

The Working Majority

Public Dissent and Decision-Making on the James City County Board of Supervisors, 2010–2026

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Abstract

This paper documents how a working majority on the James City County Board of Supervisors has handled organized public opposition across a sixteen-year period. Drawing on a corpus of 388 minute files, 295 agenda packets, approximately 2,290 recorded votes, and 940 named-commenter appearances by 468 distinct residents across January 2010 through February 2026, it identifies four cases meeting a strict-coding contested-opposed bar. In all four, the working majority advanced the contested item over organized public opposition. The paper documents three mechanisms by which dissenting supervisors are reabsorbed into the working majority and three procedural pathways that route consequential decisions to venues where direct voter accountability does not operate. Two supervisors at the core of the current working majority have never lone-dissented across their full tenures. The override pattern operates inside whatever Board composition is in place because the structural roles persist across rotating actors.

Author and Disclosures

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I.

On January 3, 2017, John McGlennon moved a motion to restructure the James City County Board of Supervisors' meeting schedule. The motion replaced two monthly regular meetings, both at 7 p.m., both with public comment, with one Regular Meeting at 5 p.m. retaining public comment and one Work Session at 4 p.m. without it. The vote was 5-0.¹ On January 4, 2021, McGlennon moved a second motion modifying the structure he had created four years earlier. The Work Session, soon renamed Business Meeting, moved from 4 p.m. to 1 p.m. The vote was 5-0.²

On November 14, 2023, McGlennon cast the lone NAY on the Consolidated Government Center Proposal at a Board of Supervisors meeting.³ Seventy days later, on January 23, 2024, he voted yes on the project's First Interim Agreement at one of the 1 p.m. Business Meetings the 2021 motion had created.⁴ Eleven months after that, yes on the Second Interim Agreement. Then yes, on every subsequent vote: change orders, special-use permit, plat vacation, \$16.5 million site-work contract, comprehensive agreement, construction-management contract.⁵

By October 14, 2025, McGlennon was the project's chief defender on the dais. In the deliberation on the plat vacation and the site-work contract, after the selective dissenter raised the question of whether the project should be put to voters and the supplier of the third vote answered with constituent-contact testimony from outside the hearing, McGlennon spoke. He acknowledged on the record that he had been very skeptical when Hipple first proposed what he called "the Hipple building."⁶ Then:

*"Sometimes you have to make decisions about things that citizens might say, well, it's not the most important thing to me, but they will probably feel the impact of it for many years to come. And so I think it's important for us to recognize that this decision is one that cannot be decided by public opinion alone."*⁷

¹ McGlennon's motion at the January 3, 2017 organizational meeting and the 5-0 vote (Hippie, McGlennon, Larson, Sadler, Onizuk).

² McGlennon's motion at the January 4, 2021 organizational meeting and the 5-0 vote (Hippie, Icenhour Jr, Larson, McGlennon, Sadler).

³ Vote 1 in the Government Center chronology: 2023-11-14 Consolidated Government Center Proposal (PPEA acceptance), 4-1 with McGlennon as lone NAY.

⁴ Vote 2 in the Government Center chronology: 2024-01-23 4th Interim Agreement for New Consolidated Government Center, 5-0. Item heard at the Business Meeting at 1:00 PM. No Public Hearing on this item.

⁵ Government Center votes 4 through 12 in the chronology: Second Interim Agreement (2024-12-10, 5-0), Change Order Library Schematic (2025-03-25, 5-0), SUP-25-0003 (2025-06-10, 4-1, Null NAY), Change Order Off-site Roadway (2025-06-24, 5-0), Change Order Library 100% Design (2025-09-23, 5-0), Plat Vacation (2025-10-14, 4-1, Null NAY), Early Site Work Package \$16.5M (2025-10-14, 4-1, Null NAY), Comprehensive Agreement (2025-12-09, 5-0), Construction Management Contract (2025-12-09, 5-0). McGlennon voted YEA on every one.

⁶ McGlennon's deliberation remarks at the October 14, 2025 Regular Meeting prior to the votes on Items 9 and 10 (plat vacation and site work package). McGlennon stated he had been "very skeptical when Mr. Hipple first talked about... what I used to call the Hipple building" before explaining his support for the project at length. Recording of the Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting, October 14, 2025, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, Hipple-building passage at timestamp 02:29:25.

⁷ McGlennon's verbatim deliberation passage from the October 14, 2025 Regular Meeting, immediately preceding the roll call on the plat vacation. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, "public opinion alone" passage at timestamp 02:30:04.

The motion passed 4-1.

McGlennon is a professor of government at William & Mary, the Class of 1935 Professor of Government, who has served continuously on the JCC Board of Supervisors since 1995.⁸ The supervisor who moved both motions creating and modifying the procedural structure inside which the Government Center deliberation occurred is the same supervisor who articulated, from the dais, the principle that the Government Center decision could not be decided by public opinion alone.

The seventy days from his lone NAY to his first subsequent YEA on the Government Center is the tightest such reversal this paper documents. The eight years from his 2017 architectural motion to his 2025 articulation of the principle that operates inside the architecture is the longest. Both arcs operate on the same supervisor's record. Both run through the same Board's structure. They are not separate facts. They are the same structural pattern at different time scales.

By absorption, this paper means an observable public sequence, not a claim about private motive. A dissenting vote or organized public opposition appears in the record, the item continues through procedural stages, and the working majority advances the decision without a resident-side reversal. Elected supervisors are entitled to exercise judgment, and organized public opposition does not automatically deserve to prevail on every contested vote. The empirical question this paper answers is narrower: across the defined universe of organized opposition the corpus contains, has public participation ever produced a resident-side reversal?

For the residents who attend hearings, organize coalitions, sign petitions, and write to their supervisors, that question matters. The corpus contains four cases at strict coding where it has been tested across 16 years. The answer in all four is the same: the working majority advanced the item. Permissive coding adds one additional case, also advanced. The pattern is not a sign of an unusual or dysfunctional Board. It is the structure of how James City County governance works.

This paper documents the pattern using the public record of the James City County Board of Supervisors from January 2010 through February 2026. The corpus contains 388 minute files (376 with parseable OCR), 295 agenda packets, approximately 2,290 recorded votes, 136 split votes, about 14 cases where the Board voted against the staff recommendation, 13 citizen petitions, and 940 named-commenter appearances by 468 distinct residents in the post-2014 period.⁹

Five findings stand out.

First, a working majority that has, across the four cases at strict coding the corpus contains, advanced every contested item where public opposition was organized and clearly opposed. Two supervisors at the core of the current working majority, Larson and Icenhour, have never cast a single dissenting vote alone.

Second, three pathways the Board uses to bring dissenting supervisors back into alignment, operating on different time scales: forward absorption through the procedural sequence, project rebranding when a

⁸ McGlennon's continuous tenure on the JCC Board of Supervisors since 1995 is established by his service spanning the entire 2010-2026 corpus window. The 1995 start date is publicly documented through prior election records and McGlennon's William & Mary faculty page; his Class of 1935 Professor of Government chair and Government Department chairmanship 1993-2003 are documented on William & Mary's Department of Government website.

⁹ Corpus channel counts. Methodology Appendix subsection A documents each channel's construction.

contested item returns under a different name, and late-tenure breakaway that registers dissent at the moment the supervisor's exit eliminates the cost of dissent.

Third, a separate set of pathways that route the most consequential decisions to venues where voters have no direct way to push back: the Business Meeting bifurcation McGlennon's 2017 and 2021 motions created, the multi-jurisdictional sports-facility authority created in December 2023, and the Economic Development Authority revenue-bond financing structure used for the Government Center.

Fourth, a working majority whose structural roles persist across rotating actors. Five roles are continuously occupied across the 16 years by different supervisors at different times, with one exception: McGlennon has occupied the institutional-anchor role for the entire window. The override pattern operates inside whatever composition is in place because the structural roles endure.

Fifth, contested cases that arise rarely and around specific catalysts. The four strict-coding cases concentrate in two episodes: Hazelwood Farms in 2022 and the Government Center in 2025. The other 14 years of the corpus contain zero strict-coding cases. The Board's response across those four cases is uniform.

The pattern is consistent. The conditions under which it operates are not.

II. The corpus and the sequence

The James City County Board of Supervisors holds about 23 to 25 meetings per year: twice-monthly regular and business meetings, plus special meetings, work sessions, organizational meetings, and joint sessions with adjacent jurisdictions. The minute record from January 2010 through February 10, 2026 is publicly available through the County’s website. It comes to 388 individual PDF files, of which 376 carry parseable OCR.¹⁰ The agenda packets that go with those meetings are also publicly available for the post-2014 portion of the window; the packet record is 295 PDFs covering January 2015 through February 2026, totaling 48,722 pages of staff reports, recommendations, fiscal-impact statements, citizen correspondence, and supporting materials.¹¹

The vote register built from those files contains approximately 2,290 recorded votes across the 16-year window. Most are unanimous five-supervisor approvals: consent calendar items, procedural motions, ceremonial resolutions, and uncontested ordinances. The split votes (anything that wasn’t unanimous) number about 136 across the period.¹²

When the votes are checked against staff recommendations recorded in each post-2014 packet, another category emerges. About 14 cases across the post-2014 corpus show the Board voting against what staff recommended. Roughly half are unanimous Board approvals over staff denials on short-term-rental and Public Service Area expansion special-use permits, concentrated in 2022 through 2024. The other half are scattered across the period in both directions. Section IX takes up the staff-vs-Board record as a separate finding.¹³

The corpus contains 13 distinct citizen petitions across the period.¹⁴ Two cite signature counts at or near 1,000: the Save Rural James City County coalition’s 992-signature petition at the February 8, 2022 Hazelwood Farms Enterprise Center hearing, and the Change.org petition cited by multiple speakers at the October 14, 2025 Government Center deliberation.¹⁵

Among the 136 split votes, four rise to what this paper calls the contested-opposed bar. These are cases where the public-hearing record shows clearly opposed citizen comment, with organized opposition behind it, and the working majority advanced the item anyway. Cases where the public-comment record was mixed, sparse, or unclear are not counted. The four cases:

¹⁰ 388 minute file count and 376 parseable OCR count. Methodology Appendix subsection A.

¹¹ 295 packet PDFs and 48,722 page count. The 2010-2014 packet absence is documented in Methodology Appendix subsection A and section H.

¹² Vote register total (~2,290 votes) and split count (~136) computed from the parsed vote register in the project corpus. The methodology of register construction is documented in Methodology Appendix subsection A.

¹³ Staff-vs-Board contradictions register documented. Section IX develops the staff-vs-Board record.

¹⁴ Petition channel inventory derived from a corpus-wide search for petition-related keywords (petition, signatures, signed, coalition, Change.org), with each hit validated against the underlying minute text. 13 petitions identified across the period.

¹⁵ Save Rural James City County 992-signature petition presented at the February 8, 2022 Hazelwood Farms Enterprise Center hearing, source minute file Change.org petition (Weber petition) cited at multiple Government Center hearings in 2025, beginning at the June 10, 2025 SUP hearing and read verbatim into the record at the October 14, 2025 plat vacation hearing.

Date	Item	Tally
2022-02-08	Hazelwood Farms Enterprise Center rezoning	3-2
2025-06-10	Government Center SUP-25-0003	4-1
2025-10-14	Government Center plat vacation	4-1
2025-10-14	Government Center site work package (\$16.5M)	4-1

These are four qualifying votes across two contested episodes: Hazelwood Farms and the Government Center sequence. The Government Center accounts for three qualifying votes because it produced three separate public-facing decision points under the same organized opposition.

Four of approximately 2,290 total votes is roughly 0.2 percent. Four of 136 split votes is roughly 3 percent. In all four cases the working majority advanced the item. A check across the broader split-vote record, looking for any motion that failed in the face of clearly opposed organized public comment, finds none.¹⁶

The bar this paper applies for the contested-opposed cases is twelve or more commenters at the public hearing, clearly opposed, with at least one sign of organization: a petition with signatures, a named coalition, an HOA representation, a neighborhood association, or repeated advocacy framing. The bar is set for one kind of public mobilization, in-person turnout at hearings. It is not the only defensible bar. Under permissive coding that treats eight to twelve commenters with a strong organization marker as sufficient, one additional case enters the universe: SUP-0012-2013, the January 14, 2014 Human Services Building Communications Tower hearing, where the Wellington Homeowners Association represented the opposition through nine formal public-hearing speakers and the Board approved 5-0. Under the same permissive coding, two boundary cases appear. Rural Lands ORD-22-0002 (October 11, 2022, 4-1 approval) had ten of twelve public-hearing speakers in opposition but a separate channel of written correspondence running net-support, the only documented channel-conflict case in the matched universe. Z-0009-2016 at 124 and 130 Riverview Plantation Drive (November 8, 2016, 5-0 denial) had seven public-hearing speakers, an 87-signature petition representing what Jane Nichols described as a majority of the residents, and is the cleanest resident-side-win counter-example in the corpus. The case appears in Section IX. Its existence is named here for the record.¹⁷

The methodology appendix at the back of this paper carries the corpus channels in detail, the construction of the vote register, the bar-calibration sensitivity analysis, the petition-channel inventory, the temporal coverage analysis, and the verification work used for factual claims about real people.¹⁸

¹⁶ A check across the broader split-vote record (~136 splits) for any motion that failed in the face of clearly opposed organized public comment finds none. Verification documented.

¹⁷ Z-0009-2016 Riverview Plantation Drive (2016-11-08) was a 5-0 denial of a rezoning application against staff and Planning Commission recommendations, with an 87-signature petition representing what Jane Nichols described as a majority of residents on opposition. The case is the cleanest resident-side-win counter-example in the corpus and is developed in Section IX.

¹⁸ Methodology Appendix subsections A through H document the channel construction, bar calibration, sensitivity analysis, petition channel, temporal coverage, vote register coverage gap, and verification discipline.

The four matched cases are not spread across the 16-year window. They cluster in two specific years: one in 2022, three in 2025. The other 14 years contain zero strict-coding contested-opposed cases. The pattern this paper documents is recent.

Most of the window is empty of the conditions under which the pattern operates. The period from January 2010 through February 2022, twelve years, contains zero matched cases. The 2018 through 2020 stretch contains 472 votes across three years with zero matched cases. The 2010 through 2014 stretch the corpus expansion added contains 745 recorded votes across five years with zero matched cases.¹⁹ Adequate coverage. Stable Board compositions across most of those stretches. Routine docket. The contested-opposed conditions did not arise.

When the conditions did arise, in 2022 and 2025, they arose around specific catalysts. The Hazelwood Farms development drew the Save Rural James City County coalition and the 992-signature petition. The Government Center initiative drew the Change.org petition cited at near 1,000 signatures, multiple speakers asking for a voter referendum, and three of the four matched cases the corpus contains. Two specific multi-month episodes produce the entire matched record.

The Board's response across the four cases is uniform. The same alignment that approved Hazelwood Farms Enterprise Center 3-2 in February 2022 approved the Government Center series 4-1 in 2025. The override pattern does not vary across the period. What varies is whether the conditions for it to operate arise at all.

A second observation about the timeline matters more than the rate. The procedural architecture inside which the override pattern operates was built before the override pattern emerged. It was built deliberately. The motion was made twice, once in 2017 and once in 2021, by John McGlennon — the same supervisor who in 2025 articulated from the dais the principle that consequential decisions cannot be decided by public opinion alone.

On January 3, 2017, at the Board's organizational meeting, the format and schedule of the Board's meetings came up for discussion. Before this date, the Board held two regular meetings per month, both at 7:00 PM, both with public comment sections. Mr. Onizuk, then Chair, framed the discussion. The minutes record an extended consensus discussion in which the Board considered moving to one Regular Meeting per month at 5:00 PM, with public comment, and one Work Session per month at 4:00 PM, without public comment. The minutes capture the consensus reached:

*"The final consensus was to have one business meeting on the second Tuesday of the month beginning at 5 p.m. The fourth Tuesday of the month would be strictly a work session that would begin at 4 p.m. It was agreed that the business meeting agenda format would stay as it has been for the last year with the exception of removing the time constraint on the first public comment section and eliminating the second public comment section."*²⁰

A motion to approve was then made. The minutes record:

¹⁹ 2010-2014 corpus expansion identified 745 votes across five years with zero strict-coding contested-opposed cases. Per-item verification of the strongest 2010-2014 candidates.

²⁰ Verbatim consensus discussion from the January 3, 2017 organizational meeting, Item C.2 "Establishment of Meeting Dates, Places and Times."

“Item C.3 Organizational Meeting of the Board of Supervisors. A motion to Approve was made by John McGlennon and the motion result was Passed. AYES: 5 NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT: 0. Ayes: Hipple, McGlennon, Larson, Sadler, Onizuk.”²¹

The motion was made by McGlennon. The vote was unanimous. The new format took effect with the January 24, 2017 Work Session and the February 14, 2017 Regular Meeting. Before this vote, every regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors had included a public-comment section. After this vote, the second monthly meeting did not.

Four years later, on January 4, 2021, the Board’s organizational meeting modified the structure. The minutes record:

“Mr. McGlennon made the motion on the Board’s 2021 calendar, noting a time change of 1 p.m. for the second meeting of the month, which is the Work Session.”²²

Mr. Hipple, Chair that year, stated the rationale for the time change:

“Mr. Hipple noted the 1 p.m. meeting time allowed for the Board to work on more County items. He further noted it allowed the Board for time to also work with staff.”²³

The motion was made by McGlennon. The vote was 5-0. The Work Session, soon renamed by the Clerk to “Business Meeting” in the official filing system, moved from 4:00 PM to 1:00 PM. The first meeting filed under the BUSINESS MEETING label at 1 p.m. was February 23, 2021.²⁴

Citizens with daytime work obligations cannot reliably attend a 1 p.m. meeting. The 1 p.m. Business Meeting does not include a Public Comment section by design. Substantive Board discussion now occurs at a meeting most working residents cannot attend, on items that the Regular Meeting later voted on without those residents having had any chance to address the Board on the substance during deliberation.

The structural consequence appears in the Government Center case directly. Between March 2024 and October 2025, eighteen Government Center Update Board Discussion items appeared at Business Meetings — at 1 p.m., with no Public Comment section.²⁵ Four substantive Government Center votes occurred at Business Meetings without Public Hearings: the Fourth Interim Agreement on January 23, 2024; a change order on March 25, 2025; an off-site change order on June 24, 2025; and the library 100% design change order on September 23, 2025.²⁶ The Plan of Finance vote on October 8, 2024, the Economic Development

²¹ Verbatim formal-vote record from the January 3, 2017 organizational meeting, Item C.3. Note the OCR renders Hipple as “Hippie” throughout; this is a consistent OCR substitution and not a misspelling in the original.

²² Verbatim record of McGlennon’s motion at the January 4, 2021 organizational meeting, with his characterization of “the second meeting of the month, which is the Work Session.”

²³ Verbatim record of Hipple’s stated rationale at the January 4, 2021 organizational meeting, with the time change to 1 p.m. justification entered into the record.

²⁴ First meeting filed under the BUSINESS MEETING label at 1 p.m. confirmed at the February 23, 2021 Business Meeting. The Clerk renamed the fourth-Tuesday meeting from “Work Session” to “Business Meeting” administratively between January 4 and February 23, 2021.

²⁵ 18 Government Center Update Board Discussion items at Business Meetings between March 2024 and October 2025 are catalogued.

²⁶ Four substantive Government Center votes occurred at Business Meetings without Public Hearings: Vote 2 (4th Interim Agreement, 2024-01-23, file, Vote 5 (Change Order Library Schematic, 2025-03-25, file, Vote 7 (Change Order Off-site Roadway, 2025-06-24, file, Vote 8 (Change Order Library 100% Design, 2025-09-23, file

Authority lease-revenue bond authorization that included the Government Center, occurred at a Regular Meeting as a Board Comment item. There was no Public Hearing on that resolution. Citizens could attend and address the Board during the general Public Comment period; they could not address the Board on this specific resolution before the vote.²⁷

Compared to the pre-2017 every-meeting-includes-public-comment regime, the 2017-as-modified-in-2021 regime cut the Government Center deliberation cycle's scheduled public-input occasions on Government Center-related agenda items by approximately 60 percent.²⁸ This is the structural removal the bifurcation produced.

This is what Section II establishes for the rest of the paper. Sixteen years of corpus. Four matched contested-opposed cases concentrated in two multi-month episodes. The architecture inside which those four cases were decided was built by motion, by name, by recorded vote, before the four cases occurred. The supervisor who moved the architectural motion is the same supervisor who articulates from the dais the principle the override pattern operates on.

The remainder of the paper documents how the architecture and the pattern operate together. Section III names the structural roles the working majority assembles from across rotating actors. Sections IV, V, and VI document the mechanisms through which dissent inside the Board is absorbed, departs, or selectively persists. Section VII consolidates the procedural architecture, with the bifurcation at its center. Section VIII returns to the four matched cases and the rate at which they arise. Sections IX through XII document the staff-recommendation track, the Board's response to organized opposition in deliberation, the civic cohort that has carried public participation across the window, and the structural finding restated against the verified record.

The form of representative government has been kept. The substance, across multiple compositions and rotating actors and the architecture this section names, has not.

²⁷ Plan of Finance Vote 3 (2024-10-08): 5-0 EDA Series 2024 Bonds authorization including the Government Center, voted at a Regular Meeting as Board Consideration(S) Item 1, no Public Hearing on this resolution.

²⁸ The 60% reduction figure compares the 2017-as-modified-in-2021 regime against the pre-2017 every-meeting-includes-public-comment regime for the Government Center deliberation cycle. Pre-2017 regime would have produced approximately 25-30 distinct public-comment opportunities tied directly to Government Center-related agenda items; the 2017-as-modified-in-2021 regime produced approximately 5 Public Comment opportunities at Regular Meetings plus 4 formal Public Hearings.

III. The five roles

A working majority on a five-member Board needs three votes. In James City County across the 16-year corpus window, the working majority has consistently assembled from the same five structural positions on the Board: an institutional anchor, a working-majority partner, a supplier of the third vote, a selective dissenter, and a late-tenure breakaway. The actors who occupy those positions rotate. The positions themselves persist.

This section documents what the corpus shows. Each of the five roles has been continuously occupied across the window, by different supervisors at different times, with one exception. The institutional-anchor role has been continuously occupied by the same supervisor for the entire 16 years.

The role descriptions describe what the corpus shows. They do not predict how supervisors come to occupy each role; the corpus shows multiple mechanisms operating. Tenure plus accumulation of external institutional ties produces movement into the anchor and partner roles in some cases. Ideological realignment during tenure produces movement between roles in others. Departure proximity opens the late-tenure-breakaway role. Ambition and external opportunity may produce variation that the corpus cannot fully resolve from minutes alone. The methodology note at the end of this section reports the trajectory-hypothesis test result. The structural finding the corpus supports most strongly is the role-level pattern: the working majority assembles across rotating actors because the structural positions endure.

The institutional anchor

John McGlennon has served on the JCC Board of Supervisors continuously since 1995, three years before the period this corpus covers. He is the only supervisor in the corpus whose tenure spans the entire 16-year window without interruption.²⁹ He represents Roberts District, which he has represented since around 2016 (Jamestown District before that, with a redistricting reassignment in 2014-2015).³⁰

McGlennon's roles outside the Board run further than any other supervisor's. He has chaired the Coalition of High Growth Communities, an organization of Virginia cities and counties that advocates at the General Assembly for state-level authority to address growth impacts. Two Virginia governors have appointed him to their transition teams on local-government policy. He has served multiple terms as JCC Board Chairman, most recently in 2022-2023 and 2026. He is the Class of 1935 Professor of Government at William & Mary, an endowed chair he has held while teaching at the College since 1974, and he served as Chair of the Government Department from 1993 to 2003. His scholarly specialization is state and local government, with particular focus on Virginia.³¹

²⁹ McGlennon's continuous tenure across the entire 2010-2026 corpus window. He is one of two supervisors (along with Icenhour, with two service segments) whose tenure spans the full period. McGlennon's start date of 1995 predates the corpus window and is established through prior election records.

³⁰ McGlennon's district representation: Jamestown District through approximately 2015, then Roberts District from 2016 forward. The district change is associated with County redistricting around 2014-2015; targeted review of redistricting documents is queued as follow-on.

³¹ McGlennon's external roles: Coalition of High Growth Communities chair, two governors' transition team appointments on local-government policy, JCC Board Chairman in 2012, 2013, 2022, 2023, and 2026, Class of 1935 Professor of Government at

The role McGlennon has occupied across the corpus combines four functions: continuous tenure, accumulated external institutional roles, motions at organizational meetings that shape the procedural structure of the Board, and rhetorical articulation of institutional principle in deliberation on contested items. All four are present in his record across the period.

McGlennon moved both the 2017 and 2021 motions that created and modified the Board’s current Business Meeting / Regular Meeting structure. Section II documents the verbatim record. He has served as Chair in five years across the corpus and Vice Chair in four others.³² He has cast four lone NAYs across his tenure, including the November 14, 2023 Consolidated Government Center Proposal vote that this paper opens with, a NAY that he reversed seventy days later and continued to reverse on every subsequent Government Center vote.³³

In the October 14, 2025 deliberation on the Government Center plat vacation and site-work contract, McGlennon articulated the institutional-anchor position from the dais. Following Null’s expressed doubt and Icenhour’s door-knocking testimony, McGlennon addressed the Board:

“Sometimes you have to make decisions about things that citizens might say, well, it’s not the most important thing to me, but they will probably feel the impact of it for many years to come. And so I think it’s important for us to recognize that this decision is one that cannot be decided by public opinion alone.”³⁴

The structural position the institutional anchor occupies is the connection between the Board’s procedural architecture (Section VII) and the principle the working majority operates on in contested-opposed cases. Across the period, no other supervisor has occupied that connection.

The working-majority partner

Across the 16-year window, the role of working-majority partner has been occupied by three different supervisors in succession: James G. Kennedy (Stonehouse, 2010-2015), Mary K. Jones (Berkeley, 2010-2015), and Ruth M. Larson (Berkeley, 2016-present).³⁵

The role consistently votes with the institutional anchor on contested items, defends procedural history in deliberation when residents question it, and provides the second of the three working-majority votes. Lone NAY votes do not come from this role. When the partner dissents, another supervisor dissents alongside.

Larson is the role’s current occupant. She has been present for thirty-eight of the forty-two split votes since her January 2016 swearing-in. She has voted yes on twenty-nine. She has voted no on nine. In every one of her NAYs, at least one other supervisor has voted no with her. She has never been the lone dissenter.³⁶

William & Mary, Government Department Chair 1993-2003. External-role data partially extracted from organizational meeting Boards/Commissions appointment lists per the trajectory analysis methodology.

³² McGlennon’s chair years (2012, 2013, 2022, 2023, 2026) and vice chair years (2012, 2016, 2025, 2026).

³³ McGlennon’s lone NAY count and the Government Center reversal documented (Vote 1, 2023-11-14). Subsequent McGlennon YEAs on every Government Center vote documented in the same chronology.

³⁴ McGlennon’s October 14, 2025 deliberation remarks. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, McGlennon’s Turn 2 deliberation begins at timestamp 02:24:45.

³⁵ Working-majority partner role occupants: Kennedy (Stonehouse, 2010-2015), Jones (Berkeley, 2010-2015), Larson (Berkeley, 2016-present). Larson’s January 4, 2016 swearing-in is the first roll call appearance documented.

Larson’s career outside the Board runs alongside her tenure on it. Before her 2016 election to the BoS, she served three years as Chair of the Williamsburg-James City County School Board. Since joining the Board, she has chaired the JCC Board of Supervisors, currently serves as Vice Chair, chairs the Tourism Council, sits on the Olde Towne Medical and Dental Center Board, and represents the Board on the School Liaison Committee. Beyond JCC, she has served on the Virginia Association of Counties Board of Directors and currently holds the position of First Vice President of VACo, the statewide organization of Virginia counties. She is a graduate of the Virginia Association of Counties Certified Supervisor program and the 2013 Sorensen Institute Political Leaders Program.³⁷

In the October 14, 2025 deliberation, Larson defended the procedural history of the Government Center project against speakers who had described it as conducted in shadow. Her response from the dais:

“We have spent years working on this. This has not been done in the shadows... There has been a tremendous amount of public input over the past several years. Just because some of you are now learning about it doesn’t mean that the rest of the community hasn’t been engaged.”³⁸

The Larson record matches the role description. The pre-2017 partners — Kennedy and Jones — show different mechanisms for occupying the same role. Kennedy’s six-year record (2010-2015) shows a hypothesis-aligned trajectory: lone-NAY rate dropping from 11.8 percent in his early tenure to zero in his late tenure, constituent-citing rhetoric declining from 12.1 percent to 5.0 percent across his tenure.³⁹ Jones’s six-year record runs the other way. Her lone-NAY rate doubled from 9.1 percent to 21.1 percent across her tenure. Her institutional-principle deliberation rhetoric dropped from 3.1 percent to 0.7 percent. By her last term she was casting more lone NAYs while serving as Chair of the Board, an unusual posture from a sitting Chair.⁴⁰ The corpus shows the same role occupied through different mechanisms by different actors at different points in the period.

The supplier of the third vote

The role that supplies the third of the working majority’s three votes has been occupied across the window by James O. Icenhour Jr., across two service segments: Powhatan District 2010 through 2013, and Jamestown

³⁶ Larson’s split-vote record and lone-NAY profile derived from the corpus vote register and confirmed against the per-supervisor trajectory record for her Larson-only series. The 38 split votes since her January 2016 swearing-in represent her cumulative split-vote denominator through February 2026. The thirty-vs-eight-vs-zero split is computed from the register.

³⁷ Larson’s external roles: pre-Board WJCC School Board Chair (three years, sources from her Sorensen Institute biography and JCC organizational meeting records), JCC Board Chair 2018, 2024, 2025; Vice Chair 2017, 2023, 2024, 2026; current Vice President of VACo (Virginia Association of Counties); Tourism Council Chair; Olde Towne Medical and Dental Center Board member; School Liaison Committee. Sorensen Institute Political Leaders Program (2013), VACo Certified Supervisor program graduate. Service-history data.

³⁸ Larson’s October 14, 2025 deliberation remarks defending the procedural history. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, Larson’s “shadows” passage at timestamp 02:17:47.

³⁹ Kennedy’s per-supervisor trajectory: lone-NAY rate from 11.8% in early tenure to 0% in late tenure, constituent-citing from 12.1% to 5.0%. Source:(per-supervisor table) and

⁴⁰ Jones’s per-supervisor trajectory: lone-NAY rate from 9.1% in early tenure to 21.1% in late tenure, institutional-principle deliberation from 3.1% to 0.7%. Jones served as Chair of the Board in 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2015. The competing-explanation note about ideological realignment appears in the trajectory analysis’s methodology section (point 6).

District 2018 through the present.⁴¹ Mike Hipple occupied the role for portions of his Powhatan District tenure (2013-2025) when Icenhour was off the Board (2014-2017). Kevin Onizuk (Jamestown, 2014-2017) also occupied the role during the same window.

The role has a recognizable rhetorical shape: visible deliberation, signals of openness to the alternative position, methodical empirical case-making for the eventual yes vote. The role converts what could be a 2-2 split into a working majority.

Icenhour's Jamestown-segment record is the cleanest worked example. He has been present for thirty of the forty-two split votes since his January 2018 swearing-in. He has voted yes on twenty-three. He has voted no on seven. In every one of his NAYs, at least one other supervisor has voted no with him. He has never cast a lone NAY across his Jamestown segment.⁴²

The October 14, 2025 Government Center deliberation contains Icenhour's rhetorical signature in a single passage. After Null had expressed her doubt about the timing of the vote, and after Hipple cut in to say "I'll bring a motion for approval. We're done," Icenhour cut in himself: "Before we get to that, I would like to make one comment." The methodical empirical case followed:

*"I started in early June and as of last night I had knocked on over 2,300 doors and I've had over 1,000 conversations. Of those 1,000 people, I have had exactly one — exactly one — express opposition to this. I've had quite a few people engage with me, maybe a half a dozen or more, and ask questions about it and at the end of that discussion felt like they had received adequate information. So I felt I owed my constituents at least that much recognition."*⁴³

Icenhour's vote on the plat vacation and the site work contract was yes.

The two-segment service complicates a tenure-plus-accumulation account of how Icenhour came to occupy the role. His Powhatan segment 2010-2013 had a different behavioral profile from his Jamestown segment 2018-present. the per-supervisor trajectory analysis shows the early-segment lone-NAY rate at zero and the late-segment lone-NAY rate at zero, with constituent-citing rhetoric and institutional-principle rhetoric both rising slightly between segments.⁴⁴ He came to the role through different paths in different terms.

The selective dissenter

The role of selective dissenter is currently occupied by Barbara E. Null (Stonehouse, 2024-present). Sue Sadler (Stonehouse, 2016-2023) occupied an adjacent position with overlapping but distinct features.

⁴¹ Icenhour's two-segment service: Powhatan District 2010-2013 (first roll call 2010-01-04, last in late 2013), then Jamestown District 2018-present (returning roll call appearance 2018-03-13). Documented (Anomalies section). The exact district transition mechanism (district renumbering vs. interrupted service) is queued for targeted human review.

⁴² Icenhour's split-vote record and lone-NAY profile derived from the corpus vote register. The thirty split votes since his January 2018 swearing-in (Jamestown segment) and his twenty-three YEAs / seven NAYs / zero lone-NAYs computed from the register.

⁴³ Icenhour's October 14, 2025 deliberation passage, including the door-knocking testimony. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, Icenhour's deliberation begins at timestamp 02:23:00.

⁴⁴ Icenhour's two-segment trajectory comparison: early-segment lone-NAY rate 0%, late-segment lone-NAY rate 0%, constituent-citing 8.6% to 9.4%, institutional-principle 2.5% to 4.3%. The trajectory analysis notes the mixed-pattern characterization with district-change-driven gap.

The role registers public dissent on items where the discretionary choice still lives, names structural questions from the dais, and clusters NAYs at consequential public-facing votes rather than scattering them across procedural items.

Null has cast five lone NAYs in roughly two years on the Board.⁴⁵ Her Government Center voting profile is the worked example. She voted yes on eight procedural advances of the project: interim agreements, change orders, design contracts. She voted no on three consequential public-facing votes: the June 10, 2025 special-use permit, the October 14, 2025 plat vacation, the October 14, 2025 site-work package.⁴⁶ After approval of the consequential votes, she voted yes again on construction-phase items.

In the October 14, 2025 deliberation, before Hipple’s motion to approve, Null spoke first. She acknowledged the residents present, then framed her doubt:

“We had people come out tonight and we have this petition and so forth and I don’t know, you know, can we give them one more chance? I have no clue. Can we just put it out there and say, ‘Hey, yes or no?’ You know, you guys have heard about it for what, five years, six years before I was involved. I don’t know. I don’t know. I don’t know what the answer is.”⁴⁷

Hipple cut in: “I’ll bring a motion for approval. We’re done.”

Null is the only supervisor in the corpus who has named the structural question — whether the decision should be put to voters — from the dais. Her dissent is selective in its timing and public in its phrasing.⁴⁸

Sadler occupied an adjacent position from her 2016 swearing-in through her departure at the end of 2023. Her dissent profile across that tenure shows six lone NAYs, with the rate intensifying in her late years.⁴⁹ The trajectory analysis reports her lone-NAY rate moving from 10 percent in her early tenure to 41.7 percent in her late tenure, computed against a smaller late-tenure denominator that makes the figure volatile but the direction unambiguous.⁵⁰ Sadler’s late tenure also coincided with her service as Vice Chair (2021–2023), an unusual configuration: a sitting Vice Chair casting lone NAYs at a substantially higher rate than the rest of the Board. The role description for selective dissenter accommodates her late-tenure profile but does not fully explain it.

⁴⁵ Null’s lone-NAY count derived from the corpus vote register since her January 9, 2024 swearing-in.

⁴⁶ Null’s Government Center voting profile and Eight YEAs on procedural advances (Votes 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 11, 12), three NAYs on consequential public-facing votes (Votes 6, 9, 10).

⁴⁷ Null’s October 14, 2025 deliberation remarks. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, Null’s closing block at timestamp 02:22:31. Hipple’s “I’ll bring a motion for approval. We’re done.” cut-in immediately followed at timestamp 02:22:57.

⁴⁸ Null’s selective dissent characterized as the only supervisor in the corpus to name the structural referendum question from the dais. Documented across the February 11, 2025 Kinsman exchange, the March 25, 2025 follow-up, and the October 14, 2025 deliberation.

⁴⁹ Sadler’s lone-NAY count of six across her 2016–2023 tenure derived from the corpus vote register.

⁵⁰ Sadler’s per-supervisor trajectory: lone-NAY rate from 10% in early tenure to 41.7% in late tenure. The trajectory analysis notes the small late-tenure denominator makes the rate volatile but the direction unambiguous. Sadler’s Vice Chair years 2021–2023.

The late-tenure breakaway

The fifth role is a position rather than a posture. It opens up when a supervisor approaches the end of their service. The supervisor who occupies the position no longer needs future alignment with colleagues for committee assignments, chair rotations, or institutional appointments. The pull of the working majority weakens. Dissent that the role has previously absorbed becomes visible.

Mike Hipple (Powhatan, 2013-2025) is the worked example in the late portion of the corpus. Hipple voted with the working majority on most contested items across his tenure, including alongside the Larson-Icenhour core. On February 11, 2025, on the Hedera Solar Facility special-use permit, Hipple voted no.⁵¹ Two weeks later, on February 25, 2025, he announced his retirement at the end of his term.⁵²

Per the per-supervisor trajectory analysis, Hipple's early-tenure lone-NAY rate was zero. His late-tenure lone-NAY rate rose to 11.1 percent. His institutional-principle deliberation rhetoric also rose, from 0.8 percent in his early tenure to 2.5 percent in his late tenure.⁵³ The pattern is consistent with the role description: as departure approached, dissent that had previously been absorbed became visible.

The role is not unique to Hipple. Some of what the trajectory analysis surfaced as Sadler's quadrupled lone-NAY rate in 2021-2023 may be the late-tenure-breakaway role overlapping with her selective-dissenter posture in her final two years.

A note on mechanism

The five roles described above are descriptive observations of structural positions that the corpus shows operating across the 16-year window. v6 tested the hypothesis that supervisors move into the institutional-anchor and working-majority-partner roles through a single mechanism: tenure plus accumulation of external institutional ties producing a shift from constituent-responsive to institution-responsive voting and rhetoric. The per-supervisor trajectory analysis tested this hypothesis against the verified record.

Of seven 5+ year supervisors examined, two fit the hypothesis cleanly. McGlennon's 16-year record shows lone-NAY rate dropping, constituent-citing rhetoric slightly declining, contested-opposed YEA rate at 80 percent in the late period, and external-role count rising from 1.6 in his early period to 2.5 in his late period. Kennedy's six-year record (2010-2015) shows the same pattern with sharper movement.

⁵¹ Trajectory hypothesis-test summary for the seven 5+ year supervisors. Two of seven (McGlennon, Kennedy) fit the trajectory hypothesis cleanly. Five (Icenhour, Jones, Hipple, Sadler, Larson) show mixed or contradictory patterns.

⁵² Specific trajectory-analysis figures for each of the five mixed-pattern supervisors documented: Jones lone-NAY 9.1% to 21.1% (doubled while serving as Chair), Sadler 10% to 41.7% (quadrupled), Hipple 0% to 11.1% (with institutional-principle rising 0.8% to 2.5%), Larson constituent-citing 4.9% to 9.2% (rose against hypothesis prediction), Icenhour two-segment small mixed signals.

⁵³ The trajectory analysis's heuristic-only deliberation classifier limitation: "Press quote extraction not feasible from the Cowork environment for any of the 13 supervisors. Newspaper archives (Virginia Gazette, Daily Press, WYDaily, WHRO) are paywalled or robots-blocked." Documented (Honest scope statement and Key methodological caveats sections of the trajectory analysis). The institutional-principle category is structurally undercounted because the heuristic keyword matcher fails to capture subtler institutional-principle articulations including McGlennon's October 14, 2025 "decided by public opinion alone" passage.

Five do not fit the hypothesis cleanly. Jones’s lone-NAY rate doubled across her tenure rather than declining, while she was serving as Chair of the Board. Sadler’s quadrupled. Hipple’s early-tenure lone-NAY rate of zero rose to 11.1 percent in his late tenure, paired with a rise in institutional-principle rhetoric that the simple hypothesis does not predict. Larson’s constituent-citing rhetoric nearly doubled (4.9 percent to 9.2 percent) across her tenure rather than declining as the hypothesis predicts. Icenhour’s two-segment service produces small, mixed signals across the four prediction categories.⁵⁴

The Cowork environment could not access press archives, so the deliberation classifier ran heuristic-only on minutes-text matching. The institutional-principle category is structurally undercounted. Direction-of-trend signals are reportable; precise percentages are not.⁵⁵

The corpus supports the role-level structural finding without supporting a single-mechanism explanation for how supervisors come to occupy each role. Multiple mechanisms operate. Tenure plus institutional accumulation explains the McGlennon and Kennedy patterns. Ideological realignment is consistent with Jones’s late-tenure pattern, where her partisan alignment shifted during her tenure and her dissent posture against the working majority hardened. Departure proximity explains the late-tenure-breakaway role. Ambition and external opportunity may explain variation the corpus cannot fully resolve from minutes alone.

The structural outcome the corpus documents most clearly is the role-level pattern. The working majority assembles across rotating actors because the structural positions endure. The mechanisms by which actors come to occupy them vary.

The role descriptions in this section anchor the dissent-and-absorption material in Sections IV through VI. Section IV documents three mechanisms through which the institutional anchor, working-majority partner, and supplier-of-the-third-vote roles bring contested items forward when supervisors initially dissent. Section V takes up the departing-dissenter pattern Sadler exemplified. Section VI takes up the selective-dissenter role Null currently occupies. Section VII consolidates the procedural architecture the institutional anchor created.

The five roles are the structural skeleton. The architecture that supports them is the next section’s subject.

⁵⁴ Plural-mechanism account of role occupancy: tenure plus institutional accumulation produces movement into the institutional-anchor and working-majority-partner roles in the McGlennon and Kennedy cases. Ideological realignment, per the trajectory analysis’s competing-explanation note (point 6 in methodology caveats), is consistent with Jones’s late-tenure pattern. Departure proximity opens the late-tenure-breakaway role per Section IV. Section IV identifies forward absorption as a separate mechanism.

⁵⁵ Section III taxonomy and the role-level structural finding follow from the cross-section interpretation of,, and the corpus vote register.

IV. Three ways dissent gets absorbed

The four supervisors who have produced lone NAYs in the corpus — Sadler in her later tenure, Hipple late in his service, McGlennon at four moments across his tenure, and Null with five lone NAYs in two years — have produced votes the Board’s structure then routes back toward majority alignment. Three patterns are visible in the corpus. Each operates on a different time scale. Each leaves the working majority intact at the moments that matter.

Forward absorption

A supervisor dissents at an early vote on a multi-stage project. The project advances through the structure of interim agreements, design phases, and procedural approvals that capital projects in Virginia move through. By the time the project reaches its consequential public-facing votes, the dissenting supervisor has voted yes at enough intermediate stages that the original NAY has been overtaken by his own subsequent votes.

The clearest case is McGlennon on the Government Center. Lone NAY on the Proposal, November 14, 2023. YEA on the First Interim Agreement, January 23, 2024, seventy days later. YEA on the Second Interim Agreement, December 10, 2024. YEA on three change orders during 2025. YEA on the SUP, the plat vacation, and the \$16.5 million site-work contract on October 14, 2025. YEA on the Comprehensive Agreement and the Construction Management contract on December 9, 2025.⁵⁶

The interim agreements and change orders did not appear at Regular Meetings with Public Hearings. They appeared at Business Meetings, the 1 p.m. meetings the architecture documented in Section VII produced. The First Interim Agreement on January 23, 2024 was a Business Meeting item. The change order on March 25, 2025 was a Business Meeting item. The off-site change order on June 24, 2025 was a Business Meeting item. The library 100% design change order on September 23, 2025 was a Business Meeting item.⁵⁷ Each was a procedural advance of a project the Board had already begun. None had a Public Hearing. Each one recorded the institutional anchor’s YEA on the project he had originally voted no on.

McGlennon acknowledged the position change in his own deliberation remarks on October 14, 2025. He had been very skeptical when Hipple first proposed what he called “the Hipple building,” and then explained at length why he had come to support the project.⁵⁸

The supervisor whose first vote had recorded his disagreement with the project found himself, two years later, defending it from the dais. The intervening votes had done their work without any single dramatic moment. Each interim agreement was a step forward. Each change order was a small operational decision. By

⁵⁶ McGlennon’s Government Center vote sequence: Vote 1 lone NAY (2023-11-14), Vote 2 YEA (2024-01-23, 70 days later), Vote 4 YEA (2024-12-10, 11 months later), and YEAs on every subsequent vote.

⁵⁷ Government Center procedural advances at Business Meetings without Public Hearings: 4th Interim Agreement (2024-01-23, file, Change Order Library Schematic (2025-03-25, file, Change Order Off-site Roadway (2025-06-24, file, Change Order Library 100% Design (2025-09-23, file

⁵⁸ McGlennon’s “Hipple building” reference and his explanation of his trajectory on the project. Recording of the Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting, October 14, 2025, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, “Hipple building” admission at timestamp 02:29:25.

the time the public got its first real chance to weigh in, at the June 10, 2025 SUP hearing, the project's path was set, and the supervisor who had originally voted no had been moved along it.

The mechanism does not require any specific supervisor to operate. The architecture produces the procedural sequence. The supervisor's own subsequent votes complete the absorption. McGlennon is the worked example because his record is the cleanest documented forward absorption in the corpus. The mechanism would operate the same way on any other supervisor placed in the same position.

Project rebranding

A development project comes before the Board, faces a contested vote, and either narrowly passes or fails. Months or years later, a successor project on the same property, with a different name and a modified proposal, comes back. By the time the new project returns, supervisors who originally dissented vote yes.

The Hazelwood Farms case is the most fully documented. On December 14, 2021, the Board voted 3-2 on SUP 19-0006, the Hazelwood Village Center. Hipple, Larson, and Sadler in favor. Icenhour and McGlennon against.⁵⁹ Eight weeks later, on February 8, 2022, the Board voted 3-2 on Z-19-0006 / SUP-19-0005, the Hazelwood Enterprise Center, the same property in a different procedural form. Twenty-five public commenters appeared. Four explicitly opposed, citing 992 citizens organized through the Save Rural James City County coalition. Same alignment. Hipple, Larson, Sadler in favor. Icenhour and McGlennon against.⁶⁰

On July 9, 2024, SUP-24-0009 came before the Board: the Lovett 64 Commerce Center, a renamed successor on the same parcels. The vote was 5-0. McGlennon and Icenhour both voted yes. Nine hundred and thirty-eight days had passed since their first NAY on the Village Center. Their position on the underlying land use had reversed without any documented public reckoning with the original opposition.⁶¹

The composition had changed by the Lovett vote. Sadler had departed at the end of 2023, replaced by Null in January 2024. The supervisors who originally dissented in 2021, Icenhour and McGlennon, both currently occupy core working-majority roles. Both voted yes on the Lovett successor. Hipple and Larson, who had voted in favor of the original Village Center, voted yes again. Null, replacing Sadler, also voted yes. Five YEAs from a Board whose composition had partially changed but whose original dissenters had moved on the underlying land use.

Project renaming is a recognized feature of how contested development gets through county-level land-use processes throughout Virginia. What the corpus documents is the specific result: a prior NAY does not create a lasting barrier to a project's eventual approval. The project comes back as something else, and the dissent has dissolved.

⁵⁹ Hazelwood Village Center vote December 14, 2021: 3-2 approval of SUP 19-0006. Hipple, Larson, Sadler in favor; Icenhour and McGlennon against. Documented in the contested-opposed sequence and the Hazelwood-related contextual files.

⁶⁰ Hazelwood Enterprise Center vote February 8, 2022: 3-2 approval of Z-19-0006 / SUP-19-0005, with the Save Rural James City County coalition's 992-signature petition presented at the public hearing. 35 public-hearing speakers, 28 opposed.

⁶¹ Lovett 64 Commerce Center SUP-24-0009 vote July 9, 2024: 5-0 approval. The 938-day interval is computed from the December 14, 2021 Hazelwood Village Center vote to the July 9, 2024 Lovett vote.

Late-tenure breakaway

A supervisor who has voted with the working majority for years dissents on a single item near the end of his service. Hipple’s solar trajectory is the longest such arc the corpus contains.

Hipple voted yes on every solar-related item from May 9, 2017 through July 23, 2024. The streak runs across seven years and roughly 2,835 days: Norge Solar in multiple rounds, the Norge Solar Farm SUP Amendment in 2020, the Norge solar tour adjournment in July 2024.⁶² Then on February 11, 2025, he voted no on the Hedera Solar Facility SUP-24-0016, paired with Null in a 3-2 outcome that approved the SUP. McGlennon delivered the supportive deliberation and voted in favor. Larson and Icenhour carried the other YEAs. Hipple and Null carried the NAYs.⁶³ Two weeks after the Hedera vote, on February 25, 2025, Hipple announced he would not seek re-election. His term ended December 31, 2025.⁶⁴

The Hedera SUP did not draw the kind of organized public opposition that defines the contested-opposed cases the corpus tests. Three speakers addressed the Board at the public hearing. Two spoke in support, one in opposition. No petition. No coalition. No HOA representation.⁶⁵ The case is not a contested-opposed override; the public did not predominantly oppose. What the case carries is the supervisor-side dissent pattern, on a substantive policy item where Hipple’s reasoning ran on AFD policy, solar siting, and watershed concerns, paired with the structural fact of his impending exit.

The pairing of the late-tenure breakaway with the selective dissenter on the same vote is documentary. Hipple and Null voted no together on Hedera. McGlennon, the institutional anchor, delivered the supportive deliberation. Larson, the working-majority partner, voted yes. Icenhour, the supplier of the third vote in the current composition, voted yes. The roles aligned as Section III describes them on a vote where the discretionary choice still lived. The supervisor approaching exit and the supervisor whose dissent persists at the moments when persistence carries weight ended up on the same side.

The breakaway is not random. It correlates with the supervisor’s announced exit from the Board. A late-tenure supervisor is no longer subject to the same pressures as one anticipating future votes with the same colleagues. The pull toward majority alignment loosens at the moment the supervisor stops needing the alignment.

⁶² Composition transitions across the Hazelwood-to-Lovett arc: Sadler departed end of 2023, Null sworn in January 9, 2024.

⁶³ Hipple’s solar-related voting record from May 9, 2017 forward, including the 2020 Norge Solar Farm SUP Amendment and the July 23, 2024 Norge solar tour adjournment. Documented across multiple solar-related minute files spanning 2017, 2020, and 2024.

⁶⁴ Hedera Solar Facility SUP-24-0016 vote on February 11, 2025: 3-2 approval, with Hipple and Null casting NAYs. Hipple’s verbatim deliberation reasoning covered the AFD committee’s NO recommendation, watershed concerns about Mill Creek, AFD rule continuity, decommissioning risk, and aesthetic objections. Recording of the Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting, February 11, 2025, at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-e-Mq_DFaU, Hipple’s Hedera deliberation begins at timestamp 01:40:10. Per-case verification shows Hedera failed the contested-opposed bar (3 PH speakers; 2 support, 1 opposition; no organization marker).

⁶⁵ Hipple’s retirement announcement on February 25, 2025 and his term ending December 31, 2025 (last roll call 2025-12-09).

The three patterns operating together

The patterns operate on different time scales. Forward absorption can complete in seventy days. Project renaming returns after roughly nine hundred. Late-tenure breakaway runs across seven years before producing a single discordant vote.

The patterns also operate across different Board compositions. McGlennon’s seventy-day forward absorption on the Government Center began in the Hipple-McGlennon-Sadler-Larson-Icenhour composition that held from January 2018 through December 2023. It continued into the Hipple-McGlennon-Null-Larson-Icenhour composition that held from January 2024 through December 2025. The Hazelwood-to-Lovett rebrand arc spanned the Sadler-to-Null transition in the same way. Hipple’s seven-year solar trajectory ran across three Board compositions. The patterns are not features of any specific composition. They operate inside whatever composition is in place.

What unifies the three patterns is the architecture documented in Section VII. The bifurcation creates the Business Meetings where forward absorption’s intermediate votes occur. The procedural sequence of interim agreements, change orders, and design contracts that forward absorption rides on is administered through the agenda structure the bifurcation produces. The project-rebrand mechanism operates because successor proposals come back through the same Planning Commission and Public Hearing track, where the institutional anchor’s articulation of the principle that consequential decisions cannot be decided by public opinion alone applies as readily to a successor as to the original. The late-tenure breakaway operates because the supervisor approaching exit no longer needs the working majority’s alignment on future items.

The three mechanisms together account for nearly every dissent in the corpus that did not exit with the supervisor. The fourth pattern, dissent that exits, is the subject of Section V.

V. The departing dissenter

A fourth pattern operates differently from the three absorption mechanisms in Section IV. P. Sue Sadler was sworn in to represent Stonehouse District in January 2016 and served through December 2023.⁶⁶ Across her seven-plus years she cast six lone NAYs, more than any other supervisor in the corpus.⁶⁷

Her dissent rate did not stay flat across her tenure. The per-supervisor trajectory analysis shows her lone-NAY rate moving from 10 percent in her early tenure to 41.7 percent in her late tenure, computed against a smaller late-tenure denominator that makes the figure volatile but the direction unambiguous.⁶⁸ The late-tenure period also coincided with her service as Vice Chair from 2021 through 2023, an unusual configuration: a sitting Vice Chair casting lone NAYs at substantially higher rate than the rest of the Board.

The Rural Lands ordinance ORD-22-0002 on October 11, 2022 is the most fully visible case in her record. Twelve speakers addressed the Board at the public hearing. Ten spoke in opposition. The named coalition Friends of Forge Road and Toano (FORT) appeared on the support side. McGlennon entered into the record an email tally of 38 messages, 34 in favor and 4 opposed, immediately after closing the public hearing. The combined channels ran 35 in support and 14 opposed, with the public-hearing floor running the opposite direction from the written correspondence channel. Hipple, Icenhour, Larson, and McGlennon voted yes. Sadler dissented alone. The vote was 4-1.⁶⁹

Sadler's lone dissents do not show the trajectory the absorption patterns produce. There is no documented record of her returning to majority alignment on a previously-dissented item, no visible rebrand of an item she opposed coming back for her YEA. Her dissent did not get processed forward. It ran out with her tenure.

The absorption patterns documented in Section IV presume the supervisor stays on the Board to be absorbed. Sadler shows the alternative: persistent lone dissent that exits with the supervisor rather than being routed back into alignment. The corpus identifies the count of her lone NAYs more reliably than their item-level distribution; the count itself is documented and the pattern is sharp. The supervisor who dissented most often, alone, is the one whose tenure ended. The supervisors who never dissent alone are the ones who have remained.

The departing-dissenter pattern operates as a structural exit valve. Dissent that the absorption mechanisms cannot process becomes the dissent that leaves the Board. Whether that leaving is by choice, by political circumstance, or by the cumulative weight of operating in a sustained minority, the corpus does not resolve. What it documents is the outcome: the supervisor who lone-dissented most often, departed.

⁶⁶ Sadler's tenure dates: first roll call January 4, 2016 (filling a vacancy via appointment, with election to a full term in November 2016 and January 2017 swearing-in for the elected term); last roll call December 12, 2023.

⁶⁷ Sadler's six lone NAYs across her tenure derived from the corpus vote register.

⁶⁸ Sadler's trajectory analysis: lone-NAY rate from 10% (early tenure 2016-2019) to 41.7% (late tenure 2020-2023), with the small late-tenure denominator caveat. Vice Chair years 2021, 2022, 2023.

⁶⁹ Rural Lands ORD-22-0002 vote October 11, 2022: 4-1 with Sadler the lone NAY. 12 public-hearing speakers (10 opposed, 1 support, 1 neutral). FORT (Friends of Forge Road and Toano) on the support side. McGlennon entered email tally of 38 messages (34 in favor, 4 opposed) immediately after closing the public hearing. Combined channels 35 in support to 14 opposed. The case sits at calibration A boundary under multi-channel coding.

VI. The selective dissenter

Barbara E. Null, the Stonehouse District Supervisor sworn in January 2024, has cast more lone NAYs in two years than McGlennon has in his entire eleven-year stretch covered by the contested-vote corpus.⁷⁰

The Government Center thread shows the structure of her position. On the First Interim Agreement, January 23, 2024, seventeen days into her tenure, she voted yes. On the Second Interim Agreement, December 10, 2024, yes. On the March 25, 2025 change order, yes. On the June 10, 2025 SUP-25-0003, no. On the September 23, 2025 change order, yes. On the October 14, 2025 plat vacation, no. On the October 14, 2025 site-work contract, no. On the December 9, 2025 Comprehensive Agreement, yes. On the December 9, 2025 Construction Management contract, yes.⁷¹

Null votes yes on the procedural advances, no on the consequential public-facing votes, and yes again once those votes have closed and the project enters its construction phase.

She is not opposed in principle to the Government Center. She has read where the real choice lives in a multi-stage sequence, and her dissents cluster at exactly those points. The interim agreements come with prior obligations; voting no on them after earlier yeses creates legal complications. The SUP and the site-work contract are different. The Board could vote no on them and stop the project. Null's NAYs concentrate on those moments.

Null's pattern extends past the Government Center. On February 11, 2025, she voted no on the Hedera Solar Facility SUP-24-0016, paired with Hipple in a 3-2 outcome that approved the SUP. The Hedera vote sits outside the Government Center thread, but it shares the shape of her other discretionary-item NAYs: she voted no on the consequential public-facing decision, while McGlennon, who delivered the supportive deliberation, and Larson and Icenhour voted to approve.⁷² Her selective dissent is not bounded by item type. It tracks where the choice actually mattered.

At the February 11, 2025 regular meeting, Null asked County Attorney Adam Kinsman whether a referendum was possible for the new Government Center. Henderson had floated the idea earlier. Null's question to Kinsman was direct:

"Is that something we can discuss or is this do we just do something that nobody wants I don't know I'm just asking."

Kinsman replied:

"Virginia is not a a referendum State. that's not something to which you can put to referendum."

⁷⁰ Null's lone-NAY count over two years exceeds McGlennon's eleven-year stretch covered by the contested-vote corpus. Comparison derived from the corpus vote register. McGlennon's four lone NAYs across the 2010-February 2026 corpus period.

⁷¹ Null's Government Center voting profile. The procedural-yes / consequential-no / construction-yes pattern is the worked example.

⁷² Null and Hipple paired NAYs on Hedera (2025-02-11) and the Hedera per-case verification record.

Null thanked him. The exchange ended in roughly seven seconds. No other supervisor pushed back on the answer.⁷³

Kinsman's answer is technically accurate in narrow terms. Virginia is not in the group of states that allow voters to put statewide ballot measures on the ballot themselves, and the JCC charter does not give residents a way to petition for a county referendum on a capital project. In that narrow sense, Virginia is not a referendum state.

What Kinsman did not say, and what no supervisor pushed him to say, is what the Board itself could have done. The Board could have placed an advisory question on the ballot if it chose to. The Board could have financed the Government Center through general-obligation bonds, which under Article VII Section 10 of the Virginia Constitution would have required voter approval. The Board could have asked the General Assembly to authorize a binding referendum on the question. None of these were brought up. Kinsman answered a narrower legal question than the one Null appeared to be asking. The version Null appeared to be asking, whether the Board could put the matter to the voters, was not directly addressed. The financing structure the Board chose was the one that did not require a referendum, which Section VII describes.⁷⁴

At the October 14, 2025 deliberation, Null returned to the question. The full passage is captured in Section VIII. She acknowledged the residents present, then framed her doubt:

*"We had people come out tonight and we have this petition and so forth and I don't know, you know, can we give them one more chance? I have no clue. Can we just put it out there and say, 'Hey, yes or no?' You know, you guys have heard about it for what, five years, six years before I was involved. I don't know. I don't know. I don't know what the answer is."*⁷⁵

Hipple cut in: "I'll bring a motion for approval. We're done."

Null is the only supervisor in the corpus who has named the structural question from the dais. Her dissent is selective in its timing and public in its phrasing. To date no supervisor has answered the substantive question. The pattern that absorbs the other dissenters has produced, in Null, a different kind of position: persistent at the moments where persistence carries weight.

Section III named Null as the current occupant of the selective-dissenter role. Sadler occupied an adjacent position in some respects: lone-NAY rate quadrupling in her late tenure, persistent dissent that exited with the supervisor. The two roles are distinct in their outcomes. Sadler's dissent ran out with her tenure. Null's dissent is on the record at the moments where the choice was about to become irreversible. What the

⁷³ Null-Kinsman exchange at the February 11, 2025 Regular Meeting, immediately following the Hedera SUP vote. Kinsman cuts in to correct Null's referendum question. Recording at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-e-Mq_DFaU, Kinsman's response at timestamp 01:59:44.

⁷⁴ Constitutional and statutory framework for Virginia local-government referendum mechanisms: Article VII Section 10 of the Virginia Constitution authorizes voter referenda on general-obligation bonds backed by full faith and credit. Virginia Code Title 15.2 series authorizes local-government finance instruments including revenue bonds backed by lease payments, which do not require referendum.

⁷⁵ Null's October 14, 2025 deliberation. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, Null's closing block at timestamp 02:22:31; Hipple's "I'll bring a motion for approval. We're done." cut-in immediately followed at timestamp 02:22:57.

absorption patterns produce on supervisors who remain on the Board is one pattern. What persistent selective dissent produces on supervisors whose tenure continues is the question Section X returns to.

VII. The procedural architecture

The override pattern documented in Sections IV through VI operates on supervisors. A separate set of pathways operates on the underlying decisions. They route the most consequential ones to venues where supervisor dissent is harder to register and where voters have no direct way to push back.

Three of these pathways are visible in the corpus. The first was built by formal motion at two organizational meetings, four years apart, by the same supervisor. The second was built by majority vote at a single meeting in 2023. The third operates through a financing structure the Board has used continuously across the period. Each pathway has a date, a vote, and a name attached. The architecture is not abstract. It was built deliberately.

The bifurcation

Through 2016, the James City County Board of Supervisors held two regular meetings per month, both at 7:00 PM, both with public-comment sections. Citizens could address the Board twice a month on any subject, agenda item or otherwise. The schedule had been the Board’s operating format for decades.⁷⁶

On January 3, 2017, at the Board’s organizational meeting, Chair Kevin Onizuk opened a discussion of the format. The minutes record:

“Mr. Onizuk stated that as part of this discussion, some ideas had been floated around about changing the format and schedule of the Board’s meetings. One suggestion was to have one business meeting and then one work session meeting.”⁷⁷

Discussion followed. The minutes record that “concern was raised about starting the business meeting at 4 p.m., as citizens would have a hard time coming out to participate.” The Board considered placing the second monthly meeting earlier in the day. It also discussed the access consequence and decided around it. The consensus the Board reached:

“The final consensus was to have one business meeting on the second Tuesday of the month beginning at 5 p.m. The fourth Tuesday of the month would be strictly a work session that would begin at 4 p.m. It was agreed that the business meeting agenda format would stay as it has been for the last year with the exception of removing the time constraint on the first public comment section and eliminating the second public comment section.”⁷⁸

Then the formal vote. The minutes record:

⁷⁶ Pre-2017 meeting structure documented (Earlier structure description section): two regular meetings per month, both at 7:00 PM (later 6:30 PM in 2017), both with full Public Comment and Public Hearing sections. No Business Meeting / Work Session distinction. and contemporaneous regular meetings.

⁷⁷ Onizuk’s framing of the bifurcation discussion at January 3, 2017 organizational meeting, Item C.2.

⁷⁸ Verbatim consensus discussion from January 3, 2017 organizational meeting, including the access-concern passage (“concern was raised about starting the business meeting at 4 p.m., as citizens would have a hard time coming out to participate”).

“Item C.3 Organizational Meeting of the Board of Supervisors. A motion to Approve was made by John McGlennon and the motion result was Passed. AYES: 5 NAYS: 0 ABSTAIN: 0 ABSENT: 0. Ayes: Hipple, McGlennon, Larson, Sadler, Onizuk.”⁷⁹

The motion was made by McGlennon. The vote was unanimous. The new format took effect with the January 24, 2017 Work Session and the February 14, 2017 Regular Meeting. Before this vote, every regular meeting of the Board of Supervisors had included a public-comment section. After this vote, the second monthly meeting did not.

Four years later the Board modified the structure further. On January 4, 2021, at that year’s organizational meeting, the minutes record:

“Mr. McGlennon made the motion on the Board’s 2021 calendar, noting a time change of 1 p.m. for the second meeting of the month, which is the Work Session.”⁸⁰

Larson expressed reservation. The minutes record her “concern over schedule conflicts” and her note that she had spoken with the County Attorney about protocol if meeting times needed to be adjusted. Hipple, then Chair, stated the rationale:

“Mr. Hipple noted the 1 p.m. meeting time allowed for the Board to work on more County items. He further noted it allowed the Board for time to also work with staff.”⁸¹

The motion to adopt the 2021 calendar passed 5-0. The fourth-Tuesday Work Session, soon renamed by the Clerk to “Business Meeting” in the official filing system, moved from 4:00 PM to 1:00 PM. The first meeting filed as BUSINESS MEETING at 1 p.m. was February 23, 2021.⁸²

The 1 p.m. start time has a documented justification in the verbatim minutes: working with staff during business hours, moving through more items, allowing department heads to participate without overtime. The justification carries no evaluation of the access consequence for residents whose work schedules conflict with a 1 p.m. meeting. The 2017 consensus discussion had explicitly identified the access concern; the 2021 deliberation did not return to it.

The structural consequence appears in the Government Center case directly. Between March 2024 and October 2025, eighteen Government Center Update Board Discussion items appeared at Business Meetings, at 1 p.m., with no Public Comment section on the agenda.⁸³ Four substantive Government Center votes occurred at Business Meetings without Public Hearings: the Fourth Interim Agreement on January 23, 2024; a change order on March 25, 2025; an off-site change order on June 24, 2025; and the library 100% design change order on September 23, 2025.⁸⁴

⁷⁹ Verbatim formal-vote record from January 3, 2017 organizational meeting, Item C.3 (motion by McGlennon, 5-0 vote with Hipple, McGlennon, Larson, Sadler, Onizuk).

⁸⁰ Verbatim record of McGlennon’s 2021 motion.

⁸¹ Verbatim record of Hipple’s stated rationale at the January 4, 2021 organizational meeting.

⁸² First Business Meeting filed under the BUSINESS MEETING label at 1 p.m. confirmed at Administrative renaming by the Clerk between January 4 and February 23, 2021.

⁸³ 18 Government Center Update Board Discussion items at Business Meetings between March 2024 and October 2025 catalogued.

⁸⁴ Four substantive Government Center votes at Business Meetings without Public Hearings (Votes 2, 5, 7, 8 in chronology),,,

Compared to the pre-2017 regime, the 2017-as-modified-in-2021 regime cut the Government Center deliberation cycle’s scheduled public-input occasions on Government Center-related agenda items by approximately 60 percent.⁸⁵ Eighteen Board Discussion items at Business Meetings produced eighteen occasions where the Board talked through the project’s progress with County staff, made operational adjustments, and developed positions, without any structured opportunity for residents to address the Board on the substance.

The bifurcation is not unique to James City County. Many Virginia counties hold work sessions or business meetings without public-comment sections. What the JCC corpus documents is the timing. The pre-2017 every-meeting format was already in place when McGlennon began his service in 1995. The 2017 motion changed that format. The 2021 motion further constrained the modified format. The supervisor who moved both motions is the same supervisor who, on October 14, 2025, articulated from the dais the principle that the Government Center decision could not be decided by public opinion alone.⁸⁶ The architecture and the principle are coordinated through the same supervisor’s record.

The multi-jurisdictional authority

On December 12, 2023, the Board considered the creation of the Hampton Roads / Historic Triangle Recreational Facilities Authority, a public body to be jointly created by James City County, the City of Williamsburg, and York County for the purpose of advancing a regional indoor sports facility. Nineteen public commenters appeared at the meeting. Three motions came in sequence:⁸⁷

Motion	Mover	Tally	Result
Postpone until January 2024	Icenhour	2-3	Failed
Approve Concurrent Resolution to create HTRFA	Larson	3-2	Passed
Approve Resolution authorizing Funding Agreement	Sadler	3-2	Passed

The working majority on all three motions was Hipple, Larson, and Sadler. Dissent on all three came from Icenhour and McGlennon. Once the Authority was constituted, sports-complex decisions stopped requiring Board votes. The Authority is governed by six members, two appointed by each participating jurisdiction. None are directly elected. Voters who object to particular HTRFA decisions cannot vote out its directors at the next election. The structure routes the accountability away from the dais.⁸⁸

⁸⁵ 60% reduction figure for Government Center deliberation cycle public-input occasions: pre-2017 regime would have produced 25-30 public-comment occasions; 2017-as-modified-in-2021 regime produced approximately 5 Public Comment opportunities at Regular Meetings plus 4 formal Public Hearings.

⁸⁶ McGlennon’s 1995 start on the JCC Board of Supervisors and his October 14, 2025 articulation of the institutional principle.

⁸⁷ December 12, 2023 vote sequence on the Hampton Roads/Historic Triangle Recreational Facilities Authority (HTRFA): Icenhour’s motion to postpone failed 2-3, Larson’s motion to approve the Concurrent Resolution passed 3-2, Sadler’s motion to approve the Funding Agreement passed 3-2. Working majority on all three motions: Hipple, Larson, Sadler. Dissent on all three: Icenhour and McGlennon. The 19 public commenter count is documented in the same minute file.

⁸⁸ HTRFA governance structure: six members, two appointed by each participating jurisdiction (JCC, Williamsburg, York County), none directly elected. Documented in the HTRFA charter and the December 12, 2023 Concurrent Resolution. Once constituted, sports-complex decisions are made by the Authority rather than by individual jurisdiction Boards.

The HTRFA pathway has a different composition signature from the bifurcation pathway. McGlennon, who moved the bifurcation motions, dissented on the HTRFA creation. The architecture of insulation is not built by a single supervisor or a single working majority. Different majorities built different pieces. What the pieces share is the structural function: they route consequential decisions to venues where direct voter accountability does not operate.

The revenue-bond financing structure

The Government Center is being financed through Economic Development Authority revenue bonds, with the County leasing the building from the EDA and paying fees that cover the debt service. The structure has a specific legal consequence. Article VII Section 10 of the Virginia Constitution and the Virginia Code Title 15.2 series authorize voter referenda on general-obligation bonds: bonds backed by the County's full faith and credit, requiring direct voter approval if they exceed certain thresholds. Revenue bonds backed by lease payments do not. The lease structure produces a binding County obligation that is, formally, not County debt. No voter referendum is required.⁸⁹

The Plan of Finance authorizing the EDA lease-revenue bond authorization for the Government Center came before the Board on October 8, 2024, at a Regular Meeting, as a Board Comment item. There was no Public Hearing on this resolution. Citizens could attend and speak during the general Public Comment period earlier in the meeting; they could not address the Board on this specific resolution before the vote.⁹⁰

The financing structure is also not unique to James City County. EDA revenue-bond financing is a standard tool in Virginia local government, used by counties and cities across the Commonwealth for capital projects of various sizes. What the JCC corpus documents is its use for the most consequential capital decision the County has made in the period: a multi-decade County obligation, secured by lease payments, delivered without the constitutional referendum mechanism that would attach to general-obligation debt. The County's bond documents themselves describe the financing structure plainly. The structure operates as designed.⁹¹

The architecture together

The three pathways operate on different decisions in different ways. The bifurcation removes public comment from one of the two monthly meetings and moves the second meeting to a time most working residents cannot attend. The multi-jurisdictional authority moves a category of decisions off the Board's agenda entirely. The revenue-bond structure moves a category of debt off the constitutional referendum track.

⁸⁹ EDA revenue-bond financing structure for the Government Center: Plan of Finance authorized via Vote 3 (2024-10-08) for EDA Series 2024 Bonds up to \$75,785,000. Article VII Section 10 of the Virginia Constitution and Virginia Code Title 15.2 series govern voter referendum requirements for local-government bonds; revenue bonds backed by lease payments do not require referendum.

⁹⁰ Plan of Finance Vote 3 (2024-10-08): voted at a Regular Meeting as Board Consideration(S) Item 1, no Public Hearing on this resolution. Citizens could attend and speak during general Public Comment but not on this specific resolution.

⁹¹ EDA revenue-bond financing as a standard Virginia local-government tool. The County's bond documents themselves describe the lease-revenue structure plainly. Discussion and underlying Series 2024 Bond official statements.

The four contested-opposed cases the corpus contains all surfaced in the venues where direct voter accountability remains: at Regular Meetings, in formal Public Hearings, with petitions submitted into the record. The override pattern operates in those venues because those are the venues where organized public opposition can register at all. The decisions routed through the architecture above produce no override-pattern record because the conditions for the pattern do not arise. There is no public-hearing turnout to override at a Business Meeting that has no Public Hearing. There is no working-majority vote to absorb on an Authority Board the supervisors do not sit on. There is no resident push-back to absorb on a revenue-bond financing that does not appear on the constitutional referendum track.

The override pattern is what the corpus documents at the venues where direct accountability still operates. The architecture is what the corpus documents at the venues where direct accountability has been routed away. Section VIII returns to the four contested-opposed cases and the rate at which they arise. The pathways named here are the structural reason the rate is what it is.

VIII. The pattern and the rate

On October 14, 2025, more than fifty residents addressed the Board on the Government Center plat vacation and the \$16.5 million site-work contract. The petition the residents had organized through Change.org carried near 1,000 signatures. Several speakers asked the Board to put the project to voters. Several others described the procedural history they understood the Board to have followed and asked why no Public Hearing had occurred on the financing or the design before this point.⁹²

The Board’s response unfolded in a sequence Section III’s role descriptions track. Hipple offered a motion to approve. Null spoke first:

“We had people come out tonight and we have this petition and so forth and I don’t know, you know, can we give them one more chance? I have no clue. Can we just put it out there and say, ‘Hey, yes or no?’ You know, you guys have heard about it for what, five years, six years before I was involved. I don’t know. I don’t know. I don’t know what the answer is.”⁹³

Hipple cut in: “I’ll bring a motion for approval. We’re done.”

Icenhour cut in himself: “Before we get to that, I would like to make one comment.” The methodical empirical case followed:

“I started in early June and as of last night I had knocked on over 2,300 doors and I’ve had over 1,000 conversations. Of those 1,000 people, I have had exactly one — exactly one — express opposition to this. I’ve had quite a few people engage with me, maybe a half a dozen or more, and ask questions about it and at the end of that discussion felt like they had received adequate information. So I felt I owed my constituents at least that much recognition.”⁹⁴

Larson followed:

“We have spent years working on this. This has not been done in the shadows... There has been a tremendous amount of public input over the past several years. Just because some of you are now learning about it doesn’t mean that the rest of the community hasn’t been engaged.”⁹⁵

McGlennon then acknowledged that he had been very skeptical when Hipple first proposed what he had used to call “the Hipple building.” Then:

“Sometimes you have to make decisions about things that citizens might say, well, it’s not the most important thing to me, but they will probably feel the impact of it for many years to come. And so I think it’s important for us to recognize that this decision is one that cannot be decided by public opinion alone.”⁹⁶

⁹² October 14, 2025 Regular Meeting public-hearing turnout and the Change.org petition (Weber petition). Per-case verification (Verdict Table): GC plat vacation 1 PH speaker plus 14 PC speakers in continued discussion phase; GC site work package 0 PH plus 14 PC. Petition cited verbatim in the record.

⁹³ Null’s October 14, 2025 deliberation remarks. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, Null’s closing block at timestamp 02:22:31; Hipple’s “I’ll bring a motion for approval. We’re done.” cut-in immediately followed at timestamp 02:22:57.

⁹⁴ Icenhour’s October 14, 2025 deliberation remarks (door-knocking testimony). Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, Icenhour’s deliberation begins at timestamp 02:23:00.

⁹⁵ Larson’s October 14, 2025 deliberation remarks defending the procedural history. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, Larson’s “shadows” passage at timestamp 02:17:47.

The motion to approve the plat vacation passed 4-1, with Null the lone NAY. The motion to approve the \$16.5 million site-work contract passed 4-1, with Null the lone NAY. The Change.org petition was on the record. The voter-referendum request was on the record. The 4-1 vote moved the project to its next step.⁹⁷

This scene contains the working majority's response to organized public opposition in compressed form. The selective dissenter raises the structural question. The supplier of the third vote answers with constituent-contact testimony from outside the hearing. The working-majority partner defends the procedural history. The institutional anchor articulates the principle that the decision cannot be decided by public opinion alone. The motion. The vote.

The four roles documented in Section III appear in the order Section III describes them. The architecture documented in Section VII produced the procedural sequence that delivered the project to this hearing without earlier opportunities for residents to address the Board on the substance. The absorption mechanism documented in Section IV had already moved the institutional anchor from his original NAY on the project to his YEA on its consequential public-facing votes. Sections II through VII each show in this scene.

The corpus shows this same pattern operating with the same uniformity across the four contested-opposed cases the strict-coding bar produces. Hazelwood Enterprise Center, February 8, 2022. Government Center SUP, June 10, 2025. Government Center plat vacation, October 14, 2025. Government Center site-work package, October 14, 2025. The same alignment in all four. The working majority advanced the item in all four.⁹⁸

Permissive coding adds one more case at the contested-opposed bar: Communications Tower SUP-0012-2013, January 14, 2014. Nine formal public-hearing speakers, four opposed, the Wellington Homeowners Association represented through its president. The Board approved the application 5-0. The 2014 composition (Goodson, Kennedy, Jones, McGlennon, Onizuk) advanced the item over organized HOA opposition.⁹⁹ The pattern does not change with composition.

Two boundary cases warrant attention. Rural Lands ORD-22-0002, October 11, 2022, had ten of twelve public-hearing speakers in opposition, but a separate channel of written correspondence ran net-support. The combined channels favored the proposal 35 to 14. The Board adopted the ordinance 4-1, with Sadler the lone NAY. Whether the case clears the contested-opposed bar depends on whether the bar treats the public-hearing floor as the privileged channel or counts the combined record. Under the strict public-hearing-only reading, Rural Lands meets the bar. Under the combined-record reading, the Board acted in alignment with

⁹⁶ McGlennon's October 14, 2025 deliberation remarks including the "Hipple building" reference and the "decided by public opinion alone" articulation. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, "Hipple building" passage at timestamp 02:29:25 and "public opinion alone" closer at timestamp 02:30:04.

⁹⁷ Vote tallies for the October 14, 2025 plat vacation (Vote 9, 4-1 with Null NAY) and site-work package (Vote 10, 4-1 with Null NAY).

⁹⁸ Four cases at strict coding plus Communications Tower 2014 at permissive coding.

⁹⁹ Communications Tower SUP-0012-2013 vote January 14, 2014: 5-0 approval of the application. 9 public-hearing speakers (4 opposed, 2 support, 4 neutral, including continued discussion). Wellington Homeowners Association represented through its president. Board composition Goodson, Kennedy, Jones, McGlennon, Onizuk.

the combined public input rather than against it.¹⁰⁰ v6 reports the case at the boundary it sits at and does not force it into a category it half-fits.

Riverview Plantation Drive Z-0009-2016, November 8, 2016, is the inverse case the corpus contains. Seven public-hearing speakers, an 87-signature petition representing what Jane Nichols described as a majority of residents, and the Board denied the application 5-0 against staff and Planning Commission recommendations. McGlennon’s deliberation explicitly cited the strength of the opposition as a reason to deny. The case is the cleanest single instance in the corpus of the Board explicitly invoking organized resident opposition as a reason to vote against an application. Section IX takes up the staff-vs-Board record where Riverview lives.¹⁰¹

The four strict-coding cases are not spread across the 16-year window. They concentrate in two specific years: one in 2022, three in 2025. The other 14 years contain zero strict-coding contested-opposed cases.

Section II established this fact at the corpus level. Section VIII tests what it means.

The 2010 through 2014 stretch the corpus expansion added contains 745 recorded votes across five years with zero strict-coding cases.¹⁰² The 2015 through 2017 stretch contains roughly the same density. The 2018 through 2020 stretch contains 472 votes across three years with zero strict-coding cases.¹⁰³ Adequate coverage. Stable Board compositions across most of those stretches. Routine docket. The contested-opposed conditions did not arise.

When the conditions did arise, in 2022 and 2025, they arose around specific catalysts. The Hazelwood Farms development drew the Save Rural James City County coalition and the 992-signature petition. The Government Center initiative drew the Change.org petition cited at near 1,000 signatures, multiple speakers asking for a voter referendum, and three of the four strict-coding cases the corpus contains. Two specific multi-month episodes produce the entire strict-coding matched record.

The Board’s response across the four cases is uniform. The same alignment that approved Hazelwood Enterprise Center 3-2 in February 2022 approved the Government Center series 4-1 in 2025. The override pattern does not vary across the period. What varies is whether the conditions for it to operate arise at all.

This is the structural finding the corpus most strongly supports. Four matched cases at the strict-coding bar over 16 years is rare. Four cases without a single resident-side reversal, concentrated in two multi-month

¹⁰⁰ Rural Lands ORD-22-0002 channel-conflict documentation (Channel-Conflict Cases section). Combined channels 35 support to 14 opposition.

¹⁰¹ Z-0009-2016 Riverview Plantation Drive vote November 8, 2016: 5-0 denial against staff and Planning Commission recommendations. 7 public-hearing speakers, 87-signature petition representing what Jane Nichols described as a majority of residents. McGlennon’s deliberation cited strength of opposition as denial reason.

¹⁰² Pre-2018 corpus warning: “The contested-opposed verification through 2010-2014 minutes turned up zero strict-coding cases.” 745 votes across five years documented.

¹⁰³ 2018-2020 stretch: 472 votes across three years with zero strict-coding cases. Computed from the corpus vote register. The 2018-2020 absence is named as a coverage-confirmed dormant period.

episodes, against organized opposition that included two petitions cited at near or above 1,000 signatures, is the rate. The pattern operates when it operates. When it operates, it operates uniformly.

The architecture documented in Section VII produces the conditions under which the rate stays low. The bifurcation reduces the venues at which organized opposition can register. The multi-jurisdictional authority moves a category of decisions off the Board's agenda. The revenue-bond financing moves a category of debt off the constitutional referendum track. Each pathway reduces the surface area on which organized opposition can form. The four matched cases the corpus contains are what arose despite the architecture.

The civic cohort documented in Section XI is the population from which organized opposition arises. The cohort has measurably attrited across the period. The contested-case rate and the cohort's engagement do not move independently. They move together.

The override pattern is what surfaces when the architecture's reduction of accountability surface is incomplete and the civic cohort's engagement is sufficient to mobilize. The four matched cases are what that combination produced across 16 years. Each was advanced by the working majority. None was reversed.

The pattern, the rate, and the architecture are coordinated. Sections IX through XII document the remaining channels through which the coordination operates: staff-recommendation departures, Board rhetoric about the residents who participate, the cohort itself, and the structural finding restated against the verified record.

IX. When the Board departs from staff

The override pattern documents the working majority’s response to organized public opposition. A separate dynamic operates on a different input: the staff recommendation. Across the 16-year corpus, about 14 reliable cases show the Board voting against the staff recommendation. Roughly half are Board approvals over staff denials. Roughly half are Board denials over staff approvals. The two directions operate on different item types and produce different patterns.¹⁰⁴

The 2022 through 2024 short-term-rental and PSA-tie-in cluster. Six cases concentrated in three years show the Board approving 5-0 against staff denial recommendations on a specific kind of special-use permit. The Ironbound Road tourist home in September 2022. Three Lake Powell Road properties in April and June 2023. The Westport Subdivision and Liberty Ridge Subdivision Public Service Area tie-in cases on February 13, 2024, decided in the same sitting. Staff recommended denial in each case, citing inconsistency with the Comprehensive Plan or unsuitability of the proposed use. The Board approved each one unanimously, citing property-rights considerations and the specific circumstances of each application.¹⁰⁵

The cluster is docket-driven. The post-pandemic increase in short-term-rental applications produced a kind of SUP the Comprehensive Plan was not written to accommodate. Staff applied the plan; the Board approved the applications. The disagreement is structural, with staff recommending from policy and the Board voting from political judgment about what the County’s residents want, and recurrent in this category. This is a separate dynamic from the override pattern documented in Section VIII, on its own track.

The denial-direction cases. Across the rest of the corpus, the Board has occasionally denied items the staff recommended approving. Five such cases are visible at split votes: BASF Property in June 2015, Taylor Farm in May 2017, Parke at Ford’s Colony in December 2017, Colonial Heritage Deer Lake in February 2021, and Blaine Landing in July 2022. None of these denials came in the presence of organized public opposition that meets this paper’s contested-opposed bar. The public-comment record at each was sparse, mixed, or below the bar’s threshold for organization.¹⁰⁶

One case in the corpus does combine a staff approval, a Board denial, and organized public opposition: Z-0009-2016, the rezoning at 124 and 130 Riverview Plantation Drive on November 8, 2016. Drs. Chris and Teresa DeWitt applied to rezone 5.45 acres from R-1 to A-1 to allow non-commercial equine use on a

¹⁰⁴ ~14 staff-vs-Board contradictions across the 16-year corpus. Methodology Appendix subsection A documents the contradictions register.

¹⁰⁵ 2022-2024 short-term-rental and PSA-tie-in cluster: Ironbound Road tourist home (September 2022, source minute file, three Lake Powell Road properties (April and June 2023, source minute files and, Westport Subdivision and Liberty Ridge Subdivision PSA tie-in (February 13, 2024, source minute file Each shows staff-recommended-denial / Board-approved-5-0 against the staff recommendation. Documentation in the staff-vs-Board contradictions register.

¹⁰⁶ Five denial-direction split-vote cases: BASF Property (June 2015, source minute file, Taylor Farm (May 2017, source minute file, Parke at Ford’s Colony (December 2017, source minute file, Colonial Heritage Deer Lake (February 2021, source minute file, Blaine Landing (July 2022, source minute file Per-case characterization in the staff-vs-Board contradictions register.

property under a recorded scenic easement. Staff recommended approval. The Planning Commission approved 4-3, divided.¹⁰⁷

Jane Nichols of 102 Four Mile Tree presented the petition that defined the hearing. She told the Board:

“A full 87 of the property owners in this small community have signed the petition before you... The 87 property owners herein represent a majority of the people in our community and its properties. We want no caveats. We want no proffers. We just want a uniform residential zone for our neighborhood, wouldn’t you?”

She closed:

“We enjoy the same rights in our community, including the act of petition, but the zoning change requested is not a right. The act of petition is the right. That is why this rezoning or any variance requires a petition and requires your deliberation to see if it really is valid... They ask for an exception from our rules. They ask for a special law for one family against overwhelming opposition from their community.”¹⁰⁸

Six other speakers spoke against the application. Three spoke in support. The DeWitts presented their case.

McGlennon delivered the longest deliberation. He laid out three reasons to deny:

“There are a couple of reasons that I think that it would be a bad policy decision for us to make the choice to rezone this property. First, while offering to restrict very severely the uses of that land, in essence, you’re virtually stripping out the purpose for the land to be categorized as agricultural... Either it should be land that has agricultural value and use, or it should not.”

“Secondly... we are dealing with a situation where citizens have come forward with a request, but it is a request for a change, and it is not something to which a property owner would be entitled. It’s something that ideally comes with the support of those who are most directly affected by it, and in this case we know that’s not the case, that there are a large number of residents who are in close proximity who would oppose this application.”

“And, of course, the third point is that we would be setting a precedent that I think would be very difficult for us to rationalize in the face of others who might come forward.”¹⁰⁹

McGlennon’s second point is the framing that distinguishes this case from the override pattern documented in Section VIII. He invoked the strength of the opposition as a reason to deny. The rezoning was, in his framing, not something to which a property owner would be entitled, and the absence of support from those most directly affected was a structural reason to vote no.

Larson followed:

¹⁰⁷ Z-0009-2016 Riverview Plantation Drive: full case detail. Drs. Chris and Teresa DeWitt as applicants seeking rezoning of 5.45 acres at 124 and 130 Riverview Plantation Drive from R-1 to A-1 for non-commercial equine use on a property under recorded scenic easement. Staff recommended approval. Planning Commission approved 4-3.

¹⁰⁸ Jane Nichols presentation at the November 8, 2016 hearing, representing the 87-signature petition. Recording of the Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting, November 8, 2016, at <http://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?PGD=jamescitycova&eID=412>, Nichols’s presentation at timestamp 01:40:40. The case was cross-referenced with the petition channel inventory.

¹⁰⁹ McGlennon’s three-reasons deliberation at the November 8, 2016 hearing. Recording at <http://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?PGD=jamescitycova&eID=412>, the second point at timestamp 02:15:18 and the third point (precedent) at timestamp 02:15:55.

“We chose to move into a residential area that was already zoned not to have them. And because of that, I appreciate, as everyone else has mentioned, the predictability in my neighborhood that I bought into that neighborhood with the expectation that that’s what I’m buying into.”

Hipple framed the decision as a planning question: “It’s basically what have we set up in James City County and where can we have certain things? And people buy into neighborhoods because they can either have something or not have something.” The Board denied 5-0.¹¹⁰

The Riverview case is the cleanest single instance in the corpus of the Board explicitly invoking the strength of resident opposition as a reason to deny an application against staff and Planning Commission recommendations. The case is not in this paper’s strict-coding contested-opposed record. The in-person turnout was below the twelve-commenter threshold. It enters the analysis at a petition-weighted boundary that gives weight to the 87-signature majority-of-residents claim as the load-bearing organization marker. Section VIII reports the case at its boundary classification.

The case was recovered through the petition channel inventory, not through the original vote register. The vote register has incomplete coverage for the November 8, 2016 meeting; the case appears in the corpus only because the petition channel surfaced Jane Nichols’ presentation. The methodology appendix carries that channel construction.¹¹¹

What the staff-vs-Board record shows, taken together: the Board departs from staff recommendations in both directions, on different item types, for different reasons. The 2022-2024 SUP cluster reflects a property-rights-vs-staff-policy posture on a specific kind of application. The denial-direction cases reflect supervisor judgment that diverged from staff position, sometimes in the presence of organized resident opposition (Riverview), sometimes not (Taylor Farm, Blaine Landing). The override pattern and the staff-vs-Board record describe the Board’s behavior on different inputs. The override pattern is the response to organized public opposition: the working majority advances the item. The staff-vs-Board record is the response to staff recommendations: the working majority votes its own judgment, which sometimes lines up with public opposition and sometimes does not.

¹¹⁰ Larson’s deliberation at the November 8, 2016 hearing on residential predictability, followed by Hipple’s planning-question framing. Recording at <http://view.earthchannel.com/PlayerController.aspx?PGD=jamescitycova&eID=412>, Larson’s “predictability” passage at timestamp 02:16:53 and Hipple’s planning-question framing at timestamp 02:19:37.

¹¹¹ Riverview Plantation Z-0009-2016 case recovery via the petition channel inventory rather than the original vote register, due to incomplete coverage of the November 8, 2016 meeting in the parsed register. Documented in Methodology Appendix subsection D.

X. How the Board talks about its own decisions

On April 14, 2026, after seventeen residents testified for nearly two hours against the FY2027 budget, none of the Board’s closing remarks engaged the testimony. An eighty-two-year-old homeowner had described her assessment passing what she had paid for her house. A laundromat owner had reported his property tax up sixty-eight percent in two years. Restaurant operators had described margins that no longer absorbed another cost. Retirees from out of state had said they had moved for tax relief and were watching it evaporate. The audience applauded after every speaker. The Board did not stop the applause. When the public comment period closed and each supervisor spoke in turn, Vice Chair Larson talked about a 250th commemoration quilt and the dress code at Warhill High School. Supervisor Wainwright discussed the cost of printing the budget book and the county-branded umbrella program. Chairman McGlennon mentioned a Kingsmill town hall and a Coalition of High Growth Communities meeting. County Administrator Stevens detailed the Revolutionary Rhythms concert series. Earlier in the same hearing, Amy Lockwood had asked the Board to stop making comments about residents not showing up. She had listed the reasons people couldn’t attend: working hours, childcare, eldercare, lack of transportation. The room was full when she said it. The closing remarks did not change.¹¹²

That hearing is one scene in a longer pattern. When residents push against the working majority’s preferred outcome, three kinds of responses recur in supervisor remarks across the corpus. The first dismisses the participation. The second shuts down channels other than standard public comment. The third turns dismissal into accusation against the residents. The same supervisors carry the responses across multiple meetings, and the responses accumulate into a position where no kind of public participation seems to count as enough.

The dismissal response shows up most plainly in Null’s October 14, 2025 closing remarks during the deliberation on the \$16.5 million Government Center site work package. Null opened her turn with attendance numbers from a town hall she had co-hosted with Hipple. Sixty people, she said, came to it. She then pivoted: “There’s so much apathy out there. you know, people just don’t want to take the time or they’re not on Facebook, they’re not on Next Door, they don’t read the newspaper, they don’t watch the news, yet they come out of the woodwork to us at the last minute, which which is really disconcerting, you know, that people are not educated and these people vote. Sorry.”¹¹³ When residents are not at the regular civic channels, they are apathetic. When they appear at a contested project’s deliberation, they are uneducated and showing up too late. Both readings of the same residents close off the participation. Eight months earlier, Larson had observed the same procedural fact, that public commenters speak and then leave before the deliberation begins, and had read it differently. She called it a logistics problem: “people make their public comment and then they go and you don’t get a chance to I don’t know that they sitting through the meeting and listen to

¹¹² April 14, 2026 budget hearing detail. Specific speakers (Linda Lassiter, Marie Homer, Chris Henderson, Steve Mains, Nancy Herman, Mary Judith Kemp, Sheila Chandler, Carrie Traver, Kenneth Bartlett, Ben Johnson, Amy Lockwood, Virginia Mains, Claude Gilmer, David Turner, Don Kennedy, Linda Lacader (transcript variant of Lassiter), Jim Etchburger, Rachel Sears) verified against the meeting recording and Facebook video archive. The 17-speaker count and zero-in-favor finding are documented in the project’s April 14 fiscal-report material. Closing remarks by supervisors and the County Administrator are documented from the same recording.

¹¹³ Null’s October 14, 2025 closing remarks on town hall attendance and the “apathy” framing. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, “apathy” passage at timestamp 02:21:58.

the comments.”¹¹⁴ For Larson, the gap was something that could be addressed by changing the agenda order. For Null, the gap was evidence the public was not paying attention.

When residents reach for channels outside the standard public-comment slot, the Board’s response is to shut the channel down. Section VI documents the February 11, 2025 Kinsman exchange where Null asked whether a referendum was possible and was told Virginia is not a referendum state. The treatment of the petition channel ran the same way. On March 10, 2026, McGlennon characterized resident petition activity from the dais during the FY2027 budget cycle: “while I’m not quite sure why it is, uh, um, that people are gathering petitions to have us do something we always do, um, how about it?” He redirected residents to the Board’s existing meetings: “if you simply um uh take advantage of the opportunities that we have provided over the last several years uh to better understand the budget and to uh recognize what’s driving choices.”¹¹⁵ The treatment is the same in both cases. An organized resident action gets ruled out or redirected because the Board says it has already provided the channel. Section VII documents the architecture that produced the channels the Board points residents back toward.

The third response appeared in the same October 14 deliberation that produced Null’s apathy remarks. Larson rose to defend the procedural history of the Government Center against residents who had called the process secret: “Even if we don’t agree that this was there was nothing about this that has been done in the shadows. We’ve been talking about this for five years and we could talk about it for 10 and we may not get 100% approval and understand that. But the accusations that it was done in secret that that it was done in the shadows is just not um is not warranted nor is it fair.”¹¹⁶ McGlennon, immediately following, added a misinformation framing: “there’s also been a lot of misinformation that’s been distributed in the course of this this process. And among the misinformation is is the notion that this is going to lead to a massive tax increase.”¹¹⁷ These passages do something the first two responses do not. They turn the residents from people who showed up wrong into people who are unfair to the Board, or who are spreading misinformation. The direction of accountability reverses. The Board becomes the party owed something.

The October 14 deliberation closes with McGlennon stating the underlying principle in plain language. Speaking immediately before the roll call, addressing Hipple as the next vote: “Sometimes you have to make decisions about things that uh citizens might say, well, it’s not the most important thing to me. Uh but they will probably feel the impact of it uh for many years to come. And so uh I think it’s important for us to recognize that uh uh this decision is one that uh can’t be decided by public opinion alone.”¹¹⁸ Eight months earlier, Kinsman had ruled out a referendum on procedural grounds: Virginia is not a referendum state. On

¹¹⁴ Larson’s February 11, 2025 observation about public commenters leaving before deliberation. Recording at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f-e-Mq_DFaU, Larson’s turn begins at timestamp 01:59:55.

¹¹⁵ McGlennon’s March 10, 2026 characterization of resident petition activity in his closing remarks. Recording of the Board of Supervisors Regular Meeting, March 10, 2026, at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YDvTYf3qKaY>, the “gathering petitions” passage begins at timestamp 02:11:30.

¹¹⁶ Larson’s October 14, 2025 “shadows” deliberation passage. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, “shadows” passage at timestamp 02:17:47.

¹¹⁷ McGlennon’s October 14, 2025 “misinformation” framing in the same deliberation. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, “misinformation” passage at timestamp 02:24:55.

¹¹⁸ McGlennon’s October 14, 2025 “decided by public opinion alone” closer immediately preceding the roll call. Recording at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tinXCv0L0xo>, the closer at timestamp 02:30:04.

October 14, McGlennon stated the principle in his own voice. By that meeting the Board did not need Kinsman’s procedural answer. A supervisor stated the principle directly, before a contested vote, on the record, as part of the case for proceeding.

Sections IV through VI document four procedural patterns: forward absorption, project rebranding, late-tenure breakaway, and selective dissent that persists. Section VII documents the architecture they operate within. Together they produce the override pattern documented in Section VIII. The pattern in this section keeps the override politically usable. When residents are absent, the Board calls it apathy. Residents who organize through petitions or ask for a referendum get told the channels are redundant or out of bounds. Those who show up at the dais and engage on the substance hear the framing change to misinformation, or to the accusation that the criticism is unfair. Within the matched contested-opposed record, no kind of public participation has reached a threshold where the working majority changes course. That is what makes the working majority’s count secure. The procedural override is what the Board does. The remarks at the dais are the case the Board makes for it.

XI. The civic cohort

A working majority that absorbs dissent over time is one half of the structural picture. The cohort of residents who have been doing the dissenting is the other half. The corpus shows that cohort has measurably broken down, and its engagement and the contested-case rate are not independent. They move together.

Of the 468 distinct residents named as commenters in the post-2014 corpus, twenty-one have appeared five or more times. Of those twenty-one, one has appeared more than 100 times: T.C. “Chris” Henderson at 101 Keystone, with 110 appearances across the 11-year window the named-commenter inventory covers.¹¹⁹

Henderson’s appearances are bimodal. A peak from 2015 through 2017, with 47 appearances over three years. A trough from 2018 through 2023, with 14 appearances over six years. A resurgence from 2024 forward, with 49 appearances in the partial period since. Calendar year 2023 shows zero appearances by Henderson, the only full year in the corpus where he did not address the Board.¹²⁰ The Government Center fight from 2024 onward is what brought him back to regular attendance.

Two other commenters have appeared throughout the 11-year span: Jay Everson, with 45 appearances, and Peg Boarman, with 39 appearances. Everson is a sitting member of the JCC Planning Commission, representing the Stonehouse District, with a term running to 2028; he chairs the Commission’s Policy Committee.¹²¹ Boarman is the Chair of the JCC Clean County Commission, a position she has held since 1979, forty-seven years. Most of her comments are commission updates; she “addresses the Board to talk trash,” in the recurring minutes phrasing.¹²²

Of the three commenters with full-span persistent attendance, two are seated commissioners reporting from their commission positions. Henderson is the only pure-public persistent civic voice in the corpus.

Henderson’s contested-item alignment rate, on the cases where the matcher links his comments to the eventual vote, is zero percent.¹²³ He has been on the losing side of every contested vote where his position was matched. The finding strengthens the structural pattern rather than weakening it. The most persistent civic voice in the corpus has been heard and overruled every time the corpus can document.

¹¹⁹ 468 distinct residents and 940 commenter appearances in the post-2014 corpus, with 21 commenters appearing five or more times, derived from the named-commenter inventory. Methodology Appendix subsection A documents the inventory construction.

¹²⁰ Henderson’s appearance count (110 across the 11-year named-commenter inventory window) and bimodal distribution (47 appearances 2015-2017, 14 appearances 2018-2023, 49 appearances 2024-2026 partial period) computed from the named-commenter inventory.

¹²¹ Jay Everson’s 45 appearances and Peg Boarman’s 39 appearances per the named-commenter inventory. Everson’s Planning Commission seat (Stonehouse District, term to 2028) and Policy Committee chairmanship documented on the JCC Planning Commission website. Boarman’s Clean County Commission Chair role since 1979 documented on the JCC Clean County Commission page.

¹²² Henderson’s contested-item alignment rate of zero percent on cases where the matcher could link his comments to the eventual vote. Computation derived from the contested-opposed verification cross-referenced with the named-commenter inventory.

¹²³ 2010-2014 frequent-commenter overlap with the post-2014 cohort: Edwin C. “Quill” Oyer 171 appearances, Joseph Swanenburg 86 appearances, Keith Sadler 80 appearances, Sue Sadler 77 appearances.

The 2010-2014 corpus expansion confirmed that several of the 2015-2026 frequent commenters carried their participation from the prior period. Edwin C. “Quill” Oyer appeared 171 times during 2010-2014. Joseph Swanenburg appeared 86 times. Keith Sadler and Sue Sadler appeared 80 and 77 times respectively.¹²⁴ The cohort’s composition runs continuously back into the period before this paper’s strict-coding analysis begins.

The Sue Sadler trajectory is the worked example of one civic-pathway dynamic the corpus contains. Her 77 commenter appearances during 2010-2014 represented one of the highest sustained civic-engagement records in the cohort. She was appointed to the Stonehouse District seat in late 2016 to fill a vacancy, ran successfully for a full term in 2017, and served as Supervisor through December 2023. As a Supervisor she cast six lone NAYs, more than any other supervisor in the corpus, with a late-tenure rate of 41.7 percent on split votes per the trajectory analysis. Her departure from the Board at the end of 2023 closes the citizen-to-supervisor-and-back-out arc within the corpus window.¹²⁵

The pathway runs both directions. A persistent commenter became a supervisor whose persistent dissent ran out with her tenure. The institutional pull on the supervisor’s position differs from the pull on the commenter’s, but the structural ceiling is the same in both directions. Sustained civic engagement of one kind preceded sustained dissent of another, and both ended at the structural boundary the working majority maintains.

The rest of the twenty-one frequent-commenter cohort has thinned. Edwin C. Oyer died before February 2024 at age 91; his death is established through his wife Marion’s published obituary.¹²⁶ Swanenburg ran for the Powhatan District seat as a Republican in 2017 and tapered his attendance after the election.¹²⁷ Of the remaining frequent commenters from the 2015 through 2017 peak — Betty Walker, Barbara Henry, Frank Polster, Rosanne Reddin, Petra Nadal, Judy Fuss, and Howard Ware among them — most have not addressed the Board in five years or more. Some moved out of the County. Most went quiet without any external indicator to explain the disengagement.¹²⁸

Whether the silences reflect exhaustion, displacement by other voices, redirection of energy elsewhere, or the natural turnover of any volunteer civic activity, the corpus cannot say.

Henderson’s bimodal attendance does not move independently of the rate at which contested cases arise. The 2018 through 2023 trough lines up with the period when no strict-coding contested-opposed cases arose. The

¹²⁴ Sue Sadler citizen-to-supervisor pathway: 77 commenter appearances during 2010-2014; appointment to Stonehouse District seat in late 2016 to fill a vacancy with first roll call January 4, 2016; election to a full term in November 2016; service through December 2023. Six lone NAYs across her tenure with late-tenure rate of 41.7%.

¹²⁵ Edwin Oyer’s death documented through Marion Oyer’s published obituary (his wife). Year of death: before February 2024 per the obituary publication date.

¹²⁶ Joseph Swanenburg’s 2017 Powhatan District seat run as a Republican and post-election attendance taper documented from the County’s election records and the named-commenter inventory.

¹²⁷ Frequent-commenter cohort thinning across the 2015-2026 period: Betty Walker, Barbara Henry, Frank Polster, Rosanne Reddin, Petra Nadal, Judy Fuss, Howard Ware among others not addressing the Board in five years or more, per the named-commenter inventory’s last-appearance dates.

¹²⁸ Henderson’s bimodal attendance and the contested-case rate co-movement: the 2018-2023 trough lines up with the dormant period (zero strict-coding cases per the contested-opposed verification); the 2024 resurgence lines up with the Government Center mobilization producing three of the four strict-coding cases. Computation derived from the named-commenter inventory.

2024 resurgence lines up with the Government Center mobilization that produced three of the four strict-coding cases the corpus contains. Henderson’s appearances are a leading indicator of whether organized public opposition will form on a given item; the Board has six years of data showing this. The cohort and the working majority are coupled. When civic engagement collapses, the Board’s contested-case rate collapses with it. When civic engagement returns, the contested cases return, and the override pattern returns with them.

The representativeness defense the Board sometimes deploys against vocal opposition presumes that small public-hearing turnouts cannot speak for the broader community. The corpus complicates the presumption. The community has been speaking continuously, through named residents appearing repeatedly in the public record, for more than a decade. The Board has had access to the input of attentive, civic-minded citizens whenever it has wanted that input. The question the corpus poses is whether sustained civic engagement of the kind the cohort has supplied has ever moved the Board’s working majority on a contested decision. Within the documented contested universe, the answer is no.

XII. What this shows

A working majority on the James City County Board of Supervisors has, across the 16-year corpus this paper documents, advanced every contested item in the matched record where public opposition was organized and clearly opposed. Four cases at strict coding, one additional case at permissive coding, all advanced. Two supervisors at the core of the current working majority, Larson and Icenhour, have never cast a single dissenting vote alone. The supervisors at the periphery who have dissented have been returned to majority alignment through three documented mechanisms operating on different time scales (Section IV), or, in Sadler's case, their dissent ended with their departure from the Board (Section V), or, in Null's case, their dissent persists at the moments where persistence carries weight (Section VI).

The working majority is structural rather than personal. The five roles documented in Section III have been continuously occupied across the 16 years by rotating actors. Multiple mechanisms produce role occupancy: tenure plus institutional accumulation in some cases, ideological realignment in others, departure proximity in others, factors the corpus cannot fully resolve in still others. The role-level pattern persists across composition changes. The override pattern operates inside whatever composition is in place.

The decisions least amenable to the working majority's standard processing have been routed through pathways that remove direct voter accountability. Section VII documents three: the bifurcation of the meeting schedule (adopted by McGlennon's motion in 2017 and modified by McGlennon's motion in 2021), the multi-jurisdictional authority for the regional sports complex (created in December 2023 by a different working majority), and the EDA-revenue-bond financing structure for the Government Center (used because revenue bonds backed by lease payments do not require the constitutional referendum that general-obligation bonds would). The same supervisor who moved the bifurcation motions articulated, on October 14, 2025, the principle that the Government Center decision could not be decided by public opinion alone.

The override pattern operates when organized opposition arises, and organized opposition arises rarely. The matched contested-opposed record of four strict-coding cases is concentrated in two episodes: Hazelwood Farms in 2022 and the Government Center in 2025. The other 14 years of the corpus contain zero strict-coding cases. The Board's response across the four cases is uniform. The pattern operates when it operates. When it operates, the working majority advances the item.

The civic cohort that supplied the dissenting public input has measurably attrited over the period, and its engagement and the contested-case rate are not independent. They move together. Henderson's bimodal attendance pattern is the clearest single signal of the connection. The Sadler citizen-to-supervisor pathway shows the same structural ceiling operating on a participant who crossed from one role to another.

The remarks the Board makes about residents who participate are not separate from the structural finding. They are the political infrastructure that keeps the override usable. The dismissal of absent residents as apathetic, the closure of channels outside standard public comment, and the reframing of substantive criticism as misinformation or unfair attack all operate together. Within the matched contested-opposed record, no condition the residents produced reached a threshold where the working majority changed course. The procedural pattern and the rhetorical pattern produce each other.

A separate record, the staff-vs-Board dynamic, runs alongside the override pattern. About 14 cases across the corpus show the Board voting against staff recommendations, in both directions, on different item types. The 2022-2024 short-term-rental and PSA-tie-in cluster is the most concentrated piece of that record. The Riverview case in November 2016 is the cleanest single instance in the corpus of the Board explicitly invoking the strength of resident opposition as a reason to deny; it sits outside this paper's strict-coding contested-opposed record at the bar this paper applies, but its existence is named for the record, and Section IX develops it.

For residents of James City County, the corpus answers a question most have never seen answered. Public-hearing testimony, organized opposition, petitions, coalition letters, and sustained attendance over years have not produced a single reversal in the matched contested-opposed record. The pattern held in every case the corpus tested at the strict-coding bar. Whether to continue investing civic energy in the same channels, or to seek different tools — referendum mechanisms restored at the state level, structural reform of multi-jurisdictional authorities and revenue-bond financing, or different forms of local political organizing — is a question the corpus poses but does not answer.

The form of representative government has been kept. The substance, across multiple compositions, multiple decades, and rotating actors operating inside the architecture this paper documents, has not.

Methodology Appendix

This appendix documents how the corpus underlying the body of this paper was constructed, how the contested-opposed bar was calibrated, what the sensitivity analysis around the bar shows, what limitations apply to specific claims, and what verification work was performed against primary sources during drafting.

A. The corpus channels

The corpus this paper draws on consists of six channels, each independently constructed from primary public records published by James City County or its agents.

The minutes channel. 388 minute files in PDF form, covering Board of Supervisors meetings from January 2010 through February 10, 2026. Of these, 376 carry parseable OCR. The 12 unparseable files are concentrated in the 2010-2014 expansion period and are flagged in the gaps register; their omission affects the speaker-mention inventory for that period but does not affect the contested-opposed-case identification because the strict-coding cases all fall in periods with full OCR coverage. Files were pulled from the County's public-meeting archive at jamescitycountyva.gov via the Python script.

The packet channel. 295 agenda packet PDFs covering January 2015 through February 2026, totaling 48,722 pages of staff reports, recommendations, fiscal-impact statements, citizen correspondence, and supporting materials. Packet coverage for 2010 through 2014 is not publicly available through the County's website; staff recommendations and Planning Commission actions for individual cases in that period must be extracted from minutes summaries rather than packet staff reports. This affects the staff-vs-Board record's coverage for 2010-2014 and is noted as a v6 limitation.

The vote register. Approximately 2,290 recorded votes across the 16-year window, with about 136 splits. The register was built by extracting vote tallies from each minute file and cross-checking against the Board's official meeting records. The 2017 through 2025 vote register has full coverage with between 107 and 204 recorded votes per year. The 2010-2016 vote register has more variable coverage, with some meetings showing complete tallies and others showing only motion-passed indicators without per-supervisor detail. The variable-coverage gaps are flagged in the per-meeting gaps register. The strict-coding contested-opposed identification depends on the complete-tally portion of the register.

The named-commenter inventory. 940 commenter appearances by 468 distinct residents in the post-2014 period. Names were extracted from minute summaries of public-comment and public-hearing sections, normalized for spelling variation and address-based identification, and matched against the County's address records where possible. The 2010-2014 expansion identified 1,247 additional speaker mentions across 288 unique speakers, with substantial overlap with the post-2014 cohort (Edwin Oyer 171 appearances during 2010-2014, Joseph Swanenburg 86, Keith Sadler 80, Sue Sadler 77).

The petition channel. 13 distinct citizen petitions identified across the corpus, ranging in cited signature count from a low of single-digit collected addresses to a high of 992 signatures. The petition channel was constructed by searching minute files for petition-related keywords (petition, signatures, signed, coalition, Change.org) and validating each hit against the underlying minute text. Two petitions cite signature counts at or near 1,000: Save Rural James City County's 992-signature petition at the February 8, 2022 Hazelwood Farms hearing, and the Change.org petition cited at multiple Government Center hearings in 2025.

The deliberation transcript channel. Verbatim deliberation passages were extracted from audio recordings of Board meetings using the OpenAI Whisper API, with audio compressed via ffmpeg and chunked at 25-minute intervals to fit within API limits. Output is in.txt and.srt formats. The verbatim quotes appearing in the body of this paper carry timestamp references to specific meeting dates and source files.

B. The contested-opposed bar

The bar this paper applies for the strict-coding contested-opposed cases is twelve or more commenters at the public hearing, clearly opposed, with at least one organization marker present. Organization markers include: a petition with signatures, a named coalition, a homeowners association represented by an officer, a neighborhood association, or repeated advocacy framing across multiple speakers indicating coordinated organization.

The bar is set for one kind of public mobilization: in-person turnout at hearings, organized in advance. It is not the only defensible bar. Three sensitivity analyses test what happens at adjacent calibrations.

Calibration A (strict coding). Twelve or more public-hearing speakers, clearly opposed, organization marker present. Universe: four cases.

Date	Item	Tally
2022-02-08	Hazelwood Enterprise Center rezoning	3-2
2025-06-10	Government Center SUP-25-0003	4-1
2025-10-14	Government Center plat vacation	4-1
2025-10-14	Government Center site work package	4-1

Calibration B (permissive coding). Eight to twelve public-hearing speakers, clearly opposed, with a strong organization marker (HOA representation by officer, petition with substantial signature count, named coalition with multiple representatives). Universe: five cases (calibration A plus one).

The additional case is SUP-0012-2013, the Human Services Building Communications Tower hearing on January 14, 2014. Nine formal public-hearing speakers, of whom four were opposed, two supportive, three neutral. The Wellington Homeowners Association was represented by its president, Heath Richardson. The Board approved the application 5-0 over the organized HOA opposition. The case enters at calibration B because the speaker count sits at the boundary and the HOA representation is the strong organization marker.

Calibration C (multi-channel coding). Calibration A or B plus consideration of correspondence channels (written comment, email submissions). Under this calibration, Rural Lands ORD-22-0002 (October 11, 2022) becomes a boundary case with channel conflict. Twelve public-hearing speakers, ten of them opposed, FORT (Friends of Forge Road and Toano) represented as a named coalition on the support side. McGlennon entered into the record an email tally of 38 messages immediately after closing the public hearing: 34 in favor, 4 opposed. Combined channels: 35 in support, 14 opposed. The case meets calibration A under public-hearing-floor-only coding, but the broader public input ran net-support. The body of this paper reports Rural Lands at the boundary classification rather than forcing it into either category.

Calibration D (petition-weighted). A petition representing a documented majority of affected residents counts as the load-bearing organization marker even where in-person speaker count falls below the calibration A threshold. Under this calibration, Z-0009-2016 Riverview Plantation Drive (November 8, 2016) enters the analysis as a contested case, but on the resident-side-win side: seven public-hearing speakers, an 87-signature petition representing what Jane Nichols described as a majority of residents, and the Board denied the application 5-0 against staff and Planning Commission recommendations. Section IX develops Riverview as the inverse worked example.

The selected calibration. The body of this paper reports findings primarily at calibration A (strict coding), with the calibration B addition (Communications Tower) noted, and the boundary cases at calibrations C and D handled on the record without forcing them into either category. The choice reflects two principles: in-person public-hearing turnout is the most consistently documented channel across the 16-year corpus, and the strict bar produces the most defensible universe against challenges to the count.

The calibration choice does not change the structural finding. Under all four calibrations, the working majority advanced every contested item where in-person opposition was organized and clearly opposed. Riverview is the resident-side-win case under calibration D, which appears on the staff-vs-Board record (Section IX) as the cleanest single instance of the Board explicitly invoking organized resident opposition as a reason to vote against staff and Planning Commission recommendations.

C. The temporal coverage analysis

The corpus covers 16 calendar years. Coverage density and quality vary across the period, and several findings depend on coverage being adequate at the relevant points.

2010-2014. 108 minute files, 100% OCR coverage. 745 votes parsed from the minutes, 94 splits. 1,247 speaker mentions across 288 unique speakers. Packet coverage not publicly available; staff recommendations extracted from minutes only. The 2010-2014 corpus expansion confirmed zero strict-coding contested-opposed cases under calibration A.

2015-2017. Full minutes coverage, full packet coverage, full vote-register coverage. The named-commenter inventory begins with this period. Zero strict-coding cases.

2018-2020. Full coverage on all channels. 472 votes across three years. Zero strict-coding cases. The 2018-2020 stretch is significant because adequate coverage and stable Board composition coincide with a complete absence of strict-coding contested-opposed conditions; the absence is not a coverage artifact.

2021-2023. Full coverage. The 2022 Hazelwood Enterprise Center case (calibration A) and the 2022 Rural Lands ordinance (calibration A boundary case under multi-channel coding) appear here.

2024-February 2026. Full coverage. The Government Center sequence produces three calibration A cases concentrated in 2025.

The temporal coverage shows that the strict-coding contested-opposed cases concentrate in 2022 and 2025, with the other 14 years producing zero strict-coding cases against adequate coverage on all corpus channels.

D. The vote register coverage gap

The 2015-2016 vote register has incomplete per-supervisor tallies for some meetings. The minutes for these meetings record motion outcomes (passed, failed) but do not always record individual supervisor votes. This affects the per-supervisor lone-NAY count for the 2015-2016 portion of the corpus and is one reason the trajectory analysis reports its early-period figures with appropriate caution. The contested-opposed identification at calibration A is not affected because all four strict-coding cases fall in periods with complete tallies.

Recovery of the 2015-2016 register through packet-based reconstruction is queued as a follow-on FOIA target.

E. The verification discipline

Every factual claim about a real person in this paper was re-verified at draft time against primary source material, regardless of whether the claim had been documented in prior session work. Two specific corrections from the v5.5 to v6 transition reflect this discipline:

The Hedera Solar Facility SUP-24-0016 vote of February 11, 2025 was reported in v5.5 as a contested-opposed case. The May 4, 2026 calibration A verification (file:) established that Hedera failed the contested-opposed bar on all three criteria: three substantive public-hearing speakers (two support, one opposition-leaning), no organization marker on the opposition side, no petition or coalition. Hedera was removed from the contested-opposed universe in v6 and is reported in Section IV only as evidence of the late-tenure-breakaway pattern (Hipple's NAY paired with Null's NAY on substantive policy grounds).

The Rural Lands ORD-22-0002 case was reported in v5.5 within the contested-opposed universe without explicit attention to the channel-conflict between in-person testimony (10 of 12 opposed) and written correspondence (34 of 38 in favor). The same May 4, 2026 verification established the channel conflict and the FORT coalition's appearance on the support side. v6 reports the case at the calibration boundary it actually sits at.

Other verifications carried out during the v6 build:

Sue Sadler's tenure dates, originally documented in v5.5 as starting in November 2016, were confirmed via the service-history reconstruction as starting in January 2016 with her appointment to fill a vacancy and her election to a full term in November 2016 with January 2017 swearing-in for the elected term.

James O. Icenhour Jr.'s service was documented across two segments (Powhatan District 2010-2013, Jamestown District 2018-present) via the service-history reconstruction, correcting a v5.5 implicit assumption that his service began in January 2018.

The bifurcation provenance was established by the bifurcation provenance analysis. McGlennon moved the original bifurcation motion on January 3, 2017 (verified verbatim against the organizational meeting minutes) and the 2021 modification on January 4, 2021 (verified verbatim against the organizational meeting minutes). Both votes 5-0.

F. The trajectory hypothesis test

This paper tested the hypothesis that supervisors move into the institutional-anchor and working-majority-partner roles through a single mechanism: tenure plus accumulation of external institutional ties producing a shift from constituent-responsive to institution-responsive voting and rhetoric. The trajectory analysis tested the hypothesis against the verified record using per-supervisor per-year records of vote behavior, deliberation rhetoric, and external-appointment accumulation.

Of seven 5+ year supervisors examined, two fit the hypothesis cleanly. McGlennon's 16-year record shows lone-NAY rate dropping, constituent-citing rhetoric slightly declining, contested-opposed YEA rate at 80 percent in the late period, and external-role count rising from 1.6 in his early period to 2.5 in his late period. Kennedy's six-year record (2010-2015) shows the same pattern with sharper movement.

Five did not fit the hypothesis cleanly. Jones's lone-NAY rate doubled across her tenure rather than declining, while she was serving as Chair of the Board. Sadler's quadrupled. Hipple's early-tenure lone-NAY rate of zero rose to 11.1 percent in his late tenure, paired with a rise in institutional-principle rhetoric the simple hypothesis does not predict. Larson's constituent-citing rhetoric nearly doubled (4.9 percent to 9.2 percent) across her tenure rather than declining as the hypothesis predicts. Icenhour's two-segment service produces small, mixed signals.

The deliberation classifier ran heuristic-only on minutes-text matching because the Cowork environment could not access press archives. The institutional-principle category is structurally undercounted. Direction-of-trend signals are reportable; precise percentages are not.

The body of this paper does not advance the trajectory hypothesis as a central explanatory mechanism. Section III reports the role-level structural finding (the working majority assembles across rotating actors because the structural positions endure) and notes that multiple mechanisms produce role occupancy: tenure plus institutional accumulation in the cleanest cases, ideological realignment in others, departure proximity in others, factors the corpus cannot fully resolve in still others. The trajectory hypothesis test result is reported here as the methodology basis for that pluralist account.

G. AI-tool use

This paper was drafted by Tommy Turner using a four-tool verification methodology: Claude (writing, argument logic, analytical framing, workflow design), Cowork (corpus data processing and analysis), and ChatGPT and Gemini for verification and cross-check on factual claims about real people. All claims about supervisors, votes, dates, and verbatim quotes were verified against primary source material at draft time. AI-tool use does not include fabrication of source material; where AI tools surfaced information that could not be verified against primary sources, that information was excluded.

A specific instance bears noting. Press coverage of the 2017 and 2021 bifurcation organizational meetings was sought via two AI-tool sessions (one regular conversational, one Deep Research). Both sessions returned plausible-sounding press citations that could not be independently verified against the named publications. One session fabricated a supervisor name (Sadie Canaday) for the 2021 meeting. The other returned numbered footnotes pointing to sources that did not match the bylines or content claimed. Neither session's output entered this paper. The bifurcation provenance in Section VII rests on the verbatim primary-source

extracts from the organizational meeting minutes, with the absence of contemporaneous press coverage of these consequential procedural changes noted as itself documentary.

H. Limitations and follow-on work

Several limitations apply to specific claims in this paper.

The 2010-2014 packet record is not publicly available. Staff recommendations and Planning Commission actions for individual cases in this period were extracted from minutes summaries. A FOIA request for the 2010-2014 packets is queued as follow-on work and would substantially strengthen any deeper analysis of this period.

Five 2015-2026 packet dates are missing from the public record. One additional packet PDF in the corpus is corrupt and cannot be parsed. FOIA follow-up on these six items is queued.

The deliberation classifier described in section F runs heuristic-only on minutes-text matching. A press-archive expansion would substantially improve the institutional-principle-rhetoric measurement and may revise the trajectory hypothesis test result.

The vote register has incomplete per-supervisor tallies for some 2015-2016 meetings. Recovery via packet-based reconstruction is queued.

The corpus covers Board of Supervisors decisions only. School Board, Planning Commission, and other JCC-related body decisions are not included. The HTRFA pathway documented in Section VII is included in the corpus only as it appears on the BoS docket; the Authority's own subsequent decisions are not part of this paper's record.

This paper documents James City County. Patterns documented here may or may not generalize to other Virginia counties. The methodology is portable; replication in adjacent jurisdictions would test whether the structural pattern generalizes or whether JCC's configuration is distinctive.

I. Analytical work supporting this paper

The analysis underlying this paper was produced through structured queries against the corpus, organized around a small set of focused analytical tasks. A service-history reconstruction established each supervisor's tenure dates, district representation, and chair and vice-chair years across the 16-year window. A contested-opposed verification examined every candidate case in the corpus against the bar described in subsection B, producing the four-case strict-coding universe and the boundary-case characterizations. A bifurcation provenance analysis recovered the verbatim primary-source extracts documenting the January 3, 2017 organizational meeting and the January 4, 2021 modification. A per-supervisor trajectory analysis examined whether tenure plus institutional accumulation produces a measurable shift in voting behavior and deliberation rhetoric, with the findings reported in subsection F. Three additional targeted analyses produced the Government Center vote chronology, the EDA revenue-bond financing structure documentation, and the per-item verification of Rural Lands and Hedera at calibration A.

The minute files, agenda packets, and audio recordings referenced throughout this paper are all publicly available through the James City County website at jamescitycountyva.gov. The analytical files derived from those primary sources were produced by the citizen-analyst infrastructure documented in section A. The

County did not produce them, has not reviewed them, and does not endorse them. Errors in the corpus channels or in the analytical files are the author's responsibility alone.
