At the regular meeting of the Giles County Board of Supervisors held on Wednesday, May 6, 2026, at 3:00 PM in the Giles County Maintenance Building located at 315 N. Main Street, Pearisburg, VA, the following members were present unless noted absent.

Jeff Morris	Chair (Central District)
John C. Lawson, Jr.	Vice-Chair (Western District)
Perry Martin	Eastern District
Paul “Chappy” Baker	At-Large Supervisor
Richard McCoy	At-Large Supervisor
Chris McKlarney	County Administrator
Catherine Ballard	Finance Director
Jon Butler	Emergency Services Coordinator
Richard Chidester	County Attorney
Gracie Howard	Board Secretary

CALL TO ORDER/INVOCATION

Mr. Morris called the meeting to order, and Mr. McKlarney offered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Mr. McCoy motioned to approve the April 16, 2026 minutes, as presented. Mr. Baker seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

VDOT REPORT

Mr. David Clarke reported on installation of a new left-turn lane on Route 460 turning onto Winding Way using annual Safety Operational Funds. Mr. Clarke noted that Safety Operational Funds are less restricted than Secondary Construction Funds and could support additional small safety projects in the new fiscal year, if desired by the Board. He advised that crews are patching ahead of scheduled plant-mix work on Route 460 and Route100, Mountain Lake Road and Doe Creek are also scheduled to receive plant mix this year. Mr. Clarke reported work on gravel roads and machine patching, including Sinking Creek and Clover Hollow. He stated that brush cutting has been ongoing using the boom ax, including Kow Camp and Eggleston Roads, with additional boom-ax work continuing. Reported major patching on Cave Hill Road and on Knob Mountain Road (off Route 460). He noted that additional patching is planned over the next six weeks and that the district is not currently short on funding, though spending will be managed. He advised that major patching is planned on Route 219, weather permitting, near the end of the week and into next week. Lastly, Mr. Clarke reported a pipe replacement on Olean Road and ongoing work with residents to improve drainage.

Mr. Baker reported that patchwork on Wolf Street remains very rough, with holes still present, and noted he had also filed a report about it. He requested brush cutting on Curve Road and asked whether VDOT had addressed potholes on the road near the Hoge Store area. Mr. Clarke discussed Lebanon Road, noting he had seen some patching on the loop but was unsure whether it went all the way down the hill, and agreed it was a good time to address it. Mr. Baker raised concern about guardrails at Big Stony Creek where the gas line crosses; Mr. Clarke responded that traffic engineering must review it and that delineators had been installed. He further reported significant holes coming off Route 460 toward Giles High School, including several potholes near the stop sign by the veterinary office, and thanked staff for their work.

Mr. McCoy thanked VDOT for the motor grader and compaction work on Sinking Creek Road and asked whether that road could be seriously considered for next year's paving list. Mr. McCoy said the improvements helped but suggested a top treatment next paving season would better solve the problem. He also noted potholes remain up hill past the bridge toward the entrance/intersection where repairs did not extend far enough.

Mr. Lawson expressed appreciation for planned work on Route 219, which he said was needed and was expected this week or next. He also relayed a text he had just received stating gravel had been placed on Robertson Mountain Road near Lurich, but some of it appeared to have come out unevenly and piled up, and he requested that it be smoothed.

Mr. Martin thanked VDOT for mowing and for paving/patching work that has addressed longstanding problem areas, and he encouraged continuing improvements to deceleration lanes where possible. He reported a rough section of Mountain Lake Road near Songertown around the big turn near 1197 Mountain Lake Road and asked that it be reviewed. He also referenced the Norcross sinkhole response, reiterating the desire to keep the process moving and offering help from the County to move permitting along; staff responded that regional staff and geologists are involved and work is proceeding cautiously to ensure safety, before equipment is deployed.

Mr. Lawson asked about brush cutting progress and whether patching of secondary surface roads would continue. Mr. Clarke stated that patching would continue, including patching ahead of an upcoming slurry seal schedule so the contractor can proceed, and noted that designers had been out on Prospectdale that day working to advance a project/item, with weather conditions favorable for progress.

Mr. Martin noted that the bridge at Maybrook has been completed and asked when work on the signage could begin. Staff responded that the request has been approved and signage work can start at any time, adding they would coordinate the process and confirming the billing approach would be that VDOT orders the signage and bills the County.

VDOT STREET CLOSURE REQUEST – PEARISBURG FESTIVAL

Mr. McKlarney noted that, while Mr. Dave Clarke (VDOT) was present, the Board may want to discuss the upcoming Pearisburg Festival scheduled for June 5–6. He stated that the festival organizers have requested County approval for a VDOT land use, and he suggested this was a good opportunity for Board members to ask any questions while Mr. Clarke was available. He added that the event is held annually and is typically well managed.

Mr. McCoy motioned to approve, and Mr. Baker seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

SCHOOL BOARD REPORT

Dr. Campbell provided three brief updates to the Board. First, he recognized Teacher Appreciation Week and thanked Giles County Public Schools teachers for their work throughout the year, emphasizing the daily impact teachers have on students and the future of the County. Second, he reported that division enrollment has remained stable, noting in-person enrollment of 2,104 students compared to 2,105 in November. Third, he gave an update on development of the division's Comprehensive Strategic Plan, stating that the draft is approximately 85% complete and is being shared with several groups for feedback. The Comprehensive Strategic Plan is not yet ready for public release.

Dr. Campbell summarized findings from the needs analysis, including strengths such as a strong community/family culture, dedicated staff, and positive feedback on CTE/workforce readiness. Also mentioning were community priorities such as clearer and more consistent expectations across schools, improved transparency and communication, increased focus on student and staff well-being/mental health, expanded extracurricular opportunities (especially in younger grades), and continued facility and operations upgrades. He explained the Plan's proposed components (school safety and security; culture and climate; student learning; student/staff well-being; student engagement and enrichment; governance and operational efficiency; facilities; and community engagement) and noted that the first three areas are currently drafted, with additional components to follow. He emphasized that the Plan is intended to be strategy-driven, and include goals, objectives, and measurable strategies that can be tracked like a checklist in future reporting. Dr. Campbell also shared a thematic analysis of survey data highlighting key "tensions" the division must balance, including community versus consistency, culture versus accountability, tradition versus future readiness, and autonomy versus alignment. He closed by asking for feedback on draft mission and vision statement ideas, inviting Board and community input on what “sounds like Giles County,” and stated he expects to share details on the remaining components at the next meeting.

Mr. McCoy offered feedback in support of the strategic planning discussion, stating that from his perspective, particularly as a parent with a child recently out of the school system, there should be greater consistency in educational practices and expectations across schools. He said instruction and how core classes are handled can vary too much between schools and should look more similar division-wide, while acknowledging there is still value in allowing schools some autonomy.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Mr. Zak Saenz- Mr. Saenz said he was speaking again about ongoing water problems on Cross Avenue affecting him and nearby homes. He explained that he is a stage 4 cancer survivor living on fixed disability income and has experienced repeated well failures tied to lightning strikes, with repairs that can be very expensive. He said his controller recently failed again but was replaced under warranty, and he is concerned that another storm-season failure could leave him without water until a water line is extended.

Mr. Saenz also described neighbors’ issues, including one household rationing water because their well goes dry and several homes relying on a spring that has recurring problems, especially freezing in winter. He noted that $600,000 has been secured and another $400,000 is being pursued. He urged the County to begin the project using the secured funds to avoid delays and rising material costs and then complete the remaining work if the additional funding is awarded.

Mr. McKlarney reported that DHCD is beginning contract negotiations for the $600,000 award and that the County could not spend funds before that process. He noted the Board will have to approve multiple agreements, including requirements related to fair treatment and connecting LMI households, and that the funding cannot simply be held without moving forward.

In response to questions, Mr. McKlarney estimated about 45 days before the County could begin spending and start the process, clarifying this would allow design work to begin (not construction). He said design should take about 60–90 days and be relatively straightforward because a preliminary engineering report is complete and much of the surveying has already been done. He added that once design is complete, the County should know more about the additional $400,000; if that funding is not received, more work may need to be done in-house. This would be difficult, given limited staff and challenging conditions. Mr. McKlarney said that the County will move as quickly as possible and confirmed work could continue through winter as weather allows.

Mr. Bill Hogg- Mr. Hogg began by thanking a deputy who checked on him while he was resting at Newport Methodist Church on a hot day. He then raised several road safety concerns, saying he often feels he is on the "complaint" side compared to others' positive feedback.

He said speeding on Eggleston Road remains an issue despite the 35 mph posting and questioned the cost/benefit of the newly opened bridge serving limited homes. He urged changes at Winding Way/Route 42, citing speeding downhill traffic, confusing yield control near the church, and repeated requests for stop signs; he described a near-miss with an 18-wheeler and warned that a serious crash is likely to occur without action.

He also referenced Sinking Creek Road work/signage, requested a deer crossing sign, asked about removal of dead deer, questioned the number of VDOT vehicles present during a bridge concrete pour, and suggested "no tractor trailer" signage on New Zion Road to prevent trucks from attempting to cross the Sinking Creek bridge. He closed by noting the new left-turn lane was installed quickly, response to while stop sign requests have lingered then and reiterated his safety warning.

OLD BUSINESS

2026 PROPOSED REAL ESTATE TAX RATE

Mr. McKlarney reported that the proposed post-reassessment tax rate had been advertised at $0.47 per $100 of assessed value, a decrease from the current rate of $0.68 per $100. He explained that although the rate is significantly lower, increased property values following reassessment make the proposed rate revenue neutral for the upcoming budget. He requested a retroactive motion authorizing advertisement of the proposed tax rate of $0.47 per $100 for the upcoming public hearing, noting that the Board had previously authorized him to proceed. A motion was made and seconded, and the motion carried by unanimous vote.

FY 27 BUDGET

Mr. McKlarney stated that the County had received the School Board's budget request that day, which would allow it to be incorporated into the overall county budget. He advised that budget advertising would begin after the Board's next meeting on May 21. Board members were reminded that they had copies of the budget, and Mr. Martin had already submitted several proposed changes. Mr. McKlarney stated that the Board would review the budget at the May 27 meeting and that it would then need to be sent promptly to the newspapers to begin the budget approval process.

DAVENPORT

COUNTY FINANCIAL POSITION / FUND BALANCE POLICY

Mr. Kyle Laux of Davenport & Company presented an overview of the County's financial position and noted that Giles County is in significantly stronger financial condition than it was ten years ago. He stated that the County has maintained structural balance, with revenues covering expenditures, and has built a stronger unassigned fund balance. Mr. Laux explained that the unassigned fund balance is a key measure of the County's financial flexibility because it supports cash flow, provides reserves for emergencies, and allows the County to respond quickly to opportunities without outside borrowing. He advised that Giles County's fund balance is now in line with regional peers after having previously been below comparable localities. Mr. Laux recommended adoption of a formal fund balance policy establishing a minimum reserve target of 15 percent, noting that such a policy would help protect the County's financial progress while still allowing flexibility as circumstances change. He added that a draft policy could be prepared for Board consideration as part of the budget process.

SCHOOL CAPITAL FUNDING / LITERARY LOANS

Mr. Laux also presented an update on school capital funding and the County's use of Virginia literary loans for school projects. He noted that the County has been able to secure substantial state support for school improvements through a combination of grants and low-interest literary loans, allowing upgrades across nearly every school in the County. He stated that approximately $64 million in total school improvements are planned, including more than $22 million in grant funding and approximately $41 million in literary loans. Mr. Laux explained that the literary loans carry a fixed 2 percent interest rate and, under current program flexibility, can be structured over 30 years rather than 20 years. He advised that extending the repayment period would allow the County to absorb the debt within its existing debt structure with minimal budget impact and no expected increase to the real estate tax rate. He further stated that even with the additional school debt, the County's debt ratios would remain at manageable levels relative to peers. Mr. Laux also noted that the loans are prepayable, which provides future flexibility if financial conditions change. He concluded by stating that Davenport would continue working with County staff on policy recommendations and on the transition of the literary loans from interim to permanent financing as the school projects move forward.

PAYMENT OF WARRANTS

Mr. Baker motioned to approve payment of FY 2026 warrants in the amount of $1,845,490.00, and Mr. McCoy seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

NEW BUSINESS

MUTAL AID AGREEMENT – BLACKSBURG VOLUNTEER RESCUE SQUAD

Mr. McKlarney noted that the mutual aid agreement under consideration was between Blacksburg Volunteer Rescue Squad and Giles County and stated publicly that emergency service agencies from Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Montgomery County provide significant assistance in Giles County, including support during flooding, swift water rescues, cave rescues, and general EMS response. He said these organizations provide outstanding service and requested Board approval to send letters to all three organizations expressing appreciation for their support and services.

Mr. Baker motioned to approve letters of recognition for Blacksburg, Christiansburg, and Montgomery County Emergency Services, and Mr. McCoy seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

Mr. Butler advised that the agreement was a standard mutual aid agreement and would be required as part of EMS agency licensure updates. He requested that the Board approve the signing of this agreement.

Mr. Lawson motioned to approve the EMS mutual aid agreement, and Mr. Martin seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 vote as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

APPOINTMENTS

Mr. Baker made a motion to reappoint Mr. Ike Snider to the Planning Commission Board. Mr. McCoy seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

Mr. McCoy made a motion to appoint Mr. Claude Wimmer to the New River Community College Board. Mr. Baker seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. McCoy motioned to go into executive session as permitted by Virginia Code 2.2-3711 A (7) Legal, and (29) Contracts. Mr. Baker seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 rollcall vote as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

Mr. McCoy motioned to return to open session, and he certified that in the closed session just concluded, nothing was discussed except the matter or matters (1) specifically identified in the motion to convene in closed session and (2) Lawfully

permitted to be discussed under the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act cited in that motion. Mr. Baker seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 5-0 rollcall vote as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

NEW BUSINESS

BUDGET SUPPLIMENTS

Mr. McCoy made a motion to approve the FY 2026 budget supplements in the amount of $701,011.00. Mr. Baker seconded the motion. The motion was approved 5-0 as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. Martin, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris

ADJOURN

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Thursday, May 21, 2026, at 6:30 PM. The meeting will be held at the Giles County Maintenance Building located at 315 North Main Street, Pearisburg, VA.

APPROVED:

Chair ______________________________

ATTEST:

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Clerk