Virginia:

AT A CONTINUED MEETING of the Nelson County Board of Supervisors at 10:00 a.m. in the Former Board of Supervisors Room located on the fourth floor of the Nelson County Courthouse, in Lovingston, Virginia.

Present:

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

Absent: Thomas D. Harvey, North District Supervisor

I. CALL TO ORDER

Mr. Reed called the meeting to order at 10:06 a.m. with four (4) Supervisors present to establish a quorum. Mr. Harvey was absent.

II. 3/25 WORK SESSION FOLLOW-UP

Ms. McGarry said that on the expenditure side, they were looking at the MACAA emergency assistance program, which she had obtained a printout for from their website. She stated that Margaret Clair has said there is currently no onsite staffing at the Nelson Center, and it has been at least two years since they have had anyone there, as they operate out of Charlottesville. Ms. McGarry said that for FY24, MACAA reported awarding $6,261.60 for emergency service assistance services in Nelson County; so far for FY25, they've expended $1,100 for 23 households, which she said seems rather strange at this point if reporting for the current fiscal year. She noted that staff could try to get clarification on that. Ms. McGarry said their applications are taken via a 24/7 client kiosk, which is a web portal, or in person during walk-in hours at their Charlottesville location—Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday from 10:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. She indicated that they also do applications at the Fluvanna Food Pantry.

Ms. McGarry said that Ms. Clair had sent information regarding the Family Assistance Grant Program that NCCDF did in 2023: It was a 12-month program; they received grant funds of $72,000, of which $12,000 went towards administrative costs, or approximately 16.7%; and they received 147 applications from 115 families, totaling nearly $76,000. Ms. McGarry stated that there were also some program qualifiers, including that families had to be at 80% average median income and had to show proof of identity, income, and financial crisis, such as overdue bills, shut-off notices, etc., and support was limited to $1,000 and/or two requests in 12 months per family. Ms. McGarry said the funds could be for utility bills, rent or security deposits, real estate taxes, medical bills, as well as some Food Lion cards.

Ms. McGarry said NCCDF made payments 133 times for 95 families, 25 of whom were return recipients. She stated that most of the payments went towards utilities—with 90 utility payments and an average payment of $418.40, totaling $37,656. She stated the next highest was rent or security deposits, then food cards, medical bills, and taxes. Ms. McGarry said the total was 133 payments, with an average of $515.01, and total payments of $55,640.29. She noted that Ms. Clair said she would need to look at the administrative costs and how it would all work, but she thought it could be similar to this 2023 grant program administered. Ms. McGarry said with the $25,000 in funds, they would likely lower the limit to $500, provided once per family over 12 months, but Ms. Clair said she would still need to put in a little more thought on the program.

Ms. McGarry said she had recently received more refined pricing for the ECC vehicle, along with an update on increased costs. She stated that the Ram truck under consideration came with the special service vehicle group, the bed convenience group with LED lighting and a bed liner, and the chrome appearance group, which does include some chrome detailing, but primarily features additional power outlets designed for cab workspace such as laptop use, and an inverter.

Ms. McGarry reported that the subtotal for the vehicle was $45,408, and they also received quotes for the camper shell and installation at $2,451, and a thousand-pound 75% pullout and installation quoted at $1,730. She said the overall equipment estimate was $10,000, reflecting reuse of some equipment from the current vehicle, and the graphics estimate was $1,750. She noted that the total amounted to $61,339, and they would need a purchase order by April 4 to get that vehicle pricing. She noted that the current vehicle was out of service and unable to pass inspection, and she had spoken with John Adkins that morning, who had discussed the situation with Curtis Sheets who mentioned the possibility of a surplus Expedition that could be used until the new vehicle was ready. Ms. McGarry estimated that it would take about six months before the truck was ready, noting the time for delivery, as well as upfitting.

Mr. Rutherford asked when staff could get some input from staff on GPS tracking.

Ms. McGarry responded that she had already gathered some information on that but would need a couple months to finalize and present the information.

Ms. Margaret Clair joined the meeting and stated that she would need to connect with a former staff member who worked for MACAA for many years, noting she could get more information on the emergency services provided by MACAA. She shared some of the emergency assistance program parameters, stating that it has been proven that recipients of cash funding use it in positive ways such as food, transportation, education, and utilities. Dr. Ligon liked the fact that with NCCDF handling the program, people were not having to travel out of County to receive assistance during limited hours. Ms. Clair noted that they would not have someone in their office to do this full-time, because it would use up all the funds. She explained that with NCCDF's program in 2023, the part-time person was in the office a few days per week, and people got used to the schedule. Ms. Clair noted if there was an emergency situation like someone getting their electricity cut off, and it was a day when the part-time person was out, she was typically the one who stepped up to handle it.

Mr. Rutherford suggested that if they were to target just utilities, that would help a lot of constituents, as opposed to a lengthy list of options for assistance. Ms. Clair reported that only one person applied to use funds for a security deposit. She confirmed that the majority of the funds were used for utilities.

Mr. Reed stated that if the Board decided not to fund MACAA's emergency assistance program, he wasn't sure how the program could come back, and it would likely become part of the Community Development Foundation going forward. He said it may be more efficient and direct this way, and he didn't know how NCCDF felt about this becoming a permanent program to administer.

Ms. Clair responded that she had not yet presented it to her board. She said the foundation had played several different roles over time, and she did not feel that this program was outside of their mission. She commented that there are a lot of regional support organizations with a presence in the County—but not actually a lot of local support. Ms. Clair noted that she did not apply for the Family Assistance Grant Program again because she thought MACAA was going to come back. She commented that the reason they went after the grant in the first place was because COVID supports were getting pulled and electric bills were going to be massive because people did not have to pay their electric bill for a long time. She noted that they had seen a couple thousand-dollar electric bills.

Mr. Rutherford said that MACAA had a lot of redeveloping to do. He commented that Dr. Ligon had suggested that the best thing they could do in that situation was to narrow it down to the things they do, do them well, and then expand. He stated that he felt the Pioneer program and after-school programs would have Board support, but he would like for the emergency assistance funding to be utilized by a local organization in the interim. He added that he suggested narrowing it down to utility bills, because utility bills remain a top concern for people throughout the community.

Mr. Rutherford said if people can't afford their utility bills, they also likely can't afford other things. Ms. Clair said in a lot of cases people will wait on the utility bill because they know they will get help and they store it up for heat assistance. She said they can put limits on the amount and frequency of allotments, and perhaps they can survey recipients afterwards. Mr. Reed asked if it was important to prioritize the types of assistance that would be provided. Ms. Clair said they should limit it because people will come in for anything. She said that she did not think it would be for housing and medical, she thought there was still DHCD money out there for rent assistance. She commented that they did not want someone losing their kids because their electricity was cut off. She said she did not like the fact that they needed to have a cut off notice, because that did affect the person's credit negatively and it was hard to come back from that.

Mr. Rutherford and Dr. Ligon stated that they would like Ms. Clair to approach the NCCDF Board and gauge their interest.

Mr. Reed commented that they've already put MACAA on alert, and he thought that MACAA would certainly understand that the County is trying to provide services as best they can.

Ms. Clair agreed to present it to her board and asked if there would be a total cap of $25,000, with an award limit of $500.

The Board confirmed those limits and said NCCDF could recommend different individual limits if desired.

Ms. McGarry confirmed that budgetarily, they would be reducing MACAA by $25,000.

Ms. McGarry said they needed to express a preference for the animal control vehicle replacement which the funds were to now be utilized for the Emergency Services truck, which was estimated at $51,000 and adds about $10,000 to the capital outlay budget, and confirmed that it is about $13,000 less than what was originally proposed for the SUV.

Ms. McGarry confirmed that the Schools had proceeded for the four (4) school buses.

III. FY26 BUDGET WORK SESSION

a. Staff Updates (as presented)

There were no specific updates, and Ms. McGarry suggested reviewing the other fund budgets and then circling back to the General Fund budget.

b. Other Fund Budgets
   1. Piney River Water & Sewer

Ms. Mawyer stated that the County owns a portion of the water and sewer system in Piney River, which is operated by the Nelson County Service Authority. She said the system is typically self-sufficient, and due to multiple equipment failures and repairs within one of the pump stations over the last three years, a full replacement of that pump station has been recommended. She stated that in FY25, a transfer of $350,000 from the General Fund to the Capital Outlay line and the Piney River fund was included for this purpose. Ms. Mawyer stated that to date, work totaling $26,875 has been expensed for this purpose, so she is suggesting that the remaining $323,125 be carried forward to FY26 for the remaining work needed.

Ms. McGarry reported that the pump station was currently down, as of the evening prior, so pump and haul operations were taking place. Mr. Rutherford asked why replacement had not proceeded. Ms. McGarry indicated that the pump station had been running well since the funding transfer.

Ms. McGarry said that pricing has been obtained for a new pump station, and Jeff Brantley indicated some engineering work might be necessary to ensure proper installation. She explained that it was not simply a matter of assembling the pump station and having it begin operation; some preparatory work must be done to guarantee it will meet requirements and fit in the location of the current pump station. Ms. McGarry said that Falwell was going to be onsite to inspect the pumps. She stated the pumps currently in place are fairly new, and there may be a warranty applicable to them. She commented that it is unusual for both pumps to fail simultaneously; normally, only one pump encounters issues.

Ms. Mawyer said that the FY26 Piney River budget is balanced at $513,033, a decrease of $51,875 from FY25 due to no transfer being budgeted from the General Fund. She said as of March 26, the system serves 206 total customers; 5 have water service only, 101 are sewer only, and 100 have both water and sewer services. Ms. Mawyer said the sewer-only base rate per month is $38.60, which includes the $9 grinder pump fee, and she noted that not all sewer service customers have grinder pumps. She stated the base rate for water-only customers is $29.90 per month, making the combined water and sewer base rate $68.50 per month. She noted that they have discussed the possibility of increasing those rates in the future.

Ms. Mawyer reported that delinquent accounts are subject to the County's collection policy, established in 2016, and accounts are considered delinquent when they are 90 or more days overdue and have a balance of $300 or more. She said delinquent account holders are sent notices and given 10 business days to return full payment in order to avoid legal action. She said the next step for accounts remaining 90 days in arrears without a payment plan, is turning them over to the Treasurer for collection procedures; accounts considered uncollectible by the Treasurer will have a lien filed with the circuit court clerk against the property, including eight percent (8%) interest on the delinquent charges until paid in full. She said delinquent accounts FY25 to date represent only about one percent (1%) of the total customer accounts.

Ms. Mawyer stated that FY26 expenditures are proposed at $513,033; notable proposed increases in expenditure projections include finalizing the replacement of the pump station, which is the remaining $323,125. She said there are also increased costs of postage and grinder pump repairs and replacements.

Dr. Ligon asked what the life of a grinder pump is and if $9.00 a month is covering it.

Ms. McGarry responded that it is not covering those costs, and sometimes they can just change out the core of it, so it's not as expensive as a full grinder pump.

Dr. Ligon asked what it costs them yearly to run Piney River water and sewer.

Staff confirmed that the cost is $189,908 and noted that this is a break-even operation, not a moneymaker.

Mr. Rutherford commented that one of the ultimate goals they should have as a County is getting out of this business and the Service Authority absorbing it. He said the Service Authority has echoed countless times that they are concerned for the maintenance of the system and the lack of consistency with the rates compared to the rest of their systems. He said about seven years ago, the Board indicated they wanted both of those things handled and made a huge effort in paying off their Piney River debt. Ms. McGarry noted that the pump station replacement also was a big piece of that.

Ms. McGarry mentioned that they added the granular-activated carbon (GAC) system for the treatment, and she agreed with the Board's suggestion to converse with Service Authority staff about developing a succession plan for this.

Ms. Mawyer noted that they amended this budget because they had to bring $25,000 over from the General Fund to cover a lot of grinder pumps, noting that the pumps don't do well when there are storms.

Ms. McGarry confirmed that they would be working on proposed rates to bring to a public hearing as soon as they could. She noted that they would check to see if they could advertise phased rate increases.

Mr. Parr reminded the Board that at their last meeting, they discussed not having public hearings every year but instead increasing in phased steps, setting a five-year plan that would help users prepare.

Mr. Rutherford noted that for sewer only customers, unlike water customers, you cannot turn off sewer. He commented that the only option for the County would be to put a lien on the property.

2. Broadband

Ms. Mawyer reported that the Broadband Fund used to be considered by the Broadband Authority, but now that it is dissolved, it is included as one of the proprietary funds. She stated that prior to FY21, Nelson County owned and operated the middle-mile fiber broadband network, which was governed by the Broadband Authority; in mid-FY 20, the fiber network assets were transferred to Central Virginia Services, Inc. (CVSI), a subsidiary of Central Virginia Electric Co-op (CVEC), as part of their fiber deployment project within their County service areas. She said the County retained ownership of towers and related assets for continued operations.

Ms. Mawyer said the network is self-sufficient and in FY26 does not require support from the General Fund. She stated that the FY26 fund budget is balanced at $273,638, a slight decrease of $2,500 from FY25. Ms. Mawyer said this is largely attributed to reduced expenditures, such as insurance, but now the County covers the insurance instead of the broadband fund, and the County no longer pays the mileage and fees for Board members, so those expenses decreased. Ms. Mawyer said the fund also has a healthy balance. She stated that operational expenses are anticipated to be $47,000, while revenues are higher at $160,000. Ms. McGarry confirmed that they had annual increases to the rates.

Dr. Ligon asked if they should be trying with future lease agreements to generate income to replace that equipment.

Ms. McGarry responded that the equipment belongs to the carrier, such as Verizon, who pays a col-location fee to have their equipment on the tower. She confirmed that the $20,000 expense noted was related to the generators or "huts" with the towers that contain the generators and racks utilized. She said she was not sure if the County owns the land or has a ground lease at Martin's store; Gladstone Fire and Rescue has a tower; and the County pays Rockfish Fire and Rescue annually a share of the tower lease revenue that AT&T pays the County—which has come in right under $11,000 for the past few years, with an escalation built into the contract. She noted that when she was in the finance director position, that amount went up, and staff stays on top of those changes.

Mr. Rutherford commented that historically, the Board hasn't been directly involved with the Broadband because it fell under the purview of the Broadband Authority, and all the tower money went to expansion.

3. Debt Service

Ms. Mawyer stated that for debt service, the County pays principal and interest for both the County and school-related debt out of the Debt Service Fund. She said a corresponding transfer from the General Fund to the Debt Service Fund is made at the beginning of every fiscal year to facilitate these payments.

Ms. Mawyer stated that the total school and County debt service payments for FY26 will be $2,734,978. She said total debt balances at the beginning of FY26 will be $30,977,000. Ms. Mawyer stated that total debt service payments for FY26 are an increase of $706,874, or about 35 percent from FY25. She said the FY26 Debt Service Fund contains a Debt Service Reserve of $4,049,095.

Ms. Mawyer stated that this reserve includes an additional $221,378 from the Debt Service Fund balance as reported in the FY24 audit. She said for County Debt Service, the FY26 payments will total about $1.2 million, an increase of $2,347 or 0.2 percent from the current year. Ms. Mawyer stated that this net increase is associated with defining interest payments on the current debt being slightly less than the increase in principal. She said at the beginning of FY26, total County debt balances will be $6,765,000. She said this consists of debt for the 2013 and 2015 additions and renovations for the courthouse project, the judicial, sheriff and court wings, and the circuit court administration areas. She said the total also includes the 2018 Nelson Memorial Library expansion project and the Larkin Property Lease Revenue Bond Anticipation Bill.

Ms. Mawyer stated for school debt service, the FY26 payments will total $1,542,790. She said this is an increase of $704,000, or 84 percent from FY25, and is mostly due to the scheduled first interest payment for the VPSA bond issued for the NCHS renovation project. She said the school debt balance at the beginning of FY26 will be $24,212,000. Ms. Mawyer stated this consists of the 2012 VPSA loan balance of $2,487,000 and the full balance of the newest VPSA bond, which is $21,275,000. She said this first interest payment caused a significant increase in the school debt service payment.

Mr. Parr asked if the $704,527 was all related to that increase. Ms. Mawyer confirmed that about $697,000 was, for the first interest payment. Mr. Parr said that allocating $600,000 for that project last year took about $10 million out of capital improvement projects, and this $700,000 is a bigger number than he recalled.

Ms. Mawyer noted that there is a listing in the packet of their beginning debt balances for FY26, as well as $696,000 for next year and other debt for schools with interest and principal in August totaling $846,000.

Ms. McGarry stated that the bond anticipation notes for the schools flow through the County's budget, but the permanent financing—the VPSA funds—will flow to them directly. She explained that when they advertise the budget for public hearing, they want to include the Schools' permanent financing, which will go in their capital budget. She added that the debt service is reflected here but not the projects themselves.

Ms. McGarry reminded the Board that the debt service strategy is to just maintain a level transfer to debt service of the $3,325,284, and as current debt payments decline, they recapture that within the reserve to pay for the debt capacity of $35 million overall—so any debt they assume up to that $35 million amount is already budgeted for and wouldn't require any new funds.

Dr. Ligon asked if the balance is invested.

Ms. McGarry confirmed that it is, stating that even though it's a separate fund, it is part of the overall fund balance that gets invested; the same is true for the Broadband Fund. Dr. Ligon asked whether the roughly $300,000 allocated for the pump station was also still invested. Ms. McGarry noted that she was pretty sure that it was since it was a proprietary fund, but she would check.

4. Capital Fund

Ms. Mawyer stated that the Capital fund was created to segregate larger capital projects from the General Fund and currently provides a holding place for capital reserves of $300,500, which has been set aside by the Board of Supervisors for remediating the building envelope at Tye River Elementary School. Ms. Mawyer stated that FY26 expenditures are proposed to be about $8.9 million, including the Capital Reserve of $300,500. She said the expenditures also include items related to the high school and DSS projects, which were financed through the bond anticipation notes (BANs), and the balance of the high school renovation project BAN is $1,474,037.

Ms. Mawyer said the balance of the DSS building project BAN is $543,502, and the County will pursue permanent financing for the remaining $6.6 million in expenditures needed for the remainder of the DSS project. She said the FY26 revenues are proposed to be about $8.9 million, utilizing a year-ending balance of $300,500.

Ms. Mawyer said the bond proceeds related to both BAN projects and permanent financing of the DSS building project are also included.

Ms. Mawyer said this fund has been set by accounting standards as an assigned balance within the General Fund and therefore is not considered when calculating unassigned General Fund balance. Ms. Mawyer stated that if this fund would not be appropriated in FY26, these funds would become unassigned within the General Fund.

Ms. McGarry stated that they had a capital reserve that was unallocated totaling $419,730, which they used toward the purchase of the new DSS building site. She said they paid cash for $419,730 of the $775,000 and financed the rest through the BAN. She said while we don't know exactly what the cost of the DSS project is, they have some estimates they used to build the capital fund budget, which should prevent doing a major budget amendment for that purpose.

5. Textbook Fund

Ms. Mawyer reported that Assistant School Superintendent Shannon Irvin has requested an appropriation of the FY26 school textbook fund in the amount of $556,868, inclusive of $329,950 in the textbook fund balance. She explained that the the school textbook fund is balanced at $556,868, which is a decrease of $172,669 from FY25. She said expenditures are anticipated to be $556,868 in school textbook payments and related technologies, with revenues primarily being a supplement from school operations of $226,918. Ms. Mawyer noted that anticipated FY25 carryover funds of $329,950.

Ms. McGarry emphasized that these funds are not coming from the General Fund, the Board just has to appropriate them as part of the overall budget.

6. Cafeteria Fund

Ms. Mawyer reported that Superintendent Hester has requested an appropriation of the cafeteria fund balance of $391,628. Board members commented that this is a huge jump at 62%. Mr. Rutherford asked if it could possibly be related to food costs. Ms. McGarry responded that the Schools had not provided detail in their request letter. Ms. Mawyer noted that the number has kind of jumped around in the past.

The Board briefly discussed additional budget items:

Ms. Mawyer reported Virginia Public Assistance (VPA) numbers were not yet finalized, and staff would follow up. Ms. McGarry noted that this was for Social Services. She explained that they were reviewing some of the transfer information. She said they were not quite sure if a three percent (3%) salary increase was included, and there was a difference between what was shown as their amended budget for this year and what the County had.

Ms. McGarry asked if the Board wanted to review any of the things that had been taken out of the budget so far. She noted that there were some items that she may want to revisit adding back in that had been reduced from some of the departments. Mr. Rutherford asked if these items were on a non-recurring basis, or a recurring basis. Ms. McGarry indicated that there was some of both.

Ms. McGarry noted that Judge Doucette had asked for a salary increase for his assistant totaling $12,771, beginning in the new fiscal year, which she had backed out of their department request. She indicated that no formal written budget request or additional details had been submitted. She confirmed that this position was going to receive the three percent (3%) increase. She indicated that the $12,771 amount was a 20 percent increase, plus benefits. The Board agreed to have Judge Doucette attend a meeting later in April to discuss the request. Ms. Mawyer explained that in her calculations for a proposed three percent (3%) increase for staff, she had included for the judicial assistant position, the increase requested by Judge Doucette, but she did not include an additional three percent (3%) on top of that. It was agreed by Board and staff that if the assistant were to receive a 20 percent increase, she would not also get a three percent increase. Ms. McGarry indicated that the position was included in the County's salary study, so that pay should be about the market rate. The Board agreed that it would be good to make Judge Doucette aware of the salary study and invite him to the Board meeting later in April.

Ms. McGarry reported that in terms of recurring things, Buildings and grounds budget was reduced by $19,560 and Waste Management was reduced by about $10,000. She noted that she would not mind revisiting those items if the Board agreed to do so.

Ms. McGarry noted that they would need to start spending some money on needed building improvements at Building Inspections if personnel were going to remain in place.

Ms. McGarry suggested that security gates at the Blue Ridge Tunnel may be good to consider. Mr. Rutherford asked if the Foundation was doing any fundraising. Ms. McGarry noted she was not sure. Mr. Rutheford suggested that the County ask the Foundation to doing some fundraising, he noted that he was not saying they should charge for people to visit the tunnel but he wanted to acknowledge that the tunnel was costing the County staff and time. Dr. Ligon commented staff was at the tunnel a lot. Ms. McGarry commented that having at bathroom facility at the tunnel would be great, but then that would add to the maintenance and upkeep. Mr. Parr noted that having the bathroom facility would take away the expense of the porta johns.

Mr. Rutherford noted he was amicable to the security gate at the tunnel, he noted that it was an attraction that brought in visitors and revenues for our constituents and neighboring businesses. He said that if they were to add the security gates, he would only be interested if Waynesboro was willing to pay half. He noted that if they decided to add the restrooms in the future, he would also want to talk with Waynesboro. Ms. McGarry noted that the restroom was only at the Eastern trailhead which was on the Nelson side. Mr. Rutherford noted that Waynesboro could still contribute. Mr. Rutherford said that Waynesboro had benefitted tremendously from the tunnel, and as far as he knew, they had not contributed any funds towards it. He suggested that the cost of added improvements should be shared with Augusta and Waynesboro. Mr. Parr said that if they were placing something on the Western end of the tunnel trail, then they should absolutely contribute, but if it were just on the Nelson side, then he did not think that should be shared. Dr. Ligon asked about honor system paid parking like what is done at Crabtree Falls. She noted that there were improvements needed at the eastern parking lot. She noted the Waynesboro side was paved. Mr. Rutherford and Ms. McGarry noted that was paid through grant funds for the project. It was noted that Waynesboro and Augusta provided letters of support for the project. Mr. Rutherford noted that the bus parking was on the Waynesboro/Augusta side of the trail, which meant places like Basic City benefited. He suggested that it be presented to Waynesboro and Augusta as a request for assistance with improvements to continue to allow people to visit the tunnel free of charge. Ms. McGarry agreed that those conversations could be had.

Mr. Reed agreed that the parking lot needed improvements, and he thought that would be a good time to implement parking fees. Dr. Ligon noted that Crabtree Falls had two drop boxes for fees, as well as a machine for credit card payments that prints parking passes. Mr. Rutherford suggested considering annual bus permits. Mr. Parr and Mr. Rutherford noted the potential greenway connections into Waynesboro and Crozet that would bring even more visitors. Dr. Ligon noted she understood the security gate. She asked how many issues had occurred at the tunnel trail. Staff noted that multiple raves had taken place in the tunnel without permission. Ms. McGarry commented that surprisingly no evidence had been left behind. Ms. Spivey noted that these events occurred prior to the addition of the cameras at the tunnel. Ms. McGarry noted that the proposed gates were electronic as opposed to being manually opened and closed by staff. Ms. Mawyer indicated that the gates would be on a timer to open at sunrise and close each day at sunset. Mr. Rutherford reiterated that they needed to reach out to Waynesboro and Augusta. He noted with the possibility of connecting to Albemarle, they needed to consider what the future of the tunnel trail looks like.

Additionally, Ms. McGarry reported that in FY27, the County would start having a full debt service payment included with the jail payment for the renovation, ramping that payment up to about $386,000 in FY27 versus around $50,000 in FY26. Ms. McGarry explained that this did not count as part of the County's debt service as it was the jail's debt, but the County paid its share of that debt through the General Fund.

Ms. McGarry also reported that the Recovery Court grant would run out in the next few years, but they may be able to extend that out further since they had not been usings the funds as quickly as they anticipated.

Ms. McGarry confirmed that they did not need to do anything further on the tax rates because they would remain the same for 2025. She noted that the Board would set those rates officially on April 8th by resolution. Ms. McGarry also reported that she was still working with the Commissioner of Revenue on the 2025 Personal Property Tax Book. She noted that the emergency services discount needed to be applied and the March DMV download needed to be added before they could determine what the percentage discount needed to be set at for Personal Property Tax Relief.

IV. OTHER BUSINESS (AS PRESENTED)

There was none presented.

V. ADOURNMENT

At 11:35 a.m., Mr. Rutherford moved to adjourn their meeting. Dr. Ligon seconded the motion, which passed unanimously (4–0) by vote of acclamation and the meeting adjourned.