

**MARCH 9TH, 2023 PLANNING COMMISSION MINUTES**

**VIRGINIA:** at the **REGULAR MEETING** of the **Tazewell County Planning Commission** held **March 9th, 2023 at 6:30 p.m. in the Tazewell County Administration Building, Tazewell, Virginia -- 197 Main Street**

**PRESENT:** **Ann Robinson-Chairperson**  
**Robert “Bob” Moss-Vice Chairman**  
**Maggie Asbury-Member**  
**Anthony Ramella-Member**  
**Jason Herndon-Member**  
**Hayden Lyons-Member**  
**Darrell Addison--Member**

**OTHERS**

**PRESENT:** **Kenneth Dunford, Jr., -- Director of County Engineering**  
**Kimberly Hilbert-Executive Secretary**  
**Barry Brooks—Director of Public Safety**  
**Dr. Chris Stacy—Tazewell County School Board Superintendent**  
**Jennifer Dawson—Thompson & Litton**

**ABSENT:** **Chase Collins—County Attorney**

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Chairperson Robinson called the March 9th, 2023 regular meeting to order and presided at approximately 6:35 p.m.

She then welcomed all visitors and all those in attendance.

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**INVOCATION AND PLEDGE**

Member Asbury gave the invocation, followed by, the Pledge of Allegiance to the US flag by Member Ramella.

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**APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA FORMAT**

Upon motion of Member Herndon, seconded by Vice Chairman Moss, and adopted by a vote of 7 to 0, the Tazewell County Planning Commission hereby **APPROVES** the agenda with the addition of Item 7a. E& S Plan Off-site Infrastructure for Proposed Project Jonah and

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moving Item 11 Comprehensive Plan to Item 6.

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### APPROVAL OF THE FEBRUARY 9TH, 2023 REGULAR MEETING MINUTES

Upon motion by Vice Chairman Moss, seconded by Member Herndon, and voted on by a vote of 7 to 0, the Tazewell County Planning Commission does hereby **APPROVE** the February 9th, 2023 Regular Meeting Minutes as written.

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### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

#### Mr. Barry Brooks—Director of Public Safety

Mr. Barry Brooks, Director of Public Safety, was at the meeting to speak on the Fire and EMS system. There are currently 12 fire departments in Tazewell County. Mr. Brooks is currently working to bring them under one central fire department with different locations. This will help with their purchasing power.

There are several factors that are hampering the current EMS program for the county:

- Volunteerism has gone way down
- a limited budget
- Age of fire fighters going up
- Equipment needs
- Enacted standards for fire fighters

As current fire fighters ages are on the rise we are tasked with finding ways to entice the younger generation to join and participate. There was a time when one generation begat another generation of fire fighters, but not now.

There is a nationwide shortage of ambulance operators and paramedics. They have teamed up with trained law enforcement officers as EMT's to help until ambulances and paramedics arrive on the scene. This has been received real well.

The department is in need of aerial equipment. This would be of assistant in bringing the area into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and help in a major catastrophe.

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While training is of importance there are several things have to be looked at:

- Screening of potential candidates
- Age—Insurance requires 21 years of age to drive
- Certification of potential candidates
- Wages

As with all budgets there is just not enough funding to be able to hire full time EMS workers.

### **Dr. Christopher Stacy-Superintendent Tazewell County Schools**

Dr. Stacy stated that the school system is the number one (#1) employer in the county. Tazewell County in the past had been seeing a decline in student population but the last few years has been maintaining an average of approximately 5,200 students.

In the last few years since Covid the school system has had to overcome several challenges including:

- Not enough teachers (nationwide shortage)
- Not enough bus drivers
- Virtual learning
- Internet connectivity

The security for schools is excellent. Having resource officers has been a wonderful addition to the school system in protecting our children.

While pay is not at the same level as eastern portions of the state it is very competitive for our area.

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### **ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION**

#### **OFF-SITE INFRASTRUCTURE FOR PROPOSED PROJECT JONAH—PSA**

Jennifer Dawson—Thompson & Litton was available to speak on the project. It will be approximately 3.5 acres of utility disturbed area in Tazewell County and .3 of an acre in Russell County to connect the Tazewell County PSA sewer line for the Pure Salmon (Project Jonah)

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project. The board will only approve the area for Tazewell County. Need approval since the project will be going out to bid in April.

Mr. Kenneth Dunford, Jr., Director of Engineering has reviewed the E & S Plan and it meets all the requirements set forth. No storm water permit will be required and he asked that the board waive the permit fee and bond.

Upon motion by Member Herndon, seconded by Member Addison and voted on by a vote of 7 to 0, the Tazewell County Planning Commission does hereby **APPROVE** the E & S Off-site Infrastructure for Proposed Project Jonah-PSA, and **WAIVE** the permit fee and bond requirement for the project.

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### CITIZEN COMMENTS

Mr. Eric Whitesell, 524 Thompson Valley Road, Tazewell, VA 24651 spoke on solar wind farm leases. He would like for the county to adopt some type of ordinance for alternate energy/solar/wind. Mr. Whitesell brings to the boards' attention some of the short falls that these leases have for property owners:

- No regulations, restrictions, ordinance, standards for solar
- No damage or decommission of these projects after useful life
- No control of the site
- No provision for discarding damaged panels
- Cost

These companies make money and leave the land in disarray and the homeowners with the responsibility of clean up.

Mr. Whitesell would like the county to:

- Adopt a solar ordinance
- Have a permitting process
- Have A site plan
- Have a bond posted

These items would help the land owner as well as the county.

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### DIRECTOR OF ENGINEERING REPORT

None at this time.

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**SUBCOMMITTEE REPORTS**

None at this time.

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**MEMBER CONCERNS**

**Member Ramella** – Fire Department/EMS more of a generational problem

**Vice Chairman Moss**—None at this time.

**Member Herndon**—Dr. Stacy gave an impressive presentation—encouraging.

**Member Addison**—None

**Chairperson Robinson**— received an email from Mr. Collins on the Litter/Junkyard Ordinance and he states that the current ordinance is the strongest by law that we can have. Code Enforcement will have the responsibility and authority to enforce the ordinance. He has spoken with Mr. Chris Plaster, Commonwealth’s Attorney, to talk with the Judges to enforce the law on these types of cases.

**Member Asbury**—the Board of Supervisors previously had a case go to court where they had pictures and the Judge did not impose any fines but let them go. Mr. Collins has been in contact with the counties enforcement personnel and hopefully in the future this will not happen again. We have ordinances in place for a reason and we want to keep our county clean. Also, there will be an open house at the Career and Technical Center and everyone is welcome to come.

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**ADJOURNED MEETING**

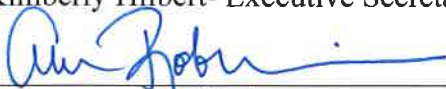
Upon motion of Member Moss, seconded by Member Addison, and adopted by a vote of 7 to 0, the Tazewell County Planning Commission Regular Meeting is hereby adjourned at approximately 8:10 p.m. until Thursday, April 13th, 2023 at 6:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted:

*Kimberly Hilbert*

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Kimberly Hilbert- Executive Secretary

  
Ann Robinson –Chair  
Tazewell County Planning Commission

