

County of Prince Edward
Board of Supervisors
Agenda Summary

Meeting Date: February 8, 2011
Item No.: 15
Department: County Administration
Staff Contact: W.W. Bartlett/Sarah Puckett
Issue: Correspondence

Summary:

Attachments:

- a. E-mail from Del. Edmunds, RE: Reassessment Bill
- b. Virginia Cooperative Extension – Update on Restructuring Plan

Recommendation: None.

Motion _____
Second _____

Campbell _____
Jones _____
Wilck _____

Fore _____
McKay _____
Wiley _____

Gantt _____
Simpson _____

K Everhart

From: James Edmunds [james@friendsofjamesedmunds.com]
Sent: Tuesday, January 18, 2011 4:39 PM
To: board@co.prince-edward.va.us; R. B. Clark; George Nester
Subject: FW: "burden of proof" bill

Delegate Edmunds asked me to share his emailed response to Nancy Carwile, a member of the Charlotte County Board of Supervisors, regarding the assessment bill (HB1588) that is currently making its way through the General Assembly.

Shelia Bradley
Legislative Aide
Delegate James Edmunds
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james@friendsofjamesedmunds.com

From: edmundsfarms@comcast.net [mailto:edmundsfarms@comcast.net]
Sent: Tuesday, January 18, 2011 3:49 PM
To: ncarwile@hotmail.com
Subject: "burden of proof" bill

Hi Nancy! I received your email regarding your opposition to HB 1588, known as the "burden of proof" bill. While I understand your concerns, I would have to respectfully disagree with you. During my 10 years on the Halifax County Board of Supervisors, one of the most frequent complaints by my constituents always seemed to deal with property values. As a property owner myself, I too felt that the appeals process places an undue and potentially expensive burden on the property owner. In my view, if a property is truly being assessed, then there has to be some information (comparable sales, location, timber values, etc.) used to value the property. This bill would simply require that when a property owner makes an appointment with the Board of Equalization to disagree with the value of their property, it would be the locality's responsibility to pull up whatever notes were used to value the property to justify how the value was determined. By no means would this bill automatically grant tax relief to "anybody who showed up to appeal". In contrast to your belief, I believe this "open door" policy making will bring about equality in valuation, not inequality. I also believe that once property owners understand how values are determined and an explanation is given, then, I believe there actually may be fewer appeals in the future.

Additionally, I also believe that requiring a property owner to go to some potential considerable expense by having an appraisal done or hiring an attorney to represent them means that only those more affluent citizens can afford to appeal at all. Also, the argument that there will be "considerably more expense to localities" simply doesn't hold water with me either. All this bill does is require that, upon making an appointment with the Board of Equalization, the Board will have available to them notes as to how the values were arrived. Personally, I do not believe there will be a "flood" of appeals just because all of a sudden they are "free". The appeals process is supposed to be "free" now.

As you know, I have a bill myself that allows for the notification of assessments and encourages property owner participation prior to evaluations. I believe that this may eliminate much of the appeals to begin with. I do want to thank you for your service to your community on the Board of Supervisors and know that I am only trying to do what I believe is fair and equitable for all. Let me know if I can ever help you in any way.

James

Virginia Cooperative Extension

A partnership of Virginia Tech and Virginia State University



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January 31, 2011

Dear Friends:

The purpose of this letter is to provide an update on circumstances surrounding the proposed Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) restructuring plan.

I have met with many of you over the past four months--and had telephone conversations with many more--to discuss the restructuring plan, the potential impact on your local Extension office, and what would be necessary to make the plan work for our employees while serving the needs and interests of the localities, clients, and volunteers. One common theme in my communications both internally and externally has also been that we would need to wait until the General Assembly took a position on Extension restructuring before engaging in discussions on the plan's logistics in each locality.

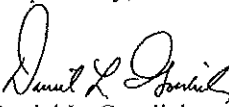
On Friday, January 28, Dr. Alan Grant, Dean of the Virginia Tech College of Agriculture and Life Sciences sent a communication to the system advising that work of the restructuring implementation teams has been suspended in order to "step back and begin a process in which internal and external stakeholders can be more engaged." I have included a copy of Dr. Grant's message along with this letter.

Despite stepping back to reevaluate the situation, restructuring Virginia Cooperative Extension remains an emotionally, politically, and financially charged topic. The General Assembly is still in session and legislators can take a variety of approaches with regard to Extension restructuring, such as requiring the development of a new process and plan, reinstating resources to retain the current structure, legislating a solution, and so on. For our part, each potential proposal will require a thoughtful and measured administrative response.

Once we know the outcome of the General Assembly session we will be able to respond administratively with more clarity. However, the overall question remains: how will Virginia Cooperative Extension strategically address the needs of our citizens in an era of declining resources? As indicated by Dean Grant, VCE will be more proactive in seeking stakeholder input moving forward and I hope you take an opportunity to engage in this discussion.

Thank you for your support of Virginia Cooperative Extension and your local Extension office. Please feel free to contact your Unit Coordinator, or myself, if we can be of service.

Respectfully,


Daniel L. Goerlich
Central District Director

www.ext.vt.edu

Extension is a joint program of Virginia Tech, Virginia State University, the U.S. Department of Agriculture, and state and local governments.

Virginia Cooperative Extension programs and employment are open to all, regardless of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, or marital or family status. An equal opportunity/affirmative action employer.

Goerlich, Daniel

From: VCE-ALLSTAFF Public Distribution List [VCE-ALLSTAFF@listserv.vt.edu] on behalf of Grant, Alan [algrant@vt.edu]
Sent: Friday, January 28, 2011 11:10 AM
To: VCE-ALLSTAFF@LISTSERV.vt.edu
Subject: VCE restructuring update
Importance: High

Dear Colleagues,

As many of you know, the discussions involving Virginia Cooperative Extension restructuring are being met with significant opposition from various stakeholders. The restructuring process has been an attempt to develop an organizational structure that meets the needs of Extension clientele within an environment of diminishing resources. However, it is clear that various stakeholders want to be much more engaged in the planning process. In fact, this contentious situation is leading some stakeholders and employees to question Virginia Tech's commitment to Extension.

Therefore, in consultation with Dr. Steger, the decision has been made to immediately suspend the work of the VCE restructuring implementation teams, so that we can step back and begin a process in which internal and external stakeholders can be more engaged. We will be asking our partners to be further engaged in this process and assist us in our mandate from the General Assembly to restructure Extension.

I recognize and I am very appreciative of the efforts that many of you have devoted to this issue, and I am confident that your ideas and past efforts will be very useful in developing a process to move us forward. Our goal is to develop an Extension system that meets the present and future needs of all Virginians while recognizing the reality of reduced state support. We are committed to a collaborative process that engages our many stakeholder groups as we accomplish this task.

Sincerely,
Alan Grant

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