

December 1, 2014

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Monday, December 1, 2014 at 6:00 PM in the Washington County Courthouse, 2nd floor Courtroom, 120 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Manning, Phelps, Sexton and Walker were present. Also present were County Manager Jerry W. Rhodes, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett, Finance Officer Frank Milazi and County Attorney Curtis Potter.

Clerk to the Board, Julie J. Bennett administered oaths to Commissioners Johnson, Sexton and Walker respectively.

County Manager, Jerry Rhodes called the December 1, 2014 meeting to order.

ELECTION OF CHAIR: County Manager Jerry Rhodes called for nominations for Chair of the Washington County Board of Commissioners. Commissioner Johnson nominated Commissioner Sexton for Chair for December 2014 - 2015. There were no other nominations. **Commissioner Phelps made a motion to close the nominations. Commissioner Johnson made a motion to elect Commissioner Sexton as Chair. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously. Chair Sexton assumed presiding over the meeting.**

ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIR: Chair Sexton called for nominations for Vice-Chair of the Washington County Board of Commissioners for December 2014 - 2015. Commissioner Manning nominated Commissioner Phelps as Vice-Chair. There were no other nominations. Commissioner Walker made a motion to close the nominations. **Commissioner Manning made a motion to elect Commissioner Phelps as Vice-Chair. Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

Pastor Greg Boston gave the invocation; County Attorney Curtis Potter led the pledge of allegiance.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: Add Item 1A: Appointment of a Sheriff. Delete Item 6: Edmunds Update (move to January 5, 2015)

Chair Sexton called for a moment of silence in memory of Sheriff-Elect John Sawyer.

APPOINTMENT OF SHERIFF: **Commissioner Manning made a motion to nominate John Barnes as the Washington County Sheriff. Commissioner Phelps seconded. Commissioner Walker made a motion to nominate James Ross as the Washington County Sheriff. Commissioner Johnson seconded.** Chair Sexton called for the vote on James Ross. **Commissioners Walker and Johnson voted yes; Commissioners Phelps and Manning voted nay. Chair Sexton voted nay.** Chair Sexton called for the vote on John Barnes. **Commissioners Manning, Phelps and Chair Sexton voted yes; Commissioners Johnson and Walker voted nay.**

Commissioner Johnson thanked all who wanted to be considered for the Sheriff's vacancy. Commissioner Johnson also stated that everyone is saddened by the tragic loss of Sheriff-Elect Sawyer. Commissioner Johnson went on to say that she has nothing against all the

fine individuals who submitted their names for this monumental task. She commended all the candidates for wanting to do so. Commissioner Johnson explained that she strongly felt that the process the Commissioners had to undertake was flawed. The fact that the citizens were not given a chance to determine who they wanted for the next four years was unacceptable to her. No small board or single person should have to shoulder this process to fill a full term in office.

Commissioner Walker told Mr. Barnes that he has his support.

Commissioner Manning thanked Sheriff Ross for his many years of service to Washington County.

County Attorney Potter said the Office of Sheriff will not be considered filled until the bond is approved.

Commissioner Johnson motioned for a 5 minute recess. Commissioner Phelps seconded.

CONSENT AGENDA: Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda:

- a) Approval of Minutes
- b) Tax Refunds & Releases and Insolvent Accounts
- c) 2015 County Commissioners' Meeting Schedule
- d) 2015 County Holiday Schedule
- e) Closing of County Offices for Employees' Christmas Luncheon
- f) Telephone Poll re: Sheriff's Bond Application
- g) Resolution to Release and Re-Convey Naval Property
- h) Resolution Authorizing Timber Sales

Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM: There were no comments from the public.

SCUPPERNONG RIVER UPDATE: Keith Sawyer spoke to the Commissioners and gave an update on the Scuppernong River. It has been flooding and causing problems. Ms. Keyes assisted in getting the Cherry Bridge area cleared which was causing a problem. There are 81 trees from Spruill Bridge to Cherry Bridge. Mr. Sawyer said it will take a good chunk of his budget to clear those trees. There is a floating mass of alligator weed across the whole Scuppernong River. Hydrilla is also a problem in the Sound and will be moving into our river--it clogs up everything. It takes 7 years of Spring to get rid of it. Mr. Sawyer said he hasn't found hydrilla in our rivers yet but he is keeping an eye on it. The Kendricks Creek project is about 90% done.

LATE APPLICATION FOR AGRICULTURE PRESENT-USE VALUE ASSESSMENT: Ms. Bennett explained that Ms. Wilkins, Tax Administrator, had a family emergency to take care of and would be unable to attend tonight's meeting. Ms. Bennett spoke to the Board on Ms. Wilkins' behalf regarding the late application for agriculture present-use value assessment received from Mr. Roland Bell of R.W. Bell & Sons, Inc. In his application, Mr. Bell explained that there was an ongoing legal matter between R.W. Bell & Sons and Bell Land Company and his attention had been focused on that issue therefore he missed the deadline

for turning in this application. Ms. Wilkins recommended that the Board approve Mr. Bell's late application.

Commissioner Manning made a motion to approve the late application for agriculture present-use value assessment from Mr. Roland Bell. Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.

EMS UPDATE: John Flemming, EMS Director, spoke to the Board. Mr. Flemming stated that two of his EMS staff lost family members in the last week. Washington County has a fine bunch of professionals and they have made it through this difficult time. Mr. Flemming noted that he has been with the County almost a year (Feb). Transport is averaging 72 transports. Highest call volume is Plymouth. Highest day is Tuesday and Thursday--11:00 am – 3:30 pm. From 11:00 pm – 6:00 am EMS averages a couple of calls a night. Mr. Flemming is trying to keep on budget; however, medication costs are on the rise. Some have increased as much as 130%.

Commissioner Phelps said it is great that the County is increasing revenues with transports; however he stated that he hopes the County is not sacrificing care by using our trucks for transport. [Commissioner Phelps mentioned seeing the Creswell truck at the PHS football game Friday night.]

Commissioner Phelps said the numbers that were given to the Commissioners regarding going to 24/72 schedule are not feasible. There is a substantial financial increase needed in the EMS budget if EMS goes to a 24/72 schedule.

Mr. Milazi spoke to the Board. His report shows that the County will need an additional \$291,813 for a full year if EMS goes to a 24/72 schedule. If the County is going to change to 24/72 effective January 1 through June 30, 2015, EMS will need \$70,179.94 and Transport will need \$35,159.98 for a total of \$105,339.92. This does not include part-time EMS employees.

Mr. Milazi also noted that there will be no point in time when EMS revenues match up with EMS expenditures. Mr. Milazi asked the County Manager what he recommends. Mr. Rhodes stated that one of the reasons to go to 24/48 this year was to get EMS costs more manageable. County staff spent several months evaluating the 24/48 schedule and it helped to reduce the impact on the fund balance. Five months is not enough time to make a judgment on whether or not going to 24/48 was a good choice. Any change is going to cost additional money. Mr. Rhodes explained that it is difficult for Mr. Flemming to estimate how many staff he will need on any given day. Regular staff positions are filled in with part-timers when one is out sick or on worker's comp. This is the part that is hard to control. Mr. Rhodes stated that any increase in EMS funding will come out of fund balance.

Commissioner Phelps voiced his concern that EMS employees are not happy with the current schedule and pay.

Mr. Rhodes asked for the opportunity to see what the numbers would be if the County stayed with 24/48 schedule and look at paying time and a half for overtime for EMS employees.

Chair Sexton said the County needs to get a handle on this and it may be that an extra tax for EMS may need to be added at next year's budget.

Mr. Rhodes said we need to address how to keep folks here and pay them a decent salary.

Mr. Flemming said he has not finished looking at alternatives to try and offset costs. Mr. Flemming also stated that EMS is fully staffed by position--even though some are out on worker's comp.

SENIOR CENTER DISCUSSION: Mr. Rhodes told the Board that Ms. Sermons and Ms. Gregory are in attendance tonight on behalf on the Senior Center Advisory Board. Mr. Rhodes said, in refreshing the Board's memory, the Senior Center Advisory Board wants the Senior Center to be moved under the supervision of the County Manager's Office. Ms. Sermons said right now there is no Senior Center Director. She wants to have some programs at the Senior Center but doesn't know if there is money for them. Ms. Sermons stated she has seen the Senior Center budget but doesn't understand it. Ms. Sermons also noted that she doesn't feel that maintenance is done in a timely manner at the Senior Center. Ms. Sermons said that someone else made the budget and feels that there is a disconnect between the Senior Center and DSS. She feels the Senior Center Director should have made the budget.

Ms. Woolard, DSS Director said that last year, all DSS supervisors were asked to submit their budget and if there was anything they wanted to add to their budget they needed to get info to her. She only had 2 supervisors that gave her additional requests (and neither was from the Senior Center Director.)

Mr. Rhodes stated that there is an advantage for having the Senior Center supervised by DSS, that in doing so, DSS receives money from the State.

Commissioner Phelps asked what DSS's recommendation is. Ms. Woolard said the Senior Center could come out from under DSS, but they are here to serve and will do whatever is needed. Ms. Woolard stated that interviews for the new Senior Center Director have occurred; however, an offer has not been made. Ms. Woolard received approximately 20 applications and interviewed four candidates.

Mr. Rhodes stated that he has ~15-20 department heads reporting to him right now.

Ms. Sermons said that the Senior Center Advisory Board believes that the next Senior Center Director should be involved in the budget for the Senior Center.

Commissioner Johnson said she understands that with all of the changes that have been required of the State systems for the services that DSS provides to citizens, that the Senior Center issues could have taken a back seat.

Ms. Woolard reiterated that in her management team meeting, in which the Senior Center Director attended, he was told to submit any budget requests; however only 2 were received and they were not from the Senior Center Director. All supervisors were given the same opportunity.

Commissioner Johnson said that hopefully things will improve between the Senior Center Advisory Board and DSS by starting off on the right foot with the new Senior Center Director in creating better communication with the DSS Director Senior Center Director and the Senior Center Advisory Board.

STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION: Mr. Rhodes told the Board he is following-up on the Board's request to have a Strategic Planning retreat. Ms. Lydian Altman, UNC-SOG, sent an e-mail with an outline of what she would propose in a Strategic Planning Session. This would be a one-day meeting with the Department Heads and Commissioners and would be held off-site at the Holiday Inn Express in Plymouth. Her fee is approximately \$2,000 for the one day. Mr. Rhodes mentioned to the Board that he asked Jennifer Arnold to contact the Kenan Institute (they wrote the Bertie County Strategic Plan) to see what they could offer. Ms. Arnold explained that LaChaun Banks of the Kenan Institute contacted the County at the end of last year. Kenan Institute would handle all of the statistical review, community engagement meetings, and stakeholder meetings (business owners, economic developers, commissioners). The Kenan Institute would suggest recommendations for the County and ask the Commissioners to prioritize them to then come up with an action plan.

Ms. Arnold said that data analysis by the Kenan Institute would be about \$1,000. The demographics and community phase would be \$3,000 and the final product would be \$5,000 with the deliverable plan. The Kenan Institute pays ~\$10,000 to the students doing the work. The Kenan Institute will work with the County on the cost, if needed.

Mr. Rhodes told the Board he talked with someone in the County who does facilitation: Rebecca Liverman, the County's Cooperative Extension Director. Ms. Liverman has facilitated strategic plans in the past and recently completed one for Camden County. Ms. Liverman said that she is a neutral party even though she is a vested stakeholder in this County and would be glad to facilitate the meeting for the Commissioners. Also, there is no charge for her to do this. Ms. Liverman stated that Cooperative Extension Directors are trained to be facilitators.

Commissioner Johnson said the Commissioners need to be involved and that some of the current 20 year plan could be tweaked. Mr. Rhodes suggested taking a broader look at different areas such as health care services, economic development, public education and work force development all of which would build the foundation for a strategic plan. Also this plan should not be so long range, possibly not to exceed 3 years and assess it each year if needed.

Mr. Rhodes' recommendation is that he is confident that Ms. Liverman can facilitate the County's strategic plan meeting for the Board and that there would be a lot of advantages to having her facilitate. Commissioner Phelps said he wished that the UNC-SOG could partner with Ms. Liverman in this effort.

Chair Sexton asked what the pleasure of the Board is. Chair Sexton said by having facilitation done in-house it saves the County money. Commissioner Phelps said he would like to see the Commissioners move forward with creating an updated strategic plan.

Commissioner Johnson asked Ms. Liverman how many people she could facilitate. Ms. Liverman said she could facilitate as many as needed.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to have Ms. Liverman facilitate the County's strategic planning meeting. Commissioner Manning seconded. Commissioner Phelps said the County needs to stress to the UNC-SOG why the Commissioners made the decision to use in-house facilitation. Commissioner Phelps went on to say that UNC-SOG is a tremendous resource and the County doesn't need to burn that bridge. Mr. Potter said he will be at UNC-SOG tomorrow and will deliver the message in person to Ms. Altman. The Strategic Planning

Meeting will begin at 9:00 am at the Holiday Inn Express. [NOTE: location was changed to the Cooperative Extension Auditorium after discussions between Ms. Bennett and Ms. Liverman after the Board meeting]. Mr. Rhodes will work with Ms. Liverman in creating an agenda.

Motion carried unanimously.

STAFF EVALUATION DISCUSSION: Mr. Rhodes spoke to the Board regarding staff evaluations. The evaluation document needs to be created and given to the staff so they know what they will be evaluated on. Evaluations would then take place at a later date. Chair Sexton agreed that something does need to be in place to carry on through new Commissioners and new County Managers. Commissioner Phelps said in his nearly 2 years on the board he hasn't seen evaluations done yet. Commissioner Phelps asked how the County will put together a timeline so a plan can be put in place. Mr. Potter said that the samples provided by Commissioner Phelps are on the right track and they could be tweaked for each position.

Commissioner Johnson said she would like to see something in place by January 2015 to be distributed in February 2015 with evaluations being conducted beginning in February 2016.

OTHER ITEMS BY CHAIRPERSON, COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY MANAGER, CLERK OR ATTORNEY: Mr. Rhodes stated that he and Mr. Milazi met with Mr. Pearlman, The Wooten Company, on the library roof. The A-roof of the library is almost completely covered and then work will begin on the flat part of the roof. Some power lines have to be moved before starting on the flat part. The project is on schedule and moving forward and is scheduled to be finished on December 17, 2014.

For clarification, Ms. Woolard asked the Commissioners if the Senior Center is staying under the supervision of DSS. The Commissioners said yes it is staying under DSS for the time being.

Commissioner Phelps noted that he was elected as the MTW Health Department Board Chair for the 15 member board for 2015.

Mr. Rhodes stated that the consultant conducting the Human Resources study is being paid for using funds originally budgeted for buying a new County Manager's vehicle. Mr. Rhodes said he is getting job descriptions created, updating ones that are in existence, updating the current Personnel Policy and doing an FMLA study.

Commissioner Manning stated he is attending an Albemarle RC&D meeting tomorrow night.

Mr. Potter stated that the Water Committee is continuing to work on issues. Mr. Potter also said that he and Mr. Rhodes will be meeting with Dan Gerlach, GoldenLEAF, regarding the future use of the Creswell Clinic.

Commissioner Johnson was appointed to NCACC President Ronnie Beal's mental health board. She will be in Raleigh the next couple of days.

At 8:15 pm, with no further business to discuss, Commissioner Phelps made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.

William R. Sexton, Jr.
Chair

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