

July 1, 2013

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Monday, July 1, 2013 at 6:00 PM in the Commissioners Room, 116 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Manning, Phelps and Sexton were present. Also present were County Manager Jerry W. Rhodes, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett, Assistant County Manager/County Attorney Cheryl Young and Finance Officer Frank Milazi. Commissioner McCray was unable to attend.

Chair Manning called the meeting to order. Commissioner Sexton gave the invocation; Kayla Smith, Tracie Reynolds and Tatiyana McQueen of the Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience (NERSBA) led the pledge of allegiance.

**ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the addition of Economic Development NCGS 143-318.11(a)(4) to the Closed Session. Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

**Commissioner Phelps made a motion to move Item 7 Appointment of Legal Counsel to Item 12A (after the Closed Session). Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

**CONSENT AGENDA: Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with the abovementioned changes:**

Consent Agenda

- a) Approval of Minutes
- b) Tax Refunds & Releases and Insolvent Accounts

**Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

**PUBLIC FORUM:** Bobbie Allen, Hwy 32 S, Plymouth spoke to the Board. She purchased a used doublewide and a lot but found out the land was wetlands. It was eventually cleared by the Corp of Engineers. The Zoning ordinance states doublewides must have permanent masonry foundation/underpinning. Commissioner Phelps deferred to Ms. Ann Keyes, Planning/Safety Director. Ms. Keyes said she has talked to Ms. Allen. Ms. Bennett passed around a copy of the amendment being referenced. Ms. Keyes said Ms. Allen can ask for an extension for putting up the foundation/underpinning through the Planning Board. Ms. Allen said she feels the ordinance is unfair and thinks that this should not be a requirement. July 18 is the next Planning Board meeting and Ms. Keyes encouraged Ms. Allen to attend that meeting. Commissioner Sexton said he was on the Board at the time (1999) and there was a push for beautifying mobile home areas and this ordinance came to be from that. Commissioner Sexton said he argued the point at that time that citizens might not have the funding to follow this ordinance.

COLLECTION OF DRAINAGE FEES: Mr. Jerry Rhodes, County Manager spoke to the Board and said he needed direction from them on how to treat costs associated with managing the collection and distribution of district drainage fees. The County would be managing 4 drainage districts and if we add Creswell it would be 5. The County has been incurring costs with the drainage districts currently managed. Mr. Chip Main, Tax Administrator, also spoke to the Board, along with Ms. Shirleyan Phelps. (Ms. Phelps currently handles the Albemarle and Pungo Drainage Districts.) Discussion ensued. Mr. Main and Mr. Rhodes stressed that the current issue with the County taking over new collections is the fact that the County is currently installing new software. Property tax notices are to be sent out by the end of July and Mr. Main is unsure that we would be able to include the drainage fees on those notices. Discussion ensued. Chair Manning stated that the County needs to be consistent between all the drainage districts. Mr. Main stated that it would be easier if Ms. Phelps could continue to do the billing for the Albemarle and Pungo Drainage Districts for this year since we are trying to implement new software.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion that Mr. Main continue to handle the billing for the Albemarle and Pungo Drainage Districts. The motion died due to lack of a second.

Ms. Phelps offered to continue handling the billing for the Albemarle and Pungo Drainage Districts until the County finishes the software implementation.

**Commissioner Johnson made a motion to graciously accept Ms. Phelps' offer to continue handling the billing for the Albemarle and Pungo Drainage Districts for this year, and the County will take over next year at no charge to any of the drainage districts. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

REQUEST FOR TAX EXEMPTIONS: Mr. Chip Main, Tax Administrator spoke to the Board about the following requests.

1. Mr. Main received a request from Bissell Rental LLC on June 13, 2013 to accept their return as 'timely filed'. The listing period normally ends on January 31, 2013, but this year it was extended to March 31, 2013, therefore the Tax Collector cannot approve this—it must go to the Commissioners. They were given an extension to April 15, 2013. They had a problem with their software change out and could not get their listing to us. They will incur a 10% late penalty. Mr. Main does not recommend this for approval.

**Commissioner Sexton made a motion to disapprove the late listing tax exemption request from Bissell Rental LLC. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

2. Mr. Main received an application for Business Property Tax Exemption on June 20, 2013 from GDS. The listing period normally ends on January 31, 2013, but this year it was extended to March 31, 2013, therefore the Tax Collector cannot approve this—it must go to the Commissioners. GDS has to go to the State first for approval and this would give the County what we need for granting their exemption. This is fairly common. Mr. Main recommends this for approval.

**Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the tax exemption request from GDS. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

PLYMOUTH FIRE DEPARTMENT/FIRE COMMISSION: Mr. Jerry Rhodes spoke to the Board regarding the request from Ms. Joanne Floyd, Interim Town Manager for Plymouth, on behalf of the Town Council of Plymouth is requesting that the Board of Commissioners terminate the payment provision of \$84,000 per year for Plymouth Fire Department Fire Protection Services as described in the Agreement for Fire Protection entered into on July 11, 2011 between the Town of Plymouth and Washington County. Dick Feyer, of the Fire Commission, doles out the .4 cent tax to the various fire departments. He explained that the Plymouth Fire Department would receive more money if they received part of the .4 cent tax and not put a dollar amount in their contract. Commissioner Phelps asked how much how much money would be taken from the other fire departments if Plymouth was to join in receiving part of the .4 cent tax. Mr. Feyer said that he does not plan for any fire departments to take a cut.

**Commissioner Sexton made a motion to terminate the payment provision of \$84,000 per year for Plymouth Fire Department Fire Protection Services as described in the Agreement for Fire Protection entered into on July 11, 2011 between the Town of Plymouth and Washington County. Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

Commissioner Phelps asked if the County receives reports from the fire departments. Mr. Rhodes said he has talked with Mr. Feyer and said the County will be asking for a report this year on how their money is being spent.

UPDATE ON NEW SOFTWARE IMPLEMENTATION: Mr. Milazi, Finance Officer, spoke to the Board regarding the new software implementation. Today is implementation day for Finance which includes payroll, budgeting and accounts payable. The Edmunds implementation team will be in the County offices on July 8, 9 and 10.

In August, the Edmunds implementation team will return to check on the water billing since a couple of cycles will have been completed using the new system.

In September, the final implementation will be with the Tax office

Mr. Milazi stated that even though the changeover is challenging it is going well. Every Thursday there is a conference call with the County Department Heads, the County Manager and the software company.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the County has to use the current software provider during this implementation. Mr. Milazi said yes and that the provider has been very helpful.

BOARD & COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS: The following Board/Committee appointments/re-appointments were requested:

Voluntary Agriculture District Board (VADB)

Mr. Rebecca Liverman, VADB, has requested the reappointment of Mr. Tim Griffin and Mr. Eddie McNair to the VADB. Their terms expired on 6/30/13. Both have agreed to serve if reappointed.

**Commissioner TAJ made a motion to approve the reappointment of Mr. Griffin and Mr. McNair to the VADB. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT: Mr. Milazi will give his report at the next Board meeting. Mr. Milazi stated that today is a new day, a new month, a new fiscal year and new software! He has closed the monthly books, but not the yearly books.

Mr. Milazi stated that he has put out the call for an RFP for a grant administrator for the Catalyst Grant (for the library).

**Commissioner Phelps made a motion to allow Mr. Rhodes to select the grant administrator according to the objective criteria in the RFP on the July 19<sup>th</sup> after bids are opened at 2:00 pm. Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

OTHER ITEMS BY CHAIRPERSON, COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY MANAGER, CLERK, OR ATTORNEY:

The ABC Board provided the Washington County Board of Commissioners with copies of their Budget Amendments for the year ending June 2013 and with copies of their approved budget ordinance and annual operating budget for 2013-2014 as is required by their statute.

Chair Manning presented Ms. Young with a plaque of appreciation from the Board for her service.

Commissioner Phelps asked for an update on the Public Safety Center. Mr. Rhodes said the County is moving along on this project and hope to be in there possibly mid-July.

Commissioner Johnson stated that Northeast Commission (NEC) is still in limbo due to the General Assembly. Hopefully the NEC will know something in the near future as to their status. The House and Senate budget does away with the NEC; however, the Governor's budget does not.

**Commissioner Johnson made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(4) (economic development) and NCGS §143-318.11(a)(6) (personnel). Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

The Commissioners came out of Closed Session and back into Open Session. **Commissioner Sexton made a motion to appoint Wendel Hutchins as interim legal counsel at \$150/hr. effective July 19, 2013. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

**At 9:07 pm, with no further business to discuss, Commissioner Sexton made a motion to recess the meeting. Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

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Buster Manning  
Chair

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