

Goochland County
2021 Legislative Agenda

Priority Requests – County

1. Expand Broadband

Requested Action

Goochland County supports the Commonwealth dedicating additional funding to the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) for broadband expansion. We are supportive of efforts to make it feasible for broadband providers and localities to expand broadband service into unserved and underserved areas. Further, Goochland County supports improvements to existing state law to make it easier for wireless communication companies to either use existing tall structures or build communication structures so long as localities ability to regulate land use is preserved. The County supports the adoption and implementation of new technology that will improve and expand citizen access to broadband internet. We support the addition of new towers within Goochland County, through appropriate planning processes, to improve and expand citizen access to broadband internet.

Background

Goochland County is a unique and beautiful place that makes it very attractive to residents and businesses alike. However, without reliable internet access in large areas of the County, we miss out on commercial development opportunities, and home-based business opportunities, and our families miss out on critical educational opportunities. The County continues to investigate and seek opportunities to expand broadband throughout the County for the benefit of its residents and businesses.

2. Reimbursement for the Compensation and Expense of the Electoral Board and the General Registrar

Requested Action

Goochland County requests legislation for the full compensation and expenses of the Electoral Board and the General Registrar.

Background

The Appropriations Act has previously reduced the funds available to localities for Financial Assistance for General Registrar Compensation (78001) and for Local Electoral Board Compensation and Expenses (78002).

3. Amend Installation and Maintenance Requirements of the “Watch for Children” Sign Program

Requested Action

Goochland County requests legislation to amend the existing “Watch for Children” Sign Program provided for in § 33.2-251 of the Code of Virginia in order to require Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) to maintain the signs and add funding sources for the signs. Goochland proposes allowing localities to cover the cost of the sign and installation via secondary system construction allocation, direct contributions or grants to the governing body, or other sources provided by the governing body. The proposed changes broaden the

means for localities to fund the purchase and installation of the signs. Many localities don't have the personnel or tracking mechanisms to maintain the signs so we propose that be borne by VDOT personnel.

Below is the proposed language:

The governing body of any county or town may enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of Highways allowing the county or town to install ~~and maintain~~, at locations specified in such agreement, signs alerting motorists that children may be at play nearby. The cost of the signs and their installation shall be paid by the county or town either (i) out of the secondary system construction allocation to the affected county, (ii) from direct contributions or grants made for such purpose to the governing body, or (iii) from such other source as may be provided by the governing body. The maintenance of the signs after their installation shall be addressed by VDOT personnel through VDOT's road maintenance funds to the affected County or residency. The provisions of this section shall not apply to any county that has withdrawn its roads from the secondary state highway system under the provisions of § 11 of Chapter 415 of the Acts of Assembly of 1932 and has not elected to return.

Background

In 2012 the General Assembly amended § 33.2-251 of the Code of Virginia which changed the process for localities to request the installation of "Watch for Children" signs by the Commissioner of Highways and Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT). As amended § 33.2-251 of the Code of Virginia authorizes counties and towns to enter into an agreement with the Commissioner of Highways to allow the county or town to install and maintain the "Watch for Children" signs at specified locations. The cost of the signs and their installation shall be paid by the county or town.

4. Give Localities the Authority to Prohibit or Regulate Tannerite

Requested Action

Goochland County requests legislation to amend the Code of Virginia by adding a section numbered 15.2 -918.1 to give localities the ability to prohibit or regulate the use of Tannerite.

Below is the proposed language:

§ 15.2-918.1 Locality may prohibit or regulate the use of tannerite.

Any locality may by ordinance prohibit or regulate the use of tannerite or a similar two-component explosive in or near residential areas. Any penalty for an offense pursuant to such an ordinance shall not exceed a Class 3 misdemeanor.

Background

This amendment to the Code of Virginia would give localities the authority to prohibit or regulate Tannerite, which is an explosive. In 2019 House Bill (HB) 1776, a bill to give localities the authority to prohibit or regulate Tannerite, was submitted by Delegate Cole "by request". HB 1776 was left in the House Counties, Cities, and Towns Committee.

Priority Requests – Schools

1. Repeal legislation that removed the flexibility for school divisions to maintain teacher quality through performance evaluations.

During the 2020 General Assembly session, several bills were passed that have the potential to negatively impact the quality of teachers in the profession. SB 98 and HB 365 removed flexibility for local school divisions to define the probationary period for teachers, while SB 167 and HB 570 removed the definition of "incompetency" for the purpose of establishing grounds for the dismissal of public school teachers. Additionally, SB 377 placed additional barriers for school divisions in the grievance process for under-performing employees. It is our belief that these bills will create additional restrictions of administrative staff and School Boards with a desire to maintain a standard of excellence in the classroom.

2. Support legislation that increases early childhood education and preschool opportunities for students.

Recent information from the Virginia Department of Education (VDOE) Office of Early Childhood Education indicates that there is a growing discrepancy in the level of kindergarten readiness among preschool aged children. It is important to continue to support programs and funding of birth-5 education, to include partnerships with private entities, adequate facility space, increasing the number of teachers, and providing support for families across the Commonwealth.

3. Adjust the funding formula for Regional Governor's Schools to accommodate the needs of full-day programs

Currently, full day Governor's Schools programs like the one at Maggie L. Walker are funded using the same mechanism as are partial day programs. Full day programs require greater funding needs from an administrative, maintenance, operations, security, and programmatic standpoint. However, the nature of the full day program is not accounted for in budget appropriations. It is our belief that the needs of full day programs should be accounted for in future appropriations for the Commonwealth's Regional Governor's Schools.

4. Support any Legislation that moves the state closer to fully funding the Standards of Quality (SOQ)

The School Board believes that the cap on support positions over 10 years ago has prevented necessary state funding. The School Board believes the state should begin funding critical positions not covered in the Standards of Quality (SOQ), such as reading specialists, math specialists, and elementary assistant principals.

5. Oppose any legislation that requires a redistribution of local dollars when establishing State-Wide virtual schools/programs

The School Board requests that the General Assembly oppose any legislation that requires a redistribution of local dollars when establishing state-wide virtual schools/programs.

Even when considering the bills proposed last year, we would also encourage the General Assembly to require residents to enroll in high quality local virtual schools when the programs are comparable or better than the state program. Local school divisions frequently have to support these students with their enrollments and process in the course, the state

funding is necessary to manage this process; otherwise, local dollars are inherently going to support this state program.

6. Oppose any bill that creates Parental Choice Educational Savings Accounts

The School Board believes that these accounts would be considered unconstitutional under Article VIII, Section 10 of the Constitution of Virginia.

7. Oppose any bill that would allow the Board of Education to establish regional charter school divisions that would be governed by a separate board appointed by the Board of Education.

8. Initiate legislation that would require local school divisions to report both a letter grade and a specific numerical value earned by students on all official transcripts.

Divisions across the Commonwealth struggle with the idea of 10 point grading scales to best serve their students in applying for post-secondary schools. Reporting of numerical grade values removes the need to “normalize” grading scales and provides more exact data for post-secondary applicants.

2021 County Policy Positions

- ✓ **Support** the prohibition of new unfunded mandates and the implementation of a “Sunset Clause” on existing unfunded mandates imposed upon localities.
- ✓ **Support** the presumption that County assessments (or as adjusted by the Board of Equalization) are correct and the preservation of the “manifest error” evidentiary requirement for assessment appeals.
- ✓ **Support** eliminating or significantly restructuring the Certificate of Public Need (COPN) process which is currently extremely lengthy and costly. The desired outcome of the COPN can be achieved more easily, leaving the medical industry to focus on health care and access rather than battling each other over advances in these areas.
- ✓ **Support** recommendations and efforts resulting from the Joint Legislative Audit and Review Commission (JLARC) study of Industrial Residuals & Biosolids outlined in HJ 120 passed by the General Assembly during the 2016 Session.
- ✓ **Oppose** any legislation amending Department of Professional and Occupational Regulation specifically pertaining to regulation of land surveyor photogrammetrists and local geographic information system (GIS) staff.
- ✓ **Oppose** any legislation requiring the recording and keeping of written or audio minutes of a closed meeting of a public body for discussions of delicate topics specifically identified and authorized by Virginia law. Requiring such a record would negate the very purpose for authorizing closed meetings on such sensitive matters.
- ✓ **Oppose** any legislation eliminating the sum sufficiency of the state’s share of funding for children receiving services through the Children’s Services Act (CSA); or any effort to

reallocate special education funding through a new formula that would shift costs onto local governments. Additionally, we oppose any legislation that places additional requirements on local governments to spend CSA funds.

- ✓ **Support** Regional County Transportation Priorities – Smart Scale Projects
 - I-64 & Ashland Rd (Rt. 623) – Traffic Signal
 - Tuckahoe Creek Parkway Bridge – bridge connecting to Ridgefield Parkway (Henrico)
- ✓ **Support** granting counties equal taxing authority to that of cities and towns.
- ✓ **Support** the requirement that bills with a local fiscal impact must be introduced by the first day of the General Assembly session.
- ✓ **Oppose** any financial policies or regulations that harm or impose burdens upon localities.
- ✓ **Support** the full funding of education for localities and public schools.
- ✓ **Support** any legislation that enhances or strengthens the Commonwealth’s ranking for doing business in Virginia.
- ✓ **Oppose** the passage of any state laws that infringe upon the rights of the law-abiding citizens of the Commonwealth under the Second Amendment of the United States Constitution and under Article I, Section 13 of the Virginia Constitution.

2021 County Advocacy Positions

Prioritization & Funding to Repair Bridges and Culverts in Goochland

Goochland County is advocating to prioritize and dedicate funding to repair bridges and culverts that are functionally obsolete or structurally deficient, through either existing or new Virginia Department of Transportation funding sources or federal funding sources. In Goochland County 8 bridges or culverts have been classified as structurally deficient and 16 bridges or culverts have been classified as functionally obsolete based upon a 2015 study conducted by the Richmond Region Planning District Commission, now known as PlanRVA. Eight of the bridges and culverts are “weight posted structures” meaning they have weight restrictions in place, three of which are high priority projects based on the impact they have on public safety and emergency response by Goochland County Fire Rescue.

1. Haskin Road (Route 616)
2. Old Columbia Road (Route 667)
3. Whitehall Road (Route 673)

Adopted by the Goochland County Board of Supervisors – December 1, 2020