

Meherrin River Regional Jail Authority Board Meeting Minutes

Thursday, August 7, 2025

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
Captain Steve Kennedy, Dinwiddie County Sheriff's Office
Casey Dooley, Dinwiddie County Board of Supervisors
Captain Joseph Lopresti, Brunswick County Sheriff's Office
Dr. Alfonzo Seward, Brunswick County Board of Supervisors
Bobby Hawkins, Mecklenburg County Sheriff
Alex Gottschalk, Mecklenburg County Administrator

Others in attendance are as follows:

Rodney Jacobs, Superintendent
Major Brent Evans, Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office
Brendan Hefty, Hefty, Wiley & Gore, P.C.
Jennifer Derrenbacker, Finance Director
Shelley Slaughter, Executive Secretary

II. Closed Meeting

Dr. Alfonzo Seward made a motion to go into closed session pursuant to Section 2.2-3711 (A) (1) of the Code of Virginia for discussion of a personnel matter involving a contract with the Superintendent of the Jail Authority. Sheriff Bobby Hawkins seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

III. Return to Open Meeting and Certification

Casey Dooley 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. Dr. Alfonzo Seward seconded the motion. By roll call vote, the motion was unanimously passed:
Ayes: Kevin Massengill, Casey Dooley, Captain Steve Kennedy, Captain Joseph Lopresti, Dr. Alfonzo Seward, Sheriff Bobby Hawkins, and Alex Gottschalk.

IV. Approval of Agenda

The August 7, 2025 Agenda needs to be amended to add under New Business - D. Contractual Services for Crystal Willett to provide consulting services. Dr. Alfonzo Seward made a motion to approve the amended agenda. Sheriff Bobby Hawkins seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

V. Approval of Minutes

Cpt. Joseph Lopresti made a motion to approve the June 12, 2025 Board Meeting Minutes. Captain Steve Kennedy seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

VI. New Business

A. Superintendent's Report

1. Presentation – Sgt. M. Buford gave a presentation on the Transportation Department and her team's role within the facility.
2. Monthly Status Report – The monthly report for the months of May 2025 through July 2025 were presented and discussed.

We are receiving applications and are making a little progress. We are in the process of hiring another Jail Officer and we have also hired a Food Service Technician that will start soon and the kitchen will be fully staffed.

3. Quarterly Financial Report – 4th Quarter FY25 – As of June 30, 2025, we have collected 84.41% of our budgeted revenues and spent 76.02% of our budgeted expenses. Expenses are lower than revenues due to lower ADP and staff vacancies. At the end of the fourth quarter, ADP was 237 with Brunswick accounting for 29%, Dinwiddie 29.5% and Mecklenburg 41.5%.

As of June 30, 2025, the True-Up is complete with Brunswick receiving a refund of \$148,236, Dinwiddie owing \$155,878, and Mecklenburg receiving a refund of \$7,641. Brunswick and Mecklenburg have requested to leave their refunds on the books.

4. Acts of Violence Policy – Effective July 1, 2025, Virginia State Code Section 53.1-116.2:1 requires Jail Superintendents to report certain acts of violence occurring within regional correctional facilities to their primary law-enforcement agency or to the Department of State Police.

Regional correctional facilities are also required to adopt a policy setting forth the procedures for investigation of such acts of violence and the respective roles and responsibilities of the Jail Superintendent and the law-enforcement agency to which such report is made. Each regional correctional facility is also required to provide a copy of the policy to the State Board of Local and Regional Jails prior to January 1 each year, beginning on January 1, 2026.

We are looking to post the Administrative Investigator position either today or tomorrow and hope to have this position filled soon. The goal is, once this position is filled, we will perform our investigations and prosecutions and notify the Sheriff's Department. Captain Joseph Lopresti inquired if there is any obligation to the Sheriff's Department to do any documentation/reports on their end. Superintendent Jacobs stated that after his review of the Code Section, he did not see any mention of the Sheriff's Department being required to keep a report. Captain Lopresti's concern is if a regional correctional facility reports an act of violence to them and then potentially does not do an investigation, it may fall back on the Sheriff's Department. Superintendent Jacobs assured the Board that this would not be the case as the Jail will be handling its own investigations both internally and criminally. Captain Lopresti recommends that the Jail call the Brunswick County Dispatch to report all acts of violence and state that we are not requesting Brunswick County Sheriff's Office assistance, just to be sure they will have the necessary report if needed. Brendan Hefty stated that this policy only requires that the Jail report acts of violence defined in 19.2-297.1 of the Code of Virginia.

Dr. Alfonzo Seward made a motion to approve the Acts of Violence policy. Sheriff Bobby Hawkins seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

B. Adopt Updated Retiree Insurance Policy

Kevin Massengill distributed the updated Early Retiree Health Insurance Policy. After Crystal Willett retired, it was discussed that the retiree policy needed to be updated in order for her to have access to our insurance for her and her family. The Finance Committee, Brendan Hefty, Bill Hefty, and Matt Davis met to discuss and decided to divide this into two tiers based on your hire date, age, and years of service. This policy will provide access to health coverage for the retiree and their eligible dependents until the retiree turns 65, and will be fully funded by the retiree.

In order to get this expedited, Kevin Massengill approved it and sent the presented letter to Anthem. However, after speaking with Brendan Hefty and Bill Hefty, it was decided that this needs to be ratified by the Board.

After discussion, the Board requested two amendments to the policy. The first amendment is to correct the Jail's name from "Meherrin Regional Jail Authority" to "Meherrin River Regional Jail Authority" throughout the policy. The second amendment is to add "access" to the first sentence of the policy. The revised sentence will read "Meherrin River Regional Jail Authority will provide health insurance access to early retirees and their families until the retiree reaches Medicare eligibility at age 65." Matt Davis has already moved forward with this with Anthem, however, we will update our policy with him to reflect these amendments.

Sheriff Bobby Hawkins made a motion to adopt the Meherrin River Regional Jail Authority Early Retiree Health Insurance Policy with the mentioned modifications. Dr. Alfonzo Seward seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

C. Superintendent's Contract Approval

An Employment Agreement was presented for consideration of approval to employ Rodney Jacobs as the new Superintendent of the Meherrin River Regional Jail. Alex Gottschalk made a motion to authorize Kevin Massengill, Chairman, to execute the Employment Agreement to employ Rodney Jacobs as the new Superintendent with an annual salary of \$138,000. Casey Dooley seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

D. Contractual Services for Crystal Willett to Provide Consulting Services

Kevin Massengill has spoken to Superintendent Rodney Jacobs about hiring Crystal Willett as a consultant for a 3-month period with the primary focus of assisting with the FY27 Budget. This contract would begin as of September 1, 2025 at a compensation of \$4,000 per month. Kevin Massengill has spoken to Crystal Willett as well and she is agreeable. Captain Joseph Lopresti made a motion to approve the 3-month contract with Crystal Willett beginning September 1, 2025 at a compensation of \$4,000 per month. Sheriff Bobby Hawkins seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.

VII. Next Meeting

The next Board meeting has been scheduled for Thursday, November 6, 2025, 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 Dr. Alfonzo Seward to adjourn the meeting. Captain Steve Kennedy seconded the motion. All members present voted in favor of the motion.