

October 7, 2013

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Monday, October 7, 2013 at 6:00 PM in the Commissioners Room, 116 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Manning, McCray, Phelps and Sexton were present. Also present were County Manager Jerry W. Rhodes, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett, Finance Officer Frank Milazi and Interim County Attorney Wendel Hutchins. Commissioner Johnson was unable to attend.*

Chair Manning called for a motion to adjourn the September 3, 2013 Board of Commissioners meeting. **Commissioner Sexton made a motion to adjourn the September 3, 2013 Board of Commissioners meeting. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Manning called the meeting to order. Commissioner Sexton gave the invocation; the son of Dwight Respass led the pledge of allegiance.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: Commissioner Phelps added “Scuppernong River Committee” as 9A under Boards and Committees.

CONSENT AGENDA: **Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the addition from Commissioner Phelps.**

- a) Approval of Minutes
- b) Tax Refunds & Releases and Insolvent Accounts
- c) Approval of Tax Administration Records Retention Schedule Amendment

Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM: Mr. Larry Jones, Plymouth, spoke to the Board about updating tennis courts in Plymouth, Roper and Creswell. Mr. Jones has talked to Mr. Fulford (Washington County Recreation Director) and talked to Washington County School officials about this issue. Some of the tennis courts are owned by the County and some are owned by the schools. Mr. Jones stated that if the courts were resurfaced, kids could use them. Chair Manning told Mr. Jones that he was going in the right direction by talking to Mr. Fulford and also told him that the Commissioners are in the process of setting up a Recreation Board that may be able to address this issue.

Mr. Lloyd Jones, Jr., Lees Mill Township, would like grass mowed on roads by his house because he can't see to pull out on to Hwy 32.

Mr. Al Joyner, Plymouth, also said that the grass needs to be mowed coming out of County Club Village.

PUBLIC HEARING: ORDINANCE AMENDMENT—UNDERPINNING

REQUIREMENT: In accordance with NCGS §153A-323 (a) a public hearing is being held on the Planning Board's proposed amendment to the Masonry Underpinning Ordinance for mobile homes.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to open the public hearing on the Ordinance Amendment—Underpinning Requirement for mobile homes. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ann Keyes reminded the Commissioners that at their September 3 meeting, the Commissioners agreed with the Planning Board's recommended Ordinance Amendment—Underpinning Requirement for Mobile Homes. Ms. Keyes noted that Mr. Julius Walker, Mr. David Clifton and Ms. Carol Stubbs, members of the Planning Board, were in attendance at tonight's meeting.

Ms. Crystal Ipock, Hughes Drive, spoke to the Commissioners and said that she doesn't see why this Ordinance should be changed since everyone else in her mobile home development has had to do the underpinning on their double-wide. Ms. Ipock had a letter from 3 other residents of Hughes Drive who shared her same concerns.

Mr. Bill Forbes, Creswell (and a Real Estate Broker), cautioned the Board on weakening the Ordinance—citing that sooner or later this will weaken the tax base, especially on mobile homes attached to the land. Mr. Forbes also stated that the mobile homes will be more valuable when being sold if they have sturdy underpinning. Mr. Forbes noted that the County doesn't need any more substandard housing.

Ms. Bobbie Allen, Hughes Drive, stated that there are 4 mobile homes that are not underpinned in their neighborhood.

Commissioner Phelps has received several calls/correspondence for and against this Ordinance amendment. Commissioner Phelps is the ex-officio on the Planning Board and feels the Commissioners should put their trust in them and follow their recommendation.

Mr. David Clifton of the Planning Board stated that originally the Planning Board wanted to stay with the original Ordinance.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to close the public hearing on the Ordinance Amendment—Underpinning Requirement for mobile homes. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the Ordinance Amendment—Underpinning Requirement for mobile homes. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING: RURAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

APPLICATION (ROAP): One of the ROAP requirements is that the County must conduct a public hearing in order to provide the general public with the opportunity to provide comments and recommendations regarding the use and distribution of ROAP funds.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to open the public hearing on the Rural Operating Assistance Program Application (ROAP) Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Marianna Phelps introduced Shonita Gibson, Francine Hines and Zina Rhodes from DSS.

Commissioner Phelps asked how many citizens in the Pea Ridge and Creswell area use Riverlight Transit. Ms. Phelps did not have those numbers broken down. There is an outreach program that tries to get the information out to all citizens in all areas so they will be aware that Riverlight Transit is available to them.

Mr. Rhodes noted that the County has been receiving the ROAP grant for 15 years and it is vital to the County. He also mentioned that the ROAP funds can only be used for trips.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to close the public hearing on the Rural Operating Assistance Program Application (ROAP). Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

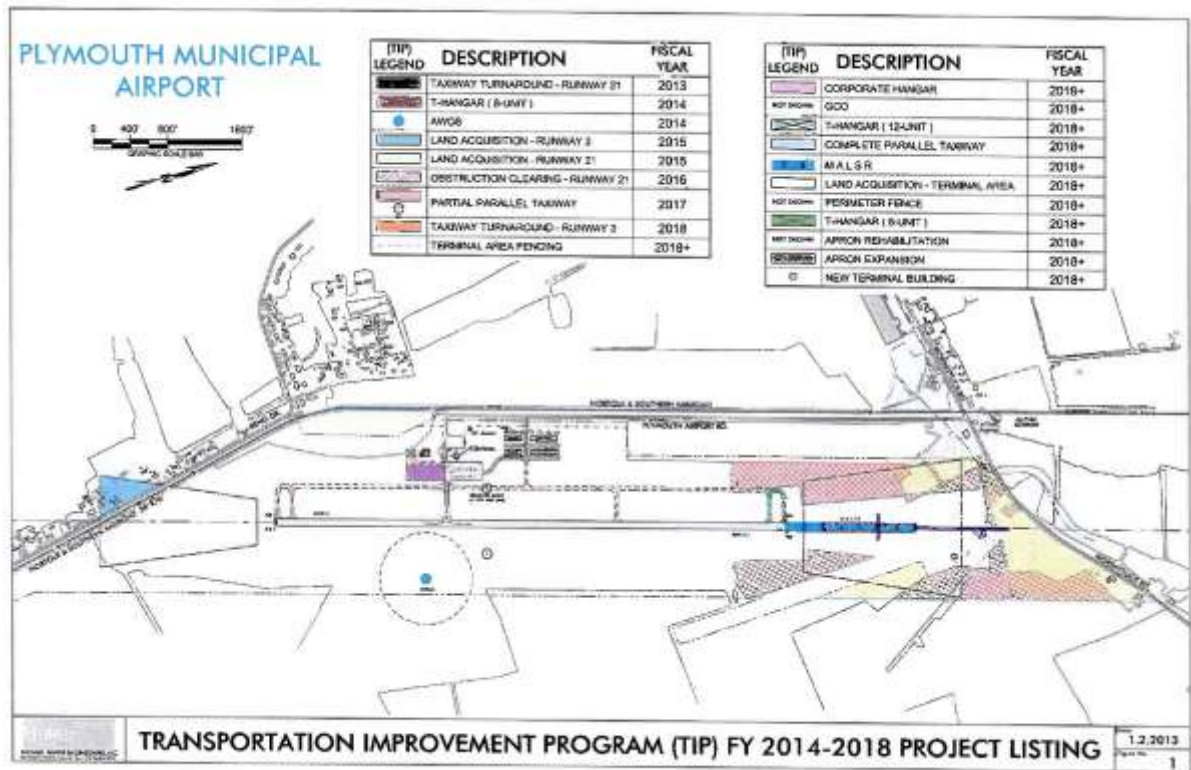
Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve submittal of the Rural Operating Assistance Program Application (ROAP). Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried unanimously.

NCDOT COUNTEROFFER ON NC-32 CONNECTOR EASEMENT:

At the last meeting Nikki Cobb, with NCDOT, spoke to the Board and stated that NCDOT is requesting a Right of Way from Washington County for the NC-32 Connector project. Ms. Cobb told the Board that .363 acres is needed from Washington County. The Commissioners decided they wanted to counter offer. A counter offer was sent to NCDOT from Washington County in the amount of \$5,000. NCDOT sent back a counter offer of \$3,500.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve NCDOT's counteroffer of \$3,500 and granted the NC Hwy 32 Connector Right-of-Way. Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

AIRPORT TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM (TIP): Knapp Brabble, Plymouth Municipal Airport Director, spoke to the Board regarding the Airport Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP). With the new administration, the counties have to start over with the projects they would like to have funded. The County has to submit our projects by November 1, 2013. There are trees that need to be removed (obstruction clearing). Counties have to compete with projects such as walking trails and ferries for this money since the money is divided up by regions. Mr. Milazi and Mr. Brabble went to a mandatory airport meeting so Washington County would be eligible to put our projects in the system. The TIP can be tweaked until June but will still have to be updated every year.



Mr. Rhodes noted that Mr. Brabble is asking for approval of the plan along this timeframe but no funding at this time.

Commissioner Phelps asked how the priority of the items came about. Mr. Rhodes said the projects are usually prioritized by safety.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the Airport Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP) for 2014-2018. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT/SENIOR CENTER—BUILDING ROOFS: Mr. Rhodes spoke to the Board about the condition of the roofs of the County Health Department and Senior Center. There are leaks in all the buildings which involve fixing four roofs. Those buildings were dedicated in 1977. There has been no significant work done to these roofs since then. There has been a lot of ‘patching’. Some mold has been growing in the Senior Center and Health Department. Mr. Rhodes contacted CentiMark (a company used when DSS had some work done). CentiMark gave Mr. Rhodes an estimate for repairing the roofs. Commissioner Sexton asked if CentiMark mentioned about putting rubber coating on the roofs. Mr. Rhodes said in CentiMark’s proposal, they would remove the current roofing (no change in the configuration) and replace the materials on it.

Chair Manning asked how the County would pay for this. Mr. Milazi said he wouldn’t want to take it from the fund balance, but he may have an answer at the October 21st recessed meeting. The County might be able to finance it at a low interest rate.

Chair Manning asked Mr. Rhodes to get a minimum of two to three bids by the November 4, 2013 meeting. Commissioner Sexton would like a bid on an A-roof for these buildings.

GOLDEN LEAF INITIATIVE: Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Milazi spoke with the Board about new initiatives sponsored and funded by the Golden LEAF Foundation. Washington County would like to submit an application for the water/sewer lines extension at the County-owned commercial shell building. We are having trouble attracting companies to this building because the County does not have water/sewer at this building. The County is applying \$1.5M for this project. This will require a 20% match from local funds (\$300,000).

Commissioner Phelps asked Mr. Rhodes to see if the Health Department /Senior Center roofs would qualify for this grant.

Mr. Rhodes also spoke about submitting a proposal to Golden LEAF for a regional project in Bertie County regarding an extraction plant for the Avoca Farms facility. Up to 5 counties would submit applications for this project. The estimated cost is \$2.9M. Martin, Washington, Tyrrell and Hyde would contribute approximately \$175,000 while Bertie County would have to contribute the remaining funds. This project would lead to job creation for some Washington County citizens.

Mr. Larry Jones, Plymouth, spoke to the Board and said he was on the first Golden LEAF Foundation committee when Washington County received \$1.2M. Mr. Jones asked where that money went. Mr. Milazi stated that those funds helped to build our current Commerce Building at the airport.

Mr. Lloyd Jones, Lees Mill Township, asked if the 2nd project (extraction facility) would enhance NERSBA. Mr. Rhodes replied that it would.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the County requesting an invitation to apply to Golden LEAF and that the County can provide the 20% match if the project is approved and to be one (1) of five (5) counties to submit applications for the extraction plant in Bertie County. Commissioner McCray seconded and the motion carried 3-1. Commissioner Phelps voted nay.

BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

Washington County Planning Board

The Washington County Planning Board is recommending to the Board of Commissioners that Mr. Frank Winslow replace Mr. Rufus Croom. Mr. Winslow has agreed to serve if appointed.

South Scuppernong Drainage Committee

Commissioner Phelps is interested in resurrecting the South Scuppernong Drainage Committee.

Previous members included:

Buddy Cahoon
Doug Maxwell
Ron Sawyer
Jeremy James
Ricky Phelps

If the Board agrees to resurrect this committee, Commissioner Phelps has offered to reach out to these citizens to see if they would still be willing to serve.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the appointment of Frank Winslow to the Washington County Planning Board. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve resurrecting the South Scuppernong Drainage Committee to work on creating the Scuppernong Service District. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried.

Commissioner Phelps indicated he would like to create another committee, the Scuppernong River Committee with the following members:

Jean Alexander
Ann Keyes
Wayne Howell
Fentress Bryant
Bennie Biggs
Syble Spruill
Steve Barnes
Mike Martin
Dorothy Redford
Commissioner D. Cole Phelps

Mr. Wayne Howell, Soil & Water Department, talked about previous efforts of trying to establish the Scuppernong Service District. Wendel Hutchins also made some comments. Mr. Howell and Mr. Hutchins wanted it to be known that the Army Corp of Engineers has said that the County cannot widen the Scuppernong River.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to create the Scuppernong River Committee with the following members Jean Alexander, Ann Keyes, Wayne Howell, Fentress Bryant, Bennie Biggs, Syble Spruill, Steve Barnes, Mike Martin, Dorothy Redford and himself. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT: Mr. Milazi discussed the 2013-2014 Fiscal Year 1st Quarter Report.

OTHER ITEMS BY CHAIR, COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY MANAGER OR CLERK:

A letter was written to the Commissioners from the President of the NC Association of County Clerks commending Ms. Bennett and Ms. Owens (Tyrrell County Clerk) for hosting the 2013 Clerks Eastern Regional Academy on September 20, 2013.

Mr. Charles Eaton, Property and Casualty Program Specialist for NCACC Risk Management Services stopped by the County Manager's office on Tuesday, October 1 to update our plaque for 2012 -2013 policy year as a continuing Super Member of the NCACC Risk Management Pools.

Mr. Milazi has received the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2012. The Certificate of Achievement is the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting, and its attainment represents a significant accomplishment by a government and its management. Chair Manning presented Mr. Milazi with a plaque of commemoration.

Ms. Bennett distributed the NERSBA Water and Sewer Strategic Plan to the Board of Commissioners for their information. This was compiled by The Wooten Company for water/sewer at the Vernon James Center in Roper.

Ms. Bennett also noted that the October 21, 2013 Board of Commissioners meeting will be held in the Courtroom in the Washington County Courthouse at 6:00 pm.

Chair Manning said that he and Mr. Rhodes attended the Eastern Clerks Regional meeting on September 20, 2013 in Tyrrell County hosted by Ms. Bennett and Ms. Owens.

Rep. Tine will be in town Thursday morning from 7:30 am – 9:00 am at the Golden Skillet for a 'meet and greet'.

Mr. Rhodes and Mr. Milazi attended the NC Commerce Listening Tour earlier today. There were about 75-85 people in attendance. Secretary Decker was there with the new vision for the Department of Commerce. They are moving forward with their plan to create a private/public sector.

Larry Jones distributed info from the US Tennis Association to the Commissioners.

*Commissioner Johnson was unable to attend tonight's meeting due to her mandatory attendance at Risk Management Trustee Board Training for the NCACC.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(3) (attorney-client privilege). Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

At 9:30 pm, with no further business to discuss, Commissioner Sexton made a motion to recess the meeting until October 21, 2013. Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Buster Manning
Chair

Julie J. Bennett, CMC, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board