

**NEW RIVER VALLEY REGIONAL JAIL AUTHORITY**  
**March 13, 2015**  
**Held at the New River Valley Regional Jail**

**A. CALL TO ORDER:**

The meeting of the New River Valley Regional Jail Authority was called to order at 10:00 a.m. by Chairman Shannon Zeman with twelve (12) members and six (6) alternate present.

<b>MEMBERS PRESENT:</b>	Bland County:	Sheriff Thompson; Mr. Workman
	Giles County:	Sheriff Millirons
	Wythe County:	Sheriff Dunagan; Mr. Reeves
	Radford City:	Mr. Young
	Grayson County:	Sheriff Vaughan
	Floyd County:	Sheriff Zeman; Mr. Turman
	Pulaski County:	Mr. Conner
	Carroll County:	Mr. Jackson; Sheriff Gardner

<b>ALTERNATES PRESENT:</b>	Carroll County:	Ms. Cannon
	Floyd County:	Mr. Allen
	Giles County:	Mr. Martin
	Pulaski County:	Mr. McCready
	Grayson County:	Mr. Smith
	Radford City:	Mr. Humphrey

<b>STAFF &amp; GUESTS PRESENT:</b>	Superintendent Gerald McPeak
	Lt. Col. Tom Lawson
	Steve Durbin—Sands, Anderson, Marks & Miller
	Robert Lyons—NRVRJ Maintenance Dept.

**B. ROLL CALL:**

Sheriff Gardner called the roll and reported a quorum present.

**C. APPROVAL OF FEBRUARY 2015 MINUTES:**

The Minutes from the February 2015 meeting were distributed to the Board. Chairman Zeman asked if there were any additions or corrections to the Minutes.

**Motion:** Mr. Workman moved that the February 2015 Minutes be approved as presented. Sheriff Vaughan seconded the motion.

**Action:** The motion passed unanimously.

**D. OLD BUSINESS:**

None.

**E. COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Personnel Committee:**

Mr. McCready said that the Personnel Committee had met today and had discussed a couple of resignations. Both officers left the jail for higher paying jobs outside of the correctional system. They also reviewed some of the state pay raise formula. He added that it doesn't bode well for some of our employees.

**Operations Committee:**

The Operations Committee did meet today and talked about the accidental discharge that the occurred last month in the Magistrate's office. Sheriff Vaughan said that Major Stallard had met with the Magistrate and obtained a copy of their gun policy. He asked Major Stallard to discuss the conversation he had with the Magistrate. Major Stallard said that he returned his weapon to him after examining it. He advised him that the weapon was operating properly and the only reason it would have discharged was if something or someone pressed the trigger to the rear causing it to fire. He also gave him his recommendation on what needed to be done to have that not happen in the future. From reviewing their policy, the one thing that stands out is that they are to carry it on their person. If they remove it, they are to place it in a receptacle. It doesn't give a definition of that receptacle. Major Stallard said that when he personally thinks about a receptacle for a firearm he thinks about a lockbox that would secure it. But the policy doesn't go into that. He added that as far as what the Chief Magistrate has done as a reprimand, we have no knowledge of that at this time. Sheriff Vaughan said that they did want to make a recommendation to the Chief Magistrate that if a Magistrate is going to carry a firearm that they keep it on their person and they kept it concealed. He asked the Superintendent to make that recommendation to the Chief Magistrate. Superintendent McPeak said that he had already spoke with Ms. Long and told her that he would give back in touch with her after this meeting to discuss the Authority's wishes. He said there was only one other recommendation that he would offer. Last year, we adopted a policy that if our jail employees wanted to carry a firearm on the property that they must be secured in a lockbox in their vehicle or in the building in a gun box. We can add Magistrates to that policy. Then if they didn't want to carry the firearm on their person they would have to have an approved lockbox in their vehicles just the same as our employees do.

Sheriff Vaughan also added that anytime an inmate refuses medical treatment at any of the jurisdictions that the jail needs a copy of that refusal. There have been a couple of times recently when inmates have been sent down here with an injury and they have already refused care. It would just help the jail to have that signed refusal.

### **Finance Committee:**

The Finance Committee did meet today. Ms. Cannon reviewed copies of the Financial Report for July 2014-February 2015 with the Authority members.

**Motion:** On behalf of the Finance Committee, Ms. Cannon recommended the Financial Report for approval.

**Action:** Following roll call, the motion passed unanimously.

Ms. Cannon said it is budget time again. She and the jail staff have been working on the budget and looking at insurance costs with possible state pay raises for C7 and C8 positions within the facility. They would like to schedule a budget meeting for everyone that can attend on March 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am. The group would appreciate participation from anyone that can make it to the meeting.

### **Design/Construction Committee:**

The Design/Construction Committee did not meet.

### **F. SUPERINTENDENT'S REPORT:**

Superintendent McPeak reviewed his report in detail. Our headcount as of this morning was 853. Our state responsible inmates went from 318 last month down to 286 for this month. We will have another group of inmates going to Bland next week and we also sent some to Brunswick this past week as well.

In employee activity, we had no new hires and 2 resignations. We currently have 14 officers in training at this time. Major Stallard has spent some time at the academy this past week and we've been getting some really good reports from the instructors/academy staff about the quality of the group of men and women that we have over there.

Superintendent McPeak gave an update on all of our inmate programs and gave totals in each of those. We were approached by Goodwill Industries regarding a new program called Just Hire One that is to begin in May. Mr. McCready has been a help on that project and the Superintendent asked that he give the group some details about the program. Mr. McCready said that both he and Mr. Workman are on the Regional Workforce Development Board and saw earlier in the year that they would have some surplus money available for adult training. The Board came up with an idea of their own that would reach out to inmates that were preparing to release in a short term. The inmate would receive training, be counseled and monitored to see that they have a place to stay and a job to go to when they leave here. Once they are on the job they would be monitored to see that they are on time and passing drug tests. The goal of Workforce Development is to turn that tax user into a tax payer and ultimately save the county some money and break the chain of them showing up here. Approximately \$70,000 was set

aside to reach that goal and that money will be spent this year. These are federal dollars that are being used so no state or local money. The Superintendent said that our programs director was already been looking to identify inmates to place in the program. We could have as many as 15-30 inmates that could benefit from this program.

We continue to work on our Social Media policy and the Superintendent said that he appreciated Sheriff Vaughan sending him a copy their newly adopted policy. It will help us with the formulation of ours.

We continue to prepare for our three year audit that should take place in about a month. We have two inmate work crews sprucing up the facility. They stay busy painting, replacing ceiling tiles and caulk around various areas in the jail. The Superintendent, Col. Lawson and Major Stallard have been touring the facility weekly to see the work that is being done. The Superintendent added that it's looking new again.

The sub-zero weather that we had a couple of weeks ago has had some detrimental effects on some of our equipment here. We had problems with another one of our HVAC units. In that one particular unit, there are 22 coils and 21 of them froze and burst. All of that water came down into an occupied control room. Our staff was able to quickly move our computer equipment and get everything protected. It happened fairly early one morning so our maintenance staff was here and could get the water turned off. We used to have Trane contracted to take care of our HVAC units but we changed last year to a company called Moore's out of Roanoke that serves the VA and NC areas. We've got a really good contract with those folks and have developed a really good relationship. On the Superintendent's report, he had quoted an estimate of the repairs because we hadn't received the bill yet. Previously when Trane had to make those repairs it was around \$3,000 but with Moore's making them they were here within 2 hours after the problem and their cost for repairs was \$672. So we received a substantial savings from previous repairs.

We still do not have a signed contract with Carilion and the Superintendent asked Mr. Steve Durbin to update the group. Mr. Durbin said that he did send what he hopes is the "final-final" to the hospital this past Tuesday. He said that he thinks that they have resolved the sticking point and he hopes to have an executed contract within a couple of days. He added that they did incorporate the Roanoke-Carilion facility as an additional signer on the contract in case we have a transfer situation with an inmate going to Roanoke for more advanced care.

The jail is going to have to make some expensive repairs to our security electronics systems. Most of the doors on the security side of the facility are operated by air. We have a couple of compressors up in the penthouse. Obviously, we don't want oil or water in that system so that system has a fairly expensive air dryer attached to it. That particular air dryer has been on the system since 1999 so it is showing some wear and tear and needs to be replaced. We're also going to have to replace the heads on the compressors. We already have a quote on the heads at approximately \$1,200 and \$8,800 for the air dryer. The air dryer is a plug and play type thing. It is built off site and our maintenance department will be able to install it. But those repairs are absolutely essential to the operation of the facility and are within this year's budget.

Chairman Zeman asked if anyone had any questions for the Superintendent. Mr. Turman said that he had some questions for him and asked if he could carry it over into New Business.

**G. NEW BUSINESS:**

Mr. Turman asked if two resignations was an accurate reflection of the number of officers that were lost. The Superintendent said that we had two resignations and one termination. Mr. Turman said that he had a count of three resignations and one termination. Col. Lawson said we had a nurse that resigned. Mr. Turman said he wasn't counting nurses...just officers. Superintendent McPeak said that we also had a retirement but he didn't count that as a resignation. Mr. Turman said he was talking resignations not retirements or nurses. The Superintendent said those were the only two that he recalls but he asked Col. Lawson to go and check. Mr. Turman asked the Superintendent if he knew right off hand how many officers we had lost this year. The Superintendent said that he couldn't tell him right off. Mr. Turman said he had asked the Superintendent for some numbers a while back because he has been concerned with the number of officers that this jail was losing because it was costing each county a lot of money. He read each year's total off as 36 officers in 2011, 27 officers in 2012, 52 officers in 2013 and 29 officers in 2014 for a total of 144 officers. He asked how many officers the jail routinely has. The Superintendent said close to 200 or a little better in its security staff. Mr. Turman said he wasn't very good at math or equations but that seemed like 72% of the officers in the last 4 years has left. The Superintendent said that not too long ago he had an employee going through Leadership Training and she compiled these numbers. Mr. Turman said yes those were the ones that the Superintendent had sent to him. Her study was done on employee turnover/retention and based on the calculations our average for the 4 year period was about 11%. The National Average for correctional officers is between 20-25%. He said that he felt like based on our numbers we were well under the National Average. It's a line of work that does have a high turnover rate. The Superintendent added that the year that Mr. Turman mentioned with us losing 52 officers was the year that we lost folks to River North. There were 16 total officers that went to River North so that number was a whole lot different to what our typical average is. Col. Lawson then came back with the list of names. The additional resignation that the Superintendent had forgotten was Officer Phillips who left to work as a military contractor. We hired Officer Phillips here around 3 years ago and he stayed with us about a year. He was then on active duty and supposed to be gone overseas for approx. 3 years but came back within about 1 year. He has been back with us again for less than a year and has now left to accept a job with a private contractor in Afghanistan. Mr. Turman asked if the list had the names on it and could he see it. The Superintendent then gave Mr. Turman the list of names to review. Chairman Zeman said he thought that this officer leaving was mentioned at last month's meeting as well. Sheriff Vaughan said that River North is experiencing some of the same issues. They have hired a lot of personnel and had a lot of turnover. They've sent them off for training and they have come back, worked and few months and decided it's not for them. He said he knew their turnover is as much as ours and maybe even more. The Superintendent said he has had recent discussions with Ms. Cannon about ways to retain officers. They discussed our insurance issues and how we haven't had salary increases here in quite some time. Hopefully, we

will get those this year. Of the two folks that left, one went to Radford Arsenal for a higher paying job and Pulaski County hired the other officer for their IT department. When an employee leaves here we ask them to fill out an exit questionnaire. There are two questions we ask:

- 1) Would you consider working for the NRVJR in the future?
- 2) Would you consider recommending us to friends or relatives?

The overwhelming majority check yes to these questions, which tells him they aren't leaving because they're disgruntled. Mr. Conner said they're leaving here because we're not paying them enough. He said every time we talk about a pay raise, we talk about taking it back with insurance. He said it was ridiculous that they say these officers aren't state officers and they're not county officers...and they just don't come under this pay raise. Mr. Conner said that until we solve that problem, it's going to stay the way it is. Mr. McCready said that you could take your whole training budget and pour it into salary increases if you wanted to on the assumption that we're going to pay everyone the most we can. But you're still going to have a portion of the people that say corrections work is not for me. You're still going to have people to retire. You're still going to have people that say they are tired of handling inmates and are going to go over to the Arsenal and make a couple more bucks an hour. Mr. McCready said that when you look at a turnover rate, you have to look at an annual turnover rate not the turnover rate over so many years. He said that just by looking at these rough numbers he would have thought we had a 15% turnover rate so the fact that our number is under the National Average is great. Mr. Turman said he still worried about the experienced officers that we're losing here. He asked could it be that they're checking that box just because they don't want the jail to give them an unsatisfactory reference down the road. Mr. Workman asked the Chairman if there was in fact a question here. He added that everyone had busy schedules and not to be rude to any locality...that some of this could be solved in the budget meeting but if there wasn't a motion then he moved that we move onto a new topic.

**Motion:** Mr. Turman made the motion that the Authority go into closed session under 2.2-371141 to discuss the termination. Mr. McCready called for a roll call vote to decide whether go into closed session. The question was asked if there needed to be a second. Chairman Zeman asked if anyone seconded the motion for the Authority to go into closed session.

**Action:** Hearing no second, the motion died.

Mr. Turman asked the board if they would like to hear from some of the officers that have left here and the reasons why they have left here. He said that they were being told that they couldn't come to this meeting and he thinks they have every right to come. Chairman Zeman said that this meeting was open to the public and in an effort to move on he recommended that Mr. Turman discuss it with the Personnel Committee. Mr. Turman said that he been there and was lectured on policy and procedures. He said that he wouldn't go to the Personnel Committee anymore.

Mr. McCready said that Mr. Turman was lectured on policy and procedures because he was advocating for his son which borders on Conflict of Interest under Virginia State

Code. Mr. McCready said that he didn't want to see Mr. Turman get criminally charged with anything so he guided him in the policies of the state. Mr. McCready said that if Mr. Turman has a personnel issue, he is welcome to bring it before the Personnel Committee. But since his son works here and he is a board member that was advocating for him...or got close to advocating for him, he didn't want Mr. Turman to get into legal trouble. Chairman Zeman said that he appreciated the clarification and he advised Mr. Turman to discuss any personnel issues with the Personnel Committee or he was welcome to bring it up with the board at another time. But he said we would now move on to other new business.

Sheriff Vaughan said he wanted to ask a question about the budget. He said that he had received a memo from the Compensation Board and asked if everyone was included in the 2% raise. Superintendent said that our C7 and C8's are but anyone above that position, administrative, nursing and kitchen staff aren't currently included. Sheriff Vaughan asked if there were any other surprises. The Superintendent said the only other surprises were positive ones. There is some question regarding our Aid to Localities payment and whether or not we will have to pay that during this budget cycle.

There was some discussion on changing the budget planning session to another date due to some scheduling conflicts. In the end, it was decided to leave it as originally scheduled for **Friday, March 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 am.**

Mr. Conner asked how many people make up the amount that wouldn't be covered under the state's raises for C7 & C8's. The Superintendent said there were around 44 people who will not be considered in the state's raise.

**H. CITIZEN'S COMMENTS:**

**I. OTHER BUSINESS OR INFORMATIONAL ITEMS:**

**J. ADJOURNMENT:**

Chairman Zeman asked if there was a motion from the floor to adjourn.

**Motion:** Mr. Workman made the motion to adjourn the meeting.  
Mr. Jackson seconded the motion.

**Action:** The motion passed unanimously.

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Zeman adjourned the meeting at 10:36 am.

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Secretary, Sheriff Gardner

