

At the regular meeting of the Giles County Board of Supervisors held on Wednesday, June 3, 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 May 21, 2026 minutes, as presented. Mr. Baker seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 4-0 vote as follows: Voting Yes: Mr. Baker, Mr. Lawson, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Morris. Absent: Mr. Martin

VDOT REPORT

Mr. Clarke reported that available year-end maintenance funds allowed VDOT to complete paving on Route 219 after snow removal costs did not fully impact the regular maintenance budget. He also reported brush cutting on Meadows Road, Turner Road, Burton Road, Broad Hollow Road, and Bales Road, along with machine patching on Lucas Road, Mountain Lake Road, Wolf Creek Road, Hilltop, and Market Street up to Route 219. Mr. Clarke noted continued dust concerns on Orchard Hill and reported that an inlet on Route 100 in Pearisburg was repaired after causing a hole in the roadway. He stated that current funds are nearly exhausted and a new allocation will be available July 1.

Mr. Baker asked about pothole repairs near Route 617/Croft Road and requested brush cutting on Curve Road, Virginia Heights, and the Riverbend/ Ripplemead area. He also thanked VDOT for paving work near the Route 460 exit ramp into Pearisburg, noting it was much improved although one pothole remained.

Mr. Lawson thanked VDOT for the smoother paving on Route 219 and noted continued concern with Route 61.

Mr. Martin requested mowing along Mountain Lake Road in preparation for the fireworks event and along Route 42 in Newport for July 4 parade parking. Mr. Clarke responded that mowing would likely begin the following week.

Mr. Morris reported concerns on Moye Road regarding overgrown brush and hazardous ditching where water may be washing across the roadway. He requested that VDOT inspect the area.

Mr. McKlarney relayed concerns from Gail Vaught regarding tree branches overhanging Eggleston Bridge, which she described as a safety issue. He also reported brush concerns on the road from Pembroke to Eggleston near Kerr Lane and from Hoges Chapel into the Sinking Creek area. He noted that Ms. Vaught asked that VDOT be thanked for its work and stated that she simply wanted to bring these issues to VDOT's attention.

Mr. Martin raised ongoing dust concerns on Orchard Hill and asked whether millings or another treatment option had been considered. Mr. Clarke responded that VDOT had discussed the possibility of using millings. He stated that none are currently available locally, but VDOT does have a stockpile in another county and may be able to haul some in for use on Orchard Hill.

SCHOOL BOARD REPORT

Dr. Marlin Campbell provided a school system update and thanked the Board for its continued support during the school year. He reported that the school year concluded successfully and that staff are now preparing for the upcoming year. He stated that end-of-year enrollment was 2,104 in-county in-person students, consistent with enrollment levels tracked since November, and encouraged families to register incoming kindergarten students as soon as possible. Dr. Campbell also referenced a memorandum included in the Board's packet regarding minor realignment of the division-level leadership team and invited questions. He further presented an updated draft of the school system's comprehensive plan, noting that it now includes all major components and is approximately 90 percent complete. He encouraged Board members to review the plan and provide feedback before it is finalized.

Mr. Lawson recognized Narrows High School for its national ranking in personal finance education, noting that the school finished sixth nationally and fourth among small schools for the 2024–2025 school year. He stated that personal finance is an important subject and said recognition was a notable accomplishment for a small high school in Southwest Virginia.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Fairley Blankenship- Ms. Blankenship addressed the Board regarding concerns in both the Glen Lyn area and the Town of Rich Creek. She stated that loud music from Interstate 81 Trailers has repeatedly disturbed her neighborhood, reporting that the volume has been strong enough to rattle windows and disrupt residents, including shift workers. She explained that she personally asked employees to reduce the volume but the issue was not resolved, leading her to contact the Sheriff's Office, where she was informed that no daytime noise ordinance exists. She requested that the Board intervene to stop or limit the music and expressed concern that employees wearing earplugs while loud music plays may present an OSHA safety issue.

Ms. Blankenship further described significant traffic problems near her residence, including tractor-trailers blocking the roadway, knocking down stop signs, damaging pavement, speeding, and discarding trash. She referenced a recent accident involving a truck and tractor-trailer and requested that missing stop signs be replaced and that the County explore the possibility of an alternate access road to the facility to reduce heavy-vehicle traffic through the residential area. She also noted upcoming construction and a planned solar project that she believes will increase traffic impact on residents.

Turning to Rich Creek, Ms. Blankenship stated that the current parking configuration forces vehicles to back into traffic, creating unsafe conditions for drivers and pedestrians. She reported that retail customers—particularly older adults and families, are fearful of backing into the roadway due to speeding vehicles and aggressive driving behaviors. She described multiple incidents involving near-misses with pedestrians, including wheelchair users at the post office crosswalk, and requested that speed bumps or other traffic-calming measures be installed. She stated that the situation has negatively affected her business.

In response, Mr. Baker informed her that traffic and parking issues within the Town of Rich Creek fall under the jurisdiction of the Rich Creek Town Council and local law enforcement, not the County. He encouraged her to attend Rich Creek Town Council meetings and gather community support for the requested changes. Mr. Morris clarified that the town not VDOT established the current parking configuration. Mr. McCoy reiterated that the County cannot regulate traffic measures within town limits.

Regarding Glen Lyn, Mr. McCoy and Mr. Baker stated that the County can address issues within its jurisdiction, including speaking with Interstate 81 Trailers about noise concerns. Mr. McKlarney added that the company is planning improvements to its entrance to reduce truck queuing on the public roads and acknowledged that sound barriers would be cost-prohibitive. He stated that the plant manager has historically

been responsive to community concerns and expressed confidence that the noise issue would be addressed. The Board agreed to review the matters raised and communicate with the appropriate parties.

OLD BUSINESS

WATER / WASTEWATER APPRENTICESHIP

Mr. McKlarney reported that three students have enrolled in the water and wastewater program and will begin their coursework and practical training within the next several weeks. He thanked Dr. Campbell for his support in helping establish the program, noting that it is a valuable initiative and that the County looks forward to expanding student participation. Dr. Campbell responded by expressing appreciation and credited Tonya Vayden and staff at the Giles County Tech Center for their work.

CROSS AVE WATER EXTENSION

Mr. McKlarney then provided an update regarding Cross Avenue, noting significant community interest. He stated that the County held contract-negotiation meetings with DHCD on Monday and will soon receive additional paperwork. He explained that the County has 120 days to complete the initial DHCD requirements and that the Board will see multiple resolutions over the next several meetings to authorize necessary agreements. He reported that once these steps are completed, the County will be able to draw down project funds. He stated that design work is largely complete and that the County has approximately two years and three months to finish the project. He also noted that an application remains pending with the Department of Health for additional funding.

2% BONUS FOR NON-STATE FUNDED EMPLOYEES

Mr. McKlarney provided the Board with information regarding a 2% bonus for non-state-funded employees. He explained that state-funded employees will receive the bonus automatically, but employees working in the same departments who are not state-funded would not receive it unless the Board approves a resolution.

Mr. McCoy motioned to approve the 2% bonus for non-state funded employees, 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

SUMMER FEEDING PROGRAM

Mr. McKlarney also announced that the summer feeding program will begin the following Wednesday morning. He invited Board members to participate alongside County staff, noting that the work is meaningful though physically demanding.

PLANNING COMMISSION RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. McKlarney then noted that Mr. Chidester, representing the Planning Commission, might be running late but that the Board already had the Commission's recommendations in their packets. He stated that the Planning Commission recommended approval of both proposals under consideration. These recommendations would allow conditional use permits for tax parcels 43-20A1 & 49-7C.

Mr. McCoy motioned to approve both Planning Commission recommendations for conditional use permits on tax parcels 43-20A1 & 49-7C, 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

PAYMENT OF WARRANTS

Mr. Baker motioned to approve payment of FY 2026 warrants in the amount of \$1,483,609.25, 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

EXECUTIVE SESSION

Mr. McCoy motioned to go into executive session as permitted by Virginia Code 2.2-3711 A 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

FY 2027 BUDGET DRAFT

Mr. McKlarney presented the proposed budget to the Board of Supervisors, walking members through revenues and expenditures and flagging areas where flexibility existed or where significant changes had been made.

On the revenue side, Mr. McKlarney noted that real estate taxes are projected to bring in an additional \$400,000 to \$435,000 from new construction and commercial development. He also noted that interest earnings on account balances are down due to

heavy spending on school projects, though balances are expected to recover as tax revenue comes in.

The most heavily debated item presented by Mr. McKlarney was the Registrar's request for 13 new voting machines at roughly \$96,000 to \$98,000, which is not currently included in the budget. The Board questioned whether all machines needed replacement or just the one that failed, and whether machines used from other localities might be an option. Mr. McKlarney relayed that the vendor indicated the purchase could be split over two budget years at roughly \$50,000 each with no interest. The Board also raised the idea of consolidating voting precincts to reduce the number of machines needed overall, and Mr. McKlarney was directed at submitting written questions to the Registrar and bring answers back at the next meeting.

The Sheriff's Department budget drew significant discussion, with Mr. McKlarney presenting a \$247,000 increase with no new positions, driven largely by telecommunications and supply costs. A major point of contention among Board members was whether the department should use available funds for tasers or hire additional personnel, with board consensus being that the Sheriff's office must choose one or the other or phase the taser purchase over two years. Several members suggested that Mr. McKlarney work toward developing a five-year plan for recurring equipment like tasers and radios to avoid large one-time budget hits in future years.

Mr. McKlarney highlighted animal control costs as a growing concern, with veterinary services now exceeding \$50,000 annually due to a legal requirement that injured animals must be examined by a vet regardless of condition. The Board expressed dissatisfaction with current vendor pricing and discussed with Mr. McKlarney the idea of bidding out veterinary services, noting there is no contract with the current provider.

On fire and rescue, Mr. McKlarney presented a \$5,000 increase per department as requested by Mr. Martin, with Glen Lyn Fire Department funds realigned into the general pool. After Board discussion about fairness between town and County departments, consensus was reached to divide allocations equally, with departments performing EMS receiving an additional \$8,000. Poplar Hill's EMS allocation was left in the budget but will be withheld until their state software is operational.

Mr. McKlarney flagged a \$400,000 increase in the Social Services budget, noting its origin remains unclear as the state has provided no explanation. He also raised the \$138,000 County allocation to the health department as a potential area for savings, given that four inspection positions have gone unfilled for years due to low state pay. Mr. McKlarney was directed to contact the health department director to explore whether the allocation could be reduced.

The community paramedic program was presented by Mr. McKlarney as receiving a one-time \$60,000 vehicle appropriation, with the expectation that it will reduce EMS call volume once operational, like a reported 20% reduction seen in Pulaski County.

A flexible \$20,000 community outreach line was discussed and kept in the budget to support local needs including the Giles Christian Mission food assistance program and other community projects, with the board agreeing, informally, to leave the funds available without a hard designation.

On the capital side, Mr. McCoy mentioned the Brights software system as outdated with no vendor support and an estimated replacement cost of around \$1,000,000. Cost has risen significantly from a prior quote of \$600,000 though it will not be addressed this year. Mr. McKlarney confirmed that a 2.5% employee pay increase is included in the budget pending confirmation of state funding. He closed by noting that the total budget came in at approximately \$128,000,200 driven largely by school construction costs.

GLEN LYN COMMONS LETTER

The Board received a letter from Glen Lyn Commons requesting a portion of revenues from water sales in Glen Lyn citing that the associated debt service had been paid off. Upon consideration, the Board unanimously and firmly declined the request.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Board announced that the June 18 Board Meeting will include the public hearing on the proposed budget as well as the first CDBG public hearing. It was further announced that on June 30 at 3:00 P.M., the Board will hold a closeout meeting for the fiscal year 2027 budget adoption, a second CDBG public hearing, and a public hearing on the proposed rezoning of two properties at the end of Giles Street from C1 to R2 as recommended by the Planning Commission. Additionally, the Board announced that the July recess meeting has been rescheduled to July 23rd.

ADJOURN

With no further business, the meeting was adjourned. The next Board of Supervisors meeting will be held on Thursday, June 18, 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:

Clerk _____

