

# County of Dinwiddie

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W. KEVIN MASSENGILL

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

June 16, 2020

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## County Officials Respond to Recent ‘Muster Call’ Event

**DINWIDDIE, VA** - On June 13, 2020, a group held a meeting on the grounds of the Historic Dinwiddie County Courthouse. County Administration and Board members have received countless calls and emails following the event.

W. Kevin Massengill, County Administrator stated, “While Dinwiddie County respects the rights of all citizens to lawfully and peaceably assemble, the private group of individuals that met on the grounds of the Historic Courthouse this past weekend was neither associated with, nor an official function of the Dinwiddie County government. Organizers were granted permission to assemble, as would any private group, after completing and submitting the required forms.” Massengill continued, “The use of the County seal on promotional materials for the event caused confusion in the community. The County has clarified with the group, that per County code, use of the County seal for non-governmental purposes is strictly prohibited without permission.”

County Attorney, Tyler Southall, stated, “In Virginia, a county does not have the power to create a militia; and in my opinion, the Code of Virginia reserves power for commanding all militia of the Commonwealth of Virginia to the Adjutant General and the Governor.”

In accordance with County policy, there was a law enforcement presence at the event, including Sheriff D.T. Adams. “As Sheriff of Dinwiddie County, I attended the event this past weekend for the sole purpose of keeping the peace. As long as the group is law-abiding, they are well within their right to assemble”, stated Sheriff Adams. He continued, “Senate Bill 64 takes effect on July 1 and, generally speaking, under it a person is guilty of unlawful paramilitary activity if a person brandishes a firearm or similar objects while assembled with one or more persons for the purpose of intimidation”, Sheriff Adams added, “No one is above the law; and no one is below the law. I was elected by the citizens of Dinwiddie County to enforce the law and that is what I intend to do.”

Regarding the event and surrounding issues, Dan Lee, Chairman of the Board of Supervisors stated, “Recognizing that many of our citizens have concerns, we want to assure the public that we hear you. We welcome and appreciate your feedback surrounding this sensitive topic. Now more than ever, it is important for citizens to stay engaged and participate in local government. The Board of Supervisors is committed to ensuring equity and fairness for all citizens of Dinwiddie County.”

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