

At a Regular Meeting of the Board of Supervisors of Warren County held in the Warren County Government Center on May 06, 2025, at 7:00 PM.

Present – Warren County Board of Supervisors and County Staff: Jerome K. Butler, Chair (Happy Creek District); John W. Stanmeyer, Vice Chair (Shenandoah District); Cheryl L. Cullers, Chair (South River District); Victoria L. Cook, (Fork District); Richard A. Jamieson, (North River District); also, Jason J. Ham, County Attorney; Edwin C. Daley, County Administrator; Kelly Wahl, Planner; Matt Wendling, Planning Director; Chase Lenz, Zoning Administrator; Sherry Sours, The Commissioner of Revenue; Zachary Henderson, Deputy Clerk to the Board of Supervisors

Call to Order and Pledge of Allegiance of the United States of America:

Mr. Butler called the meeting to order at 7:00 PM with an opening prayer from Pastor David Gurley

Adoption of Agenda – Additions or Deletions:

On a motion by Ms. Cullers, seconded by Mr. Stanmeyer, and the following vote, the Board adopted the agenda as presented.

Ms. Cook, Aye; Dr. Jameison, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye; Mr. Stanmeyer, Aye; Ms. Cullers, Aye

Discussion - Contract Renewal Agreement for Reassessment Services:

Ms. Sours stated that that Cowan Services has provided two different options for their reassessment for 2027, both of which would be divided between two different fiscal years. The first option is the full amount that includes the mailing of the reassessment notices and the use of the aerial imagery. The second option is the lesser amount that is without the aerial imagery and would have to bear the cost of the notices and mailing.

Ms. Cook commented on the contract and that this is the first time the County has utilized their services, emphasizing constituent complaints regarding professionalism and responses etc. Additionally, she asked if Ms. Sours or her office had communicated with them about said complaints. Ms. Sours stated that one of the issues was there was only one available room to do the hearings, therefore multiple hearings took place in a single room resulting in noise and attention issues.

Mr. Cowan stated that some of the complaints he experienced and acknowledged were people having a difficult time getting in contact with him and his staff when they were first calling, and plans on hiring staff for exclusively that purpose for a short period of time. In terms of complaints in the field, Mr. Cowan stated that they are following typical protocols with marked vehicles, ID Badges etc. but emphasized that they are always looking to improve and do better in the future as their business grows.

Dr. Jamieson stated that people had communicated to him frequently that they could not get in contact with Cowan which caused confusion and missed appointments. He then suggested a call log or the County being involved in knowing when a person has an appointment so records can be kept if they are missed. Additionally, commented on the constituent confusion regarding the appointments themselves when calling in, Mr. Cowan stated that due to a new computer system, and that transition, there were some data errors that had to be corrected which resulted in delays to the process. Typically, they would have preferred to finish in the fall and have hearings before the end of the year.

Dr. Jamieson then asked about the two renewal options, emphasizing that the option with Eagle View (visual imagery) and what the relationship will look like in terms of value, questioning the value of the additional information provided by Eagle View. Mr. Cowan stated that the immediate benefit to the County would be the various departments that will be able to utilize it such as Planning & Zoning and Public Safety. From an

assessment standpoint, there will be a crediting to the contract price since they would save money with not having to go out in the field.

Mr. Stanmeyer asked, regarding the second option with no aerial imagery and desk review only, what that would consist of and the specifications of that approach. Mr. Cowan stated that the desk reviews consist of reviewing all facts to ensure their alignment and adjusting those to market value.

Ms. Cullers stated that she has received calls about property where buildings were said to be there that weren't and asked about the property evaluation process given the wide variety of different adjustments in small areas, as well as documentation of appeals. Mr. Cowan stated that they have written notes as well as an appeal log that summarizes all the changes etc.

Mr. Butler asked if the aerial imagery is proprietary and if the County owns it. Mr. Cowan stated that the County would own it, and anybody would be able to have access to it.

Dr. Jamieson asked if other departments have expressed any interest in the aerial imagery and if they could benefit from it and expressed a concern that the additional cost of \$240,000 may not be worthwhile. Ms. Sours stated that the Sheriff's Office used to have it but had problems with the servers that could not be replaced.

Dr. Jamieson further stated that he would like a commitment to an appointment log that is initiated by Cowan and shared with the County so that the County could have a track of all appointments that have been made and appointments that weren't made.

Public Comment Period for Items on the Agenda: *there were no speakers for this portion.*

Board Reports:

- **Ms. Cook reported the following:**
 - Attended a School Board budget meeting with Dr. Jamieson to discuss their priorities.
 - Provided updates on the County Administrator recruitment process
 - Stated that there will be a follow-up School Board Budget meeting on May 8th.
 - Gave a shout out to VDOT and complimented their responsiveness to constituent needs
- **Dr. Jamieson reported the following:**
 - Attended a School Board budget meeting with Ms. Cook to discuss their priorities.
 - Toured E-Wilson Elementary School with Dr. Ballenger and Dr. Funk.
 - Toured the E-Wilson school with Ballenger
 - On April 29th: Interviewed with the County Administrator recruiter.
 - On May 1st: Went on Town Talk to discuss and expand on the Economic Development Plan, and commented that Economic Development was addressed in Broad terms and is suggesting a process to help move things in a positive direction, and a debt conscious point of view
 - Commented that a Homesteader expressed interest in getting a working group started to establish ideas for a Farm Stand Hub on vacant land, and that he will try and facilitate that.
- **Mr. Butler reported the following:**
 - Commented on the Data Center issue emphasizing their size and utility consumption and stated that they would not be a good fit here.
 - Commented on the upcoming Wings and Wheels event this weekend and encouraged everyone to attend at the Airport.
- **Mr. Stanmeyer reported the following:**
 - Worked on constituent issues regarding delinquent taxes for at risk homes and a conditional use permit at Rockland with DEQ issues.
 - On May 17th: there will be a Shenandoah River cleanup at the Farms from 9:00AM – Noon.

- Commented that May is national bike month.
- **Ms. Cullers reported the following:**
 - On April 17th: Attended a Northern Shenandoah Valley Regional Commission meeting where a housing project in Winchester was discussed and the possibility of something similar with derelict housing here.
 - On April 18th: Met with the new owner of the old Rivermont Fire Station and took a property tour.
 - On April 21st: Met with the Fire Chief and Assistant to discuss the Chester Gap agreement.
 - On April 23rd: Attended the Community Development meeting and spoke with VDOT regarding a camping CUP.
 - On April 23rd: Attended a Recovery Court meeting, commenting on the 5 potential grads working through the program.
 - On April 25th: Attended the Skyline High School Morale Booster fundraiser
 - On April 26th: Attended the Samuel's Library Taste for Books event.
 - On April 27th: Attended the Lone Pine Earth Day Event at the Gazebo
 - On April 28th: Met with David Beahm and Jon Martz regarding the housing project discussed in the Regional Commission meeting
 - On April 28th: Attended a meeting of the Police Athletic League that the Sheriff's Office is putting on.
 - On April 29th: Attended a Town Council meeting and met with the County Administrator Recruiter
 - On April 30th: Met with some residents in her area about a CUP for a campground.
 - On April 30th: Attended the Warren County Public Schools annual Banquet and then recognized all the teachers and support staff for teachers of the year from each school
 - Acknowledged national teacher appreciation and nurses week.
 - On May 1st: Attended Skyline High School's Annual FAA Banquet.
 - Gave her thoughts on the ongoing discussion regarding Data Centers, emphasizing her concerns regarding their size and consumption of utilities and her confidence that the Board majority is not in favor of them as well.
 - Commented on the Tourism committee and their efforts to build a foundation of ideas that will help guide the new director when they are hired.
 - Commented on the division in the County and the "misinformation" that is being spread having an adverse effect on the community.
 - Commented on the recent post about river contamination and discussed DEQ's efforts to improving their age system and urged for better answers regarding the high levels of E Coli and solutions.
- **Dr. Daley had no report:**
- **Mr. Ham had no report:**

Approval of Minutes - April 15th, 2025:

On a motion by Mr. Stanmeyer, seconded by Ms. Cook, and the following vote, the Board approved the minutes for the April 15th meeting as presented.

Ms. Cullers, Aye; Mr. Stanmeyer, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye; Dr. Jameison, Aye; Ms. Cook, Aye

Consent Agenda:

1. FY26 Health Insurance Rates
2. Amendment to Lease Agreement of Hangar B17 to Andrew Gass
3. Warren County Offices Closure Request **(REMOVED FOR DISCUSSION)**
4. Authorization to Advertise for Public Hearing - Secondary Six-Year Plan through the Virginia Department of Transportation

5. Authorization to Advertise - Ordinance Authorizing the Payment of Employee Bonus

Ms. Cullers stated that she would like to remove Item #3 “Warren County Offices Closure Request” for discussion.

On a motion by Mr. Stanmeyer, seconded by Ms. Cook, and the following vote, the Board approved the Consent Agenda as amended.

Ms. Cook, Aye; Dr. Jameison, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye; Mr. Stanmeyer, Aye; Ms. Cullers, Aye

Warren County Offices Closure Request:

Ms. Cullers stated that she thought this was pulled off at the beginning of the year when the Calendar was approved because the primaries are not as traffic heavy, and the disruption of the workday did not necessitate a building closure. Additionally, the offices being closed will take away another day for citizens to be able to come in and pay taxes, given the penalty date is being extended.

Ms. Meadows stated that at the time of the calendar approval, the County was not aware that there would be a primary this coming June and have already been seeing traction with early voting this year and since the Board room and other room do get heavily impacted, it would be better to be closed.

Ms. Cullers acknowledged and further commented that the longer lines for residents paying taxes do not disrupt the workday in the offices and that the crowds for the primary will not be as severe as that.

Dr. Daley stated that the primary reason for extending the due date until the week of the 23rd was because of Juneteenth and then the primary election and expressed concern of the combined traffic of voters and people trying to pay taxes.

On a motion by Ms. Cook, seconded by Dr. Jamieson, and the following vote, the Board approved the request to close Warren County Offices on Tuesday, June 17, 2025, to hold a Primary Election for Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, Virginia House of Delegates, and Local Offices.

Ms. Cullers, No; Mr. Stanmeyer, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye; Dr. Jameison, Aye; Ms. Cook, Aye

Contract Renewal Agreement for Reassessment Services with Cowen Services LLC:

Dr. Jamieson stated that he is not convinced that the extra costs of the aerial imagery is going to pay off.

Ms. Cook stated that the imaging software could be more of an efficient use of time and better assess properties. And even if it is unknown if other departments will be able to use the software, once they see the capability, some departments may benefit from it as well.

Dr. Jamieson acknowledged the potential benefit and the progression of technology but does not feel there is enough preparation and analysis of what the tangible benefit is, and recommended departments do research and study what their specific use could be.

Ms. Cullers confirmed with Dr. Daley that the ultimate total of \$238,200 per year extra for the assessment services with the aerial imagery with Eagle View.

Mr. Stanmeyer gave support for option 2 (option without aerial imagery) on cost saving grounds, and to allow Cowan to work through the existing challenges without adding new additions.

On a motion by Mr. Stanmeyer, seconded by Ms. Cullers, and the following vote, the Board approved Option #2 to the Agreement between the County of Warren, and Cowan Services LLC and authorized the Chair and County Administrator, either of whom may act, to execute all necessary documents that have been approved by the County Attorney.

Ms. Cook, No; Dr. Jameison, Aye; Mr. Butler, Aye; Mr. Stanmeyer, Aye; Ms. Cullers, Aye

Public Comment Period – General Comments:

1. Jarred Hill – voiced his support for Samuel’s Public Library and thanked local candidates for their pledge to support the library. Additionally, commenting on Data Centers and emphasizing their variations, utility consumption, size, and environmental impact on the community and its people.
2. Lewis Motten - voiced his support for Samuel’s Public Library and commented on a Civic Pride Workshop in September 2022 that inspired him to step into public service for the first time and recounted the ongoing “political storm” and how it has impacted staff and residents.
3. George Cline – recounted on what the Town of Strasburg is doing to help a local family with a memorial skate park to honor their lost son and used that as an example of how a community and its leaders should help their citizens.
4. Scott Turnmeyer – commented on the decision to move the Economic Development and Tourism Manager position to Parks and Recreation, stating that Tourism should not be focused on event coordinating and should be rooted in Economic Development and growing a revenue stream for County needs.

Adjournment:

On a motion by Dr. Jamieson, seconded by Ms. Cook, and the following vote, the meeting was adjourned at 8:38PM.