

**COUNTY OF HENRICO, VIRGINIA  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS  
SPECIAL MEETING  
November 28, 2023**

The Henrico County Board of Supervisors convened a special meeting at 5:30 p.m. on Tuesday, November 28, 2023, in the County Manager's Conference Room, Administration Building, Henrico County Government Center, Parham and Hungary Spring Roads, Henrico, Virginia.

**Members of the Board Present:**

Frank J. Thornton, Chairman, Fairfield District  
Tyrone E. Nelson, Vice-Chairman, Varina District  
Patricia S. O'Bannon, Tuckahoe District  
Daniel J. Schmitt, Brookland District

**Member of the Board Absent:**

Thomas M. Branin, Three Chopt District

**Other Officials Present:**

John A. Vithoulkas, County Manager  
Andrew R. Newby, County Attorney  
Tanya N. Brackett, CMC, Assistant to the County Manager/Clerk to the Board  
Michael Y. Feinmel, Deputy County Manager for Public Safety  
W. Brandon Hinton, Deputy County Manager for Administration  
Monica Smith-Callahan, Deputy County Manager for Community Affairs  
Cari M. Tretina, Deputy County Manager/Chief of Staff  
Steven J. Yob, Deputy County Manager for Community Operations  
Steven Knockemus, Assistant Director of Public Relations

**Kai Bears Popcorn**

Kai Walker, a 9-year-old resident, and his parents, Kimberlee Garnes-Walker and Art Walker presented Kai Bears popcorn, a business that was launched earlier this year. Mr. Walker stated their primary business is currently festivals and fairs, but they are hoping to get their popcorn into movies theaters and eventually onto cruise ships. He noted he is teaching his son the aspects of business and how important it is. Kai says he loves popcorn and picking the different flavors and coming up with the concepts. His parents thanked the Board for allowing him to come and present his business and for purchasing the popcorn.

**Richmond Region Tourism Update**

Jack Berry, President and CEO of Richmond Region Tourism, gave the Board its yearly update on Richmond Region Tourism. He first thanked Mr. Thornton and Mrs. O'Bannon for their 28 years of service and noted he enjoyed working with them and wished them the best in their retirement. Mr. Berry continued with his presentation stating RVA tourism continues to break records with spending in Henrico for 2022 up by 27% from 2021, generating over \$75 million in local taxes, supporting over 10,000 jobs and \$521 million in

wages, and continuing to break records in occupancy tax collection within the Richmond Region. Richmond continues to be one of the 15 best places to visit according to Good Housekeeping Magazine, with Lewis Ginter Botanical Gardens being one of the top choices. He shared an Instagram video that was posted of the Garden Festival of Lights.

Mr. Berry noted Henrico Sports Tourism continues to bring in top tournaments. At this point in the presentation Mr. Berry recognized Danielle Fitz-Hugh, Vice President of Community Relations, who reviewed the Tourism Master Plan. Mrs. Fitz-Hugh shared a video highlighting the Richmond Region and explained the Tourism Improvement District (TID) that will fund marketing activities to benefit the hotels in the region. The marketing campaign has been focused on hotel occupancy and revenue and to drive overall travel, with a focus on mid-week travel and the difficult months of travel. Mrs. Fitz-Hugh highlighted the upcoming RVA Sports Awards coming up in February and thanked the Board and the Manager for their continued support.

### **Home Purchase Assistance Program**

Eric Leabough, Director of Community Revitalization, updated the Board on the Employee Home Purchase Assistance Program that was first discussed at the Board's Retreat in December. Mr. Leabough stated the employee must be full-time with Henrico General Government, Henrico County Public Schools, or in the office of a constitutional officer. They must have at least 12 months of continuous full-time service and meet certain performance requirements. In addition, the employee must be a first-time homebuyer or who has not owned a home in the last five years. Finally, the employee's household income must meet Virginia Housing's household income limits. Mr. Leabough noted the employee must occupy the house and maintain full-time employment with Henrico County for a minimum of five years after the closing, the home must be purchased in Henrico, and they must contribute a minimum of \$1,000 in their own funds toward the purchase of the home.

Mr. Leabough concluded his presentation by noting employees must successfully complete the homebuyer education course and they can receive up to \$25,000 in home purchase assistance. The Board thanked Mr. Leabough for taking on this initiative after it was discussed at the Retreat. Mr. Leabough thanked Human Resources and other staff members for their assistance in launching the program.

### **HCPS Budget Amendment Item on Board Agenda**

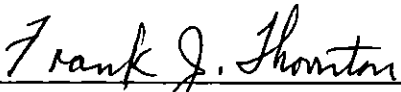
Dr. Amy Cashwell, Superintendent of Schools, and John Wack, Chief Financial Officer for Schools, updated the Board on the budget amendment on the agenda. Dr. Cashwell explained the recent changes to the state budget meant HCPS received an additional \$25.6 million in state revenue. She explained it was allocated to be spent in three primary components: \$17.49 million in flexible spending per pupil to address learning loss and implementation of the Virginia Literacy Act; \$5.94 million to address the support cap by funding more of the State's share for school support positions; and \$2.14 million for the State's share of an additional 2% salary increase for certain positions. Dr. Cashwell stated the funds will also be used to add new positions, including reading specialists and attendance officers. Mr. Nelson asked if there was a market for these current positions. Dr. Cashwell stated there is a need for these positions, and explained they are working with Human Resources to reallocate these positions and re-grade them, so they are favorable for recruitment. Dr. Cashwell responded to additional questions from Mr. Nelson regarding teacher vacancies and recruitment efforts.

Mrs. O'Bannon asked if the County was fully funding our schools. Dr. Cashwell stated the County has always fully funded the schools, and the shortfall comes from the state. The Manager noted the shortfall from the state for this fiscal year was \$140 million.

#### **Review of the Regular Meeting Agenda Items**

Mr. Vithoukas reviewed the agenda for the 7:00 p.m. meeting. He asked Justin Crawford, Management and Budget Division Director, to review the budget item. Mr. Crawford reviewed the item and responded to several questions from the Board members. Mr. Thornton explained over the years he has seen many budgets and has noticed the changes throughout the years with his service on the Board. In particular, he has noticed the unity of the Board and how the appropriations are spread throughout the County and not just within one area or one district. He thanked the Manager for his leadership and his fellow Board members because it has not always been this way and it shows how far the County has come. It shows what we always say: the "Henrico Way."

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 6:51 p.m.

  
Chairman, Board of Supervisors  
Henrico County, Virginia