

# **Meherrin River Regional Jail Authority Board Meeting Minutes**

**Thursday, May 2, 2024**

The Meherrin River Regional Jail Authority Board held their meeting in the Meherrin River Regional Jail Board Room.

## **I. Call To Order**

Members Present are as follows:

Kevin Massengill, Dinwiddie County Administrator  
Bill Chavis, Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors  
Captain Steve Kennedy, Dinwiddie County Sheriff's Office  
Captain Joseph Lopresti, Brunswick County Sheriff's Office  
Leslie Weddington, Brunswick County Administrator  
Dr. Alfonso Seward, Brunswick County Board of Supervisors  
Alex Gottschalk, Mecklenburg County Administrator  
Tom Tanner, Mecklenburg County Board of Supervisors

Others in attendance are as follows:

Crystal Willett, Superintendent  
Brent Wright, Major  
Brendan Hefty, Hefty, Wiley & Gore, P.C.  
Jennifer Derrenbacker, Finance Director  
Shelley Slaughter, Executive Secretary

## **II. Closed Meeting**

Tom Tanner made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (a) (1) of the Code of Virginia to discuss the Superintendent's Evaluation. Leslie Weddington seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

## **III. Return to Open Meeting and Certification**

Bill Chavis made a motion that the Jail Authority return to open meeting and certify by roll call vote that to the best of each member's knowledge only public business matters lawfully exempted from the open meeting requirements of the Freedom of Information Act and identified in the motion to go into closed meeting were heard, discussed or considered in the closed meeting. Tom Tanner seconded the motion. By roll call vote, the motion was unanimously passed:

Ayes: Kevin Massengill, Bill Chavis, Cpt. Steve Kennedy, Cpt., Joseph Lopresti, Leslie Weddington, Dr. Alphonso Seward, Alex Gottschalk and Tom Tanner.

**IV. Approval of Agenda**

Leslie Weddington made a motion to approve the May 2, 2024 agenda. Alex Gottschalk seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

**V. Approval of Minutes**

Bill Chavis made a motion to approve the February 22, 2024 Board Meeting Minutes. Tom Tanner seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

**VI. New Business**

**A. Attorney's Report**

1. Election of Officers
  - a. Chairman
  - b. Vice-Chairman
  - c. Secretary

The Authority bylaws call for authority election of officers by July 1 of each year. The current officers are Kevin Massengill, Chairman; Leslie Weddington, Vice-Chairman; and Wayne Carter, Secretary. Alex Gottschalk was nominated for Secretary as of 7/1/2024.

Bill Chavis made a motion to approve the slate of officers. Tom Tanner seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

**B. Superintendent's Report**

1. Staffing Presentation – Brent Wright, Major of Administration and Support gave a presentation of an overview of his role within the facility. He also gave a staffing position update to the Board as well as an overview of costs associated with the Mecklenburg Facility, which is temporarily closed.
2. Davenport Discussion Update – At the November 2023 Board Meeting, the Board voted to move short-term, variable-rate DSRF funds to VA SNAP to maximize our earnings and requested periodic updates to assist in determining when to move the funds to long-term, fixed-rate investments.

Davenport provided an updated analysis as of April 25, 2024 and it shows that VA SNAP rates are currently higher than fixed-rate Treasury investments. Therefore, no change is recommended at this time. Another update will be given at the August 2024 Board Meeting.

3. Monthly Status Report – The monthly report for the months of January 2024 through March 2024 were presented and discussed.

STAFFING UPDATE – As of today we have 39 vacancies and 1 new hire slated to start on May 13, 2024. We are working diligently to recruit more Officers. We post on social media as well as Indeed.com and attended a Job Fair recently with no interest.

INMATE HOLD – As discussed at the last Board Meeting, we have a repeat offender that has caused issues with one of our Lieutenants, in which the Lieutenant had to take out a no contact protective order. Piedmont Regional Jail agreed to hold this particular offender and did so for a time; however, we received the call that they would no longer hold said offender. Major Brent Wright reached out to Riverside Regional Jail and they would not agree to hold this offender even with payment. Major Wright then reached out to Blue Ridge Regional Jail and they agreed to hold said offender at no cost. This offender is slated to be released on May 21, 2024, but could possibly have other charges that may require more jail time. If so, we wanted to remind the Board of the possibility of having to pay another facility to hold this offender if needed.

HEM – We currently have 2 offenders on HEM. One is on dialysis 3 times a week therefore we worked with Mecklenburg County along with DOC to get this offender approved for HEM. The other offender was put on HEM by the Brunswick County Commonwealth's Attorney due to medical conditions as well.

OFFENDER SERVSAFE PROGRAM – We started an offender Servsafe Program. The first class was held in March with 6 offenders participating and 5 passing. Another class started on April 24, 2024 with 6 participants.

TAXI SERVICES – We provide a taxi service to offenders that are released without transportation. We have designated locations that they can choose from to be transported to at no cost to the offender. The company that we currently have a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with will no longer report. We have a list of taxi service companies that we can call as backup and we have been in contact with the original company that we used years ago. However, they will only accept cash or Cash App. We do not have petty cash, so we reached out to see if they would let us pay them a balance to have on hand and replenish as necessary. We are waiting to hear back from them on this solution.

We are having a lot of issues with taxi services reporting and we are running out of options. There may be a time that we may have to release to the street if we cannot provide transportation. Dr. Alfonzo Seward recommended reaching out to medical transport services to see if they may be interested in making these transports if needed.

NATIONAL CORRECTIONAL OFFICERS WEEK – Next week is National Correctional Officer's Week. We will be providing a food truck, which was covered 100% by one of our vendors, as well as Spirit Week, and many door prizes throughout the week to be raffled off.

4. Board Meeting Schedule – The proposed FY25 Board Meeting Schedule was presented. It is proposed to keep our meetings quarterly, on the first Thursday of August, November and May at 12:30 p.m. February's meeting will be held on February 20, 2025 at 12:30 p.m. due to conflicting meetings. Tom Tanner made a motion to approve the presented Board

Meeting Schedule. Dr. Alfonzo Seward seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

5. Quarterly Financial Report – 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter FY2024 – As of March 31, 2024, we have collected 63.01% of our budgeted revenues and spent 55.52% of our budgeted expenses. Expenses are lower than revenues due to lower ADP and staff vacancies. At the end of the third quarter, ADP was 251 with Brunswick accounting for 25.51%, Dinwiddie 29.88% and Mecklenburg 44.61%. We are projecting a surplus of \$1,957,766.

This is the first year we are using the percentage of usage on a 3-year rolling average to calculate the True-Up. As of March 31, 2024, the Actual True-Up shows Brunswick would receive a refund of \$167,996, Dinwiddie would owe \$319,504, and Mecklenburg would receive a refund of \$151,508. The Projected True-Up as of June 30, 2024 shows that Brunswick would receive a refund of \$222,977, Dinwiddie would owe \$424,069 and Mecklenburg would receive a refund of \$201,092.

6. Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates Engagement Letter – The Audit Engagement Letter with Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates was presented. This needs to be reviewed, approved and executed by the Chairman of the Board and submitted to Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates prior to the start of the FY24 Audit. Leslie Weddington made a motion to approve the Chairman, Kevin Massengill, and Superintendent Crystal Willett, to sign the Engagement Letter provided by Robinson, Farmer, Cox Associates. Cpt. Joseph Lopresti seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.
7. RFP – Vehicle Fleet General Maintenance Services – We issued RFP# 01-FY2024 for Vehicle Fleet General Maintenance Services on March 8, 2024. Vendor proposals were due by April 8, 2024 but unfortunately no vendors submitted a proposal. Based on our average annual spend (\$13,380) and the anticipated total spend (\$40,140) for this contract over a 3-year term, we are not required to issue an RFP since this amount is below the \$200,000 threshold required by the Virginia Public Procurement Act.

Our Small Purchase Policy requires a written informal solicitation of a minimum of four (4) sources if the project is \$30,000 but less than \$200,000, which we already did as a written formal solicitation. Since we did not receive any proposals in response to our solicitation, we plan to reach out to the vendors that our localities and Sheriff's Offices are currently working with to get written quotes and establish a Memo of Understanding (MOU) with the best solution.

8. Proposed FY25 Budget – The FY25 budget has been prepared with the goal of maintaining low operational costs while providing exceptional service to our offenders, staff and community. The budget was prepared using financial data from FY13 through FY23. Jennifer Derrenbacker provided an overview of the changes proposed in the FY25 budget.

The proposed FY25 budget was presented at the February 2024 Board Meeting. Since that meeting we have received our VACORP Insurance Premiums, which did increase slightly. However, we anticipate a substantial refund on our worker's compensation payroll audit that will offset this increase.

The total budget is increasing 1.82% mainly due to lower revenues and ADP along with higher fixed costs due to contract increases, particularly our medical contract. The LIDS revenue decreased due to a large number of offenders going to DOC and a lower ADP in general.

A 3% salary increase is included in the budget for all of our positions which is based on the most recent proposed salary increase by the House and Senate. The state budget has not yet been approved. They will be reconvening in special session on May 13, 2024. We recommend moving forward with the 3% increase in our budget and if anything happens to change the state budget, we will set up a special board meeting to amend our budget.

The total locality contributions are increasing 0.43%. We are able to minimize the increases to our localities in their contributions because we include a Reserve Fund, a Rate Stabilization Fund and an Unrestricted Fund Balance. We include these revenues as a budgetary tool to help balance the budget and help with the localities' contributions.

This year the percentage of usage is determined using a 3-year rolling average to help minimize the large increases and decreases to the locality contributions year to year.

Our budgeted ADP is 280 and this is based on using a 3-year weighted average. Our per diem is increasing due to our ADP decreasing along with increased fixed costs.

Superintendent Crystal Willett is recommending the creation of a Lieutenant Colonel position and it would be a zero dollar impact to the current FY25 budget due to how we fund at 15 officers per shift therefore we can use the vacancy savings to offset this cost. This position would assist the Superintendent with day to day operations. She feels that having this position will help us be more proactive rather than always reactive in our thinking and actions.

Alex Gottschalk referred to Superintendent Crystal Willett's Accomplishments, Goals and Objectives letter to the Board and inquired about the plans and budget for the New Financial Accounting System. Planning is in the very early stages and a goal that we are looking to achieve next fiscal year. Jennifer Derrenbacker reached out to other Regional Jails gathering information on who each currently uses. Based on that information we are in the minority with Bright and the challenges it brings.

After we gather all of this information, we may present our thoughts to the Board to discuss and then look into planning for the financial impact for FY27.

Tom Tanner made a motion to approve the FY25 Budget as presented in the amount of \$21,922,702.94, to include the addition of the creation of the Lt. Colonel position. Dr. Alfonzo Seward seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

**VII. Next Meeting**

The next Board meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, August 1, 2024, at 12:30 p.m. at the Meherrin River Regional Jail Board Room. Lunch will be provided.

**VIII. Adjourn**

There being no further business, a motion was made by Bill Chavis to adjourn the meeting. Leslie Weddington seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.