

**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
STRATEGIC PLANNING MEETING
FEBRUARY 29, 2016**

At a special meeting hosted by the Board of Supervisors of Floyd County, Virginia, and including the School Board, Town Council and Economic Development Authority, held on Monday, February 29, 2016 at 7:00 p.m. at the Floyd Innovation Center thereof;

Board of Supervisors members and staff present	School Board members and staff present	Town Council members and staff present	Economic Development Authority members and staff present
Case Clinger, Chairman	James Ingram, Chairman	Will Griffin, Mayor	Jon Beegle, Chairman
Joe Turman	Faye Nichols	Karen Bingham	George Nester
Fred Gerald	Gene Bishop	Paul LeMay	Leon Moore
Linda Kuchenbuch	Linda King	Michael Patton	Andy Finn
Lauren Yoder	Laura Leroy	Bruce Turner	Lydeana Martin, Director
Terri Morris, County Administrator	Kevin Harris, Superintendent	Kayla Cox, Town Manager	
Cynthia Ryan, Asst. County Administrator			
Ms. Wanda Combs covered the meeting for <u>The Floyd Press</u> .			

Chairman Case Clinger called the Board of Supervisors meeting to order at 7:00 p.m.

Mayor Will Griffin called the Town Council out of recess.

Chairman James Ingram did not take any action with the School Board.

On a motion of Leon Moore, seconded by George Nester, and carried, it was resolved to call the Economic Development Authority (EDA) to order.

Chairman Clinger welcomed all present.

Town Council – Mayor Will Griffin

- 1) This joint meeting is a long-time coming and it is good to bring everyone together.
- 2) The Town Council has a major sidewalk project throughout the Town.

- a) The sidewalk will come up Oxford Street and at the request of the Board of Supervisors will extend to the County Administrative Building.
 - b) We are one easement away from being able to go to bid. Hopefully we can go to bid in the next couple of months and begin construction this summer.
 - c) We received an \$800,000 grant and the Town match is 20%.
 - d) We identified 4 areas where we would like to extend sidewalks in the future in conjunction with the Board of Supervisors: to Blue Ridge Apartments on Christiansburg Pike, to the high school on Baker Street, to Jacksonville Center and to Floyd Fitness and the Recreation Park.
- 3) The Town has been successful in getting grants. We have received over \$2.5 million in grants in the past 9-10 years.
- a) One was a Community Development Block Grant for \$1 million to work on facades and in that grant was a \$300,000 loan pool. We were told these aren't bank loans. The point of the loans is to encourage business and job creation. We were told to expect a default rate of 50%. We were told to loan \$300,000 and when those were paid off loan another \$300,000. The money would become the Town's if \$600,000 in loans were made.
 - b) To date we have made \$685,000 in loans and we have only had \$25,000 in defaults.
 - c) The only restriction is the money has to be used for economic development.
- 4) The Town has a meals tax and lodging tax. There has been a 33.17% increase in revenues since FY2011. That is with about the same number of restaurants and 24 more rooms.
- 5) The Town issued 148 business licenses in 2011 and issued 172 in 2015.
- 6) The County and Town have a joint Tourism Advisory Council.
- a) Last week Southern Living Magazine named Floyd as one of the top 20 small towns in southern USA.
 - b) Last summer USA Today named Floyd as one of the top 10 small towns in southern USA.
- 7) The area behind Food Lion is one of the few remaining places within town limits available for development. We are close to being fully developed. We have zoning in town and try to control growth that way. Once the town is fully developed where do we go?
- 8) We need to turn our focus to preserving what we have so it does not get ruined by some unwanted development that does not fit with Floyd.
- 9) In the future some mix of zoning and annexation will have to be discussed so that we can protect what we have.
- 10) Going forward we need to keep Floyd what it is and not lose its charm.
- 11) The goals from the Town Council's 2012 Comprehensive Plan are still applicable today. But we need the cooperation of the Board of Supervisors, Economic Development Authority, School Board, Public Service Authority, and Recreation Authority to make them happen.

- a) Protect and enhance quality of life through education, training and better job/income opportunities;
- b) Provide adequate public facilities and services;
- c) Provide for a diversity of housing, including safe and decent housing that is affordable for all;
- d) Sustain rural and small-town charm and value local heritage;
- e) Provide for appropriate use and development of areas adjacent to Town.

School Board – Chairman James Ingram

- 1) Short term goals are:
 - a) Providing competitive compensation and benefits to all employees which will improve morale by showing them we recognize the value of our employees;
 - b) Adequate budget for aging facilities, because old buildings have more frequent system failures and asphalt in all parking lots are cracking and breaking up;
 - c) Flexibility in the budget for increases in health insurance and the Virginia Retirement System next year;
 - d) Funding for career and technical programs such as cosmetology, HVAC, and EMT certification, which will enable high school graduates to go directly into the workforce.
- 2) Long term goals are:
 - a) Gaining support from the Board of Supervisors to fix the pay scale so it doesn't flatten out in the middle of an employee's career, possibly by doing these in increments over a few years;
 - b) Getting support from the Board of Supervisors to conduct a survey to get an idea of the best direction to move forward in providing public education over the next 50 years, whether that be a middle school, intermediate school, or K-8 & 9-12;
 - c) Beginning discussion with all sections of the county to get feedback about what the people are willing to support as far as the future of the school system and the direction to go;
 - d) Setting up meetings in each school so citizens can voice their opinions about the changes that may be suggested through surveys;
 - e) Getting support from the Board of Supervisors for an expansion of the career and technical program on a larger scale with a focus on facilities, instructors and equipment.

Economic Development Authority – Chairman Jon Beegle

- 1) Examples of collaboration in the past have included:
 - a) When the Floyd Flex building was vacated, the Board of Supervisors and EDA worked together to get H&V to move into that building.
 - b) The Floyd Innovation Center came together through the Board of Supervisors, federal EDA, and Tobacco Commission.
 - c) Right now we are working on improving large vehicle access to the Commerce Park.
- 2) EDA successes have included:

- a) The C4 program (Creators, Curriculum, Coaches and Challenge) had 63 participants with an average of 22 people at each session. We had to have 21 teachers/mentors to teach and judge prospective businesses realize their dream. It was almost all volunteers. A result of the C4 program was a 4-part series on National Public Radio and a minimum of 3 start-up businesses.
 - b) The federal EDA which was part of creating this building saw what we were doing here and realized that this was a rural success story and asked for a write-up to present to the White House.
 - c) The Floyd Innovation Center now has all but 2 large bays rented and we are in conversation about one of the large bays.
 - d) H&V uses the Center for training purposes.
 - e) We offer membership for businesses and individuals who want to use the building.
 - f) We started a 5 & 10 loan program and have awarded over \$150,000 to start up and existing businesses. We have \$20,000 to loan now that was money paid back into the program. We have 2 applicants for a loan.
 - g) The Economic Gardening Project involved a panel of experts who assisted businesses by telling them how they might develop. They meet with the owner and look at their business plan, marketing, target audience, and obstacles they might have to get around to be successful.
 - h) The Printer Project which allowed us to improve the printing capacity of 3 local businesses. We also helped purchase equipment and software for Jacksonville Center so they could have a photo lab and they can do 3-D imaging.
 - i) We created a community Online Sales Seminar. This came about because people wanted to talk about how to develop and grow their online sales. We've had 2 sessions and each session had 20+ people in attendance.
- 3) Future projects include:
- a) Continuing the C4 program. Because of this program Floyd is viewed as the innovative, creative model to follow. Ms. Lydeana Martin was asked to speak at the NRV Livability Forum earlier today regarding this program. When you are viewed as successful you are more likely to get additional grants as agencies are willing to invest in your programs.
 - b) We have created a Strategic Planning Committee to explore and prioritize the needs we have.
 - c) We want to create a shovel ready site in the Commerce Center.
 - d) We want to improve large truck access to the Commerce Center.
 - e) We are looking at agriculture from the focus of improving an existing industry.
 - f) We are looking at how to create a successful workforce development program and who can we partner with.
 - g) Along with others we are trying to understand how water affects our economic opportunities and to give support to the need for improved infrastructure and distribution of water.
- 4) Parks and Recreation needs to be part of future meetings as they are a partner in economic development.
- 5) EDA could work with the School Board on projects such as a culinary arts teaching facility and in off hours use the facility for teaching adults or supporting entrepreneurs.

6) Could we connect the Commerce Center to town with a trail or sidewalk?

Board of Supervisors – Chairman Case Clinger

- 1) In 9 years all but two of the county's loans will be gone. Three major ones will be off in 6 years. We will be in a position of being able to invest.
- 2) We don't want to wait until the last minute and be reactive. We want to start being proactive now. Things can't happen overnight. It takes planning now to do it right.
- 3) The Board of Supervisors wants to help the various groups meet their goals. If we start planning now, it will be easier to do that as we move forward.
- 4) The idea of a Strategic Planning Committee with a couple of members from the Town, Boards, and Authorities that could meet more often is a good idea. The members of the committee could take ideas back to their group. I would like to get everyone together again, at least yearly.

Supervisor Linda Kuchenbuch asked if anyone else in the room would like to speak before the meeting was closed.

Council Member Michael Patton suggested all those present at the meeting introduce themselves. Each person present stated their name and the agency they were representing.

Supervisor Lauren Yoder and Supervisor Kuchenbuch both expressed interest in creating an interagency Strategic Planning Committee and also having the entire group meet periodically, such as 3 times a year.

Chairman Jon Beegle said he was in favor of a meeting every 4 months and he would want to participate.

Chairman Clinger suggested that the committee consist of 2 members from each entity, including the Recreation Authority.

Chairman James Ingram said it is good to see progress. If you don't discuss the projects you are doing, you stalemate.

Supervisor Kuchenbuch said by creating the committee and meeting regularly and reporting back to the entire group it becomes a living and breathing organization. I think it is really important. We are on a precipice right now. We are at a point in this County and Town's future and present where everyone is looking at us. Grant folks are saying this place is doing good things. The Town has had success with its grants. The County has had success with its grants. Everybody is looking at us, the Schools as well. It is really important that we show that we are working together to benefit all of the folks who live, work, play, and go to school in this county.

Chairman Clinger said perhaps this is something we want to take back to our respective boards.

Mayor Griffin said the Town Council is in. We would love to form a committee that meets regularly.

Chairman Clinger replied that enough of his Board members are nodding their heads to show that they are interested in this and we will discuss this at our next Board of Supervisors meeting. From people nodding it looks like EDA members and School Board members are also interested in pursuing this. The committee could meet once a month and as things come up. The entire group could meet every 3 months, bi-annually, whatever. If nothing comes out of this meeting other than that, we will have made progress.

Mayor Griffin added it is a huge step, unprecedented really.

Supervisor Kuchenbuch said there are so many places around us that have seen people not working together and they are at odds with each other. That is not what Floyd is about. Floyd is about working together for the greater good. We see that in every single part of our community, whether it be churches together, whether it be folks coming together in tragedies. That is what we do. That is what we are. It is really, truly what defines us. And it is everybody, people who have been here 17 years, people who have been here 30 years, people whose family has been here 400 years. It is all of us coming together. We don't have those preconceived divides. We are beyond that and that is why it is important for us as community leaders to embrace that and move forward.

Supervisor Yoder said I like it that we will meet regularly. If we don't we will forget things the next time around. Each group here has goals where there is a lot of overlap. We can find ways to work together.

Chairman Ingram said the idea of working together is to make it successful.

Supervisor Yoder added if we don't put it on the front burner, then nothing will happen.

Chairman Ingram continued you talked about adults using facilities for career and technical education (CTE) like with the welding program. We can build on that.

Chairman Clinger said there are a lot of opportunities to keep us moving forward, not let it just be a flash-in-the-pan, one-time meeting.

School Board member Gene Bishop said both the Governor and General Assembly brought out how they would like to redo high school. With the lower two grades of high school being more in the basic subjects and the higher grades being in programs that lead to certificates where available.

Chairman Clinger agreed and said those are some things to look at. You said more expansion of the schools. I would hate to put \$50,000 in redoing a baseball field and then two

years later someone says we need more building. By having the Recreation Authority involved in the conversations, the School Board looking at mid- and long-term goals, we won't have to invest a lot and then tear it up as we go forward. We will all be working together at the same time.

School Board member Bishop said he went to Richmond to the Capital Conference. The Chancellor of the Community College Boards talked about the Governor just putting out a scenario on economic development. He said we could put 1 person here with a Master's degree, 2 under him with Bachelor's degrees, and then 7 people under with certificates where they have middle class jobs at \$60,000-\$80,000 a year with no further education than high school with a certificate. He said Virginia can place the person with the Master's degree and 2 with Bachelor of Science degrees, but they can't place the 7 with certificates. North Carolina can place the 7 and that is the reason all the businesses are going to North Carolina.

Supervisor Kuchenbuch responded it isn't like Virginia doesn't have an excellent community college system in place.

School Board member Bishop replied it needs to be more affordable and offer more dual enrollment opportunities.

Chairman Clinger added you can look at the success the schools have with their welding department. They are renowned for the welders they turn out. That has taken a long time to grow. Hopefully other career and technical paths will be successful.

Chairman Ingram agreed and said Giles is doing that.

Chairman Beegle said welding has set the model for culinary arts to follow.

Chairman Clinger said he believes students are Serve Safe certified when they finish the culinary arts program. That is the first part of what you need in your business. I'm sure 4 or 5 years ago they weren't that way. It has grown over time. Hopefully that is what these meetings can do. We can find out from EDA the specific jobs they are looking for in technical. With the Town, what projects you have coming up and can we tie in the 5 & 10 and loan pool?

Vice Chairman Faye Nichols said I was in education for a number of years. We need to change the mindset of parents too. As a school counselor, everybody wants their kids to go to college. That is the only thing they see. If you have programs there, the parents can go and look into those CTE programs and say, "Oh my gosh, you don't have to pay all this back when you are training or certified in a certain area." We've got to communicate that to parents. We have to start there.

Supervisor Kuchenbuch replied that we have such a fluid makeup of our community that we can start that dialogue. It just takes meetings and getting people together. The first meeting will probably have between 15-20 people. The drug situation with STOMP, at the first meeting there were so few people, but now we are taking it to the next level. There are going to be entire assemblies where all the students are involved. It just takes a little bit of time. But I think it is well worth the time. It is what we are doing here as well. It is well worth the time we invest.

Supervisor Yoder added that he wanted to share about serving on the Rescue Squad and it is a struggle to get volunteers. The County is spending about \$750,000 for a paid staff. It is a large line item in our budget now. That will continue to grow and eat up parts of our budget that could be used for something else. We have to provide the services. If we could invest now into a program that gave us volunteers and gave students a career opportunity they don't have now, it will help everybody...the school system, the County, EDA with students getting good jobs at \$30,000 per year the first day. We really have to think about investing because if we don't it will be a much bigger problem 5 years from now.

Chairman Ingram said the community needs to understand that payback will not be immediate, but there will be payback a long time down the road. People can be right-now oriented. It is the future of the County we are talking about.

Supervisor Kuchenbuch responded that the constituents she spoke to during the campaign election understand that it is not a quick fix. They are ready for us to make those hard choices, tough decisions and think wisely about what we are doing. They are behind us. They want us to do this. They are ready. I'm not saying everybody, but there are a number of folks who are ready and willing to support these efforts because they believe in where they live. They believe in Floyd and want it to grow and be as wonderful a place today as it can be 50 years from now.

Vice Chairman Turman said that he talked to Kevin Sowers [Emergency Services Coordinator] the other day about some of the surrounding counties that offer EMT classes in high school in their senior year. I was talking to one of the fire chiefs and he said, "That would be great and also put Firefighters I and II where they could get their certificate." They could come out and start. It gives them something to work for and also open up something in the medical field for them.

School Board member Bishop said there is a bill coming through the General Assembly where they are trying to make it where people who are expert in firefighting and not have a BS degree be able to teach those classes at the high school.

Supervisor Turman said he was told that Carilion might be able to provide an instructor. It would be great to find out about this and bring it back to everybody. It would help us with our budget if we could get enough volunteers.

Supervisor Kuchenbuch said students coming out of the high school have gone on to become EMTs and firefighters. If we provided a more structured environment for others to think that is an opportunity, you could probably triple that number.

Supervisor Yoder said our school system is the key to making most of this work.

School Board member Linda King said that the school system just added a Communities in Schools program which is a national program that has been around about 40 years. Primarily right now we are working on dropout prevention as our first focus. If we save one kid from dropping out of school, we have helped our community by keeping them off welfare and making them employable. It can spearhead into internships in the communities and students that are

motivated. If they talk to people and see there is an opportunity for a job, it will motivate them to stay in Floyd County and work here and be productive citizens. It helps everybody.

Vice Chairman Nichols asked why can't they do a block schedule and work at businesses. They may stay there or start their own business.

Chairman Beegle said the more options you give young people, the more experience, the more they understand what they like to do. A 10th grader might think he wants to be a firefighter for the rest of his life, but when he gets in the class he may realize he does not. When kids go to college they declare what their major is going to be. They may think they want to be an accountant but when they get out it is really a forest ranger. They may find out from job experience it is something else. The broader experience we can give these kids the better equipped they are to make decisions about what they should be doing.

Ms. Lydeana Martin [Community and Economic Development Director] said one of the challenges in economic development is we don't have a lot of business. The paid EMS started when all the plants in Floyd closed down and volunteers had to work elsewhere.

Superintendent Kevin Harris responded this is interesting. We can employ every welder that we graduate, but there is nowhere to weld in Floyd. There is no business to weld. Now if we could bring in a business that welded truck boxes or aluminum boats or something like that... Doug will tell you that every kid he graduates he can find a job for them welding making pretty good wages. But those jobs aren't here in Floyd. So if you can find a way to look at what we are strong at as a school system... Joe Tesauro with agriculture and woodworking now. You are talking about lending the school for culinary arts. Last year we taught two weldings. The first welding class filled up immediately. We taught another welding class. This year Mr. Tesauro is teaching a traditional wood working class; teaching people how to build things with hand tools. We could do that for culinary arts. We could do it for business. Becky Howell came to meet with me after the last School Board meeting. We are going to do an after school and summer Junior Achievement program, which is basically teaching people how to use skills to start their own business. We are doing a lot of things. One of the things Mr. Bishop brought up, which is exactly right, is that there is a bill now going through the House and Senate that would allow people without teaching credentials to come into schools and teach CTE classes. The barrier to that is... I'll give you a good example, Jessica Slusher has a degree in criminal justice, but she would have to take 5 classes to become a teacher. If this bill passes then EMTs, fire, somebody like Jessica who works in the school system could teach a block of criminal justice. Think about the Sheriff's Department, we have jobs in law enforcement here in the county, EMT jobs. If this bill passes I would really like... I don't know who the people are to contact, whoever is training the EMTs and the fire people... we would love to have them come and teach a block of that to our students. And if the bill passes, we would love to do something like that. I have already been talking to some folks about that.

Chairman Clinger asked if anybody else had anything to say.

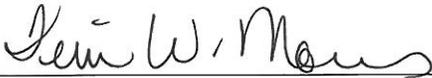
On a motion of George Nester, seconded by Leon Moore, and carried, it was resolved to adjourn the Economic Development Authority.

The School Board said they were not in session and did not need to adjourn.

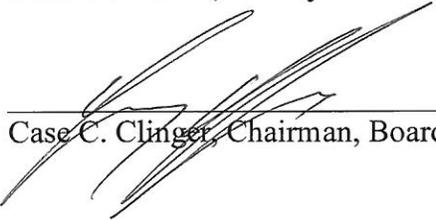
Michael Patton moved to extend on behalf of the Town Council to all folks present to hold the next meeting at Town Hall in 3 months. He also moved that the Town Manager, County Administrator, and a representative from the School Board work together to come up with plans for sidewalks to the Commerce Center and the High School. Paul LeMay seconded the two-part motion. The Town Council concurred.

On a motion of Michael Patton, seconded by Bruce Turner, and carried, it was resolved to adjourn the Town Council.

Supervisor Kuchenbuch moved, seconded by Supervisor Gerald, and carried, it was resolved to adjourn the Board of Supervisors until the next day, Tuesday, March 1, 2016.



Terri W. Morris, County Administrator



Case C. Clinger, Chairman, Board of Supervisors