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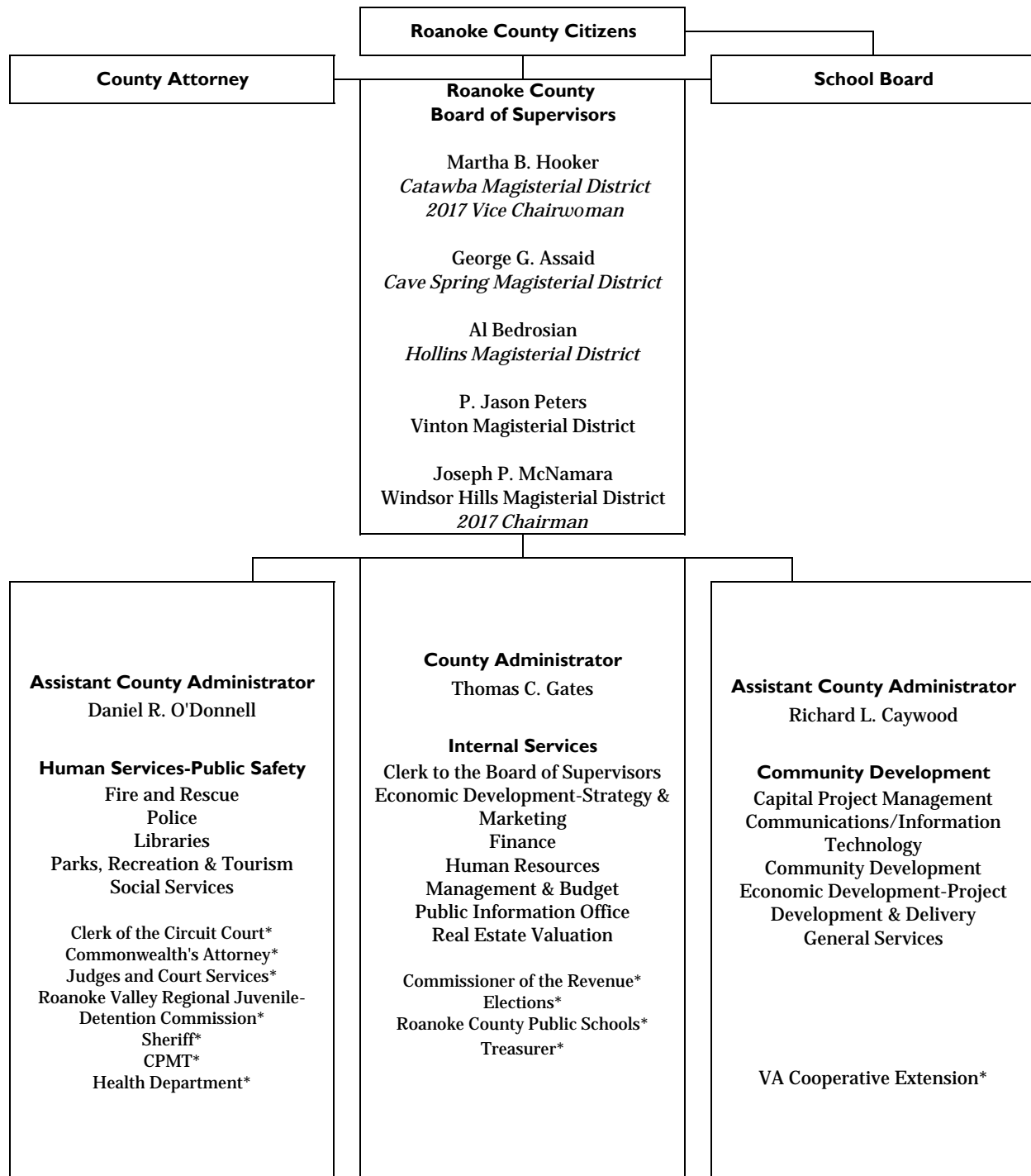


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Roanoke County Organizational Chart



*Denotes Liaison Relationship



History of Roanoke County, Virginia

In the 1740s, the first Scotch-Irish and German settlers reached the upper Roanoke Valley by traveling from Pennsylvania through the Shenandoah Valley. They were joined by Tidewater Virginians of English ancestry who journeyed up the valleys of the James and Roanoke Rivers.

Roanoke County, named after the Roanoke River, was formed in 1838 from a portion of Botetourt County and in 1849 a portion of Montgomery County was added. Roanoke County's name comes from the Algonquin word "Rawrenock", which means wampum. Wampum were white shell beads worn by Native Americans. This explanation comes from Captain John Smith, who wrote about the origins of Roanoke Island in North Carolina's Albemarle Sound.

Most of Roanoke County was rural in nature and farming was predominant throughout the area. By the latter half of the 20th century, Roanoke County, (the "County"), was in transition from farm to factory, but the County's rural population was still relatively large in 1920.

The County today has a population of approximately 94,000 and is a mostly suburban area that surrounds the City of Roanoke. Its 251 square miles include the Town of Vinton; Hollins, home of the prestigious Hollins University for women; and historic Bonsack. A diversified economic base helps to provide security from market fluctuations related to particular products.

The County is governed by a charter approved by the 1986 session of the Virginia General Assembly, which grants additional authority to the County Administrator. The Board of Supervisors is the governing body of the County. Members of the Board, one from each of five magisterial districts, are elected to four-year terms. Board members annually select a Chairman and Vice-Chairman to each serve a one-year term.

The Board appoints a County Administrator to act as administrative head of the County. The County Administrator serves at the pleasure of the Board, carries out its policies and directs business procedures. All department heads report to the County Administrator except for the School Board, Welfare Board, Library Board, Health Department and the County Attorney who report directly to the Board. Five constitutional officers (Commissioner of the Revenue, Commonwealth's Attorney, Clerk of the Circuit Court, Sheriff, and Treasurer) are elected by the voters of the County and are not accountable to the Board, but work closely with the Board and the County Administrator.

On July 1, 1980, the Roanoke County Public Service Authority (therein called the "Authority") was dissolved and the sewer utility operation became a part of the utility department within the County government. The water utility operation had previously been transferred to the County effective July 1, 1976. Effective July 1, 2004, these utility operations were transferred to the newly created Western Virginia Water Authority as discussed in more detail on the next page.

The County participates in the Roanoke Regional Airport Commission which was formed in 1987 through an act of the Virginia General Assembly. The Commission's five Board members are each appointed a four year term by both the Roanoke City Council and The Roanoke County Board of Supervisors. This is representative of a new cooperative, promotional spirit that is emerging in the Roanoke Valley between local governments.



In 1992, the Roanoke County Police Department became the first nationally accredited department in Southwest Virginia through the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA). The department has maintained national accreditation since November 1997. Existing departmental programs including criminal investigations, traffic enforcement, domestic violence, crime prevention, criminal apprehension, and community-involved policing, are enhanced through the accreditation process.

The Roanoke Valley Resource Authority (RVRA) was established on October 23, 1991 under a user agreement between the County of Roanoke, the City of Roanoke and the Town of Vinton to develop a regional solid waste disposal facility. In 2016, the City of Salem joined the RVRA. A nine-member board appointed by the governing bodies of the Charter Members presently governs the RVRA. The County has control over the budget and financing of the Authority only to the extent of representation by board members appointed. The old regional sanitary landfill operated by the Roanoke Valley Regional Solid Waste Management Board was closed on September 30, 1993.

On July 1, 2004, the County of Roanoke and the City of Roanoke, Virginia (City) formed the Western Virginia Water Authority, a regional water and wastewater authority. This full service authority serves both County and City citizens ensuring a reliable and efficient means of providing water and wastewater treatment, at the lowest cost and best rate and service for its customers. The assets and liabilities of the County and City water and wastewater utilities were merged into one full service authority.

The Western Virginia Regional Jail Authority was formed in June 2005 by the counties of Roanoke, Franklin, and Montgomery and the City of Salem. This regional initiative was undertaken to address overcrowded conditions experienced by each of the partner jurisdictions. The Western Virginia Regional Jail houses post-sentencing inmates and special populations, while the local jails remain operational and are used to house pre-sentencing inmates.

In 2016, the Board of Supervisors adopted the first-ever Community Strategic Plan. The Community Strategic Plan focuses on Community Health and Well-Being, Economic Development, Education, Public Safety, Quality of Life, and Transportation through seven Strategic Initiatives identified through a series of citizen engagement strategies including focus groups, public meetings, and citizen surveys. The Community Strategic Plan can be viewed online at www.roanokecountyva.gov/CSP. The County of Roanoke is in the process of developing an internal Organizational Strategic Plan, which will identify strategies to be used by departments and employees to deliver quality services with integrity and distinction.

As part of the Strategic Planning Process, the following Vision Statement was developed in 2016.

“Roanoke County is a vibrant, innovative, and scenic community that values its citizens, heritage, and quality of life.”

Regional Cooperation, public-private partnerships, citizen involvement, innovation, and quality services provide the foundation for Roanoke County's strength. From its beginning, Roanoke County has served as a catalyst for growth and unity in the Roanoke Valley. In fact, most of the present day neighborhoods in the Valley started life within Roanoke County.



**County of Roanoke, Virginia
by Magisterial District**

