

CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

Imperfection is beauty at Dolls & Flaws, in this week's Small Business Spotlight

LOCAL, A2



Make a cheesy broccoli chicken bake like you remember

LIVELY, INSIDE

Tuesday, March 24, 2026

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1st clerk to the board named

Shane McCrum, of Amissville, tapped for \$150K job reporting to supervisors



McCrum

George Mason University, according to a county release Saturday night. Originally from the small town of

graduate of Christendom College in Front Royal with a bachelor's degree in history. McCrum is working toward getting a master's degree next year in global commerce and policy from

Clifton in Fairfax County, McCrum previously interned with the right-wing Heritage Foundation and for Congressman Chris Smith, a New Jersey Republican, according to his 2019 profile at America's Future, another conservative group based in Washington, D.C., with which he was associated.

Catalpa Supervisor Paul Bates voted against hiring him.

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ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

Culpeper County has hired its first-ever "clerk to the board," dividing a role previously filled by the county administrator, who was recently fired.

interviewing three candidates in a closed session on Thursday, the board appointed Shane McCrum, 29, of Amissville, to the position, earning \$150,000 annually.

He most recently worked as a defense consultant with Cydecor Inc. in Arlington and is a 2019

STATE OF COMMUNITY TACKLES CHILDCARE



ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION, CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

Leanna Saupp (from left), Angie Starks, Rhian Allvin and moderator Winona Pritts represent the childcare panel at last Wednesday's State of the Community at Germanna Community College.

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

The State of the Community and what's on the horizon led discussion at the Culpeper Chamber of Commerce annual program last Wednesday at Germanna Community College. Panelists discussed public safety, health and well-being and child care at the breakfast gathering.

Leaders shared important updates shaping Culpeper's future, according to the chamber. The event concluded with a critical examination of child care and its importance to economic development.

On the all-female panel were Rhian Allvin, CEO of Brynmor at Culpeper Baptist; Leanna Saupp with Foundation First/Ready Region North Central and Angie Starks of Culpeper Human Services-run Kid Central.

A big issue they run into is single working moms and dads trying to get subsidies to help pay for child care, said Starks.

Allvin added Virginia is one of the few states in the country that, when the federal ARPA dollars went away after COVID, made a large investment in child care.

"Virginia replaced those dollars in a bipartisan effort years ago, and they really invested heavily," she said. "It's never enough because the demand always outpaces the money that exists, but Virginia has made a huge commitment at the state level. The fact that there's a child care panel at a chamber of commerce speaks volumes to the role and the importance of the business community talking about this, understanding it and being a leader in describing what's going on."

Allvin described a bill going through the legislature in Michigan called "tri-share," a cost-sharing model where the family pays a third, the employer pays a third, and the state pays a third for child care.

"The gaps are these families who just make too much to qualify for subsidies but can in no way afford — it's like a mortgage payment," she said.

Through their partnership with Culpeper Baptist, the rent is affordable, allowing Brynmor to pay workers a living wage, Allvin said.

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BOARD OF SUPERVISORS

Underwood reflects on first months as chairman

Like DOGE, he says they're trying to be more efficient

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

On the board of supervisors on and off for more than a decade, Republican Tom Underwood is sitting in the chairman's chair for the first time. It's been a bit of a rocky start, he agreed in a phone interview Thursday morning.

"I hope it gets smoother," he said. "We've had more changes than I anticipated."

In addition to the board changing its administrative structure and implementing a hiring freeze amid budget concerns, Underwood referenced a list of directives handed down earlier this month, "exploring internal functions," he said. These measures included freezing employee credit card use and undergoing a forensic audit.

"I did not expect most of what we've done," Underwood said. "I thought we would be focused on the budget, capital improvement projects, etc. What happened is, after (county administrator) Sam McLearn left, senior staff leadership met, came to us, said there's stuff they wanted to talk about."

The board fired McLearn earlier this month without much explanation.

The board has met in closed session seven times since January to discuss its new direction.

"We held a special meeting, listened to what (staff said) and unanimously put out a press release. While the change in county administrator we investigated, the resulting actions were the board reacting to staff recommendations," Underwood said.

While the county's annual financial audit relies heavily on management representations and internal systems and controls, a forensic audit will assess those representations and controls, he said.

"Staff recommended we do one now," Underwood said. "As far as I know, we have not done one."

He said the county would issue a request for proposals for forensic audit services and hire an accounting firm to perform the work.

As for the suspension of employee use of county credit cards, Underwood said, "We're trying to make sure that the policies are disseminated as they need to be. Do county employees have the direction they need as to how to use them and for what? Staff recommended we do this, it made sense so we said yes."

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Natalie Ferlazzo and Katelyn Wise are this week's Academic Spotlight

COMMUNITY, A3

Weather

Mostly sunny and cooler
High 53 • Low 33
Forecast • A6

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