

Agenda  
Board of Supervisors  
Isle of Wight County  
April 3, 2025

1. Call to Order (6:00 P.M.)
2. Invocation – Chairman Don Rosie
3. Approval of Agenda
4. County Administrator's Report
  - A. Retiree Benefits  
Resolution to Adopt Health Benefits for County Retirees
  - B. Proposed FY2025-26 Operating and Capital Budgets  
Presentation of the County Administrator's Proposed  
FY2025-26 Operating and Capital Budgets
  - C. Noise Ordinance  
Discussion of Amendments to the County's Noise Ordinance
  - D. Energy Task Force Recommendations  
Discussion of Energy Task Force Recommendations
5. Closed Meeting
6. Adjournment

**ISSUE:**

Resolution to Adopt Health Benefits for County Retirees

**BACKGROUND:**

At its regular meeting on March 20, 2025, the Board adopted a resolution to approve the Employee Health Insurance Plan offerings for FY2025-2026 and to establish rates effective July 1, 2025.

Retiree health insurance is a benefit designed to support former employees who have dedicated years of service to our community. It ensures that eligible retirees have continued access to healthcare coverage after leaving active employment, helping them manage medical expenses and maintain their well-being.

Advantage 65 offered by The Local Choice provides Medicare supplemental medical benefits and some primary benefits for services not covered by Medicare for retirees eligible for Medicare.

The Board may wish to add a retiree benefit to the County's Health Insurance Plan through Anthem.

**BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Adopt a resolution to add a retiree health benefit through Anthem.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Type	Upload Date
Resolution	Resolution	4/3/2025

**ISSUE:**

Presentation of the County Administrator's Proposed FY2025-26 Operating and Capital Budgets

**BACKGROUND:**

Staff will provide the Proposed FY2025-26 Operating and Capital Budgets to the Board for its review. Highlights of the proposed budgets will be presented.

The calendar for review and consideration of the budgets includes the following dates and times:

- **Thursday, April 10th at 6:00pm** - Budget Work Session
- **Thursday, April 17th at 5:00pm** - Budget Work Session
- **Thursday, April 24th at 6:00pm** - Budget Public Hearing
- **Thursday, May 1st at 6:00pm** - Budget Work Session
- **Thursday, May 8th at 6:00pm** - Budget Work Session
- **Thursday, May 15th at 5:00pm** - Adoption of the Proposed Operating & Capital Budgets, Related Ordinances, and CIP

**BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

TBD

**RECOMMENDATION:**

For the Board's information, discussion, and direction.

**ISSUE:**

Discussion of Amendments to the County's Noise Ordinance

**BACKGROUND:**

The Board has previously discussed potential amendments to the County's noise ordinance. The Board may wish to continue its discussions.

**BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Per the Board's Board's discussion and direction.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Type	Upload Date
Draft Ordinance Amendment	Backup Material	2/28/2025

## CHAPTER 11.2. NOISES.

Editor's note —Ord. No. 2011-5-C, adopted Mar. 3, 2011, amended and reenacted Ch. 11.2 in its entirety to read as herein set out. Formerly, Ch. 11.2 consisted of §§ 11.2-1—11.2-4.

Prior Ordinance History: 7-15-82; 3-22-07; 5-24-07.

**Sec. 11.2.1 Declaration of policy.** The Board of Supervisors hereby finds and declares that certain noise is a hazard to public health, welfare, peace and safety and the quality of life of the citizens of Isle of Wight County; that the people have a right to and should be ensured of an environment free from noise that jeopardizes public health, welfare, peace and safety or degrades the quality of life; and that it is the public policy of the Board of Supervisors to prevent such noise to the extent such action is not inconsistent with state or federal law or Constitutional rights.

### **Sec. 11.2-2. Enforcement.**

The provisions of this chapter shall be enforced by the Sheriff of Isle of Wight County, Virginia. (Ord. No. 2011-5-C, 3-3-11.)

### **Sec. 11.2-2. ~~Unnecessary or excessive noises generally.~~ Definitions.**

For the purposes of this chapter, the following words and phrases shall have the following meanings:

*Dwelling unit* means one (1) or more rooms arranged, designed, or intended to be occupied as living quarters, having rigid exterior wall structures.

*Emergency and public safety work* means any work performed for the purpose of preventing or alleviating physical injury, illness, or property damage, or work performed by public and private service companies constructing, inspecting, and repairing utilities, repairing, and maintaining roads, bridges, and highways, providing snow removal, and the operation of public safety and emergency vehicles.

*Excessive Noise.* Any sound which disturbs humans, or which causes or tends to cause an adverse psychological or physiological effect on humans.

*Enclosed dwelling unit* means the dwelling unit has its doors and windows closed.

*Enclosed vehicle* means a vehicle with all operable doors, windows, sunroof, and other openings closed.

*Medical care facility* is defined as set forth in Section 32.1-102.1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended.

*Motor vehicle* means every vehicle defined as a motor vehicle by Code of Virginia, § 46.2-100.

*Person.* Any individual, firm, owner, sole proprietorship, partnership, limited liability company, corporation, unincorporated association, governmental body, municipal corporation, executor, administrator, trustee, guardian, agent, occupant, or other legal entity.

*Plainly audible* means any sound that can be heard by the human ear with or without a medically approved hearing aid or device. Specific words or phrases need not be discernible. The detection of bass reverberations is sufficient to constitute a plainly audible sound. The sound must not be so faint that its source cannot be identified.

*Public property.* Any real property owned or controlled by the county or any other governmental entity.

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**Public right-of-way.** Any public street, avenue, boulevard, highway, sidewalk, or alley.

**Real property line.** An imaginary line along the ground surface and its vertical extension, which separates the real property owned by one person from that owned by another person, but not including intra-building real property divisions.

**Residential property.** Any property zoned to allow for residential use by right and used for residential purpose.

**School** means a public school subject to Title 22.1 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, a private school serving children in one (1) or more grades between kindergarten and grade twelve (12), a school for students with disabilities as that term is defined in Section 22.1-319 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, a child day care center as that term is defined in Section 63.2-100 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended, and any public or private institution of higher learning, as those terms are defined in Section 23.1-100 of the Code of Virginia, 1950, as amended.

**Sound.** An oscillation in pressure, particle displacement, particle velocity or other physical parameter, in a medium with internal forces that cause compression and rarefaction of that medium. The description of sound may include any characteristics of such sound, including duration, intensity, and frequency.

It shall be unlawful for any person to make, or to cause or allow to be made, upon any property in the county, any unnecessary or excessive noise or sound, whether vocally, mechanically, electronically or otherwise, or of such a character, volume, duration or frequency as to disturb, injure or endanger the quiet, comfort, repose, health, peace or safety of any person in the county. (5-24-07; Ord. No. 2011-5-C, 3-3-11.)

### Sec. 11.2-3. Noises expressly prohibited.

The following acts are specifically declared to be in violation of this chapter, provided that the acts so specified shall not be an exclusive enumeration of those acts which may constitute a noise disturbance under section 11.2-2:

- (a) To use, operate, or play any **device which produces, transmits, reproduces, repeats, amplifies or projects and sound, including, but not limited to,** radio, phonograph, television, compact disc or tape player, musical instrument, loudspeaker, sound amplifier or other machines or devices capable of **producing, reproducing, repeating, or carrying** sound, in such a manner or with such volume or duration that it is plainly audible between 12:01 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. (i) inside the confines of **an enclosed** the dwelling unit, house or apartment of another person or (ii) **across a residential real property line** at fifty or more feet from the device, except for devices permitted to be used at public parks or recreation fields, sporting events, school sponsored activities on school grounds, or duly authorized parades, public functions or commemorative events.
- (b) To all noise between the hours of 12:01 a.m. and 7:00 a.m. that is plainly audible either (i) inside the confines of **an enclosed** dwelling unit, house or apartment of another person or (ii) **across a residential real property line** at fifty or more feet when the noise is generated from a gathering of ten or more people.
- (c) To allow any animal or bird, except farm animals in agricultural districts, to create noise such that it is plainly audible at least once a minute for ten consecutive minutes (i) inside the confines of **an enclosed** dwelling unit, house or apartment of another; or (ii) **across a residential real property line** at fifty or more feet from the animal or bird.
- (d) To operate, install, have or permit on the outside of any store, shop, business establishment, warehouse or commercial building, any loudspeaker or other **sound producing, reproducing, repeating, or carrying** device capable of emitting music, noise, sounds, ~~tapes~~ or voice, **both live or recorded,** in such manner that it is plainly audible on any public sidewalk or street unless it is used only

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intermittently for announcing or paging an individual or unless it signals the ringing of a telephone, danger from smoke, a fire or a burglary **or any other local state or national emergency**, or the beginning or stopping of work or school, or unless it is operated in accordance with conditions of zoning.

- (e) To play or permit the playing of any **device which produces, transmits, reproduces, repeats, amplifies or projects and sound, including, but not limited to**, radio, compact disc or tape player, loudspeaker, sound amplifier or other machines or devices capable of **producing, reproducing, repeating, or carrying** sound, which is located within a motor vehicle and which is plainly audible **within another person's enclosed vehicle** ~~from outside the motor vehicle at a distance of fifty feet or more from the vehicle~~. This provision shall not apply to sirens, ~~loudspeakers~~ **sound amplifiers**, and emergency communications radios in public safety vehicles, nor shall it apply to motor vehicle alarms or other security devices.
- (f) To create **noise that is plainly audible noise** ~~noise~~ **(i) inside the confines of an enclosed dwelling unit of another person or (ii) across a residential real property line** in residential areas between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 ~~5:00~~ a.m. in connection with the loading or unloading of refuse, waste or recycling collection vehicles.
- (g) To create **noise that is plainly audible noise** ~~noise~~ **(i) inside the confines of an enclosed dwelling unit of another person or (ii) across a residential real property line** in residential areas between 10:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. in connection with lawn care, leaf removal, gardening, tree maintenance or removal and other landscaping, lawn ~~or~~ or timbering activities.
- (h) **Sounding or permitting the sounding of any horn, whistle, or any other auditory sounding device on or in any motor vehicle on any public right-of-way or public property, except as a warning of or from danger.**
- (i) **Yelling, shouting, whistling, or singing between the hours of 11:00 p.m. and 7:00 a.m. that is plainly audible (i) inside the confines of an enclosed dwelling unit of another person or (ii) across a residential real property line.**

(Ord. No. 2011-5-C, 3-3-11.)

#### **Sec. 11.2-4. Exemptions.**

This chapter shall apply only with respect to noise or sound received or heard in zoning districts in which residential use is permitted, whether or not exclusively, under the provisions of the county zoning ordinance, as it may be amended from time to time, and, notwithstanding any provisions of this chapter to the contrary, shall have no application to fire, rescue, police, ambulance or other emergency vehicles or aircraft or to any noise or sound created thereby or to any noise or sound created by any person to sound a warning or to call attention to a bona fide emergency. This chapter shall not apply to noise or sound which customarily accompanies bona fide parades, sporting events, public functions or public commemorative events, nor to noise or sound which customarily accompanies activities of churches and synagogues, nor to activities conducted in any gymnasium, arena, theater, amphitheater, swimming pool, stadium, rifle range, gun club or any similar sporting activity, whether any such activity occurs indoors or outdoors, except to the extent that any such parade, function, event or activity shall be prohibited or limited, either expressly or by necessary implication, by the terms or conditions of any required use permit issued in connection therewith, or to the extent that such parade, function, event or activity shall be conducted without a use permit when such permit is required by any provision of appendix B of this Code. Nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted so as to interfere with legitimate agricultural activities. (Ord. No. 2011-5-C, 3-3-11.)

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This chapter shall apply only with respect to noise or sound received or heard in zoning districts in which residential use is permitted, whether or not exclusively, under the provisions of the county zoning ordinance, as it may be amended from time-to-time.

This chapter shall have no application to any sound generated by any of the following:

- (a) Sound necessary for the protection or preservation of property or the health, safety, life, or limb of any person.
- (b) Fire, rescue, police, ambulance or other emergency vehicles or aircraft or to any noise or sound created thereby or to any noise or sound created by any person to sound a warning or to call attention to a bona fide emergency.
- (c) Activities permitted by law for which a specific license or permit has been granted by the county, state or federal government; including, but not limited to, noise generated by and necessary for the conduct of public festivals, parades, special events, fireworks, public functions or public commemorative events, and celebrations of recognized federal, state and local holidays, nor to noise or sound which customarily accompanies sporting events, activities conducted in any gymnasium, arena, theater, amphitheater, swimming pool, stadium, rifle range, gun club, *private lawful shooting activities on private property*, or any similar sporting activity, whether any such activity occurs indoors or outdoors, except to the extent that any such parade, function, event or activity shall be prohibited or limited, either expressly or by necessary implication, by the terms or conditions of any required use permit issued in connection therewith, or to the extent that such parade, function, event or activity shall be conducted without a use permit when such permit is required by any provision of appendix B of this Code.
- (d) Activities for which local regulation of noise have been preempted by state or federal law or which the county has no authority to regulate.
- (e) Bona fide religious services, religious events, or religious activities or expressions, including, but not limited to music, singing, bells, chimes, and instruments *both live and or reproduced, which may be amplified*, which are a part of such service, event, activity, or expression.
- (f) Military activities of the Commonwealth of Virginia or of the United States of America.
- (g) Any speech protected by the laws of the United States or the state.
- (h) Public speaking and public assembly activities conducted on any public right-of-way or public property, provided such activities are approved by the county.
- (i) Activities on or in governmental and school athletic facilities and on or in publicly owned property and facilities, provided that such activity has been authorized by the owner of such property or facilities, or his agent.

Nothing in this chapter shall be interpreted so as to interfere with bona fide agricultural activities. (Ord. No. 2011-5-C, 3-3-11.)

#### **Sec. 11.2-5. Penalties.**

Any person violating any of the provisions of this chapter shall be deemed guilty of a Class 3 misdemeanor. Upon any subsequent conviction within a period of twelve months, the violator may be found guilty of a Class 2 misdemeanor. Each day such a violation is committed or permitted to continue shall constitute a separate offense and shall be punishable as such. (Ord. No. 2011-5-C, 3-3-11.)

**ISSUE:**

Discussion of Energy Task Force Recommendations

**BACKGROUND:**

At its Work Session in August 2024, the Board received a presentation regarding the final report from the County's Energy Task Force. The Board may wish to discuss the report and the recommendations of the Task Force.

**BUDGETARY IMPACT:**

None.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

Per the Board's discussion and direction.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

Description	Type	Upload Date
Energy Task Force Final Report	Backup Material	4/1/2025



Local Roots, Global Reach  
**ISLE OF WIGHT**  
COUNTY, VIRGINIA

# **ENERGY TASK FORCE**

**FINAL REPORT TO THE ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY  
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS**

**AUGUST 1, 2024**

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## **I. Background**

In November 2022, the Isle of Wight County Planning Commission recommended supervisors form an Energy Task Force (ETF) to review Isle of Wight's existing energy infrastructure, remaining capacity in high-voltage transmission lines, future energy generation projects and emerging energy generation technologies. The Board of Supervisors voted in February 2023 to create the task force and decided on a seven-member body consisting of one representative from each of the county's five voting districts and two at-large members. The at-large slots would eventually be filled by a representative from the Windsor and Smithfield town councils. No representative was appointed from District 5 for the duration of the ETF. (Appendix A)

The ETF held its inaugural meeting on June 5, 2023, and established a meeting schedule where the group would meet on the second Monday of each month at 4:00pm. Meetings were held in the Board of Supervisors' meeting room at the Isle of Wight County Courthouse Complex. (Appendix B) Typically, the ETF welcomed presentations from various energy-related organizations during the first hour of the meeting. The second hour was reserved for discussion and/or work of the ETF. (Appendix C)

In early meetings, the ETF designated a chair and vice chair, Lynn Briggs and Thomas DiStefano, respectively. The group also drafted a mission statement and goals to focus the work of the committee. The mission states: The Energy Task Force (ETF) will assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and vulnerabilities of the county's energy planning to date and provide recommendations to enhance sustainability, reliability, and economic growth. (Appendix D) ETF goals include:

1. The ETF will concentrate on gaining information from knowledgeable sources on existing energy infrastructure capacity, current and emerging energy generation and storage technologies, strategies and programs underway by energy providers and diversification strategies for traditional and renewable energy relevant to local government purview, regulation and influence.
2. The ETF will provide periodic progress reviews to the Board of Supervisors to ensure the ETF is meeting the Board's intent.
3. The ETF will make a comprehensive set of recommendations to the Board of Supervisors in June 2024 or as directed by the Board. Examples of possible recommendations include:
  - a. develop energy-related amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan and additional areas for inclusion in the county's Zoning Ordinance
  - b. identify the emergence of future energy sources with potential job creation and other economic development enhancements.

- c. assess the complexity and rapidity of change in the energy environment and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on the necessity for an enduring advisory organization.

The ETF operationalized the goals through the creation of five specific deliverables:

1. Identify energy-related gaps in the County's Comprehensive Plan and additional areas for inclusion in the County's Zoning Ordinance.
2. Recognize opportunities for leveraging increased shares of job creation and economic development from emerging energy sources for the County.
3. Define the complexity and rapidity of change in the energy environment for the County.
4. Provide an assessment on the need for an advisory organization or other resources for ongoing technical analysis.
5. Recommend methods for the County to educate the public, including the business community, and gain input on energy-related matters.

The ETF applied a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) to each deliverable and presented the findings in the form of a quad chart. (Appendix E)

From the SWOT analysis, the task force identified overall strengths and weaknesses related to energy growth in Isle of Wight County. Using the strengths and weaknesses, the ETF compiled specific priorities and recommendations for the Board of Supervisors regarding energy expansion in the county.

## **II. Strengths and Weaknesses**

### **Strengths**

Isle of Wight County is uniquely positioned with its significant energy supply lines, including multiple electric transmission lines and the largest natural gas pipeline in the Hampton Roads area. These lines, while not guaranteeing direct access, present potential opportunities for energy growth through significant private investment. The county's skilled workforce, drawn by our proximity to naval installations, Surry Nuclear Power Plant, and multiple nuclear-certified shipyards, is a valuable asset for the energy sector. Isle of Wight's investment in career and technical education at local high schools

is also nurturing a generation of 'homegrown' energy sector workers, further bolstering potential for energy expansion.

Additionally, Isle of Wight County recognizes the importance of energy to the future of the economy. The creation of an Energy Task Force acknowledges this importance and is novel among other local governments. The Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) is creating incentives to diversify energy production and, in some cases, mandating aspects of energy policy. It is wise for the County to proactively manage its destiny rather than having it dictated by development and state-level edicts. While the public does not overtly demonstrate an awareness of general energy policy, citizens are quick to show an interest when the positive or negative impacts of county-level energy decisions are made obvious to them.

### **Weaknesses**

When the first solar projects were introduced to Isle of Wight County, the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors were not prepared for the nuances of energy projects, at least from an ordinance perspective. While the County was wise to implement initial ordinance measures to manage solar growth, revisiting those ordinances is imperative given the maturity of awareness and knowledge the county now has. The ETF specifically recommends the county ensure that its decommissioning ordinances and bond requirements are still sufficient. The ETF has also discovered that modeling energy production growth capacity is difficult due to proprietary protections on available transmission line capacity. Therefore, establishing goals associated with particular types of energy production in the County is not advised. Lastly, current solar ordinances are effective at managing utility-scale solar but restrict community-level solar. Community-level solar energy is likely to be more acceptable and strike a better balance between the general population's opinions on solar energy and individual landowner rights. The ETF therefore recommends the County adding less restrictive "community scale" considerations to the ordinance.

The ETF predicts battery storage will be the next wave of energy projects to reach the County. This statement is based on presentations from experts and research by members of the ETF. A thoughtful and safe investment in battery storage will be a positive for the County as battery storage will dramatically increase the efficiency of solar energy and reduce the overall acreage requirements of future solar projects. Regrettably, it seems the current market will not incentivize retrofitting battery storage into solar projects already in production. The County should consider this situation when approving future solar projects that do not have plans or the capability to add battery storage efficiencies in the future. Battery storage is also an effective means to maximize current transmission line infrastructure.

While the ETF generally supports battery storage, the County's current ordinances and emergency management procedures do not specifically nor adequately address the particulars of battery storage. The common idea of allowing an electrical generation or storage facility to "burn itself out" may seem reasonable in theory, but the idea of a battery facility being allowed to burn for days will almost certainly be unacceptable to county residents if ever executed in practice. Therefore, it is critical that strict ordinances are in place before proposed battery storage developments come calling to Isle of Wight. The cost involved in these preventative measures may not be popular with some developers, but it will be in the best long-term interest of the County.

The task force considered other forms of energy generation, such as hydroelectric, wind, natural gas, and small modular nuclear reactors (SMR). Geographic and climate factors make Isle of Wight uncompetitive for hydroelectric and wind power. Our proximity to the area's largest natural gas pipeline would seem to favor peak-loading natural gas plants. However, Hampton Roads is the end of the pipeline, which creates restrictions on natural gas growth. Also, Virginia's policies over the past ten years have mostly tilted against non-renewable energy production, which makes natural gas investment risky for private investors. Governor Youngkin and other state leaders have expressed an interest in SMR technology, but existing regulations and costs will continue to create a high initial barrier to entry. Existing regulations were developed to govern traditional nuclear power generation activities, such as a Surry Nuclear Power Plant. Federal government efforts to tailor regulations for SMR power generation have not yet resulted in a regulatory environment necessary to promote near-term deployment within our county. The ETF assesses the most likely initial locations to be co-located with existing nuclear power infrastructures, such as Surry and North Anna nuclear power plants. However, Isle of Wight County's proximity to Surry may provide indirect opportunities, such as supporting industry or workforce housing. Additionally, if ongoing federal regulation studies result in reduced regulatory constraints, Isle of Wight has many of the characteristics, such as transmission capability and access to water, necessary for SMR deployment and the ETF suggests pursuing SMR energy production.

### **III. Priorities and Recommendations**

#### Comprehensive Plan

The County is moving forward with reviewing and updating the current Comprehensive Plan. This provides Isle of Wight an opportunity to address future energy needs and growth as part of the process. Specifically, the ETF recommends the following actions occur in conjunction with the Comprehensive Plan update:

1. Visually depict current utilities across the county (large transmission lines, natural gas pipelines, water/sewer lines, etc.) as well as wetlands and other impediments to development. These graphics would show how utilities drive residential, commercial, and industrial development and help inform where future utility development is best suited.
2. Investigate the interest and demand for electric vehicle charging stations in new construction (for example, housing developments, parking lots, and gas stations). The ETF does not have a specific position on the necessity of electric vehicles but acknowledges their increasing numbers and the influence of state and federal legislation to increase infrastructure to support electric vehicles.

### Ordinance Considerations

The ETF acknowledges the critical role effective ordinances play in managing economic development and protecting the well-being of citizens. Although the ETF was not chartered to draft specific ordinances, it is within the group's responsibilities to make recommendations where ordinances are lacking or should be revised.

1. The County should immediately develop ordinances to regulate the construction, operation, emergency management planning, and decommissioning of energy storage capabilities and facilities. As previously mentioned, the ETF believes energy storage will be the next type of energy projects proposed to the County for development. Being proactive now, before any projects are proposed, will better position Isle of Wight to educate citizens on energy storage, acquire community input on ordinances, and provide energy storage developers with clear standards for their projects.
2. The County should revisit its solar energy ordinances and consider the following:
  - a. Are the decommissioning provisions strong enough to ensure the land can be returned to its original use and the surety bonds will cover the cost? This should be reviewed regularly as the solar industry learns more about decommissioning facilities over time.
  - b. There is a potential need to expand the solar ordinances to differentiate between utility-scale solar, community-scale solar, and microgrids. The current ordinances only cover utility-scale solar. Community-scale solar and microgrids may provide additional solar opportunities and empower property rights without some of the controversial issues the county has witnessed under utility solar. Additionally, community-scale solar and microgrids will enable solar capacity in areas of the county that are currently not feasible for utility-scale solar due to distance from or capacity of large transmission lines. One item of concern is ensuring community-scale solar ordinances do not become a way around utility-scale solar

constraints. Therefore, the distinctions between the two must be more specific than size or energy output alone.

### Other Energy Storage Considerations

Energy storage is an emerging technology that will significantly increase the viability of solar energy production. The biggest drawbacks for solar energy are its less than 30% efficiency, high land use to megawatt (MW) ratio compared to other energy-producing methods, and wasted energy when the grid cannot handle the amount of energy generated during peak production. Energy storage addresses and improves upon each of those issues. However, it was disheartening to learn from the experts who presented to the ETF that retrofitting current solar facilities with energy storage is unlikely because it is not economically viable.

Emergency management is an issue that needs careful consideration regarding energy storage. The batteries involved in energy storage present considerably more risk than solar panels and, therefore, require separate emergency management planning. Electric discharge from a battery in a casualty scenario is extremely dangerous considering the amount of heat concentrated in the battery and the potential release of toxins in the case of a fire. The best way to mitigate these risks is through the initial design of the energy storage facility by incorporating safeguards and physical separation requirements that are dictated through strong ordinances and site plan reviews. Once an emergency has occurred, ensuring county emergency response personnel have the proper equipment, training, and procedures will be critical to limiting the spread of the casualty to other batteries and keeping first responders and the public safe. Due to the dangers of fighting a battery fire, the general emergency management response is to allow the fire to burn itself out. While this seems sufficient in theory, in practice, it will likely have severe consequences with respect to public response. Therefore, citizens must be educated on emergency response and kept informed throughout any response scenario, to include accurate and timely air quality analysis.

### Sustaining Energy Expertise

Over the past year, the ETF received a wealth of information from industry experts regarding challenges and opportunities related to the future of energy in Isle of Wight. The ETF discovered a common theme throughout the numerous resources provided to the group: the energy industry is in a state of constant and rapid change driven by technology, economics, conservation, and political policy. Given Isle of Wight's size, location, and needs, it is difficult to recommend an easy and economical solution as to how the County can maintain an adequate pulse on the energy industry. However, the ETF offers the following items for consideration:

1. The ETF, in its current form, is not a viable long-term solution for addressing energy needs in Isle Wight. Monthly meetings with industry experts proved beneficial to rapidly increasing the group's knowledge of the energy industry and using that knowledge to identify current challenges and opportunities. The dilemma is how the ETF can convey the knowledge gained into something that can provide the County with timely advice and future planning without encroaching on County staff and Planning Commission responsibilities. It may be more realist to fold the ETF into a smaller subcommittee of the Planning Commission with the purpose of reviewing energy matters on a quarterly to annual basis. This action would require additional thought and better guidance with respect to future expectations. The subcommittee would also have potential limitations in finding citizens with the right level of expertise who are available and willing to serve in such a role.
2. The ETF considered the idea of the County hiring an additional staff member with energy expertise, but decided, at this point, it is unlikely the position would have enough consistent work to justify the cost. Acquiring an energy consultant on retainer was also considered, but the ETF decided County staff would be the appropriate entity to determine the level of need and cost efficiency of a consultant on retainer.
3. The ETF recommends leveraging area resources, such as the Hampton Roads Alliance and other regional entities, when possible.

### High Priorities

Isle of Wight County is facing energy challenges from current and pending projects. Many of the concerns revolve around county ordinances mainly geared towards utility scale projects, which to this point have strictly been solar.

**The ETF recommends Isle of Wight County address the following items as high priorities:**

1. Develop ordinances related to energy storage to prepare for future projects throughout the community.
2. Clean up solar energy ordinances, especially for microgrids and community scale projects, through the use of specialized ordinances.
  - The ETF recommends staff write ordinances with input and review by an energy-related body, such as the ETF or a subcommittee of the Planning Commission.
3. Improve emergency management response to hazardous situations at energy storage facilities.

- a. Energy storage facility materials should be known prior to installation and communicated to Emergency Management staff for identification potential hazards and development of a detailed emergency response plan.
  - b. Emergency Management staff should review the “let it burn” practice with respect to public relations, such as advanced public awareness of the practice and engagement during casualty events.
  - c. Emergency Management should consider methods to conduct rapid air sampling for developing public health advisories to ensure the safety of citizens. This may require the County to develop air sampling capabilities rather than relying on agencies outside of Isle of Wight.
- 4. The County should engage with the public to provide factual and unbiased energy-related information to the highest extent possible. In the event biased information is offered to the public, Isle of Wight should consider directing the community to reliable, factual sources that provide a balanced assessment of different types of energy. Ideas for public engagement include:
  - a. Surveys: Periodically gather feedback regarding what the public wants to know more about related to county energy production.
  - b. Develop a webpage specifically devoted to energy, including approved energy projects, energy projects under review, energy ordinances, and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ).
  - c. Use social media and the county website to share resource links.
  - d. Display energy-related informational videos during the closed meeting broadcast and on the county-run PEG channel to reach members of the community.
  - e. Share the location of the county’s energy-related web site and resources during public hearings to direct attention to relevant information.
  - f. Incorporate energy growth as part of the comprehensive plan development and review process.
  - g. Distribute energy-related information at an existing Isle of Wight County booth during the annual County Fair.

**Actions to prepare for: long range**

- 1. The ETF found that high energy consumers, such as data centers, have a general opinion that regional weather threats make the Hampton Roads area an undesirable location for operations from a risk perspective. The ETF considers the County to have considerably less risk than more coastal communities in the region and recommends addressing this narrative through economic development channels.

2. With established industries and naval facilities, and vibrant technical education programs in the public schools, Isle of Wight County has the potential for a highly skilled workforce to support energy growth. The County should consider partnering with educational agencies to develop training opportunities for citizens. A built-in workforce would enhance the attractiveness of the county for development of future energy projects.
3. The ETF recommends the County develop a comprehensive map identifying the locations of all utilities available in Isle of Wight. While much of this data is currently available to the public, the ETF found that a single, inclusive resource on the County's website would be beneficial

### **Final Thoughts**

The Energy Task Force has created guidance for the County, although not necessarily the specifics, for energy growth in Isle of Wight. Over fourteen months of collaboration, all members of the ETF agreed that the details are best left to the current experts, including Emergency Management, the Planning Commission, and the Economic Development department. The task force realized that energy guidelines are a hot topic, frequently changing, sometimes confidential, and often lacking. Technology to address emergencies is not keeping up with energy advancements. It appears the growth of energy projects is moving exponentially, while advancements in safety and technology to support such projects are not keeping pace. In addition, energy growth in the Commonwealth is itself mired in politics, as evidenced by legislation introduced during the 2024 General Assembly. The Virginia Clean Economy Act establishes benchmarks for Virginia, especially with renewable energy, that can only be met if localities are supportive of renewable energy projects. A bill was proposed that would have given state agencies the ability to override local decisions with regards to approval. Fortunately, this bill was defeated, but it does emphasize the dilemma facing Virginia as a whole versus counties and cities. In addition, the prevailing political party in the Commonwealth can adjust policy to align with their position, making future planning, especially at the local level, significantly challenging, but not impossible. Planning is the key to success, for as the saying goes, "failing to plan is planning to fail." Isle of Wight County must make planning for energy growth a priority, otherwise it will fail to learn from past mistakes. The ETF has identified items of highest importance the County should tackle first to prepare for ongoing energy projects and those just on the horizon. The five citizen volunteers on the task force, along with the Director and staff of Economic Development, and the numerous presenters embraced the opportunity to participate in this unique project. The creation of an Energy Task Force demonstrates the County's commitment to a comprehensive approach to energy growth for the benefit of citizens and the economy. The members of the ETF are appreciative of their role in preparing Isle of Wight County for the future.

## APPENDIX A: ISLE OF WIGHT COUNTY ENERGY TASK FORCE MEMBERS

<u>APPOINTEES</u>	<u>DISTRICT</u>	<u>DATE APPOINTED</u>
Thomas Distefano 15151 Batiste Court Carrollton, VA 23314 757-708-0880	2	2/23/2023
Lewis Edmonds 23427 John Henry Street Windsor, VA 23487 757-871-6550	4	3/16/2023
Lynn Barlow Briggs 211 North Mason Street Smithfield, VA 23430 757-365-1611	1	3/16/2023
David Tucker 6251 Old Stage Hwy. Smithfield, VA 23430 757-334-3726	3	3/16/2023*
VACANT	5	N/A
Michael G. Smith 104 Commerce Street Smithfield, VA 23430 757-576-4203	AT-LARGE APPOINTEE (Town of Smithfield)	4/27/2023
Edward (Gibby) Dowdy 9 Bank Street Windsor, VA 23487	AT-LARGE APPOINTEE (Town of Windsor)	6/1/2023

\*Resigned effective 11/16/2023

## APPENDIX B: ENERGY TASK FORCE MEETING DATES

Kick-off Meeting

**June 5, 2023**

Meeting #2

**July 10, 2023**

Meeting #3

**August 14, 2023**

Meeting #4

**September 11, 2023**

Meeting #5

**October 9, 2023**

Meeting #6

**November 13, 2023**

Meeting #7

**December 11, 2023**

Meeting #8

**January 8, 2024**

Meeting #9

**February 12, 2024**

Meeting #10

**March 11, 2024**

Meeting #11

**April 8, 2024**

Meeting #12

**May 6, 2024**

Meeting #13

**June 10, 2024**

## **APPENDIX C: ENERGY TASK FORCE SPEAKERS & TOPICS**

Jonathan Thompson, Community Electric Cooperative  
Electric Co-op History / Role in Energy

Mark Repsher, PA Consulting  
Energy Road Map for Hampton Roads

Justin Pope, Dominion Energy  
Infrastructure / Innovations / Long Range Programs

Gina Slaunwhite, Columbia Gas of Virginia  
Natural Gas Distribution / Supply & Demand / Future of Gas Derivatives

Matt Smith, Hampton Roads Alliance  
Offshore Wind / Energy Road Map for Hampton Roads

Erich Fritz & Kelsie Jewell, Dominion Energy  
Solar, Battery Storage, SMRs & PJM Relationship

Brett Malone, VT Corporate Research Center  
Green Hydrogen Technology / VT-NN Hydrogen demonstration project

Larry Corkey, Virginia Department of Energy  
VA's Energy Plan 2022 / Other Commonwealth energy initiatives

Amy Ring, Isle of Wight County Community Development  
Comprehensive Plan Update & County Zoning Ordinance

Emily M. Jordan, Virginia State Senate, District 17  
Solar Legislation

Will Drewery, Isle of Wight County Fire Rescue  
Emergency Management Plan / Fire Rescue Response

## **APPENDIX D: ENERGY TASK FORCE MISSION & GOALS**

### **Mission:**

The Energy Task Force will assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and vulnerabilities of the county's energy planning to date and provide recommendations to enhance sustainability, reliability, and economic growth.

### **Goals:**

- The ETF will concentrate on gaining information from knowledgeable sources on existing energy infrastructure capacity, current and emerging energy generation and storage technologies, strategies and programs underway by energy providers and diversification strategies for traditional and renewable energy relevant to local government purview, regulation and influence.
- The ETF will provide periodic progress reviews to the Board of Supervisors to ensure the ETF is meeting the Board's intent.
- The ETF will make a comprehensive set of recommendations to the Board of Supervisors in June 2024 or as directed by the Board; examples of possible recommendations include:
  - develop energy-related amendments to the County's Comprehensive Plan and additional areas for inclusion in the county's Zoning Ordinance.
  - identify emerging and future energy sources with potential job creation and other economic development enhancements.
  - assess the complexity and rapidity of change in the energy environment and make a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors on the necessity for an enduring advisory organization.

## **APPENDIX E: ENERGY TASK FORCE ANTICIPATED DELIVERABLES & SWOT ANALYSIS**

1. Identify energy-related gaps in the County's Comprehensive Plan and additional areas for inclusion in the County's Zoning Ordinance.
2. Recognize opportunities for leveraging increased shares of job creation and economic development from emerging energy sources for the County.
3. Define the complexity and rapidity of change in the energy environment for the County.
4. Provide an assessment on the need for an advisory organization or other resources for ongoing technical analysis.
5. Recommend methods for the County to educate the public, including the business community, and gain input on energy-related matters.

**Goal #1: Identify energy-related gaps in the County's Comprehensive Plan and additional areas for inclusion in the County's Zoning Ordinance.**

## **Strengths**

- High transmission lines cross the county
- Natural gas pipeline crosses the county
- Broadband data lines cross the county (need to verify)

## **Weaknesses**

- Coastal weather threat stereotypes
- Hampton Roads is the end of the natural gas pipeline
- Does county electrical code account for charging stations (residential/commercial)
- Current definition of "utility scale solar" does not account for smaller/microgrid projects
- Ord 4.H. does not cover decommissioning
- Ord 4.J. potential to discourage capital improvement and impacts smaller/microgrid projects
- Ord 4.O. County Emergency Management doesn't have a standardized risk matrix for solar
- Energy is a gap in the current comprehensive plan

## **Opportunities**

- Create a standard risk matrix details responses and/or mitigations for a defined set of circumstances and environmental factors such as
  - Weather: flooding, wind hurricane, wildfire, earthquake, extreme temps
  - Electrical failure
  - Cyber failure (loss of monitoring, hacking, etc.)
- Pushback on coastal weather threats vs rest of Hampton Roads
- Explore opportunities to "tap into" resource streams transiting through the county (electric, gas, broadband)
- Encourage charging stations in developments/new businesses (gas stations)
- Set standards for energy storage via ordinances/code
- Broaden 2% rule to allow microgrids within developments

## **Threats**

- Lack of emergency management plans/procedures for energy generation and storage
- Lack of monitoring standards for energy storage facilities
- "Let it burn" emergency management response to energy facility fires is unlikely to be acceptable during a crisis
- Energy storage projects would potentially incur more cost to the county in terms of emergency management that may not be offset by current tax scheme

**Goal #2: Recognize opportunities for leveraging increased shares of job creation and economic development from emerging energy sources for the County.**

**Strengths**

- Skilled workforce
- High transmission lines cross the county
- Natural gas pipeline crosses the county
- Broadband data lines cross the county
- Citizens have indicated an interest in energy projects in the County, especially ones that directly impact them.

**Weaknesses**

- Restrictions or “gaps” related to zoning
- Regulatory restrictions/issues
- Understanding the implications of the Virginia Clean Energy Act
- No long-term energy plan for the county
- Energy expansion within the county so far has been limited to solar
- Members of the Planning Commission and Economic Development Department do not currently have technical expertise regarding various forms of energy.

**Opportunities**

- Partner with local industry and educational institutions for workforce training opportunities to support energy growth in the county.
- Capitalize on workforce with nuclear experience due to Surry plant and Navy ships
- Explore opportunities to “tap into” resource streams transiting through the county (electric, gas, broadband)
- Focus on energy opportunities as part of the upcoming review of the county’s comprehensive plan.
- Increase awareness and demand for clean and sustainable energy
- Identify “good fit” emerging energies for IOW.

**Threats**

- Citizen concerns with development of energy facilities and environmental impacts.
- Gaps in existing county code/ordinances could delay review/approval process.s
- Plans for emergencies and natural disasters
- Regional cooperation in other areas of Virginia is more organized than Hampton Roads

**Goal #3: Define the complexity and rapidity of change in the energy environment for the county.**

## **Strengths**

- Availability of land
- Access to the grid
- Skilled workforce
- Energy Task Force shows county's commitment to energy development

## **Weaknesses**

- Restrictions or "gaps" related to zoning
- Regulatory restrictions/issues
- Understanding the implications of the Virginia Clean Energy Act
- Limited technical expertise on energy in county government
- No long-term energy plan for the county
- Energy expansion within the county so far has been limited to solar

## **Opportunities**

- Partner with local industry and educational institutions for workforce training opportunities to support energy growth in the county.
- Focus on energy opportunities as part of the upcoming review of the county's comprehensive plan.
- The Virginia Clean Energy Act falls across multiple categories.
- Capitalize on workforce with nuclear experience due to Surry plant and Navy ships
- Increase awareness and demand for clean and sustainable energy
- Identify "good fit" emerging energies for IOW

## **Threats**

- Areas of Virginia are becoming "centers" for specific types of energy-related industries
  - Southwest VA--green energy (Delta Lab)
  - Northern VA--data centers
  - Western Tidewater--solar
- Citizen concerns with development of energy facilities and environmental impacts.
- Gaps in existing county code/ordinances could delay review/approval process.s
- Plans for emergencies and natural disasters

**Goal #4: Provide an assessment on the need for an advisory organization or other resources for technical analysis.**

## **Strengths**

- The county established an Energy Task Force to to assess the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and vulnerabilities of the county's energy planning to date and provide recommendations to enhance sustainability, reliability, and economic growth.
- Existing county entities, such as the Planning Commission and the Department of Economic Development, serve as current monitors for establishment of new energy facilities.

## **Weaknesses**

- Members of the Planning Commission and Economic Development Department do not currently have technical expertise regarding various forms of energy

## **Opportunities**

- Partnerwith Hampton Roads Regional Alliance or other regional groups to advise on new energy facilities.
- Identify individuals locally with expertise on various types of energies.
- Promote the county's focus on and commitment to emerging energy opportunities.

## **Threats**

- Financial obligations related to ongoing energy advisory group or consultant.
- Finding individuals with technical expertise on various types of emerging energies.
- Lack of clear purpose for an advisory organization and how they fit into current hierarchical structure.

**Goal #5: Recommend methods for the County to educate the public, including the business community, and gain input on energy-related matters.**

## Strengths

- The public has demonstrated interest in energy projects that directly impact them (e.g. proximity to the project, etc.). More active engagement will result in greater public feedback perhaps, soliciting feedback from a more representative sampling of the community.

## Weaknesses

- The ETF assess that the general public's knowledge level is currently relatively low on policy topics influencing energy production. For example, the Virginia Clean Economy Act (VCEA) requires electricity to be delivered from 100% renewable sources by 2045 with iterative milestones to implementation leading to that end state.
- Cost of energy per production type is not well known. Consumer cost has been demonstrated to be a high priority to the public, therefore more study and public information is necessary

## Opportunities

- IOW should use engagements with the public to provide factual and unbiased information to the highest extent possible. In the event biased information is offered to the public, IOW should consider indicating the bias of the source and also offer counter position informational sources. Ideas for public engagement include:
  - Using public hearings to direct attention to relevant information.
  - IOW county website resource links
  - Comprehensive plan engagement during public outreach and publication
  - County Fair – include information at an existing IOW booth
  - Social media postings
  - Peg Channel
  - Advertisements during the closed session portion of County meeting broadcast.
  - Public survey questions. What does the public want to know more about. FAQ section on website.
- Review currently publicized information on services that run through county (e.g. gas, power, water, fiber, sewer, fiber, etc.) to ensure County is providing most all relevant information to attract desired energy producers and consumer business opportunities.
- ETF present to IOW BOS, Town governments (Windsor, Smithfield)

## Threats

- Lack of knowledge could lead to uniformed opinions and decisions.