Nelson Memorial Library. Mr. Plunkett explained that Nelson Memorial Library staff are JMRL employees. He said the \$1.1 million has not been fully funded by the state since 2001, which was the only year it was fully funded; if the biennium being discussed now goes through, it will be only 5% short of full funding—compared to about 60% underfunded 10 years ago. He stated that the local library collection's value is \$428,000, with total JMRL books and materials valued at \$6.8 million. He reported that Nelson readers used \$673,000 in materials last year. He said the total value of library use for Nelson residents—including circulation, program attendance, meeting room use, and technology—was \$1.1 million, yielding a \$2.84 return on investment for every dollar spent last fiscal year. He said the County's regional cost share was 4.28% for FY27, with \$327,000 for local operations and \$7,800 for bookmobile service. He cited the main drivers of cost increases as personnel, especially healthcare, which rose over 15% for the second year (after a 30% increase the year before), and a 5% pay scale adjustment and a local 2% raise for eligible staff.

Mr. Plunkett said the JMRL strategic implementation plan is available online (jmrl.org/future), with the library board's direct goals for library staff. He explained that the state mandates that libraries have a five-year plan, and the library system is preparing to address new technologies, such as AI, as community members come to the library for guidance—and as with previous technology waves such as personal computers and cell phones, library staff will help patrons learn and adapt. Mr. Plunkett concluded by stating that Nelson County's Comprehensive Plan recognizes the library partnership as an ongoing strategy to meet the needs of the community through quality services; after 50 years of collaboration with JMRL, he looks forward to another 50 years ahead.

Ms. McGarry asked if JMRL follows the Charlottesville City pay and benefits structure.

Mr. Plunkett responded that JMRL contracts with the City for benefits such as healthcare and retirement, but JMRL has its own salary scale as it could not afford Charlottesville's pay scale. He noted that the raise for staff is 2%, but the budget includes a 5% increase to the pay scale from the bottom to the top. He said they had a salary study done three years ago, which revealed that JMRL was 20% to 25% below market value across the board, so they have been pushing that pay scale for hiring the last few years. He said at the Nelson Memorial branch, one of the increases is in retirement because staff is crossing a threshold into 10 years of service, which is a better retirement package.

Ms. McGarry asked if the 5% increase in the pay scale gets them to market value.

Mr. Plunkett responded that it gets them to about 10% below market value, and he doesn't expect that they can come back every year and ask for a 5% increase to the pay scale—so they will reevaluate and perform more salary work next fiscal year.

Mr. Lenahan asked if Nelson's operating costs were \$327,000 with \$110,000 for additional services.

Mr. Plunkett confirmed those totals and said the \$110,000 was for support of the regional library system.

Dr. Ligon commented that she is very thankful for JMRL's presence here, noting that Nelson has a large homeschool population—and the services the library provides such as midweek reading groups, are appreciated by those families.

Mr. Plunkett mentioned that their circulation numbers are going to be skewed going into next year because beginning in the current fiscal year, they turned on automatic renewals so patrons can renew them twice as long as no one is waiting for them.

Mr. Reed commented that the meeting rooms are fabulous.

Mr. Plunkett credited Nelson County for that, stating that the renovation of the building provided a lot of flexibility, with accommodations for a large-scale meeting or just a few people.

Mr. Parr asked if they had an update on the repairs from the incident where a truck clipped the corner of the building.

Mr. Plunkett responded that the last he had heard, they were waiting on some contract information.

Ms. McGarry said staff has contacted the company to see when they can start the work, and now they are just waiting for that local firm to become available.

B. Region Ten – Shannon Wright

Ms. Shannon Wright, Senior Director for Region Ten's Rural and Community-Based Services, addressed the Board. Ms. Wright reported that Nelson has three main facilities: the Nelson Counseling Center, the Horizon Center, and the Town Creek Assisted Living Facility. She said the Horizon Center is a psychosocial rehab program next to the clinic that supports adults with serious mental illness, focusing on social and daily living skills, and the clinic provides most of the outpatient services in Nelson. She stated that the clinic offers case management for mental health and developmental disabilities for both children and adults, outpatient services for all populations including those with substance use disorders, and an Assertive Community Treatment Team for outreach to adults with serious mental illness.

Ms. Wright reported that there is significant collaboration with the Town Creek Assisted Living Facility and that medication management is provided by nurse practitioners and psychiatrists for those needing psychotropic medications. She said additional nursing support from Charlottesville is available for clients requiring medication assistance, such as monthly or biweekly injections. Ms. Wright said Town Creek is their newest service, with 60 beds and 40 staff members—helping many residents leave state hospitals and transition into the community, with the goal being for eligible individuals to live independently and eventually move into their own apartments. She noted that support continues for those transitioning from Town Creek into independent living in Nelson or nearby areas.

Ms. Wright reported that Nelson has also supported their Opioid Abatement Authority (OAA) grant for several budget cycles, which has helped expand the crisis continuum out of Charlottesville and perform outreach in the County with harm reduction kits, fentanyl test strips, and Narcan to help individuals stay alive, with the goal of eventual recovery and cessation of substance use. She stated that Region Ten partners with the County's recovery court, which has quickly become successful compared to other localities, with staff supporting participants. Ms. Wright stated that Nelson residents can access additional Region Ten services not based in Nelson, including the crisis continuum and emergency services team, which perform crisis evaluations to determine the need for hospitalization. She added that there is a crisis stabilization program at Old Lynchburg Road as a hospital alternative.

Ms. Wright reported that their OAA grant supports the upcoming 23-hour chair program, which is awaiting licensure and designed for individuals in crisis, including those under the influence, allowing time to determine if hospitalization is needed. She said the 23-hour program provides support and

evaluation as clients recover from crises, allowing for safety planning and discharging to home rather than a hospital. She reported that Nelson County residents can also use the Moore Center or Women's Treatment Center, both 30-day residential programs for substance use disorders.

Ms. Wright reported that in the previous year, 1,702 Nelson residents received some type of service from Region Ten, totaling over \$5.4 million in services, with those numbers contributing to the calculation of the budget request along with the value of services provided to residents and the percentage of service cost and population relative to the agency.

Ms. McGarry asked if that was a new way of calculating what they are requesting from each of the localities, as she did not recall seeing it before.

Ms. Wright responded that this is an existing formula, with a fine point on the funding balance the state is emphasizing and apparently closely watching. She explained that per the Code of Virginia, the state dollars cannot exceed more than 90% of the budget of community services boards such as Region Ten—so they are being careful to meet that 10% across the six localities they serve.

Dr. Ligon stated that at face value, the FY27 request quite a jump.

Ms. Wright agreed.

Dr. Ligon asked how many people placed in Nelson County were actually from the County.

Ms. Wright responded that not every client is originally from Nelson County, because of the contract with the state for Town Creek and the push to transfer people—but not everybody stays forever either.

Mr. Rutherford asked if all of drug court participants go to Region Ten.

Ms. Wright confirmed that they are the treatment providers for the recovery court.

Mr. Lenahan noted the fact that Greene's allocation is \$106,000 with a population of 21,000; Nelson is \$150,000 with a population just under 15,000; Louisa pays \$145,000 but has a population of 41,000. He asked if those should correspond.

Ms. Wright responded that it is part of the formula, which is not based solely on population but also factors in the cost of service category for each jurisdiction.

Mr. Lenahan noted that Louisa had \$137 per beneficiary, whereas Nelson had \$234 per beneficiary—so Nelson is paying \$100 more per beneficiary than Louisa is.

Ms. McGarry commented that there does seem to be a discrepancy that she has not yet figured out. She also noted that the 1,702 total clients does not match up with beneficiaries in PB-2 of their information.

Ms. Wright responded that the beneficiaries table was one of the only things that was not reviewed with the Region Ten fiscal director, so they don't match because she thought they were measuring different things.

Ms. McGarry also asked about line 22 at the bottom of PB-1, which shows a surplus for FY27 of \$178,022. Mr. Lenahan noted that FY25 shows a surplus of \$36 million. Ms. Wright commented that she did not know of any time that they had a \$36 million surplus.

Dr. Ligon noted that they had helped 1,700 people and asked how the numbers were derived for the local shares report. Ms. Wright clarified that residential services are calculated on a "bed day" basis versus Horizon House, which calculates by hours, with the units differing for different services.

Mr. Rutherford stated that they need to fix the PB-1 numbers that were showing the surplus, as they don't seem to align. Mr. Lenahan asked for additional information on how the per beneficiary number is determined on PB-2. Ms. McGarry asked if the beneficiaries were increasing, whether Region Ten would be able to report the areas where the increases were expected.

Mr. Lenahan reiterated the marked difference between Nelson and Greene.

Ms. Wright explained that the biggest difference is that Nelson has a greater number of services than Greene, even if they take Town Creek out of the mix. She noted that Region Ten provided \$2.2 million

of services to Greene last year, with the number for Nelson at \$5.4 million, and they serve far more people here than in Greene.

Dr. Ligon noted that the grand total is not that different, with 1,755 for Greene and 1,702 for Nelson, just the cost is different. She asked if they have clinics in Greene as well.

Ms. Wright responded that they just have the clinics, with no day program and nothing like Horizon House, so the cost of services provided would be much less. She also explained that the return on investment listed is for the County—so for every \$1 they spend, they get \$25 in services.

Mr. Lenahan asked what they could do to get down to the \$160,000 range. Ms. McGarry asked if Region Ten were to not receive the amount they were asking for in funding, how they would address that programmatically.

Ms. Wright responded that they will continue as they always do, and where it gets challenging is a year from now when there are significant Medicaid cuts and additional administrative hurdles from those recipients of Medicaid. She emphasized that state money is their highest revenue stream, followed by fee for services provided and billed, and the latter half of FY27 could be quite challenging—particularly for clients. She noted that Region Ten was the safety net provider and they would continue to provide services as best they could. She said they would continue to run a lean operation, as they always did.

Mr. Rutherford asked if the State had indicated how much of the Medicaid issue they were resolving. Ms. Wright noted that she had not heard, but she was not sure how much they could resolve. She said the very first thing to go would likely be Medicaid expansion.

The Board had no further questions for Ms. Wright.

Ms. Wright responded that she would return with clarifications on the surplus and the difference in services being rendered with that per capita and how those numbers are generated per beneficiary. She also stated that she would provide a definition of “beneficiaries” and where programmatically they are projecting an increase in beneficiaries.

C. Nelson County Community Development Foundation – Margaret Clair

Ms. Clair stated that the Nelson County Community Development Foundation (NCCDF) is requesting additional funds this year, primarily to hire another full-time staff member to address succession planning and manage ongoing work. Ms. Clair said she could review the letter to discuss recent activities, noting that the organization has served as Nelson’s housing organization for approximately 40 years, beginning with an indoor plumbing initiative.

Ms. Clair reported that the NCCDF initially participated in the HUD home program and continues to receive HUD home funds through the Director’s Consortium of the Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC), currently about \$85,000 annually. She indicated that was all program money and noted that only 10% of these funds can be used for operating costs, with the remainder primarily supporting rehabilitation work. She said the funds have been used to create housing through rental development or for first-time homebuyers, although she has not yet completed a first-time homebuyer project with these funds.

Ms. Clair reported that four apartments are under development in Roseland, noting the project will total approximately \$800,000, not including land costs, since the lot is already owned. She said the project is nearly complete, with electricity installation pending and plans to install septic systems and finalize construction soon, aiming for completion by April. She reported that she is working to lease these units, which will become the 12th through 15th rental properties owned and managed by NCCDF, most of which were built, or purchased and renovated by George Kreiger in previous years. She stated that assets include six apartments in Shipman, two single-family homes and four apartments in Roseland on St. James Place, and single-family homes in Arrington, Massies Mill, and Gladstone.

Ms. Clair reported that grant writing efforts have increased this year to secure additional funding for rehabilitation projects. She stated that each rehab typically helps one or two family members remain in their home for an additional 10 years, with projects such as roof repairs, ramps, bathroom modifications, or foundation corrections, with the goal of keeping costs around \$10,000 per project. She said they complete as many projects as possible with the \$80,000 in available funds and supplemental grants. She said they also collaborated with the Fluvanna-Louisa Housing Foundation to obtain the Older Americans Home Modification grant, which contains much more stringent guidelines, such as the requirement to not spending more than

\$5,000. She said they were working through it and would have to complete 27 projects over two and a half years. She noted that they were not getting much money from an administrative perspective from that grant.

Ms. Clair stated that the organization is also completing rehabilitations, while progressing on the St. James Place Apartments. She reported that NCCDF was overseeing the Renaissance Ridge project, with home construction expected to begin late summer or early fall and homes available for purchase in early 2027. She reported that she obtained a \$400,000 Virginia housing loan to subsidize mortgages for 20 of those Renaissance Ridge homes and hoped to assist as many families as possible, depending on eligibility. She noted she was also working with a land trust. She said that additional funding sources and partnerships are being explored to make the homes more affordable.

Ms. Clair stated that the High School House project is progressing well, with plans to relocate it to one of their Arrington lots and on its foundation by the end of May. Ms. McGarry asked if NCCDF planned to do another house project in the future. She noted that it was not in the request but it was showing on the County's spreadsheet that it was a change from the current fiscal year. Ms. Clair said unless NCCDF hires another capable staff member, completing more than one project every two years may not be feasible. She noted that she did not include this in the request because by project completion, it would be the end of the year and costs would approach a couple hundred thousand dollars. She mentioned that NCCDF has three additional lots available but she did not want to overextend them financially.

Ms. McGarry said Ms. Clair had not submitted the family assistance program as a request, but she had indicated that she may be able to do that again if the Board desired.

Ms. Clair responded that they probably could if the County wanted them to keep doing it, and the person managing that, Georgia Brown, is in her 70s and works two days a week. She noted that Ms. Brown had been doing this work for MACAA and has a lot of those contacts, as well as the ability to supplement individuals' funding with other support such as church contributions. She emphasized that the NCCDF would be willing to keep doing this, but MACAA is back in the County and apparently has funding.

Ms. McGarry asked if the new NCCDF position could handle those duties.

Ms. Clair responded that they could. She said she has been getting a lot of help from a contractor who has been working with the NCCDF on the Renaissance Ridge project, and that person has been handling social media and blog postings as well as working on their donor database. Ms. Clair said she would like to work on a matching grant with the Perry Foundation and reach out to both current and prospective supporters. She noted that they had done a first-time homebuyers class at the Nelson Center last spring, and many people in the County—particularly those under 80% AMI—do not think there are opportunities for them. She added that upcoming blog postings would focus on the costs involved in buying a house and on home ownership maintenance costs, noting that now that the housing vouchers are gone, she needs more marketing expertise. Ms. Clair explained that the new position would help with marketing and grants.

Mr. Reed asked what the NCCDF five-year strategic plan looks like.

Ms. Clair responded that there is nothing on paper yet, but it would likely be more of the same efforts—dependent in part on how the Lovington Heights planning project proceeds. She added that once the Larkin property water and sewer is determined, they could possibly pick up on that same idea and locate some housing there.

She said she would like to see more development in the Lovington corridor, given transportation barriers, access to a grocery store, the library, and agencies like Region Ten is more possible if someone is within walking distance; sidewalks will also help. She stated that she would also like to do a set of duplexes in every little neighborhood, with areas like Gladstone or Schuyler next, and the Foundation would like to find a little piece of land where they could put six apartments as well as working with the land trust. Ms. Clair emphasized that density is the key to affordability, and there are not many places where people want that.

Mr. Lenahan asked if the \$25,000 for Nelson County High School house project was to purchase the house from the high school. Ms. Clair responded that it was half of the price.

Mr. Lenahan asked what the sale price of the house would be.

Ms. Clair responded that it depends on several factors including the buyer, but it could easily be under \$200,000. She noted that they could put a soft second on the land, which drops the price immediately but would not require the buyer get a loan for that much. She noted that in the old days, NCCDF and other nonprofits would hold the loans, but they did not want to tie that money up in a house for 30 years. She emphasized that homebuyers must income qualify and have to be under 80% AMI, so it is not ever going to be sold to an investor.

Ms. McGarry asked why NCCDF is showing a surplus that's painfully close to the increase in funding they are asking for, and she asked why they have a surplus.

Ms. Clair responded that it is all programmatic money, and she did not think she actually had a surplus—but they did have an audit done, so she would provide that information later.

Ms. Clair commented that if they could not fully fund her, she would understand and work to do as much as possible with what they have. She commented that they were trying to build capacity to do more projects. She noted that her part-time person, Rose, was really helped to build their capacity, noting that she had gotten ten rehab projects completed in six months' time. She said that they did not have employee benefits, because they had to have two full-time employees, so none of their employees had benefits.

The Board took a brief recess.

II. 2/25 WORK SESSION FOLLOW-UP.

The Board reviewed the established budget work session times. Dr. Ligon noted that the next work session was scheduled to take place during their regular board meeting on March 10th during the evening session.

Mr. Reed stated that they have a four-hour work session on March 11, but he would not be present if there were sessions on March 18 or 19, or for the March 25 authorization; he proposed that they either discuss the tax rate at the March 11 work session and add that to that agenda, which he felt they could do in the four hours, or add the following Monday, March 16 as another potential work session date.

Dr. Ligon asked what things needed to occur for the Board as a whole to happen or be talked about before they talk about tax rate.

Mr. Rutherford said they would need the four-year school trajectory in deciding the real estate tax rate, and what they would guess the LCI is going to be when it gets to 20% only by the state.

Mr. Reed said he would assume that their final budget request from the schools won't be significantly different from what they have already.

Mr. Rutherford clarified that he was referring to the next few years and that trajectory.

Ms. McGarry said she did not know how fast they will get to the 80% cap.

Mr. Rutherford said they should just count on it for now, and it will be a good thing if they're wrong. Mr. Lenahan asked if they should know what the final budget will be, before they talk about the tax rate, so they know what their tax rate needs to be.

Mr. Reed said this is the dilemma that we deal with every year because it depends on what the state gives them, but they don't find that out until after the Board has to establish the tax rate.

Mr. Rutherford noted that Amherst just voted to leave their rate as is, even though equalization for them is 39 cents.

Mr. Reed commented that at least if they did that, they would have an opportunity to talk about it and at least would know what they are aiming for—and they have to reevaluate it anyway.

Ms. McGarry emphasized that the value of setting it high is they can always come down, but you can't go up.

The Board agreed to proceed with a discussion on agencies, excluding those who will present on March 10, and they agreed to fund agency requests as presented in the FY27 BUDGET - AGENCY FUNDING matrix on Page 10 of the Board packet. The Board discussed the following items separately:

- Blue Ridge Health District: Ms. McGarry noted they would be attending the March 10th meeting.
- CASA: The Board decided to fund CASA at \$3,500 as requested which was the same amount in FY26.
- Central Virginia Economic Development Partnership: Ms. McGarry noted that the formula was set up to be 74 cents per capita, which caused the request to increase by \$943. The Board was in agreement to fund Central Virginia Economic Development Partnership at \$10,943 as requested, which was an increase of \$943 from FY26 funding.

March 4, 2026

- Community Investment Collaborative (CVSBDC): The Board was in consensus to fund CVSBDC at \$9,148 as requested for FY27, which was an increase of \$172 from FY26.
- Foothills Child Advocacy Center: Mr. Rutherford noted he had received a call from Foothills and they were trying to bring in a new system for Virginia that involves reporting to police and other entities. He suggested that they skip discussing Foothills for the time being. Mr. Reed commented that they would be funding them in the short term this year and next year, but once the new DSS building was complete, DSS would be able to provide some of the services that Foothills is currently completing for the County. The Board agreed to wait on discussing Foothills. Ms. McGarry noted that Foothills would still be providing services, but they would be doing so at the DSS building.
- Gladstone Senior Center Meals: The Board agreed to fund the Gladstone Senior Center Meals at \$15,000 for FY27, which was the same funding amount for FY26.
- Habitat for Humanity – Piedmont Region: The Board agreed to level fund Habitat for Humanity at \$2,500 as requested.
- Humane Society/SPCA of Nelson County, Inc.: The Board skipped the SPCA as they were scheduled to attend a subsequent work session.
- JABA: The Board agreed to level fund JABA at \$111,904 as requested.
- JAUNT: The Board agreed to fund JAUNT at \$90,442 as requested, which was an increase of \$1,602 for FY27.
- Jefferson Madison Regional Library: The Board agreed to fund Jefferson Madison Regional Library at \$445,356 for FY27, which was an increase of \$31,442 from FY26.
- Juneteenth Committee: The Board agreed to fund \$5,000 as requested. Mr. Lenahan asked if they can do a 50/50 match grant on the nonprofits, such as they do with Wintergreen Performing Arts, and stated that the County has not been provided with any receipts. Mr. Parr stated that the Board has already approved this request in a meeting for this budget year, but they could revisit this in the future. He noted that the committee was spending more than \$5,000 on the event and they could provide some documentation. Ms. McGarry noted that they could ask about the documentation.
- Lovington Merchants Association: The Board agreed to fund \$5,000 as requested.
- MACAA: Ms. McGarry reported that MACAA would be attending the March 10th meeting to discuss their request.
- Nelson County Community Development Foundation: Dr. Ligon said she was willing to give the increase of \$25,339 as requested. Mr. Parr commented that it was a big jump. Mr. Reed noted that it was, but it was a staff position and building capacity for projects that the Board wanted to see happen in the County. Dr. Ligon noted that she was pleased that Ms. Clair took on the additional work last year for the Family Assistance. Mr. Reed said he was glad that they were trying to build capacity, rather than doing as little as they could with as little as they had. Mr. Rutherford asked if Ms. Clair was not willing to do the Family Assistance program again with the \$25,000. Ms. McGarry noted that Ms. Clair had said they would be willing to do it, but it would be much easier with the additional position. Mr. Lenahan noted that if they had another full-time position, they would be able to offer benefits and insurance. Mr. Lenahan asked if the Board would be interested in funding half of the position at \$12,500. Mr. Rutherford said he did not think that was unreasonable. Mr. Reed said he would be opposed to it, because when looking at building capacity and adding a full-time position, Ms. Clair needed another position to accomplish what NCCDF was trying to do.

Dr. Ligon suggested they consider level funding MACAA and give the increase they had requested to NCCDF. Mr. Reed commented that realistically, those funds would be going to the schools. Dr. Ligon noted that MACAA pulled Head Start and it was gone. Mr. Reed noted that was correct, but this would be for after school. Ms. McGarry noted that they had talked about using the MACAA Head Start funding to offset the Parks and Recreation afterschool program.

The Board discussed NCCDF funding and Mr. Parr said he felt that the \$12,500 amount was reasonable. Mr. Lenahan moved to increase the NCCDF funding by \$12,500. Mr. Rutherford seconded the motion.

Mr. Reed stated that the purpose of this request is to build capacity and add a position, and you cannot do that for \$12,500. He said if NCCDF is in a position where they can't build capacity, then next year she will ask again and with less accomplished than she had hoped to accomplish. He said that's why he asked Ms. Clair what the next year looked like.

Mr. Lenahan said that next year, NCCDF would propose a larger budget because they would have the second full-time position and would not be able to afford benefits for that person.

Mr. Reed said that increasing capacity will enable them to do additional fundraising, which is the typical trajectory for nonprofit organizations.

Mr. Rutherford stated that \$12,500 was not a bad start.

Mr. Parr noted that their grants were \$82,000 and Ms. Clair is proposing \$50,000 this year—but she said in her presentation that she was ramping up her grant requests but showing a \$32,000 reduction in grants.

Mr. Reed cited the large Perry Foundation grant, which is not an annual recurring amount, as the reason for that discrepancy.

Dr. Ligon said she would like to appreciate the nuances of what Ms. Clair is trying to do but wondered how she is going to pay for benefits if she gets two full-time people. Mr. Rutherford noted that Ms. Clair could always come back later and ask for the other \$12,500. He commented that Ms. Clair had said that whatever the Board could fund was good.

The motion for an additional \$12,500 in new funding for the NCCDF passed by roll call vote (4-1), with Mr. Reed voting no.

The Board discussed the Family Assistance Program with NCCDF, noting that Ms. Clair had commented that she did not request the money again because she thought that MACAA was going to be providing assistance again. Mr. Rutherford said he did not mind doing the Family Assistance Program again. Mr. Reed suggested that the Board wait to see what MACAA has to say.

- Nelson County Economic Development Authority: The Board decided to level fund at \$8,100 as requested.
- Nelson County EMS Council: The Board agreed to fund the EMS Council at \$562,010 for FY27, which was a 1.6% increase.
- NVERS – Previously TJEMS Council: Mr. Lenahan said he spoke with Tony Reid who said that Nelson is no longer part of TJEMS because it was absorbed by NVERS. Mr. Rutherford commented that in eight years, he had not heard of TJEMS doing anything. Dr. Ligon said she thought that participation had to do with training or accreditation. The Board decided to wait and have Mr. Parr check in with EMS Council.
- OAR/Community Corrections: Mr. Rutherford noted Offender Aid Restoration (OAR) was asking for \$1,500 more for FY27. He suggested that the Board fund the request. The Board agreed to fund at \$16,901 as requested.
- PVCC: The Board agreed to fund PVCC at \$2,004 as requested, which was a decrease of \$120 from FY26.
- Region Ten: Mr. Rutherford noted they would hear from Region Ten again.
- Rockfish Senior Center Meals: The Board agreed to level fund at \$12,367 as requested.
- Shelter for Help in Emergency: The Board agreed to level fund at \$9,372 as requested.
- Thomas Jefferson Planning District Commission (TJPDC): Mr. Reed confirmed that the \$1,073 increase in requested funds was due to a membership increase per capita. The Board agreed to fund \$22,340 as requested for FY27.
- Thomas Jefferson Soil and Water Conservation District (TJSWCD): The Board agreed to fund TJSWCD at \$37,226 as requested, which was an increase of \$1,084 from FY26.

March 4, 2026

- Virginia Career Works Piedmont: Virginia Career Works Piedmont requested \$5,915 for FY27, which was an increase of \$2,973, or 101.05%. Ms. McGarry noted that the funding request was 40 cents per capita and based on a population of 14,788 for Nelson County. Dr. Ligon commented that the request stated that federal funding had declined in recent years. Mr. Reed reported that the revenues showed a 44% drop in grant funding. The Board decided to wait to discuss funding until after Mr. Lenahan attends his first meeting on that board and reports back.
- Amherst Wolverines: The Board agreed not to provide funding for this \$5,000 request.
- Virginia Institute of Government: The Board agreed to fund \$1,000 as requested.
- Wintergreen Performing Arts – 50/50 Grant: The Board agreed to fund at \$4,500 as requested.

Dr. Ligon said she would like to see a report from Animal Control on the number of animals that the Humane Society has taken from Animal Control over the last few years. Board members discussed previous funding for the SPCA and their role in the County.

Mr. Parr left the meeting at 6:58 p.m.

Mr. Lenahan asked how JABA determined the amount of funding requested. Dr. Ligon stressed the need for both JABA and JAUNT in the South District. Mr. Lenahan noted that he had no issue, he just wanted to understand how JABA arrived at their requested amount. Mr. Reed commented that he was not sure if there was a ratio or per capita to determine the funding amount. He reported that JABA had a new executive director, and the prior director, Marta Keane's strategy had always been that when she requested level funding, it usually made helped keep things smooth between JABA and the localities. He commented that the cost for services was going up and there were more seniors everywhere and they continued to provide services. Mr. Lenahan asked for staff to find out how that amount was calculated by JABA.

The Board returned to the discussion of the SPCA. Mr. Rutherford noted that the SPCA was previously funded when they were asking for funding, then they did not need any more funding. Mr. Lenahan noted discussion of funding with SPCA representatives, and they had indicated that any funding would be appreciated. Dr. Ligon asked if the SPCA was taking any animals from Animal Control. Mr. Lenahan reported that the SPCA said they were taking some animals from Animal Control. Dr. Ligon asked the Board to check the true definition of what an SPCA should be doing for a county and what they are required to do and then decide whether the SPCA was doing that before the Board circles back to discuss it further. Mr. Rutherford asked if Amherst had an equivalent – Dr. Ligon noted that they did. She explained that in Amherst, the building was shared between Animal Control and SPCA and not a great setup in her opinion.

Mr. Lenahan noted that Animal Control was not part of the Sheriff's Office, which was unique.

Ms. McGarry said that arrangement is not unique but is more like 50/50. Mr. Lenahan asked if there was coverage for Animal Control on the weekends, noting that people have commented that when reporting a stray on the weekend, they were told to put the dog back where it came from. Ms. McGarry confirmed that the County had people on call for Animal Control on weekends, and she mentioned that after hours, only emergent calls were answered.

Mr. Lenahan asked if it could possibly be beneficial to have Animal Control under the Sheriff's Office. Dr. Ligon asked what the pros and cons would be. Mr. Lenahan suggested there could be more coverage on the weekends, and they would have someone to pick up strays on the weekend.

Ms. McGarry responded that if that happened, she would be concerned that they may be more "police-like" rather than Animal Control officers, and the work they are currently doing could get scaled back if they go under the Sheriff's Office. She stated that if the Board felt it was important enough for Animal Control to pick up strays on the weekend, then we could make adjustments in house for them to be able to do that. She explained that right now, their policy has them responding to more emergent calls after hours. Dr. Ligon asked if there were any more pros to having Animal Control under the Sheriff's Office. Mr. Lenahan commented that the scenario would provide the Sheriff with two (2) more law enforcement personnel. Dr. Ligon commented that Animal Control was deputized in some aspect.

Mr. Reed mentioned that they would likely also have different training and pay scales. Ms. McGarry confirmed that Animal Control was on a different pay scale. She expressed concern that the work that Animal Control is doing currently would be scaled back and the County would not have as good of an Animal Control office as they have now, and Animal Control would likely get pulled into the law enforcement side of things.

March 4, 2026

Mr. Lenahan pointed out that last month, Animal Control had 98 calls for service and 14 animals picked up. Ms. McGarry noted that Animal Control spent a lot of time investigating abuse and neglect complaints, building cases, and going to court also.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS (AS PRESENTED)

There was none.

V. ADJOURNMENT

At 7:08 p.m., Mr. Reed moved to adjourn the Board meeting to March 10, 2026. Mr. Rutherford seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (4-0) and the meeting adjourned.