

**CRAIG COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS
MARCH 19th , 2026 AT 6:00 P.M.
CRAIG COUNTY COURTHOUSE**

AT A CONTINUED MEETING of the Craig County Board of Supervisors conducted on the 19th day of MARCH 2026 at 6:00 p.m. in the Craig County Court House Courtroom.

PRESENT: Jesse Spence, Chair
Jordan Labiosa-Vice Chair
Carl Bailey-Supervisor
Keith Dunbar-Supervisor
Brian Lipes-Supervisor

Dan Collins – Clerk
Amy Bryson-Deputy Clerk

OPEN MEETING CONTINUING MEETING

The meeting was called to order at 5:30 p.m. by Mr. Spence. The invocation was given by Mr. Lipes, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

REQUESTS TO POSTPONE, ADD TO OR CHANGE THE ORDER

- A. **III, NEW BUSINESS**, consider a Resolution Opposing Mandatory Collective Bargaining Legislation
- B. Public Hearing before New Business

HEAR THE PUBLIC

Dr. Wheeler, received the same request for collective bargaining and will be opposing it.

NEW BUSINESS

R26-25

RESOLUTION OF THE CRAIG COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS OPPOSING MANDATORY COLLECTIVE BARGAINING LEGISLATION (HB 1263 / SB 378)

WHEREAS, current Virginia law provides a local option allowing governing bodies to determine whether and how to engage in collective bargaining based on local fiscal capacity, workforce needs, and service priorities; and

WHEREAS, HB 1263 and SB 378 would eliminate this local option and impose a state-mandated, one-size-fits-all collective bargaining framework administered by a Public Employee Relations Board (PERB); and

WHEREAS, this legislation shifts authority away from locally elected officials and imposes an unfunded mandate with significant fiscal and administrative consequences for local governments and taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, Virginia's localities vary widely in population, resources, and service delivery models, and are best positioned to make decisions that reflect their unique circumstances; and

WHEREAS, mandatory collective bargaining as proposed would:

- Divert limited local resources from core services to new administrative and bargaining structures without dedicated funding;
- Eliminate local flexibility to align workforce decisions with budgets and service needs;
- Create unpredictable fiscal obligations through arbitration and expanded dispute resolution processes;
- Increase administrative burden, litigation risk, and long-term costs for local taxpayers; and

WHEREAS, local governments must maintain balanced budgets while continuing to provide essential services, including public safety, education, and infrastructure;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Craig Board of Supervisors strongly opposes HB 1263 and SB 378 and any legislation that mandates collective bargaining for local governments; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that the Board urges the Governor and members of the Virginia General Assembly to preserve local authority over workforce and labor relations policies; and

BE IT FINALLY RESOLVED, that the Clerk of the Board shall transmit this resolution to the Governor and members of the Virginia General Assembly.

Adopted this 19th day of MARCH, 2026.

Mr. Spence asked for a motion on R26-25. Mr. Labiosa was motioned, seconded by Mr. Bailey. Voting was as follows: Mr. Labiosa, yes, Mr. Lipes, yes, Mr. Dunbar, yes, Bailey, yes, and Mr. Spence, yes.

RECESS TO WORK SESSION

Mr. Collins reviewed with the board the proposed budget along with schedule, compensation, and recruitment. All budgets have been received and reviewed with departments. Discussion on real estate taxes, machinery and tools and fund balances. These included an increase in pay to all county employees at 2%, the boiler system for the school, volunteer fire department payments, and other expenditures. The occupancy tax can be raised on the Airbnb's by recent law but was opposed by the Tourism Commission. All federal and state money allotted to the tower sites for emergency services has no local tax dollars. Overall employment for the county for fulltime is and part time down. There is a minimum wage adjustment that we addressed a year ago. Reviewed the Consumer price index at 3.4% and real estate taxes regarding the last reassessment in 2024.

Dr. Wheeler reviewed with the board the funding challenges the school faces like *Composite Index of Local Ability-to-Pay (LCI) is a Virginia formula determining the state/local split for school funding, requiring wealthier areas to pay more. Based on property values (50%), income (40%), and sales tax (10%), it supports a state-wide goal of 55% state funding and 45% local funding. It is used to calculate the state share of school division payments. -*Viginia Department of Education.

LCI points and the regional LCI as we sit higher than surrounding areas, that has consistently gone up since 2010. This means we get less money from the state and need more money from the county to offset these costs. Dr. Wheeler also reviewed with the board on ADM, Average Dailey Membership-the average number of students enrolled and the number of sessions in school counted by March 31st, can affect funding also. An example is if students graduate early before March 31st, would affect our funding. Dr. Wheeler reviewed the programs now offered by Craig County Schools with the board other localities surrounding and similar populations. He reviewed the Virginia Preschool Initiative (VPI), setting students up for success, in his presentation his research on how much higher the scores were to students who had not received preschool. Investing up front will save money for students who are not able to read and comprehend in future grades. At Risk program includes economically disadvantaged, special education, this money goes to reading specialists and math specialists and reaches kids who need extra support. Compensation supplements help recruit and retain staff. He reviewed the infrastructure allocations used for small in-house repairs. K three class reduction helps with our younger children primary for high economic disadvantage students. Technology PSA, internet, chrome books, they age out and the money goes to replace those items. He is requesting more than last year at about \$500,000.00 more to fund all the programs. This budget is a shortfall due to the LCI which puts a burden on the county unfairly. Dr. Wheeler is looking at having to make these cuts if he cannot maintain what we have now. Supervisor Spence asked if the at-risk program also provides free or reduced lunches. Dr. Wheeler explained that the free or reduced lunches is a different program and does not fall under the at-risk program. He also explained that free and reduced lunches are for children who fall under a household income and after a percentage of so many students that qualify, the entire school gets free and reduced lunches.

The discussion on wants and needs vs rural areas and city areas. His presentation is available on the school website.

Darrly Humphreys, Emergency Director for Craig County- He thanked the board for adjusting the overtime issue. He reviewed supplements for EMS and Fire, discussed advertising options for EMS, and a posting board like Indeed, we currently post on the website. He is requesting for future needs, three additional EMT and two Life Support for the next year, and two paramedics, one this year and one next year. Total of 11 people and ran 883 calls for 2025, that is about 2.5 calls per day and doesn't have enough staff. Weekends are busy at about 64%, we would like to offer 24/72/365 because the call is always an unknown. It is stressful if you only have 5 people and if one leaves? The best estimate on the worst-case scenario on what it would cost to hire the three EMT's. It has been a struggle for the last three years. He is also making the board aware He is retiring in 2028. With more mandates coming from the state for example, running our own pharmacy, you have to be certified to have a DEA license, where I have two, Amber and Robert who manage the site. A lot of things are revolving and changing. The way work on shift and in order to train, it is the benefit of the county and citizens. Our journey is two hours to Lewis Gale. We are vulnerable and do not want to depend on Roanoke County. Over the years 1.5 calls and now 2.5 calls a day, not everything is an emergency but to the person who calls it is an emergency. Not all emergencies, a lot of people don't have doctors and use the emergency room as a doctor's office. We can only bill if there is transportation. Can not itemize/Insurance/Medicare won't allow us. Bulk of money comes from mileage, being paid one way. Soft billing the county accepts the insurance premium and doesn't require the patient to pay the difference. However, in a county like ours with so many elderly people who cannot afford the rest of the money. A full staff EMT and Paramedic on a truck. ALS has to have an EMT on the truck. That is the law. I would like to have two by next budget year. Discussion on using Indeed to recruit new hires and posts throughout other broader spectrums can help the county. Discussion on asking new hires to commit to a two-year contract to send the school, pay for the education and while they are in school for a three-year term. For EMT's then off to the paramedic school and then another three-year contract. Discussion on paying employees called step pay with that pays a range matching experience and performance reviews. CERT program discussion, has dried up from funding, maybe doing another program in the schools that might have a good investment, several students went on to work in Emergency Services including EMT's, paramedics and Firefighters. Would like to teach/train inhouse as many can participate in our local volunteer fire departments. If you get interest, from new advertising.

Sherriff Office, Sheriff Craddock shared with the board being short staffed that affects work / life balance. Many deputies are working around the clock; he needs more deputies to run a fully functioning Sheriffs department. They discussed holiday pay as many have to work and then cannot take time off. He would like more opportunities for deputies with VRS, like deferred compensation or a cash match. He is asking to look outside the county for recruitment, once to full staff, deputies would not have to be on call at night. All adds up to overtime. The Sherriff reviewed salaries according to other counties and options for bonuses. He would like to take care of his deputies, dispatchers, fulltime and part-time employees as he has a great staff.

The board discussed supplements, bonuses, raises, and pay range raises on experience to be competitive to surrounding areas.

Supervisor Spence made a motion that \$1,500.00 to full time EMS and Sheriff's department employees as retention bonus in good faith, Supervisor Dunbar seconded the motion, all in favor, motion passes.

The board will be looking at options, researching, and a compensation plans for EMS and Sheriff's department.

ADJOURN TO CONTINUE MEETING ON APRIL 2nd , 2026

Mr. Spence adjourned to continue the meeting to April 2nd , 2026, at 5:00 pm.

_____, CHAIRMAN
CRAIG COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

_____, CLERK
CRAIG COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISOR
