

**Virginia:**

At the Town Hall meeting of the Board of Supervisors held at the Charles City County Government Administration Building thereof on **Wednesday, March 6, 2019, 6:00 p.m.** in the 244<sup>th</sup> year of the Commonwealth and 385<sup>th</sup> year of the County.

PRESENT: Floyd H, Miles, Sr., Chairman  
Gilbert A. Smith  
William G. Coad

RE: ADOPTION OF AGENDA

Motion was made by Bill Coad to approve adoption of Agenda as presented. Motion passed unanimously.

RE: MEALS TAX

Michelle Johnson stated in May 2018 the Board adopted a resolution authorizing the County to request the Circuit Court to issue a meals tax referendum on the November ballot. In November 2018 the referendum passed by a majority vote, 2056 yes, 1, 223 no. Even though the meals' tax was successfully placed on the November 2018 ballot, it was not advertised for the required amount of time. The next steps are to adopt a new resolution; advertise referendum once a week for three weeks prior to election; place meals' tax on November 2019 ballot; if passes, the Board of Supervisors will adopt an ordinance authorizing the 4% meals' tax and the administration of such tax; new tax will begin in January 2020.

Preston Adkins asked if non-profit organizations will be taxed. Michelle Johnson stated 501-3C organization is exempt from taxes.

Bonnie Whittaker asked if the funds being collected from the tax will only be going to EMS? Bill Coad stated that was stated on the referendum. She also asked if there were any other ideas across the board on how to receive dollars and not put it all on one entity. She stated the dollars Cul's Grille donate to the schools and Education Foundation will have to be cut out. Just want to know is there any other way to raise money without putting it all on one industry?

Kevin Sullivan stated meals' taxes are aggressive taxes that will hit the poor people a lot harder. There is no grocery store in the County, they rely on take out for their substance. This is not a big money maker for this County. Restaurants in this county are at early stage, meals' tax is low hanging fruit. Water and Sewer needs to be raised. Even though it says it on the referendum it does not force you to use it for EMS.

Judy Ledbetter asked what is the revenue projection for the meals' tax? Michelle Johnson stated she does not have that information with her tonight, but she will get that information to her.

It was stated by a citizen, if you have no idea on how much you are going to receive in revenue, what's the purpose? Bill Coad stated an actual dollar cannot be placed on it because of anticipated growth.

Gilbert Smith asked for the projection of the number of people going to be hired. Michelle Johnson stated it is proposed that the County be prepared to serve a minimum of 800 people per day for three years. She stated she does not have the preliminary number from the 4% with her tonight.

Bill Coad stated the referendum did dedicate the dollars to Fire/EMS. We will spend far more than what is received from the meals' tax on Fire/EMS. Water and Sewer will never be a self-sustaining system in this County.

Kevin Sullivan stated the issue is the millions of dollars in the CIP for system. \$400,000 a year to serve approximately 10% of the County is not fair to the other 90% that doesn't have access to the system. Bill Coad stated we were dictated by DEQ and VDH.

Preston Adkins asked when the construction jobs are over, what will happen when the people leave? Gilbert Smith stated they are construction jobs, he can visualize food trucks up and down Route 106. They will leave once the workers leave.

A citizen stated he oppose the meals' tax, as he believes it is premature. He believes the majority of the construction food budget will be going to Bottoms Bridge to eat. He thinks the County should give it a little bit more time, see some development, breaking ground on gas plant, then visit this again. Michelle Johnson stated they will not be allowed to leave the site during the construction of the first project. They are looking to have temporary food options for them on site.

Cullen Jenkins stated Cul's Courthouse Grille has been here for 10 years. 4% will hurt us, there are four restaurants in Charles City County. 75% of their businesses come from Prince George, New Kent, and surrounding counties. It was a disappointing thing last year when we came to you all about the meals' tax to find out it was already on the ballot to be voted on. We have 12 employees; 10 employees live in Charles City County. Between the sales' and meals' taxes it will be 10% total.

Skeeter Glenn stated I have been involved in Economic Development since 1983. We have gone out, in and out the state to try to get businesses to come to Charles City County. They will ask why. We are a rural, easy to work with, don't have a business or meals' tax. Never got one business to come to the County because of taxes. That's not the way businesses make decisions to come to the County. He stated he is excited about tourism. Tourism puts the bigger grain on Fire/EMS, police department. We are funding it but get no additional revenue. His decision of where he eats is not because of a tax, it is because of service and taste of food.

Bonnie Whittaker stated if she understands correctly food tax is placed on food prepared in Charles City County, any outside caters or any other county that comes here they are not taxed. It would be terrible disadvantage to the County.

Bill Coada read the definition of meals' tax. Any place where food is prepared for service to the public, whether on or off premises. Any place where food is served to the public. He will verify if it is correct. He also stated this has not been voted on to go to referendum on this November ballot.

### Broadband Update

Michelle Johnson stated in December 2018 WideOpen Network was hired to redesign the system. Development of RFP (Request for Proposal) is being developed. March/April Tower Bidding process; May 2019 Tower Construction; May/June Wireless Equipment Installation by SCS Broadband; June/July start signing up customers. She also stated when we received the grant the tower was placed, it was not taken into consideration the line of sight to the Courthouse Tower that feeds into the Ruthville Tower. Current tower 120 feet, constructing 199 ft tower at 40 ft. higher elevation. This will eliminate the problem, giving us the line of sight needed.

Was there any recourse for the County from the original design system? Michelle Johnson stated our County Attorney is working on this. This is against SCS not the design team. Computer testing was done in the past. This time a physical testing will be done.

Bonnie Whittaker asked about a tower being taken down. Michelle Johnson stated the tower taken down from District 1 will be moved to District 3 to expand coverage.

Kevin Sullivan stated now that the County is moving and rebuilding a tower. He hopes the County will recoup some of the \$18,000 done on the study. Michelle Johnson stated yes, we will. He thinks a broadband authority would be better for the County.

Bill Coada stated we are in a performance contract with SCS Broadband. Prior to us taking over the infrastructure we have spent approximately \$20,000 of taxpayer money along with the \$60,000 grant; EDA gave \$80,000 to get the signal through the air.

Preston Adkins asked if the grant the County received all for the fiber and have that total been spent? Michelle Johnson stated the grant was actually \$600,000. This grant was for fiber to be installed in the Industrial Park for commercial use.

Bill Coada stated SCS is the service provider they do not own the fiber.

Wayne Orrell asked about provisions for the Library. Michelle Johnson stated the Library will have fiber run to their building.

SPower

Michelle Johnson SPower came to the County almost a year ago to install a 340-Megawatt Solar Power Plant. A public hearing will be held on Tuesday, March 26, at 7:30 p.m. at the Board of Supervisors' meeting for staff and the public to give their opinions on this proposed project. The proposed project is on Route 106, approx. 2,174 acres which 1,800 acres to be developed for the project. The remaining land will be preserved as open space. Right now, if the land stays the way it is, the County will receive \$455,000 in revenue over the next 35 years. If this is approved the County will receive \$4,725,000+ over the next 35 years. There will be community meetings held on March 12 and March 18 at 7:00 p.m. Union Baptist Church on March 12 and St. John Baptist Church on March 18.

Cul's stated last year someone broke in their restaurant and stole \$1,000. They received a check in the amount of \$2,000 from an unknown source. Rumor has it that SPower replaced the dollars. Cul's Grille was able to give a \$2,000 scholarship last year.

Other questions/comments made:

*Question:* Will any homes be affected? The answer was no.

*Comment:* If there were no tax breaks, there would be no solar farm. If you google SPower and go to news you will find SPower is proffering a lot more off smaller properties. Gilbert Smith stated they have to be legal in what they are doing.

*Question:* With all the power plants coming in, will homes be able to receive any power from them? Michelle Johnson stated all the power goes into a network, PMJ network, homes will not be able to receive power.

*Question:* Will any types of gases be released into the air? No, it does not emit anything.

*Question:* How will the meetings be advertised at the churches? Michelle Johnson stated they were advertised at Board meetings, Chronicle, County website, and postcards were mailed to individuals within a one-mile radius of the site.

Questions: Will it give out any noise? No.

Michelle Johnson stated she took a tour of the Dominion Energy Solar Plant in New Kent County. The panels were turning when she took the tour, it was like turning a piece of paper; there was noise.

Public Comments:

Preston Adkins asked for an update on Fire/EMS. Michelle Johnson stated a Captain for Fire/EMS has been hired. He will be introduced at the Board meeting on March 26<sup>th</sup>; working on grants to help pay for personnel as well as apparatus for the County; working on an agreement with the Volunteer Fire Department to use

their equipment and facility to submit to the State, as some of the equipment belongs to the Volunteers; and staff will be proposing personnel in the FY20 Budget.

Eleanor Robinson asked for an update on Dollar General. Michelle Johnson stated the County has an ordinance that total signage for a site can be no more than 100 square feet. Dollar General had two signs, one sign 96 sq. feet and the other 50 sq. Feet. They are modifying their signs to meet our ordinance requirements.

Martha Harris asked how many lodgings do we have that we collect lodging tax from? Denise Smith stated seven. Several AB&B are no longer in business.

Michelle Johnson thanked everyone for coming out to the Town Hall meeting. She stated Town Hall meetings will be held once a quarter for dialogue, a lot of work is being done behind the scene. She invited everyone to come out to the Board monthly meeting on March 26 at 7:30 p.m.

Board Directives and Comments

None

Executive Session

No Executive Session needed.

There being no further business, the Board **adjourned until Tuesday, March 26, 2019, 7:30 p.m.**