

BUILDINGS & GROUNDS – Matt Jones, Superintendent of Buildings and Grounds, addressed the following items with the committee:

- Roof Top HVAC Unit – Scheduled to be installed in April.
- DPW Barn Update:
 - Joint Washington County and Town of Fort Ann Highway Barn – The Engineering firm made a presentation to the Fort Ann Town Board like they made to the County on March 1st and Fort Ann passed a resolution to go forward with the project. Engineering for the project is going out to bid on Thursday and due back in about one month. This will probably require a special Government Operations committee meeting prior to the Public Works committee meeting next month to select the firm.
 - Middle Falls – Still in negotiations with the property owner next to the current site. He missed the deadline this month to go before the Town of Easton Planning Board and will be on next month's schedule. They will advise them what needs to be surveyed. Expects to have more information next month.

COMMITTEE MEETING DISCUSSION – In the absence of Mr. O'Brien, Mrs. Fedler stated Mr. O'Brien brought it to the County Administrator's attention that he felt we needed to look at the classroom being the new meeting room. Some concerns with meeting in the Board room are people could not see each other face to face, people were looking at the back of each other's head and the sound. The Information Technology CIO is looking into updating the sound system. Tim Hardy, Deputy Director of Public Safety, displayed pictures of the proposed classroom setup, slides attached. Mrs. Fedler stated the classroom is frequently used by departments and the Board room is used specifically for the Board and available. Mr. Haff prefers the smaller committee room and that committee meeting atmosphere where you converse back and forth and pass around papers rather than this large, open, more sterile room. Mr. Campbell does not know why we are just not going back to the committee room to conduct meetings like before the pandemic. Mr. Griffith agrees with getting back to a smaller setting in conjunction with the open meetings law and any changes to that law. The committee room needs to be outfitted with the equipment needed to conduct zoom meetings. The County Attorney stated pre-COVID any member had the ability to attend a meeting remotely according to the law but that option was never provided. The Clerk would be required to notice where the member was attending from and that the site was publicly accessible. So, if the extension to the open meetings law expires next month the option to attend remotely is allowable with the proper notification. The required notification to participate remotely would apply to committee members. Discussions are taking place regarding changing the open meetings law to allow elected officials the ability to attend without that requirement that is be a public place. Proposals are out there to lift the requirement that the elected official attend from a public accessible place provided that the public has a place to both observe and participate, noting that sometimes those words are being used interchangeably in the discussion. He stated when you conduct a public meeting, the public has the right to attend but the public does not have a right to comment unless you specifically provide that or it is a public hearing. The proposed changes seems to be saying that there has to be at a minimum a right for the observation of what the committee/Board is doing and it sounds like they are going to make that in real time verses posting a zoom meeting after the fact. The other proposed change with participation is it being at the meeting watching or does it include the ability to address the meeting remotely. The committee room is not equipped and ready for the proposed changes and requires a couple of upgrades. Chairman Hall mentioned how cramped the committee room would get during a meeting with very little room for the public. The room limit is posted and if the attendees at the meeting exceed that amount then the meeting is moved to another room and that has happened but not often. Mrs. Clary does not have any problem with meeting in the Board Chambers. Mr. Hicks would like to get back to the committee room with more efficiency and it is a much more effective meeting. He stated it has only been a handful of times that the

capacity has been exceeded requiring moving to another room. Staff could zoom in from office instead of having to come to the committee room. Mr. Shaw stated he can hear more clearly in the committee room and struggles in the Chambers. Mr. Henke stated he would have to vote against the classroom because it is used by multiple departments and the set up and take down is a lot of extra work when the committee room is available. Mr. Hardy stated Information Technology can get a microphone and a camera in the committee room relatively quickly. Mr. Hicks proposed tabling any discussion on this until the next Government Operations meeting when more information on the executive order that is set to expire. The County Attorney believes there will be a requirement to provide access to the meeting by livestream or by posting the video of the meeting so the committee room should be equipped to enable this to happen and start that process now. Chairman Hall stated there needs to be room for the public and also ADA compliant. Mr. Griffith stated cameras and microphones in all three meetings room would not be that expensive and then they would all be equipped and it gives the committees/Board meeting options. The Treasurer stated he has additional space next to the classroom and it could be made into a committee room. Mrs. Fedler stated we have rooms to use. She stated the Chambers has worked and would continue to work until a decision is made at the State level on meetings. Mr. Hicks recommends tabling the discussion until next month's meeting and have a deadline. Mrs. Fedler stated this will be on the agenda for next month's meeting. The County Attorney suggested moving forward for the next meeting with the costs associated with upgrading the committee room.

The meeting adjourned at 11:33 A.M.

Debra Prehoda, Clerk
Washington County Board of Supervisors

BOS CLASSROOM OVERVIEW

POTENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING SETUP

Recent discussion has arisen relative to the possibilities of re-locating Committee meetings of the Board of Supervisors to other locations, in particular, the Board of Supervisors Classroom located on the 2nd Floor of Building B near the Treasurer's Office, and the technology capabilities of the location.



BOS CLASSROOM OVERVIEW

POTENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING SETUP

CAPACITY

The room is capable of hosting the total capacity of any Committee, with additional seating for non-Committee members of the Board of Supervisors, Clerk and Deputy Clerk of the Board, County Administrator, County Attorney and Department Head presenting. Additionally, there is adequate seating for other attending personnel (Department Heads, ancillary presenters, etc.) and members of public.

TECHNOLOGY

The classroom is equipped with a large display (TV) with an onboard computer to allow for presentations of digital or electronic media and a commercial grade webcam, speakers and microphone – allowing for remote two-way meetings or conferences.

SAMPLE COMMITTEE SETUP

In a sample setup of the classroom, the tables were set in a “T” shaped format, allowing the members of the Committee (up to 10 chairs) to sit around the base of the “T” and the Chair, Clerk, County Administrator, County Attorney and Presenter to sit at the top of the “T”, allowing for all to view the display device and be on camera for remote, two-way meetings.



BOS CLASSROOM OVERVIEW

POTENTIAL COMMITTEE MEETING SETUP



NOTEWORTHY ITEMS FOR CONSIDERATION

- Video / Audio is better with smaller groups
- Video of the room is small scale while viewing, unable to make out faces or who is talking in most cases while attending / viewing remotely
- “Quiet Talkers” or those with low voices are difficult to hear remotely
- Multiple people talking at once makes it difficult to hear / discern discussion remotely

