

THE COLUMN

Newsletter of
the Virginia Institute
of Government

Spring/Summer 2012

Welcome
New CSS Members



City of Falls Church
Surry County
Town of Lawrenceville
Town of Round Hill

INSIDE

EBIS

A treasure trove
of answers

3

Online Compensation Survey System

Has your locality
subscribed?

3

SEI & LEAD

Discount for
Institute members

4

Training Calendar

Fall 2012
Wednesday Series

4

Bedford—City & County: Reversion & Cooperation

FRANK J. ROGERS

Reversion. The word implies a retreat—a backward movement—antithetical to progress. And yet, reversion may be in the future for any number of Virginia cities. For the City of Bedford, that future may be now.

In 2008, Bedford City informed the county of its intention to revert from city to town status, as allowable under the Code of Virginia (Chapter 41, Title 15.2). A city may seek reversion to town status independently—without the county's blessing—or through a negotiated settlement with the county. In Bedford's case, city and county officials preferred to work through a negotiated settlement in order to avoid litigation and provide the best chance of a mutually beneficial agreement. If successful, the Bedford City reversion would be the third in Virginia, following Clifton Forge in Alleghany County (2001) and South Boston in Halifax County (1995).

WHY REVERT?

Reversion comes with economic incentives as outlined in the state code. For the city, this means the ability to divest itself of certain expenditures, which are transferred to the county. In return, the state provides additional aid to the county to offset some of the fiscal impact—most notably in the form of direct aid for education.

A LONG-STANDING PARTNERSHIP

For many years, both localities have worked together to provide enhanced services through contractual agreements. The results of this collaboration include a department of social services; a community and policy management team; a regional library system; an economic development authority and commerce park; resources for youth sports programs; provision of fire and rescue services; and a school system.

Similarly, a joint revenue-sharing program enables us to promote sound economic development and sustainability for the region.

Our agreement provides a 50-50 split of tax

continued on page 2



“If successful, the Bedford City reversion would be the third in Virginia, following Clifton Forge in Alleghany County (2001) and South Boston in Halifax County (1995).”

continued from page 1

revenues generated by certain commercial areas of the county that are adjacent to the city boundary. Innovative at the time it was initiated, this partnership results in annual revenue for the city of \$700,000 to \$800,000. The city in turn invests 50 percent of its share into infrastructure development to support commercial growth, benefiting both localities.

PLANNING FOR REVERSION

Once again the city and county are collaborating, this time to ensure that the proposed reversion is a forward-looking process. We have attempted to develop a plan that lends itself to sound development, sustainable growth, and a stronger community. Our efforts to do so have been strengthened by our long tradition of working together.

Upon receiving the city’s notice of its intent to revert, the county board of supervisors named a committee of its members to work with representatives of the city council to broker a negotiated settlement, as allowable under state law. Through a negotiated settlement, we hoped to amicably resolve the many issues surrounding a reversion, thereby minimizing the negative impact on the county. In the absence of such a settlement, a special three-judge panel determines the elements of any reversion.

After three years of planning for a reasonable transition, the joint negotiating committee reached a final voluntary settlement agreement, which was formally adopted on

September 14, 2011, by both the Bedford County Board of Supervisors and the Bedford City Council. Within the next few months, a formal legal filing for the Commission on Local Government (COLG) was prepared.

FINAL STEPS

On May 14, 2012, the COLG traveled to Bedford to tour the area, hear testimony, and conduct a public hearing. Following that, the COLG will draft a recommendation and forward it to a special three-judge panel for approval. Presuming a favorable recommendation from the COLG and a timely ruling from the judicial panel, the city intends to become a town effective July 1, 2013.

With that date in mind, staff members of both localities are meeting to resolve issues related to implementing the policies and procedures stipulated in the voluntary settlement agreement. There is no doubt that challenges lie ahead. We will not anticipate every aspect of our new working relationships. But, we will continue to work together in a manner that we believe to be in the best interest of our citizens and our collective future.



Frank J. Rogers is the Interim County Administrator of Bedford County. Contact him at 540/586-7601 or f.rogers@bedfordcountyva.gov. More information is available at www.bedfordcountyva.gov/reversion.

CRITERIA FOR REVERSION

The Commission on Local Government must base its review of the proposed reversion upon the criteria and standards as set forth in Sections 15.2-4106, Code of Virginia, as follows in the partial list below:

- 1. The city has a current population of less than 50,000 people;**
- 2. The adjoining county or counties have been made party defendants to the proceedings;**
- 3. The proposed change from city to town status will not substantially impair the ability of the adjoining county in which the town will be located to meet the service needs of its population;**

- 4. The proposed change from city to town status will not result in a substantially inequitable sharing of the resources and liabilities of the town and the county;**
- 5. The proposed change from city to town status is, in the balance of equities, in the best interests of the city, the county, the Commonwealth, and the people of the county and the city; and**
- 6. The proposed change from city status to town status is in the best interests of the Commonwealth in promoting strong and viable units of government.**

Section 15.2-4111 stipulates that the effective date of transition shall be no sooner than six months from the date of the court order granting town status.



**VIRGINIA
INSTITUTE OF
GOVERNMENT**

www.ValnstituteofGovernment.org

THE COLUMN is published by the Virginia Institute of Government as a service to state and local government officials and professionals. The Institute is part of the Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia.

Unless otherwise noted, articles are written by Institute staff. For additional information, contact Billie Easton.

Virginia Institute of Government
700 East Franklin Street
Suite 700
Richmond, Virginia 23219-2318
804/371-0202
PHONE
804/371-0234
FAX
column@virginia.edu
E-MAIL

INSTITUTE STAFF

DIRECTOR

John P. Thomas
434/982-5545
jpt6n@virginia.edu

**ASSOCIATE
DIRECTOR**

Tedd E. Povar
804/371-0202
tep3e@virginia.edu

**TRAINING
DIRECTOR**

Billie E. Easton
804/371-0202
bee2u@virginia.edu

**INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY
DIRECTOR**

Mary Beth Witherell
434/982-5702
meh4q@virginia.edu

PROGRAM ASSISTANT

Chantel Robinson
804/371-0202
cer8t@virginia.edu



**WELDON COOPER
CENTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE**
University of Virginia

VIRGINIA INSTITUTE OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES

Compensation Survey System (CSS)

Localities encouraged to tap into resource

Rolled out in 2005, the CSS continues to receive support from its 90 subscribing localities in spite of the dearth of pay adjustments over the past several years.

Institute members *and* nonmembers may use the system. Annual subscriptions range from \$50 to \$500 based on population.

The CSS is the result of a cooperative partnership between Technology Net Incorporated of Salt Lake City, Utah, and the Institute. We expect to see renewed interest as economic conditions improve and pay and benefit increases become the norm rather than the exception.

System benefits include

- Unlimited online access to salary and benefit information searchable by several factors, e.g., position, locality type and size
- Significant time savings for staff
- Continuous monitoring for accuracy and timeliness

If your locality is not a CSS subscriber, please consider joining. The service is only as valuable as the support and commitment of its members. The more users, the more benefit to all.



Contact Tedd Povar at 804/371-0202 or tep3e@virginia.edu.

EBIS

Economy is dominant issue

The Institute's Email Broadcast Information Service (EBIS) is nearing its 16th anniversary and continues to be a highly valued member resource.

During the past few years, economic issues have dominated the inquiry topics, while human resources questions continue their traditionally strong showing.

Recent topics include

- Governing body meetings — dealing with disruptive groups
- Animal shelter adoptions — waiver of adoption fees for seniors
- Water & sewer system — transfer to large regional authority or private operator (towns under 10,000 pop.)
- Compensation adjustments — FY13
- Virginia Retirement System — 5 percent contribution for local government employees (one-time or phase-in) per SB497
- Landfill — accepting waste at no charge from charitable organizations for house-fire victims and others in need

If your locality is not receiving the Institute's inquiries, please let us know so we can add an appropriate contact to our listserv. All localities can receive and respond to our inquiries, but only Institute members can submit inquiries.



Contact Tedd Povar at 804/371-0202 or tep3e@virginia.edu.



UPCOMING

**WEDNESDAY SERIES,
FALL 2012**

for Supervisors and Managers



**Engaging & Motivating
Employees**
October 17



**The Art of Coaching
and Mentoring**
November 14



**Understanding
Communication Styles**
December 12

Classes held in Richmond
8:30 am-3:30 pm

To register:

Contact Chantel Robinson
at 804/371-0202
or cer8t@virginia.edu
VaInstituteofGovernment.org

University of Virginia
700 East Franklin Street, Suite 700
Richmond, Virginia 23219-2318



VIRGINIA
INSTITUTE OF
GOVERNMENT

COOPER CENTER'S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS

**Virginia Institute
of Government
Advisory Committee**



Ed C. Daley, *chair*

R. Michael Amyx
Elsie M. Barnes
James D. Campbell
James K. Conant
Ray A. Conner
Joe T. May
Anne H. Moore
David A. Nutter
James J.L. Stegmaier
David J. Toscano
Elizabeth D. Whiting

John P. Thomas, *ex officio*

Is your locality an Institute member? Attend one of the Cooper Center's nationally recognized leadership programs at a **10 percent discount**. All programs are held at the University of Virginia in Charlottesville.
www.coopercenter.org/leadership

**SEI (Senior Executive
Institute)**

SEI is an annual, two-week residential program for senior local government managers.

SEI 2012 Schedule

July 15-27
August 6-9 (ON-CORE, newly expanded alumni program)

SEI 2013 Schedule

July 14-26
August 5-8 (ON-CORE, alumni program)

Contact Melanie Harlow at
434/982-5514 or mjb3a@virginia.edu.

**LEAD (Leading, Educating,
and Developing program)**

LEAD is a one-week residential program for department/division heads and senior staff.

LEAD Fall 2012 Schedule

September 16-21
October 28-November 2

LEAD 2013 Schedule

February 24-March 1
April 7-12
September 8-13
October 20-25

Contact Carmie Rodriguez at
434/243-5031 or carmie@virginia.edu.