The Smyth County Board of Supervisors held its regular meeting on Thursday, May 14, 2026, at 5:00 p.m. The location of the meeting was held in the First Floor Board Room of the County Office Building, 121 Bagley Circle, Suite 100, Marion, Virginia.

PRESENT:	Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff
ABSENT:	None.
STAFF:	County Administrator, Shawn Utt Asst. County Administrator – Operations, Lisa Richardson Asst. County Administrator – Development, Clegg Williams Executive Assistant & Deputy Clerk, Madi Pitts Zoning Administrator, Becca Creasy
OTHERS:	Smyth News & Messenger, Stephanie Porter-Nichols Smyth County Sheriff's Office

05/14/2026 5:00 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins called the meeting to order and welcomed everyone.

05/14/2026 5:00 PM Assistant County Administrator – Operations Lisa Richardson led the Pledge of Allegiance. Rev. Alan Gray of Royal Oak Presbyterian Church provided the invocation.

05/14/2026 5:03 PM Minutes of the April 23, 2026 meeting

After further discussion, the following motion was made:

- *A motion was made by Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call to approve the April 23, 2026 meeting minutes as presented. North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings seconded this motion.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:

AYES:	*Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;* *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;* *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;* *North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;* *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;* *Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;* *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.*
NAYS:	*None.*
ABSTAINERS:	*None.*
ABSENT:	*None.*

05/14/2026 5:04 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins moved on to presentations.

05/14/2026 5:04 PM 4H Extension Agent Bailey Robertson provided an update on the 2026 4H Camp, stating that this program has been a staple in the County since 1954 and has helped many local students learn life skills. Mr. Robertson introduced 4H Teen Club President Ryan Haynes and stated that 4H camp currently has 190 kids attending and 51 scholarship applications, which require $2,731.00 to fulfill. Mr. Robertson offered the Board the opportunity to tour the campgrounds.

05/14/2026 5:06 PM 4H Teen Club President Ryan Haynes stated that 4H Camp was a great opportunity for local youth to learn networking, life skills, and become involved in sports and outdoor recreation.

05/14/2026 5:10 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins noted that 4H Camp is locally funded and does not receive any funding from the state.

05/14/2026 5:11 PM 4H Extension Agent Bailey Robertson stated that 4H College would continue this year and Smyth County was sending their 16th delegation and tapping 2 4H all-stars.

05/14/2026 5:13 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to fund the 51 4H Camp scholarship applications in the amount of $2,682.00 through the Board members funds.

After further discussion, the following motion was made:

- *A motion was made by Park District Supervisor Kris Ratliff to split the cost of funding 51 4H Camp scholarships in the amount of $2,682.00 between the 7 board member funds. North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings seconded this motion.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:

AYES:	*Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;* *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;* *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;* *North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;* *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;* *Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;* *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.*
NAYS:	*None.*
ABSTAINERS:	*None.*
ABSENT:	*None.*

05/14/2026 5:14 PM Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris read the following resolution into the record:

RESOLUTION OF THE SMYTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS IN HONOR OF EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES WEEK

WHEREAS, emergency medical services is a vital public service; and

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services agencies are ready to provide life-saving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and

WHEREAS, access to quality emergency care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and

WHEREAS, in May of 1928, Julian Stanley Wise witnessed two persons in a capsized canoe in Roanoke, and with multiple bystanders with no training, saw the need for training and organization in EMS, started the first volunteer EMS agency in Roanoke in 1929.; and,

WHEREAS, the emergency medical services system consists of first responders, emergency medical technicians, paramedics, emergency medical dispatchers, firefighters, police officers, educators, administrators, pre-hospital nurses, emergency nurses, emergency physicians, trained members of the public, and other out of hospital medical care providers; and

WHEREAS, the members of emergency medical services teams, whether career or volunteer, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their life-saving skills; and

WHEREAS, Smyth County prides itself in the five agencies of Smyth County that provides emergency medical services; The Town of Chilhowie, The Town of Marion, Sugar Grove Lifesaving Crew, Nebo Fire Department and Smyth County for their dedication, passion, and enthusiasm; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize the value and the accomplishments of emergency medical services providers by designating Emergency Medical Services Week;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, the Smyth County Board of Supervisors declares the week of May 17th to May 23rd, 2025, to be Emergency Medical Services Week in Smyth County, in honor of the men and women whose diligence and professionalism keep our County and citizens safe.

Adopted this the 14th day of May, 2025.

ATTEST:

SMYTH COUNTY
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Shawn M. Utt, Clerk

Charles E. Atkins, Chair

05/14/2026 5:14 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to approve the Resolution in Honor of Emergency Medical Services Week.

After further discussion, the following motion was made:

- *A motion was made by Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris to approve the Resolution in Honor of Emergency Medical Services Week. Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call seconded this motion.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;

Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.

NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 5:18 PM School Board Superintendent Dr. Brad Haga presented the FY27 School Board budget, stating that there were significant budget constraints as the Local Composite Index increased from 0.2225 to 0.2422, causing an increase of $980,000. Dr. Haga stated that the School Board's FY27 state funding was $47,687,680, which was an increase of $581,891 from FY26 and the FY27 federal funding was $6,031,506, which was a decrease of $566,427. Dr. Haga noted that salary costs had increased to $39,971,299 to account for a 2% cost of living increase for all employees, however this amount could increase to 3-3.5% once the Governor's final budget is presented. Dr. Haga noted other expenditure changes such as a decrease cost in benefits due to a decrease in group life insurance and Virginia Retirement System costs, and non-salary costs, due to increased costs of materials, supplies, and purchased services. Dr. Haga stated that the School Board would be adopting STAR academy to directly assist special needs students and conducting facility reviews. Dr. Haga concluded stating that the total revenue and expenditures were balanced at $70,960,572 for FY27 and noted the large impact salary increases and diesel costs have had on the proposed budget.

05/14/2026 5:32 PM Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris asked when the last facility review of the schools had been conducted.

05/14/2026 5:32 PM School Board Superintendent Dr. Brad Haga stated that he believed the schools had not been reviewed since 2008 and these reviews currently being conducted would include population studies as well as structural and operational efficiencies for each building.

05/14/2026 5:34 PM Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call asked if the School Board was anticipating resignations and retirements.

05/14/2026 5:34 PM School Board Superintendent Dr. Brad Haga stated that there had been a few, and the School Board would not fill these vacancies due to the tight budgetary constraints. Dr. Haga said that the largest expense in the School Board budget was personnel costs and resources for special education, as 23% of Smyth County students have special needs and this is an increase seen across the nation.

05/14/2026 5:39 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt presented the FY27 Smyth County budget, stating that the FY26 budget has seen a drop in revenues and he anticipated that FY27 would be more conservative. Mr. Utt stated that he anticipated school board funding and comp board funding to have substantial budgetary increases. Mr. Utt stated that these increases have resulting in the FY27 budget's proposals to eliminate 8 full-time positions (noting that this change is due to employee relocation and not lay-offs), eliminating the Atkins EMS station and combining these service areas and staff with the Saltville EMS station, suspending the capital improvements plan, and reducing general fund budget requests. Mr. Utt stated that despite these budget cuts, to fully balance the budget the staff has proposed increases to real estate taxes, solid waste fees, and utility fees.

05/14/2026 5:52 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins thanked the presenters and moved onto the public hearing regarding VDOT's Secondary Six Year Plan.

05/14/2026 5:52 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt read the top priorities of the Secondary Six Year Plan: Route 651 Carriage Road, Route 624 Milldam Road, Route 798 Hale Lake Road, Route 676 Old Brunswick Road, Route 652 Rosenbaum Hollow Road, Route 601 Pugh Mountain Road, and Route 653 Tilson Hollow Road.

05/14/2026 5:53 PM With no one wishing to speak, Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins closed the public hearing.

05/14/2026 5:54 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to waive the rules and vote on the VDOT Secondary Road Six Year Plan at the May 14, 2026 Board meeting instead of the May 28, 2026 meeting.

After further discussion, the following motion was made:

- *A motion was made by Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener to waive the rules and vote on the VDOT Secondary Road Six Year Plan. Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris seconded this motion.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 5:54 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to approve the VDOT Secondary Road Six Year Plan.

After further discussion, the following motion was made:

- *A motion was made by Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener to approve the VDOT Secondary Road Six Year Plan. Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris seconded this motion.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*

ABSTAINERS: None.
ABSENT: None.

05/14/2026 5:54 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins moved onto the financial status report.

05/14/2026 5:54 PM Assistant County Administrator – Operations Lisa Richardson provided the April 2026 Financial Status Report, sharing the revenue and expenditure reports, bank and CD balance, and April 2026 balance sheet for the Board's review. Ms. Richardson stated that the total current fund balance was $16,769,902.81.

05/14/2026 5:59 PM Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris expressed his concerns over unpaid taxes.

05/14/2026 6:00 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins shared his appreciation for the formatting of the financial reports from the County's new financial system, Edmunds.

05/14/2026 6:00 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to accept the payment of invoices as presented from April 1, 2026 to April 30, 2026.

After further discussion, the following motion was made:

- *A motion was made by Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call to accept the payment of invoices as presented from April 1, 2026 to April 30, 2026. North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings seconded this motion.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: None.
ABSTAINERS: None.
ABSENT: None.

05/14/2026 6:00 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins moved on to citizen's time.

05/14/2026 6:00 PM Larry Atwood of 140 Rabbit Hill Lane in Sugar Grove stated that he was a member of the Sugar Grove Rescue Squad and requested a copy of the application and associated documents for a PPE grant they received from the state.

05/14/2026 6:01 PM Assistant County Administrator – Operations Lisa Richardson stated that she would provide Mr. Atwood with these documents.

05/14/2026 6:02 PM David Fulton of Marion stated that sometimes tax tickets are mailed to the wrong address, and citizens are unaware they have unpaid taxes.

05/14/2026 6:02 PM Dr. Charles Wassum of 200 Heart Street in Wassona Park shared his concerns over unpaid taxes and the county's debt service payments, which he worried incurred significant interest. Dr. Wassum shared his disagreements with data center due to privacy concerns and damage to agricultural areas.

05/14/2026 6:07 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins stated that County Administrator Shawn Utt has modified how the county pays debt and saved the county $120,000 in interest payments. Mr. Atkins shared that the County does not have enough fiscal flexibility to eliminate their debt currently.

05/14/2026 6:08 PM With no one else wishing to speak, Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins closed Citizen's Time and moved onto old business.

05/14/2026 6:08 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt read the following Budget committee report and recommendation:

> County Administrator Shawn Utt presented a request from Commissioner of Revenue Bradley Powers to begin a discussion on a framework for tax rate relief incentives for volunteer public safety agencies, in accordance with authority granted by Code of Virginia, 1950, § 58.1-3506.A (15). Commissioner of Revenue Bradley Powers presented an example of Tazwell's County Code, which requires qualified taxpayers for this incentive to be considered active members of a volunteer fire department or rescue agency within the county, not delinquent on any real or personal property taxes, certified by the County Emergency Management Coordinator, and enrolled in their department's roster where applicable. Mr. Powers stated that this incentive could exempt up to $300 per taxpayer on their personal property obligation and should be limited to 1 vehicle per volunteer. Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill asked how consistent activity of members would be ensured. Commissioner of Revenue Bradley Powers stated that each volunteer agency's chief would verify active participation of volunteers, and that this incentive would not be offered to volunteers residing outside of the county or part-time & full-time paid staff. Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins stated that there could be varying standards for active participation between agencies. Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris recommended that this be referred to the Public Safety Advisory Committee and the chiefs of the volunteer departments can mutually agree on participation standards. County Administrator Shawn Utt recommended the chiefs reverify these standards annually through the PSAC. Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill asked if any additional volunteer organizations could request this benefit. County Administrator Shawn Utt stated that state code limits this incentive to public safety volunteer agencies. Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins requested this matter be referred to the Ordinance Committee, following approval from the Public Safety Committee and confirmation by the Board of Supervisors, to review the final draft ordinance language.

After discussion, the following committee recommendation was made:

- *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener made a motion to recommend the Board approve the Volunteer Agency Tax Relief framework as amended and forward to the Public Safety Advisory Committee meeting on May 26th, 2026 for development of participation standards and the Ordinance Committee on June 4, 2026 to review the draft ordinance language. The motion was seconded by Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill and unanimously approved as a committee recommendation.*

After consideration, the committee recommendation PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 6:11 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt continued with the Budget committee report and recommendations:

Commissioner of Revenue Bradley Powers presented a proposal from Vision Governmental Solutions for the 2028 General Reassessment of Real Property. County Administrator Shawn Utt requested the final proposal from Vision Governmental Solutions include a cooperative procurement agreement. Commissioner of Revenue Bradley Powers stated that he could communicate that request and shared his support for the proposal due to a positive relationship with the organization and their staff's familiarity with Smyth County. Mr. Powers stated that this proposal included the costing of mailings, property photos, a citizen appeal process, call center for citizen questions, and a website for citizen education. County Administrator Shawn Utt asked if the County would be required to hire part-timers to assist with the reassessment. Commissioner of Revenue Bradley Powers stated that the County may have to hire part-timers to assist with the Board of Equalization process but not the reassessment itself. Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill requested information on Vision Governmental Solutions deadlines for real property assessment. Commissioner of Revenue Bradley Powers presented Vision Governmental Solutions full scope of project and County Administrator Shawn Utt stated that the FY27 County Administration budget has prepared for the reassessment to begin the summer of 2027. Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener asked about the cost of Vision Governmental Solutions proposal. County Administrator Shawn Utt stated that the cost is comparable to the most recent reassessment.

After discussion, the following committee recommendation was made:

- *Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill made a motion to recommend the Board approve the finalized proposal from Vision Governmental Solutions contingent on proof of cooperative procurement agreement language. The motion was seconded Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener and unanimously approved as a committee recommendation.*

After consideration, the committee recommendation PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;

Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 6:14 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt continued with the Budget committee report:

> County Administrator Shawn Utt presented options from Treasurer Tom Burkett to amend county code regarding dog licenses. Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener asked why dog license requirements cannot be removed from county code. County Administrator Shawn Utt stated that state code requires counties to track dangerous dogs and kennels through dog licenses. However, Smyth County could amend their code to mirror neighboring counties such as only requiring a one-time dog license registration at the birth of the dog, which has shown to heavily increase code compliance. County Administrator Shawn Utt noted that dog license costs were $0.09 per tag and generated $6-7,000 annually to fund the spay and neuter program. After further discussions regarding enforcement concerns and rabies management, the committee elected to table this conversation until the Fall of FY27. No action was taken at this time.

05/14/2026 6:15 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt continued with the Budget committee report and recommendation:

> County Administrator Shawn Utt presented a Moral Obligation Request from Rye Valley Water Authority related to a project to replace a main water line, which has resulted in an 80%+ loss of water. Mr. Utt noted that the grant funds would be paid out on a reimbursement process and he had worked with the Bank of Marion to help RVWA obtain a line of credit (LOC). He noted the Bank has approved the LOC but is requesting the County consider providing a Moral Obligation in support of RVWA. He also stated that this request would result in a net zero cost to the county and recommended the committee accept the request as presented.

After discussion, the following committee recommendation was made:

- *Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill made a motion to recommend the Board approve the Moral Obligation Request from Rye Valley Water Authority as presented and to authorize the County Administrator to execute documents necessary to move the project forward. The motion was seconded by Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener and unanimously approved as a committee recommendation.*

After consideration, the committee recommendation PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*

ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 6:17 PM Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call asked if the county would be liable for any interest on this request.

05/14/2026 6:17 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt stated that the majority of this cost would be reimbursed to the Rye Valley Water Authority, which would not make the County liable unless the RVWA defaults on their loan. Mr. Utt noted that these funds will not be paid in a lump sum and that this would be managed by Mount Rogers Planning District Commission to ensure there were no delays on reimbursement.

05/14/2026 6:18 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt continued with the Budget committee report:

> County Administrator Shawn Utt stated that there were discussions regarding adding retiree health insurance benefits to staff that remained employed with the County for 20-30 years. Mr. Utt stated that he and School Board Superintendent Dr. Brad Haga were in favor of these benefits, but did not have adequate fiscal flexibility for this consideration in FY27 and requested this conversation be tabled for FY28. Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris suggested the County adopt a small fee to each employee's monthly insurance deduction, which would fund the retiree insurance program. Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener shared his support for this idea but requested County staff send a survey to employees before the Board considers adopting this benefit. No action was taken at this time.

05/14/2026 6:19 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt continued with the Budget committee report:

> Transitioning to his position as Smyth County Deputy, Courtney Widener presented the FY27 Budget requests from the Smyth County Sherriff's Office which requested a $5,000 increase to all full-time deputy salaries to address low recruitment concerns, increases to the extradition budget at a net zero cost to the County due to state budget match, and increases to dispatch staffing funding. County Administrator Shawn Utt stated that a $5,000 salary increase to all officers would increase the FY27 County budget by an additional $255,000. Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins recommended delaying the individual salary increases until after certification is achieved with an officer's first-year of employment. County Administrator Shawn Utt requested clarification on the increases to the extradition budget. Royal Oak District Supervisor, Deputy Courtney Widener stated these increases were needed for coding purposes. Mr. Utt also noted that he would amend the budget to consider part-time and full-time employment changes with Dispatch. Discussion ensued regarding proposed real estate tax increases and land use evaluations. No action was taken at this time.

05/14/2026 6:21 PM Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams provided the Joint Ordinance committee report and recommendation:

> Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams presented a draft data centers ordinance that permitted large scale data centers over 40,000 square feet to apply by Special Use Permit in industrial, commercial, agricultural, and agricultural / rural districts, small scale data centers less than 40,000 square feet by Special Use Permit in

agricultural, agricultural / rural, and commercial districts, and small scale data centers less than 40,000 square feet by right in industrial districts. Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill recommended that the percentage of open space required to be maintained on data center sites be left to the discretion of the Board and Planning Commission and the committee agreed with this request. Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins asked about regulations for property abandonment. Mr. Williams said that property owners must clean the site within 365 days of abandonment or the County would execute a security bond required in the applicant's submitted materials. Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins requested the setback regulations be aligned with building code and set to 60 feet and the committee agreed. Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill shared his support for the strict regulations regarding property sound, which must be limited to 55 db(A) at the sending property line and the committee agreed to this regulation. Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins asked why the facilities were limited to 60 feet in height in the draft ordinance and Executive Assistant Madi Pitts stated that this was aligned with building code regulations. County Administrator Shawn Utt requested that lighting restrictions be amended to state that applicants must "minimize and mitigate off-site effects" and the committee agreed. Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams recommended amending the ordinance to add a sign requirement regarding public interest meetings for data center applications and the committee concurred.

After discussion, the following committee recommendation was made:

- *Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill made a motion to recommend the Board concur with the proposed Data Centers Ordinance and schedule a joint public hearing for June 25th, 2026. The motion was seconded by Park District Supervisor Kris Ratliff and unanimously approved as a committee recommendation.*

After consideration, the committee recommendation PASSED by the following vote:

AYES:	*Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;* *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;* *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;* *North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;* *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;* *Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;* *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.*
NAYS:	*None.*
ABSTAINERS:	*None.*
ABSENT:	*None.*

05/14/2026 6:25 PM Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener shared concerns about allowing small-scale data centers by right in industrial zoned districts and suggested requiring all data centers to apply by special use permit.

05/14/2026 6:27 PM Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams stated that he would discuss this with the Joint Ordinance committee and confirm that all data centers must comply with the regulations in the ordinance, regardless of whether they will be permitted by right or special use permit.

05/14/2026 6:27 PM Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris raised concerns of the limited job creation of data centers and asked whether the ordinance addressed these.

05/14/2026 6:28 PM Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams stated that current zoning ordinances have not made any regulations regarding employment numbers.

05/14/2026 6:28 PM Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams continued with the Joint Ordinance committee report:

> Zoning Administrator Becca Creasy provided the committee with recommended zoning code amendments to align county code with state code regulations regarding junkyards and automobile graveyards. Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams noted that automobile graveyards frequently present maintenance issues due to the strict limitations of current county code, which states that 2 or more unlicensed vehicles visible outside an owner's property constitutes an automobile graveyards, however state code allows for 6 or more. Mr. Williams recommended separating the definitions of junkyards and automobile graveyards in the county code. Further discussion ensued regarding raising the limitation to 3 or more unlicensed vehicles, however the committee elected to table the discussion to a later date. No action was taken at this time.
>
> Due to time constraints, the committee postponed the discussion regarding home occupations until the following Joint Ordinance committee.

05/14/2026 6:28 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins called for a brief recess.

05/14/2026 6:47 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins called the meeting back into order.

05/14/2026 6:47 PM Zoning Administrator Becca Creasy read the following Planning Commission recommendation:

> After discussion, Ms. Meadows made a motion to recommend approval of Ms. Stanley's Special Use Permit for a Child Day Center, conditioned upon obtaining approval from VDOT, licensing from DSS, and any required building permits. The motion was seconded by Mr. Buchanan, and the following vote was recorded:
>
> | | |
> |---|---|
> | Vote: 5 yeas | Buchanan Jr., Dean, Meadows, Shepherd, and Wagoner |
> | 0 nays | |
> | 2 absent | Campbell and Davidson Jr |

05/14/2026 6:48 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to approve the Planning Commission recommendation regarding the special use permit request for a Child Day Center at 620 Railroad Drive.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill made a motion to approve the Planning Commission's recommendation regarding the special use permit request for a Child Day Center at 620 Railroad Drive. The motion was seconded by Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;*
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 6:49 PM Zoning Administrator Becca Creasy read the following Planning Commission recommendation:

> After discussion, Ms. Meadows made a motion to recommend approval of Mr. Saufley's RV park, conditioned upon obtaining approval from the health department and VDOT, as well as any permits required for grading and electrical work. The motion was seconded by Mr. Buchanan, and the following vote was recorded:
>
> Vote: 5 yeas Buchanan Jr., Dean, Meadows, Shepherd, and Wagoner
> 0 nays
> 2 absent Campbell and Davidson Jr

05/14/2026 6:50 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to approve the Planning Commission's recommendation regarding the special use permit request for an RV Park behind 1200 Highway 16 in Marion, VA.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill made a motion to approve the Planning Commission's recommendation regarding the special use permit request for an RV Park behind 1200 Highway 16 in Marion, VA. The motion was seconded by Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;*
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 6:50 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt provided an update on the County-wide burn ban in Smyth County, stating that with the recent rains and cooler weather, there have been several citizens requesting the County consider easing the restrictions that were set in place on April 16, 2026. Mr. Utt stated that after consultations with the National Weather Service and the Virginia Department of Emergency Management, the County is still currently listed as being in an "Extreme Drought" still and will need roughly 10-inches of rain over the next 30 days to relieve the drought concerns. Mr. Utt recommended the Board table this item for reconsideration at the May 28, 2026 Board meeting.

05/14/2026 6:51 PM Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill noted that Wythe County recently amended their burn ban to allow burning from 4:00 p.m. – 12:00 a.m.

05/14/2026 6:52 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt stated that the burn ban specifically bans anything that can throw an ember, and does not apply to self-contained fires, like propane or gas grills.

05/14/2026 6:53 PM Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams stated that Transfer Stations may need to stop accepting brush due to the large amount of brush that has accumulated at the transfer station.

05/14/2026 6:54 PM Park District Supervisor Kris Ratliff recommended the County purchase or rent a wood chipper to deal with the brush rather than burning it.

05/14/2026 6:54 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins moved onto new business.

05/14/2026 6:54 PM Assistant County Administrator – Operations Lisa Richardson read the following resolution into the record:

RESOLUTION OF THE SMYTH COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
REGIONAL IMPROVEMENT COMMISSION FUNDS

WHEREAS, Virginia Code 558.1-4107. 1 established in 2020, a Regional Improvement Commission to serve the jurisdictions composing the Bristol Transportation District; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Regional Improvement Commission shall be to (i) receive disbursements made to it; (ii) establish funding priorities for member localities related to improvements in the area of education, transportation, and public safety; and (iii) make annual payments divided equally among the jurisdictions to fund the established priorities as determined by the Commission; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Improvement Commission has established funding priorities for member localities related to improvements in the area of education, transportation, and public safety; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Improvement Commission is planning to make its annual distribution to each jurisdiction composing the transportation district in August 2026; and

WHEREAS, the Regional Improvement Commission has asked each member locality to provide documentation of each locality's 2026 funding priorities.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board of Supervisors for Smyth County, Virginia hereby plans to use its portion of the 2026 Regional Improvement Commission funds for improvements in public safety and education.

Adopted this the 14th day of May, 2026.

	SMYTH COUNTY
ATTEST:	**BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**
_____	_____
Shawn M. Utt, Clerk	Charles E. Atkins, Chair

05/14/2026 6:54 PM Assistant County Administrator – Operations Lisa Richardson stated that the County is expecting $1.2 million in casino funds in August 2026 and has traditionally used this funding for public safety and education.

05/14/2026 6:55 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to approve the Regional Commission Funds Resolution as amended.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call made a motion to approve the Regional Commission Funds Resolution as amended. The motion was seconded by Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:

AYES:	*Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;* *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;* *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;* *North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;* *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;* *Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;* *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.*
NAYS:	*None.*
ABSTAINERS:	*None.*
ABSENT:	*None.*

05/14/2026 6:57 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins moved on to the report from the County Attorney.

05/14/2026 6:57 PM County Attorney Scot Farthing stated that he had no updates at this time.

05/14/2026 6:57 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins moved on to the report from the County Administrator.

05/14/2026 6:57 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt requested the board appoint various positions due to current vacancies or term expirations.

05/14/2026 6:58 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to appoint Shannon Gentry as the Chilhowie representative to the Department of Social Services Board.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill made a motion to appoint Shannon Gentry as the Chilhowie representative to the Department of Social Services Board for a four-year term ending June 30, 2029. The motion was seconded by Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:

AYES:	*Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;* *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;* *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;* *North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;* *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;* *Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;* *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.*
NAYS:	*None.*
ABSTAINERS:	*None.*
ABSENT:	*None.*

05/14/2026 6:58 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to appoint Donald Bonham to the Rye Valley Water Authority.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris made a motion to appoint Donald Bonham to the Rye Valley Water Authority for a two-year term ending June 30, 2028. The motion was seconded by Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:

AYES:	*Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;* *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;* *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;* *North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;* *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;* *Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;* *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.*
NAYS:	*None.*
ABSTAINERS:	*None.*
ABSENT:	*None.*

05/14/2026 6:59 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to appoint Bobby Coe to the Rye Valley Water Authority.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris made a motion to appoint Bobby Coe to the Rye Valley Water Authority for a two-year term ending June 30, 2028. The motion was seconded by Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 7:00 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to reappoint Commonwealth Attorney Bucky Blevins and Sheriff Chip Shuler to the Southwest Virginia Community Corrections Criminal Justice Board.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call made a motion to reappoint Commonwealth Attorney Bucky Blevins and Sheriff Chip Shuler to the Southwest Virginia Community Corrections Criminal Justice Board for a 4 year term ending June 30, 2030. The motion was seconded by North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 7:00 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to reappoint Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams to the Transportation Rural Technical Committee.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call made a motion to reappoint Assistant County Administrator – Development Clegg Williams to the Transportation Rural Technical Committee as the non-specific representation for a three-year term ending June 30, 2029. The motion was seconded by Park District Supervisor Kris Ratliff.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: None.
ABSTAINERS: None.
ABSENT: None.

05/14/2026 7:01 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to reappoint Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Wideners to Mount Rogers ASAP Board.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris made a motion to reappoint Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Wideners to Mount Rogers ASAP Board for a 4 year term ending June 30, 2030. The motion was seconded by Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: None.
ABSTAINERS: Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener.
ABSENT: None.

05/14/2026 7:02 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to reappoint Kaylan Bales as the Saltville representative on the Library Board.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call made a motion to reappoint Kaylan Bales as the Saltville representative on the Library Board for a four-year term ending June 30, 2030. The motion was seconded by North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: None.

ABSTAINERS: None.
ABSENT: None.

05/14/2026 7:04 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to appoint Mark Morin as the voting representative and Kimberly Woodlee as the alternate to the CPMT Board as representatives of Mount Rogers Community Services.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener made a motion to Mark Morin as the representative and Kimberly Woodlee as the alternate to the CPMT Board for unexpired terms. The motion was seconded by Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: None.
ABSTAINERS: Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins.
ABSENT: None.

05/14/2026 7:06 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt invited the Board to the annual Employee Cookout on June 5, 2026 and stated that there would be a dunk tank fundraiser for Santa's Elves and invited the Board to sign up to be dunked.

05/14/2026 7:11 PM County Administrator Shawn Utt presented the *SmythGrow* quarterly report stating that 97 houses were currently under contract and that this program was predicted to be have met its goal of 100 homes well before the original 5-year plan.

05/14/2026 7:11 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins moved on to Supervisor Comment Time.

05/14/2026 7:11 PM Chilhowie District Supervisor Mike Sturgill praised many recent achievements by local students.

05/14/2026 7:13 PM Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call thanked the attendees.

05/14/2026 7:15 PM Park District Supervisor Kris Ratliff thanked the staff.

05/14/2026 7:15 PM Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener shared citizen complaints regarding the no littering signs near Horseshoe Bend in Thomas Bridge and asked that signs be added to either side of the road. Mr. Widener noted the conservative FY27 budget and encouraged land use tax reconsideration to increase local revenue. Mr. Widener recognized National Police Week and thanked all public servants.

05/14/2026 7:20 PM Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins thanked the staff and shared concerns regarding the impact of fuel prices and the School Board's budget increases on the FY27 County budget.

05/14/2026 7:21 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to enter into closed session.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener made a motion to enter into closed session under Code of Virginia 2.2-3711(a)5 regarding Project Nemo and 2.2-3711(a)5 regarding Project Hightower. Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris seconded the motion.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:

AYES:	*Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;* *Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;* *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;* *North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;* *Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;* *Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;* *Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.*
NAYS:	*None.*
ABSTAINERS:	*None.*
ABSENT:	*None.*

05/14/2026 7:46 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to reenter open session.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener made a motion to adopt the following resolution and enter back into open session. Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris seconded the motion.*

RESOLUTION
CERTIFICATION OF CLOSED SESSION

WHEREAS, the Smyth County Board of Supervisors has convened in a closed session on this date pursuant to an affirmative recorded vote and in accordance with the provisions of the Virginia Freedom of Information Act; and

WHEREAS, Section 2.2-3712 of the Code of Virginia requires a certification by the Smyth County Board of Supervisors that such a meeting was conducted in conformity with Virginia law;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Smyth County Board of Supervisors hereby certifies that, to the best of each member's knowledge, (i) only public business matters lawfully exempted from open meeting requirements by Virginia law were discussed in the closed meeting to which this certification resolution applies, and (ii) only such public business matters as were identified in the motion convening the closed session were heard, discussed or considered by the Smyth County Board of Supervisors.

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 7:50 PM Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins entertained a motion to authorize the County Administrator to negotiate and execute option agreement for Project Hightower as discussed in Closed Session.

After discussion, the following motion was made:

- *Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener made a motion to authorize the County Administrator to negotiate and execute option agreement for Project Hightower as discussed in Closed Session. Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris seconded the motion.*

After consideration, the motion PASSED by the following vote:
AYES: *Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charles Atkins;*
Vice Chair, Chilhowie District Supervisor Michael Sturgill;
Royal Oak District Supervisor Courtney Widener;
North Fork District Supervisor Rick Billings;
Rye Valley District Supervisor Jason Parris;
Park District Supervisor Kristopher Ratliff;
Saltville District Supervisor Roscoe Call.
NAYS: *None.*
ABSTAINERS: *None.*
ABSENT: *None.*

05/14/2026 7:50 PM Seeing no further business, Chair, Atkins District Supervisor Charlie Atkins recessed the meeting until the Joint Public Hearing with the Planning Commission.