

AT A MEETING OF THE MIDDLESEX COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS HELD  
ON AUGUST 18, 2022, IN THE BOARD ROOM OF THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE,  
SALUDA, VIRGINIA:

Present: Wayne H. Jessie, Sr., Jamaica District (by Zoom)  
Don R. Harris, Saluda District  
John B. Koontz, Jr., Hartfield District  
Reginald A. Williams, Sr., Harmony Village District  
Lud H. Kimbrough, III, Pinetop District

Matthew L. Walker, County Administrator (by Zoom)  
Betty S. Muncy, Assistant County Administrator  
Tammy-Lynn Gilbert, Executive Assistant/Deputy Clerk

**CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Kimbrough called the meeting to order at 3:00 p.m. for the purpose of conducting a work session to discuss the Sheriff's Office, Puller Center renovation project

**PULLER CENTER RENOVATION PROJECT**

Mr. Kimbrough explained the work session was to discuss the sheriff's office and review the options for this project. He said that everyone is in support of a new sheriff's facility that will help towards obtaining accreditation, purchasing cameras for the department, and having a functional Emergency Operations Center. Mr. Kimbrough said the Puller Center was selected as a candidate for the new Sheriff and Emergency Operations Center and Bay Design was selected to examine the facility and report it would be a viable option. He added at the last Board of Supervisors meeting, Bay Design provided an estimate of \$3.75 million for the renovation project, which would take approximately two years to complete.

Mr. Charlie Beam, County Engineer said he met with Sheriff Bushey and toured the existing Sheriff Office facility and stated it was very cramped, he then toured the Puller Center where Sheriff Bushey was able to identify his needs and requirements. He added he also met with Bay Design and reviewed their drawings and stated that their planned outline does accommodate the Sheriff's requirements. He added this facility will carry the Sheriff's Department through the next 20-25 years and stated that Bay Design has provisioned for future expansion. Mr. Beam also mentioned he has identified items that will need to be added into the \$3.75 million which will increase this price. Mr. Beam explained the estimated 2-year construction schedule, stating this includes the design, obtaining permits, bidding, and awarding the contract and the construction and added the renovation could be completed in 12 months.

Mr. Kimbrough asked about the additional costs that Mr. Beam mentioned. Mr. Beam stated they were the costs associated with construction administration such as reviewing drawings, responding to RFI's and inspections. He added that if the County could provide their own inspections, it would save on project costs.

Mr. Harris asked for a rough estimate of the costs. Mr. Burton, Bay Design representative, stated he believes the costs would be approximately \$320,000.00. Mr. Harris requested further clarification on the costs. Mr. Burton said the proposed number is \$3.75 million; however, there could be unforeseen costs as the detailed design goes through. Mr. Harris asked if there were ways to phase parts of the renovation over a period of time. Mr. Burton mentioned that internally, there wasn't anything that could be phased and added externally, there are a few things that could be phased but would only have a savings of approximately \$200,000.00. Mr. Beam added to be issued a certificate of occupancy, the building cannot be under construction.

Mr. Williams asked for clarification on the two-year construction schedule. Mr. Burton said there is a significant amount of work to be done on the electrical to satisfy the building official and DEQ. Mr. Burton explained the process, and said during the planning process, there will be meetings with the MCSO committee and DEQ to ensure they are meeting the stormwater management requirements. He added once the plans are approved, there is a three-month advertisement, bid and review process by the Board to award the contract, and a 10-month construction period. Mr. Burton said any changes after that point, the Board would receive a change order.

Mr. Koontz said he is concerned with the level of confidence he has when addressing his constituents regarding this project and therefore, he is relying on the experts and looking for a level of confidence from those working on this project. Mr. Burton stated he is confident in the fact that the Puller Center will provide top notch space for the Sheriff's Office to operate out of. He added, it is difficult to get a full understanding from a condensed version the project reports provide. Mr. Koontz asked Mr. Burton and Mr. Beam to make themselves available to the media. Mr. Burton stated that he couldn't speak for the County, he can only explain the report which would already be public knowledge. He said he would work with Mr. Beam to ensure the reports are clear. Mr. Burton said one question he can see being asked is when would the design team get approval to proceed with the detailed work, adding that as of the August 2, 2022 meeting, it hadn't been decided on. He also mentioned whether the funding would be direct from the County or would it be USDA.

Mr. Jessie said the County knows it needs a Sheriff's Office and the County has an available building that has space needed today and for future expansion. He added that this building could also accommodate training events which could bring revenue to the County. Mr. Jessie said he feels everyone agrees. He said he would like to hear about the financials from Mr. Walker.

Mr. Kimbrough suggested keeping the financial decisions separate from how to proceed with the project. He asked what square footage was the Puller Center. Mr. Burton said the square footage was approximately 10,244 square feet. Mr. Burton added the building will be designed to meet the current codes and will have a risk factor of four which is required for police stations and emergency operations centers.

Mr. Kimbrough spoke of his concerns regarding the requirements between building new versus renovating. Mr. Burton stated once finished, the building would be classified as all public safety and emergency operations centers with a risk factor four and the design would meet the current code requirements. Mr. Kimbrough also asked if the roof structure meets the requirements. Mr. Burton stated if a detailed structural analysis is required, they are prepared to do one. He added the detailed plans will determine the condition of the roof and whether it needs repairs or replacement.

Mr. Kimbrough said he hears a high level of confidence for this project; however, in the interest of doing their due diligence, he introduced Mr. Jim Snowa, a retired architect and colleague, to provide another opinion on this project.

Mr. Snowa stated he was there to provide a third set of eyes and give his professional opinion. He stated he would like to see a detailed engineering report to analyze and make sure there is not a lot of money being put into a project that does not meet the criteria and if it does not meet it, the report will show what needs to be done to get in compliance with the criteria. He stated without a detailed program criteria, the information provided is a best educated guess. Mr. Snowa introduced a rough draft for a new build facility which is the same square footage as the existing Puller Center. He stated that the plans meet Sheriff Bushey's requirements, including the Training classroom and the EOC and 911 center. He then explained the materials that would be used for this construction.

Mr. Koontz asked for clarification on building new. Mr. Snowa stated the Puller Center is 40-50 years old and although he did a brief walkthrough with the Sheriff, he is unsure of the condition of the facility. He added he sees a Pandora's box scenario. Mr. Snowa said the renovation estimated for \$600,000 in demolition costs, money that could be used elsewhere in the project.

Mr. Koontz stated this information is being provided late and a plan for the Sheriff's office is in discussions. Mr. Snowa agreed with Mr. Koontz and stated he is only providing his professional opinion at no cost to the County.

Mr. Harris asked about the square footage price for a new build. Mr. Snowa stated the cost would be \$275.00 per square foot. Mr. Harris asked barring any issues that may or may not be present with the site, what would the cost to build a new building. Mr. Snowa said for the architectural, plumbing, mechanical and electrical components of the Puller Center renovation, the cost is \$3.2 million. He added the cost of the same components for the new build is \$2.7 million which is a difference of roughly a half a million dollars.

Mr. Snowa said his concern with the Puller Center renovation would be the further along the project is, the more issues that could arise.

Mr. Kimbrough asked about estimated completion time and Mr. Snowa said the bidding process would take six to nine months and construction would be estimated at 10 to 12 months.

Mr. Snowa said as a citizen of Middlesex County, regardless of which plan is decided on, he wants to ensure the Sheriff's Office gets the attention that is needed and well deserved. He said he is only providing information so the Board of Supervisors can make an informed decision how to spend money wisely on this project. He added all that he or Mr. Burton can do is make projection of costs based on their experience and the current market.

Mr. Harris asked for Sheriff Bushey's thoughts on the matter. Sheriff Bushey stated there are still a lot of unanswered questions and discussed Mr. Snowa's plans and the unknown costs. He also mentioned his concerns with a metal building holding up against Mother Nature. Mr. Burton also discussed the Puller Center renovation in greater detail.

Mr. Harris asked Mr. Burton if he had anything he'd like to add. Mr. Burton discussed several issues that would be faced with the new build plan. He then explained the process for the cost per square foot of the renovation project. He stated just the architectural engineering cost and the mechanical, electrical and plumbing costs are approximately \$317 per square foot and he has seen numbers ranging anywhere from \$200 to \$400 per square foot for the construction costs. Mr. Burton reminded the Board, the new High School costs were \$350 per square foot. Mr. Burton also stated that Bay Design was only tasked with evaluating whether the Puller Center could be renovated and they have determined that it can be.

Mr. Jessie said there is a plan already in place, stick with the plan and do not delay this anymore. He added it is good to have input from different people. He said there is no guarantee that a new building could withstand a hurricane; however, the Puller Center has stood for many years.

Mr. Beam said he has met with Mr. Snowa, Bay Design and Sheriff Bushey and reviewed the current facility and toured the Puller Center. He said he also discussed Mr. Layman's requirements for the building. Mr. Beam created a comparison of the two designs and said that the design, permitting bidding were very similar. He stated he was more focused on which of the designs met all the requirements for the Sheriff's Department and Emergency Services. He then discussed Mr. Snowa's plan in more detail. Mr. Beam stated that both plans had viable points but focused on the Puller Center renovation and said that it is a 50 year old building; however, once it's been renovated, it will be a new building and will be renovated according to today's codes and standards.

Mr. Burton stated there was another possible option to consider and suggested building a new facility on the existing Puller Center site. He said the cost of both options would be somewhere in the mid \$3 millions and will be approximately 2 years to complete.

Mr. Kimbrough stated the Board would review and make a decision during the upcoming Board of Supervisors meeting. He asked Sheriff Bushey if the 2-year completion date was acceptable. Sheriff Bushey stated he wished to move forward.

Mr. Walker discussed various financing options with either USDA or the private market. He mentioned the additional requirements should the USDA financing be selected and stated he would like to have Mr. Burton speak with the USDA representative to go over those requirements. He also mentioned the possibility of grants or loan forgiveness that would be possible options. He said the most attractive feature for the USDA financing is the 40-year term at a substantially lower interest rate.

Mr. Kimbrough adjourned the meeting at 4:51 p.m.

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Lud H. Kimbrough, III, Chairman  
Board of Supervisors