



VIRGINIA: A SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE SURRY COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HELD IN THE GENERAL DISTRICT COURTROOM OF THE SURRY COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER ON THURSDAY, APRIL 2, 2026, AT 6:00 PM.

PRESENT: SUPERVISOR BREYON D. PIERCE, CHAIRMAN
SUPERVISOR WALTER HARDY, VICE-CHAIR
SUPERVISOR DR. ROBERT ELLIOTT, JR.
SUPERVISOR WILLIAM (TIM) CALHOUN
SUPERVISOR CAMERAN DREW

ABSENT: STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE ZARIAH HARRELL

ALSO PRESENT: MS. MELISSA ROLLINS, COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR
MS. LOLA PERKINS, COUNTY ATTORNEY
MR. RAY PHELPS, DIRECTOR OF EMERGENCY SERVICES
MS. RENEE CHAPLINE, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MS. LATONYA BROWN, DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL SERVICES

Invocation

The invocation was given by Elder Welton Blount, Sr., from St. Paul Holiness Church, Dendron, VA.

Call to Order/Moment of Silence/Pledge of Allegiance/Adopt Agenda

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Pierce, who then asked for a moment of silence. Following the moment of silence, he asked those present to stand and recite the pledge of allegiance. Chairman Pierce asked for Motion to accept the agenda. Supervisor Elliott made a motion to accept the agenda and Supervisor Drew seconded the motion. All present voted affirmatively. (Approved)

SUPERVISOR BREYON PIERCE.	AYE
SUPERVISOR WALTER HARDY	AYE
SUPERVISOR WILLIAM (TIM) CALHOUN	AYE
SUPERVISOR ROBERT ELLIOTT, JR	AYE
SUPERVISOR CAMERAN DREW	AYE

Consent Items

1. Resolution – Proclamation for National Crime Victims Rights Week
2. Resolution – Surry County High School Girls Basketball Team
3. Resolution – Declaring April as Surry County Clean Up Month
4. Approval of Draft Minutes – BOS Work Session – March 4, 2026

5. Approval of Draft Minutes. – BOS Work Session – March 5, 2026
6. FY 2026-27 Local Choice Renewal
7. Resolution – Opposing Collective Bargaining Legislation
8. Emergency Service Grant – VDEM - \$9500 (Emergency Shelter Upgrade), VA Dept of Fire Programs - \$25,270 (Washers for Volunteer Fire Dept Turn Out Gear)
9. Ratification of Contract with Axon Enterprises
10. Budget Amendment – Clerk of Circuit Court Records Preservation Grant - \$39,620

Chairman Pierce read the items listed for consent and asked Board members if any items needed to be pulled for discussion.

Mr. Drew asked to pull Item 2 for discussion.

Chairman Pierce asked for a motion to approve the remaining consent items. Supervisor Elliott moved, and Supervisor Hardy seconded, to approve the consent items 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.

Vote 5:0 (Approved):

Ayes: Mr. Pierce, , Mr. Hardy Mr. Calhoun, Dr. Elliott, Mr. Drew

Nays: None

Absent: None

Mr. Drew presented the Resolution in Recognition of the Surry County High School Girls Basketball Team.

The members of the Surry County High School Girls Basketball Team and Coach Wilhelm Johns accepted the Resolution.

Chairman Pierce further acknowledged Ms. Zariah Harrell, who was part of the basketball team but was not present at tonight's meeting because she was currently traveling with the softball team.

Mr. Calhoun thanked the volunteers of the Claremont, Dendron, and Surry Fire Departments, the EMS Department, and Surry Rescue Squad for their service to Surry County. He stated that specifically, he wanted to thank the volunteers of the Surry and Claremont Fire Departments who responded to a wooded area fire on his road on Tuesday afternoon. He said that they were able to contain and extinguish the fire before it reached nearby structures.

Mr. Calhoun announced his immediate resignation from his position on the Board of Supervisors. He read a prepared statement that cited his lack of confidence in the Board's ability to operate in a fair, respectful, and transparent manner, specifically regarding the lack of fair election processes for the Chairman and Vice Chairman positions, the repeated disregard of motions he made, and the failure to provide sufficient information in a timely manner necessary for informed decision-making. He expressed that it had been an honor to serve the citizens of Surry County; however, he believed stepping aside was the appropriate course of action at this time. (Mr. Calhoun immediately left the meeting).

Public Comments

1. Roberta Hammel, Claremont District – requested that the Board consider adopting an equalized tax rate in response to increased real estate assessments this year
2. Bryan Hammel, Claremont District – noted the issues with the last reassessment and requested the Board consider reducing the number of teachers in the County schools in order to save funds and reduce the tax rate
3. Susan Corvello, Claremont District – acknowledged the partnerships the County had with the town; requested the Board to include a plan and funding for the County's 4H and Agricultural Extension Program in the Proposed Budget, with a dedicated permanent location

Public Hearing

1. Public Hearing on the Proposed Tax Rates for Tax Year 2026 for FY 2026-2027 Budget Planning Purposes

- I. Call to Order – Chairman Pierce called the public hearing to order.
- II. Presentation by Staff – Melissa Rollins, County Administrator provided a summary of the item. She stated that per the advertisement of the Tax Year 2026 proposed tax rates, there was no change in the real estate tax rate of \$0.71 per \$100 of assessed value and there was no change in the personal property tax rate at \$3.75 per \$100 of assessed value; all other rates remained the same. There was one proposed change to the Personal Property Tax Relief, which would change from 31% to 33%.
- III. Open Floor for Public Comments – Chairman Pierce opened the public hearing for the Proposed Tax Rates for Tax Year 2026.
 1. Diane Cheek, Surry District – requested a lowered real estate tax rate of \$0.69 and adjusting the budget to support that rate.
 2. Susan Corvello, Claremont District – asked for clarification regarding the Revenue Stabilization Fund, which was proposed to be used to pay the debt service for the YMCA project. She asked if this met the intended purpose of the Fund and what plan they had to replenish the reserves. She asked for clarification regarding the potential change in due dates for property taxes on mobile homes.
- IV. Close Floor to Public Comment – Chairman Pierce closed the public hearing.
- V. Closing Staff Comments – Ms. Rollins noted that the copies of the Resolution to adopt the tax rate were included in the Board's materials for the meeting.
- VI. Board Discussion – Dr. Elliott said that he wanted the public to know that he had heard all of their concerns and was taking them to heart. He asked that citizens keep in mind that the costs of operating the County government were increasing and could not be avoided. In order to provide services to their community, they could not adopt an equalized tax rate.

Board Action: Chairman Pierce asked for a motion on the item.

Supervisor Elliott moved for approval of **the Proposed Tax Rates for Tax Year 2026 in the Resolution as presented**, seconded by Supervisor Drew.

Vote: 4:0 (Approved)

Ayes: Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hardy, Dr. Elliott, Mr. Drew

Nays: None

Absent: None

New Business

1. Sussex Service Authority Operations Agreement

Melissa Rollins, County Administrator, provided an overview of the item. She explained that for the Board's consideration was a new contract with the Sussex Service Authority, which included increased costs due to the costs of operations of the Service Authority. She reviewed the increased costs of maintenance, administrative fees, and routine lab fees, which comprised a 4% increase in adjusted monthly costs. Furthermore, there were changes to the use of the equipment and personnel. The estimated overall increase in the annual contract was \$10,000. Staff was requesting the Board to approve the new Operations Agreement, effective July 1, 2026.

Board Action: Chairman Pierce asked for a motion on the item.

Supervisor Drew moved for approval of the **Resolution to Adopt the Sussex Service Authority Operations Agreement as presented**, seconded by Supervisor Elliott.

Vote: 4:0 (Approved)

Ayes: Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hardy, Dr. Elliott, Mr. Drew

Nays: None

Absent: None

Unfinished Business

There was none.

Presentations

1. Surry Department of Social Services – Latonya Brown provided a presentation on Child Abuse Awareness Month. She shared national and local statistics on child abuse and discussed the Surry Department of Social Services programs and policies to address child abuse. She announced that tomorrow, Department of Social Services staff would be wearing the color blue in recognition of Wear Blue Day, with blue representing the national symbol for child abuse prevention. The theme for this year's Child Abuse Prevention Month was "Pinwheels of Possibilities," where pinwheels represented the happy, healthy, and safe childhood that every child deserved. She presented pinwheel lapel pins to the Supervisors.

2. FY 26-27 County Administrator's Proposed Budget

Melissa Rollins, County Administrator, presented the FY 26-27 County Administrator's Proposed Budget for Surry County. She provided an overview of the budget process, which was balanced and maintained the current tax rates. She discussed the constraints and budgetary drivers, financial policies, future investments, and efficiencies that informed their budget strategies. She then discussed the details of the budget, including alignment with the Board's strategic goals, cost of living adjustments (COLA) for employees, and dedicated funding to the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) for the County and Schools. She reviewed the tax rates and revenue sources in the General Fund as well as state revenues. She further elaborated on the General Fund, Other Funds, and CIP. (Presentation included).

Board Comments

Mr. Drew – Thanked the public for attending tonight's meeting and to those watching from home.

Dr. Elliott – Thanked everyone for participating in the Board meeting tonight. He thanked the County Administrator for her budget presentation. He reiterated to the citizens that the County was doing everything possible to provide the best services with limited resources. He encouraged everyone to come together during their First Fridays gatherings, which would be starting next month. He said that Board members would be glad to discuss anything about the budget or other County issues with their constituents at their community events.

Mr. Hardy – Thanked Ms. Rollins and staff for preparing the budget for this year. He acknowledged the budget process was always difficult and they continued to work within constraints. He emphasized that they needed to make sure their employees were paid adequately and competitively so their services did not suffer. He noted that with regard to the surrounding localities' tax rates, Surry County did not charge machinery and tools property tax to their local farmers, while their neighbors did. He asked the public to keep in mind that their revenues were limited in that regard and prevented them from being able to lower the real estate tax, but they did this to support their local farmers. He emphasized that if they did not diversify their revenues in the County, the issue of real estate tax would only continue. He again congratulated the girls' basketball team for their outstanding performance. He announced that Surry County would be hosting their 2026 Job Fair on April 15 from 9:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. at 205 Enos Farm Road. He said that today, he visited their Senior Center and was grateful to join in fellowship with them. He stated that last month, Chairman Pierce, Mr. Harrison, and he had a meeting with Congresswoman McClellan to discuss the needs of Surry County, and he greatly appreciated her commitment. He also thanked Mr. Harrison for his dedication in applying for grants for the County. He congratulated Mr. Phelps for receiving state grants for their emergency services, which was a significant success. He expressed his disappointment that only five citizens attended tonight's budget presentation, as he was hoping more citizens would take the opportunity to learn more about the County's budget and tax rates this year.

Mr. Pierce – Thanked his colleagues for their comments and thanked all the citizens who attended tonight's meeting. He stated that April 1 began the second quarter of the year, which brought them into springtime as well as budget season. He acknowledged Ms. Rollins and all their staff who worked on the budget for this year. He agreed with the other Supervisors who had noted the impacts of inflation and how they needed to stay focused on the future of their County and ensuring an excellent quality of life for all their citizens. He thanked the girls' basketball team for all their hard work. He also thanked Elder Blount, who was his pastor, for giving the invocation this evening and for all the other prayers he had given. He acknowledged the Sheriff and other staff members present at tonight's meeting. He also expressed his appreciation for everything Mr. Phelps had done for their community and their safety improvements they had achieved under his leadership. He also noted that the recent collaborative meeting the Board had a few weeks ago with elected officials from their local towns was tremendously productive and he looked forward to continuing that collaboration in the future.

County Administrator's Report

1. Celebrating Employee Achievements – Ray Phelps, Director of Emergency Services, stated that it was an honor to accept the Award for the Top Preparedness Program from the Virginia Emergency Management Association Symposium. He thanked his staff for their dedication to Surry County and for making this program a success.

Ms. Rollins recognized Deseria Creighton-Barney, Director of Human Resources, for her successful completion of the High-Performance Leadership Program through the National Association of Counties (NACo), earning her master's certificate.

Ms. Rollins additionally reminded the public that April was Surry County Clean Up Month, and she encouraged everyone to take advantage of the extra days provided for solid waste and recycling. She thanked all of the County's team for their instrumental work in developing the budget this year, which was intended to be as efficient as possible. She also thanked staff for putting on a successful April Spring Fest, which was a great event despite the cold weather.

Reports

1. Business Licenses Revenue Memo - 2026
2. Blackwater Regional Library Directors Report – March 2026
3. FOIA Request Summary – March 2026

Chairman Pierce enumerated the reports. He asked Board members to please review the reports and provide any questions or comments to staff.

For Your Information

Chairman Pierce asked if their County Attorney could address the resignation they had received from Supervisor Calhoun earlier in tonight's meeting and the next steps for the representation for the Surry District.

Lola Perkins, County Attorney, explained that there were two phases to the process. The first was to file a writ of election with the Circuit Court, which must be filed within 15 days from the date of vacancy; in this case that would be April 17, 2026. The writ of election requests a special election, which had its own timing requirements outlined in Virginia Code. She stated that the most cost-effective approach will be to hold the special election on the date of the general election, November 3, 2026. She requested that the Board authorize the filing of the writ of election with the Circuit Court, with the special election to be held on November 3, 2026. The second part of the process was that the Board was required to appoint an individual to fill the vacancy, which could be filled by a certified voter in the Surry District. The appointment must occur within 45 days of the vacancy. This individual would serve until November 3, 2026, and whoever was elected in that special election would immediately fill the vacancy at that point. Prior to appointing the interim Supervisor, the Board must announce the individuals being considered at least seven days in advance of a public meeting, and then the Board could make the appointment during that subsequent public meeting.

Board Action: Chairman Pierce asked for a motion.

Supervisor Drew moved **to authorize staff to submit a writ of election to the Circuit Court with a recommended date of November 3, 2026 for the special election**, seconded by Supervisor Hardy.

Vote: 4:0 (Approved)

Ayes: Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hardy, Dr. Elliott, Mr. Drew

Nays: None

Absent: None

Adjournment

Chairman Pierce asked for a motion for adjournment to April 29, 2026, 6:00 p.m. for a regular meeting.

Supervisor Drew moved, and Supervisor Elliott seconded.

Vote 4:0 (Approved):

Ayes: Mr. Pierce, Mr. Hardy, Dr. Elliott, Mr. Drew

Nays: None

Absent: None

The meeting adjourned at approximately 7:40 p.m.

This meeting can be viewed in its entirety through the Surry County Government Website:

<https://www.surrycountyva.gov/387/Watch-A-Meeting>