

At a Public Hearings Meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Warren County held in the Warren County Government Center on May 09, 2023 at 6:00 PM.

Present: Victoria L. Cook, Chair (Fork District); Cheryl L. Cullers, Vice Chair (South River District); Jerome K. Butler (Happy Creek District); Walter J. Mabe (Shenandoah District); and Delores R. Oates (North River District); also, present Edwin C. Daley, County Administrator; Jason J. Ham, County Attorney; Alisa Scott, Finance Director; Matt Wendling, Planning Director; Zach Henderson, Deputy Clerk of the Board

Adoption of Agenda – Additions or Deletions:

On a motion made by Ms. Cook, seconded by Mrs. Cullers, and the following vote, the Board approved the agenda as presented:

Mr. Butler, Aye; Mrs. Cullers, Aye; Mrs. Cook, Aye; Mrs. Oates, Aye; Mr. Mabe, Aye

Public Hearings:

Ordinance Delaying Penalties and Interest Upon Certain Local Taxes:

Dr. Daley stated that this ordinance was intended to extend the due date for real estate and personal property taxes to June 22nd and gives additional time for the Commissioner and the Treasurer to prepare the invoices and will give citizens at least three weeks having the bill in their hand.

There were no comments from the Board and there were no comments from the public.

On a motion made by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mrs. Cullers, and the following vote, the Board of Supervisors approved the Ordinance delaying penalties and interest upon certain local taxes:

Mr. Mabe, Aye; Mrs. Oates, Aye; Mrs. Cook, Aye; Mrs. Cullers, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye.

Building Inspection Fees:

Mr. Beahm was not present for the meeting. Dr. Daley suggested to still hold the public hearing as the information had all been discussed in prior work sessions. Mrs. Cook opened the public hearing and there were no questions or comments from the Board.

George Cline of 86 Menefee Lane, Front Royal, spoke as a representative of the Warren County Builders Association, and expressed the need for a fee increase but commented that it is a 200% increase and is excessive. Furthermore, he asked what the County will be getting out of this increase, i.e. additional County Staff, shorter plan review times etc.

Ryan Oaks of Oaks Construction, 1075 Rivermont Drive, Front Royal, agreed with Mr. Cline's statement that the 200% increase is excessive. Furthermore, his biggest concerns is the permit going from \$5 to \$200, and the plan reviews taking 40 days approximately to be completed.

Hugh Henry of 175 Hugh Henry Lane, Front Royal, spoke as a representative of the Planning Commission and commented that the Warren County has to compete with surrounding Counties and that he would understand the \$200 fee if that is what all surrounding Counties were doing. He emphasized the importance of looking closely at the rates in the surrounding counties in order to stay competitive and grow.

There were no additional comments from citizens.

Dr. Daley reminded the Board that they had looked at two different options during the work sessions and the one being presented is the higher of the two. He then offered to table this motion until Mr. Beahm can come review the lower option again (100% as apposed to 200%).

Mr. Cullers, in conjunction with Mr. Clines' question, asked what the 200% plan is expected to cover a new position or if it's expected to cover what the County currently has. Dr. Daley stated that currently there is a Deputy position and a Plans Reviewer position vacant. They have been vacant for some time but interviews for one of the positions are scheduled for the following week. However, this money was intended to reduce the funding from the General Public, and not for those vacancies since they are already in the budget.

Mrs. Oates asked if there was a way to set the expectations and performance of the Building Department. Dr. Daley stated that there was and that the County will review what has been done in the past.

On a motion made by Mrs. Oates, seconded by Mrs. Cullers, and the following vote, the Board tabled the Building Inspection fees.

Mr. Mabe, Aye; Mrs. Oates, Aye; Mrs. Cook, Aye; Mrs. Cullers, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye.

Planning, Zoning and GIS Department Fees:

Mr. Wendling stated that the fees have not been changed since April 2004, and since then the department has remained constant in terms of department size and personnel etc. The additional costs are due to the updated technology and licensing. Furthermore, the increase in fees and structure has been compared to approximately 7 other municipalities, and Mr. Wendling compared Warren County more closely with Culpepper given its similarities in size and demographics.

Mrs. Cook opened the public hearing, and Mr. Butler asked why Clarke County was not referenced in the discussion of comparison in terms of the GIS and Building Fees. Mr. Wendling did not have tangible research on hand but stated that the demographics and size are vastly different from Warren County and there are a lot of conservation easements, also their tax rate is higher given their low population.

Hugh Henry spoke on behalf of the Planning Commission and cautioned the Board about trying to figure out a net zero based on the economy. Furthermore, he cautioned them to stay competitive with surrounding Counties and some of their fees need an increase too and commented that the fee structure should be examined more frequently so as to avoid any dramatic changes.

There were no additional comments from the public.

Mrs. Cullers asked about the differential for Short Term Tourist Rentals. Mr. Wendling stated that it has been bumped from \$1,500 to \$1,750 for a Conditional Use Permit. This is due to the fact that Short Term Rentals

require a post approval process which requires a checklist of items that must be completed before a certificate of zoning can be issued.

Mrs. Cook asked what the main objective was in doing research to determine the new fees. Mr. Wendling stated that his objective was to identify where the fees were particularly low or had no fee at all, and also to have the fees structured so that they did not have to be reviewed and changed frequently.

On a motion made by Mrs. Cullers, seconded by Mr. Butler, and the following vote, the Board of Supervisors approved the authorization of the planning, zoning, and GIS fee schedules modifications request.

Mr. Butler, Aye; Mrs. Cullers, Aye; Mrs. Cook, Aye; Mrs. Oates, Aye; Mr. Mabe, Aye

Tax Relief for the Elderly:

Mrs. Sherry Sours was not in attendance and Dr. Daley stated that the new tax rates cannot be retroactive this year because Warren County is already into the Tax share. However, it allows those who are already in the program to gain additional assistance. Starting January 1st, 2024, the Board has two options that were previously discussed and option 2 was recommended.

There were no citizens who signed up to speak and there were no additional comments from the Board.

On a motion made by Mrs. Oates, seconded by Mrs. Cullers, and the following vote, the Board amended County code Section 160-17 as presented effective immediately and that the ordinances described in option 2 be amended as presented effective January 1st, 2024.

Mr. Mabe, Aye; Mrs. Oates, Aye; Mrs. Cook, Aye; Mrs. Cullers, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye.

Adoption of Resolution to Set Percentage of Tax Relief for Personal Property (Motor Vehicles) for 2023 Tax Year:

Dr. Daley stated that this is the amount that is received from the State and in 2001 the State agreed they would provide 70% of the cost of Personal Property. However, since then it has dwindled down to 25%.

There were no citizens who signed up to speak and there were no additional comments from the Board.

On a motion made by Mrs. Cullers, seconded by Mr. Mabe, and the following vote, the Board of Supervisors approved and adopted the attached resolution to set a percentage of tax relief for the 2023 Tax Year at a level of 25% that is anticipated to exhaust personal property tax relief funds provided to Warren County by the Commonwealth of Virginia as authorized by the Warren County Code section 160-109.

Mr. Butler, Aye; Mrs. Cullers, Aye; Mrs. Cook, Aye; Mrs. Oates, Aye; Mr. Mabe, Aye

FY23-24 Proposed Tax Rate(s):

Dr. Daley stated that this is a cumulation of all the tax rates excluding the Sanitary Districts. There are two changes from last year, due to the high valuations of vehicles last year, the \$4.00 rate was reduced to \$3.80, that now goes back to \$4.00. Secondly, Mrs. Sours has previously discussed the real estate rate with a recommendation of \$0.49 cents.

There were no citizens who signed up to speak and there were no additional comments from the Board.

On a motion made by Mrs. Cullers, seconded by Mr. Butler, and the following vote, the Board of Supervisors adopted the proposed tax rates for 2023, including a real estate rate of \$0.49 cents.

Mr. Mabe, Aye; Mrs. Oates, Aye; Mrs. Cook, Aye; Mrs. Cullers, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye.

Sanitary District Tax Rates:

Dr. Daley emphasized that in terms of Sanitary District tax rates, Warren County is now the lowest in the valley. Mrs. Cullers asked for confirmation that the rates are set by the districts and not the County. Dr. Daley confirmed that was correct.

There were no citizens who signed up to speak and there were no additional comments from the Board.

On a motion made by Mr. Butler, seconded by Mr. Mabe, and the following vote, the Board of Supervisors adopted the Sanitary District Tax rates for 2023.

Mr. Butler, Aye; Mrs. Cullers, Aye; Mrs. Cook, Aye; Mrs. Oates, Aye; Mr. Mabe, Aye

New Business:

Mrs. Culler commented that \$0.40 is cutting it close in terms of being able to meet the County's obligations and emphasized Fire and Rescue, and she would like to know what the citizens themselves think and are willing to do when it comes to Fire and Rescue and their financial support.

Adjournment:

The meeting was adjourned at 7:06 PM