

December 13, 2013

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a recessed session on Friday, December 13 at 2:00 PM in the Fellowship Hall of the First Baptist Church of Plymouth on Washington Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Manning, McCray, Phelps and Sexton were present. Also present were County Manager Jerry W. Rhodes and Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett. Commissioner Raymond McCray and Finance Officer Frank Milazi were unable to attend.

Chair Johnson called the December 13, 2013 meeting to order.

APPOINTMENT OF THE REGISTER OF DEEDS. Mr. Rhodes explained to the Commissioners that a recommendation was received from the Democratic Party Chair, Zeb Taylor for the Register of Deeds appointment due to Elaine Vann's retirement. The Democratic Party recommended that Tim Esolen (current GIS Director) be appointed.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion approve the appointment of Tim Esolen as Register of Deeds. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Rhodes spoke of a request from Tim Esolen that he would like to occupy both the Register of Deeds position and the GIS Director position. Chair Johnson asked since the Register of Deeds is an elected position, does it put the GIS Director position in jeopardy to do both. Mr. Rhodes explained that he had asked Mr. Potter to do some research on this. Mr. Potter said the state of current laws says that Mr. Esolen 'could' occupy both positions. However, the County Personnel policy regarding dual employment within the county may not allow it. Commissioner Phelps stated that he thinks it would be a substantial savings to the county but asked how the time would be split. Mr. Rhodes was concerned that the County would be taking 3 positions down to 2. Mr. Rhodes also feels it is making those 2 full-time positions to 2-part time positions. Mr. Rhodes stated he thought it would be difficult to manage. Discussion ensued. Chair Johnson said even the UNC School of Government thinks it's not a good idea to have someone in an elected position and a separate county position due to it being a liability. Commissioner Manning asked Mr. Esolen to speak about this issue. Mr. Esolen said he knows this county and it's an option he threw out to do both. He also stated that he has been doing both positions unofficially for the past two months. Chair Johnson stated that she still has concerns about the liability issues--the County would love to save money but doesn't want to spend money to get us out of a bad situation. Mr. Esolen said he is looking at working both positions for 2.5 years in case he doesn't run for the Register of Deeds after Ms. Vann's unexpired term is up. Commissioner Sexton asked Mr. Esolen about the projects that he is working on now in Mapping. Mr. Esolen stated he is working in gravesites, adding to parcel layers, old tax map numbers, locating water meters, etc. Commissioner Manning asked Ms. Elaine Vann (former Register of Deeds) if Linda Alligood, current Assistant Register of Deeds, can do the job she did. Ms. Vann said that Ms. Alligood is doing it right now. Commissioner Manning asked if GIS and RoD can be in the same office. Mr. Esolen said he wouldn't want that. It wouldn't be right for the Register of Deeds office. Commissioner Sexton asked if the assistant has to be full time. Chair Johnson said yes, there has to be a full-time assistant according to the

statute. Commissioner Phelps stated that he has concerns of Mr. Esolen doing both jobs. Mr. Rhodes said Mr. Esolen does an excellent job but feels it would be difficult for him to do both. Commissioner Manning asked if anyone else in the County offices can do what Mr. Esolen does in GIS. Mr. Esolen stated that Ms. Ann Keyes (Planning/Safety and Emergency Management Director) can do GIS. Mr. Esolen explained that there are some employees in the Tax Office have been used as backups. Commissioner Sexton said he sees the conflicts and differences because the Register of Deeds is an elected position. **Commissioner Sexton made the motion to keep the positions of Register of Deeds and GIS Director separated. Chair Johnson seconded.** Discussion ensued. Mr. Potter stated that Mr. Esolen is now the Register of Deeds and still in the GIS Director position. It is inconsistent with our County Polity for Mr. Esolen to hold the two positions. Mr. Rhodes said normally the employee would have to leave to be able to take the new position. Mr. Rhodes said Mr. Esolen could be contracted to help out until a new GIS Director is hired. **Chair Johnson, Commissioners Phelps and Sexton voted aye. Commissioner Manning voted nay. Motion passed.**

Mr. Rhodes stated that Ms. Vann's salary was \$47,472. Mr. Potter researched he statute regarding elected officials salaries and noted that the salary cannot be reduced without consent; therefore, the salary for Mr. Esolen will remain at \$47,472.

BEAUFORT COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (BCCC) AND PITT COMMUNITY COLLEGE (PCC) REQUESTS TO USE THE PLYMOUTH MUNICIPAL AIRPORT FOR BLET COURSES: Chair Johnson told the Board that certain courses in the Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) training curriculum require driving courses. Both BCCC and PCC offer BLET courses. Mr. Rhodes explained that the County has had two requests, one from BCCC and PCC, to use our airport for this part of their curriculum. Representatives from both community colleges have been to our airport and PCC even tested the course with Mr. Rhodes as a passenger. It is a low speed course. They will be using the tie-down areas of the airport. If a plane lands, they know they will have to get out of the way! Scheduling is low impact. BCCC will need two days in March. PCC will be having 2 sessions of two days in other months. BCCC and PCC representatives will be attending the Commissioners' meeting in January to speak to the Commissioners. Commissioner Sexton asked if there is any compensation. Commissioner Phelps would like to know what they paid Kinston Airport when they utilized their facility. Chair Johnson would like for both community colleges to do a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in case any damage occurs to the asphalt. Commissioner Manning asked if Mr. Knapp Brabble, Airport Manager, is ok with this. Commissioner Manning asked that Mr. Brabble attend the January Commissioners' meeting also. It was requested that it should be written in MOU that the County's needs come first. Also, do the schools have liability insurance? Commissioner Manning asked that Mr. Brabble talk to DOA in Raleigh to make sure this ok. Commissioner Manning also feels there needs to a fence on the pedestrian side or a gate. Commissioner Phelps had a couple of questions regarding BCCC's request of water/bathrooms and radio communications.

OTHER ITEMS: At the December 2, 2013 Board of Commissioners meeting, Commissioner Sexton was approved to be on the Albemarle Commission but he has since found out he has a conflict with the Albemarle Commission meetings so Commissioner Manning is going to take his place on that Commission.

Mr. Rhodes stated that the RPO will be visiting soon to talk about their bike plan/pedestrian plan.

Commissioner Manning stated he met with Amy Williams (Rufus Croom's replacement) about doing work on Kendrick's Creek. She is going to send maps to the Army Corp of Engineers.

At 3:30 pm, with there being no further business to discuss, Commissioner Sexton made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Tracey A. Johnson
Chair

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