

October 5, 2015

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Monday, October 5, 2015 at 6:00 PM in the Commissioners Room, 116 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Manning, Phelps and Walker were present. Also present were Commissioner/Interim County Manager Sexton, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett, Finance Officer Frank Milazi and County Attorney Curtis Potter.

Chair Sexton called the meeting to order. Commissioner Walker gave the invocation; Commissioner Johnson led the pledge of allegiance.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: Chair Sexton deleted Item 3—EMS Overtime. Mr. Potter deleted Item e) Cherry Bridge (in Creswell) Resolution and added it as Item 2 (a). Ms. Bennett added a re-appointment to the Jury Commission under Item 10—Boards & Committees.

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

- a) Approval of Minutes
- b) Tax Refunds & Releases and Insolvent Accounts
- c) Proclamation: National Breast Cancer Awareness Month & Paint it Pink! Plymouth
- d) Amendment to Washington County Library Board By-laws
- e) ~~Cherry Bridge (in Creswell) Resolution~~

Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Bennett read the Proclamation: National Breast Cancer Awareness Month & Paint it Pink! Plymouth.

PUBLIC FORUM: Crystal Maxwell, of Washington County Hospital (WCH) stated that Paint it Pink! Plymouth is being sponsored by WCH and Relay for Life. There are t-shirts and pink bows for sale. Ms. Maxwell said this is the first event of its kind and hopes it grows into an annual event.

Sister Garcia, Hwy 32 N, Roper, thanked Mr. Potter for helping to explain things to her regarding her recent problems with a water bill and she also thanked the Board for listening to her and she thanked Ms. Ann Keyes for a fundraiser event during the Peanut Festival and thanked others who gave donations. Sister Garcia encouraged others to help the needy as she does.

Camilla Morgan, 318 Revels Street, Roper, addressed the Board saying she prays for the Board and for them to look at changing the law regarding adjusting severely high water bills.

CHERRY BRIDGE RESOLUTION: Mr. Potter noted that the Board had in front of them a revised resolution. This resolution is to ask for State funding to remove the pylons from the old bridge that are causing a blockage in the waterway.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to adopt the Cherry Bridge resolution.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the issue would be dealt with in January. Mr. Potter said he does not know for sure, but Representative Tine would like to have this resolution before November.

Commissioner Phelps seemed to think funds are already set aside for this project.

Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

WATER INFRASTRUCTURE UPDATE: Mr. David Tawes, Public Utilities Director, introduced himself. Mr. Tawes said he worked at Kill Devil Hills as a Water Supervisor and also worked as a consultant for DENR. He said he enjoys his job. Mr. Tawes said that the challenges that the County has is right up his alley. The most valuable resource is the County staff. He is meeting with Mr. Milazi tomorrow on how to find funds for the recommendations from Rivers and Associates to be able to proceed with the water booster project for Waterside at the Point in the Pea Ridge area. Chair Sexton said he knows we have already paid out some funds to Rivers and Associates. Mr. Potter said the County would need to pay an additional \$34,000 to have documents created to put with the USDA Fund application. Chair Sexton asked what the timeline is for submitting the application. Mr. Tawes said he recommends moving forward. Chair Sexton mentioned that one of Mr. Tawes' tasks is to look over the Water Rules & Regulations Ordinance and see about a re-write.

FY 2015-2016 RURAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ROAP) GRANT APPLICATION: Ms. Zina Rhodes, DSS, spoke to the Board regarding the FY2015-2016 Rural Operating Assistance Program (ROAP) Grant Application.

Ms. Rhodes stated that the funds provided by the grant are used for the operating cost of trips, but not for administrative or capital costs. Riverlight Transit has received disbursement of ROAP funds from the County for several years now.

Riverlight Transit was able to provide 9,000 trips last year due to this funding. Commissioner Johnson confirmed that there are no matching grant funds for this particular grant.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve that DSS submit an application for ROAP funding and the distribution of the funds to programs and agencies in the County. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

NORTHEAST WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD (NWDB) AND THE NEW BEAUFORT COUNTY COMMUNITY COLLEGE (BCCC) WASHINGTON COUNTY CENTER: Mr. Potter introduced Mr. Dave Whitmer, Director of the NWDB. Mr. Whitmer spoke to the Board about the possibility of having NWDB staff on site at the BCCC Washington County Center. The NWDB is authorized by federal funds. They are one of twenty-three (23) Boards in NC under the Department of Commerce. The NWDB also provides services for businesses. The NWDB serves a ten (10) county region. Mr. Whitmer went on to say that the NWDB has had an office in DSS for years. NWDB staff can help citizens create resumes and search online for jobs, interview preparation and funding for occupational training. NWDB will also reimburse citizens up to \$500/month for transportation and sometimes child care. Mr. Whitmer said that NWDB's 2nd highest case load is in Washington County. He said he feels that

if NWDB has an office in the BCCC Washington County Center that they would be able to help even more of Washington County's citizens. Mr. Whitmer thanked the Board for their consideration in this matter. Mr. Whitmer did note that NWDB would still plan on four (4) days a week in Washington County.

Commissioner Johnson said that the NWDB has an opening because the Washington County Chamber of Commerce has not appointed anyone. The Chamber of Commerce is to make the appointment, but there is no one at the Chamber to make the appointment at this time. Mr. Whitmer will follow up to see if the Board of Commissioners can make the appointment.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve NWDB to have a presence at the new BCCC Washington County Center and bring back the necessary paperwork for authorization. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.

¼ CENT RESOLUTION: Mr. Potter stated that after the 2015-2016 budget was approved, the Commissioners directed staff to look into doing a special referendum on the sales tax in an attempt to increase County revenues. The proposed resolution calling for a March 15th, 2016 special advisory referendum concerning the levy of one-quarter percent (0.25%) sales and use tax in accordance with NCGS §105-537 is as follows:

A RESOLUTION CALLING FOR A MARCH 15th, 2016 SPECIAL ADVISORY REFERENDUM CONCERNING THE LEVY OF ONE-QUARTER PERCENT SALES AND USE TAX IN ACCORDANCE WITH N.C. GEN. STAT. § 105-537

WHEREAS, in 2007, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted the "One-Quarter Cent County Sales and Use Tax Act", codified as Article 46 of Chapter 105 of the North Carolina General Statutes which authorizes counties to levy an additional sales and use tax; and

WHEREAS, in order to levy such tax, Washington County must conduct a special advisory referendum in accordance with the provisions of N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-287; and

WHEREAS, the Washington County Board of Commissioners wish to hold the special advisory referendum during the Presidential Primary election on March 15th, 2016; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Washington County Board of Commissioners as follows:

1. That pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 105-537, the Washington County Board of Commissioners hereby directs the Washington County Board of Elections to conduct a special advisory referendum as described herein, to be held during the normal time the polls are open on March 15th, 2016 in accordance with N.C. Gen. Stat. § 163-287, and to take all necessary steps to that end in accordance with this resolution and applicable law.
2. That pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat §105-537, the form of the question to appear on the ballots and in the instructions to voters for said referendum shall be as follows:

[] FOR [] AGAINST

Local sales and use tax at the rate of one-quarter percent (0.25%)
in addition to all other State and local sales and use taxes.

3. That the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners is hereby authorized and directed to mail or deliver a certified copy of this resolution to the Washington County Board of Elections within three (3) business days after the passage hereof.
4. That this resolution shall take effect upon its passage

Mr. Potter explained that this is not a property tax, it is a sales and use tax. Some items would be exempt such as prepared food and gas. Mr. Potter said the ¼ cent tax could bring in \$100,000 - \$150,000 to the County in revenues.

Commissioner Phelps said the Board needs to find creative ways to find funds. Once the revenues are collected, where would the money go? To the general fund? Mr. Milazi stated that designating where the money goes does not mean that it actually goes there. Mr. Potter stated that this referendum would have a sunset provision. For example, the ¼ cent tax collection could end in ten (10) years.

Commissioner Johnson noted that a ¼ of a penny tax on \$4.00 would be \$4.01. Commissioner Johnson said having the ¼ cent tax is a better way to increase revenues for the County and this tax would stay in Washington County.

Mr. Potter said the Board's concerns should be addressed in the Resolution. Chair Sexton asked Mr. Potter to bring the resolution back to the Board at the November meeting.

COURTHOUSE SECURITY: Commissioner Phelps spoke to the Board regarding Washington County's Courthouse Security. Judge Michael Paul and Judge Wayland Sermons have requested the Commissioners identify one (1) entry point to the Courthouse immediately to create a more secure place. Commissioner Phelps explained that if the Board does not do this, the judges will be trying to shut the County Courthouse down. Commissioner Phelps will bring back suggestions to the November meeting.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT MERGER: Commissioner Phelps and Mr. Curtis Potter updated the Board on the possible MTW Health Department merger with the Albemarle Regional Health Services. Mr. Potter attended a meeting with other county managers and Mr. Jerry Parks. Mr. Parks has completed a financial review of the MTW Health Department. Based on the way industry is going to home health care, operations should be streamlined. Assessment of the finances, if the contributions received this year were to happen every year, MTW Health Department would be in the black and could operate. Mr. Potter was asked to come to the Washington County Board by the County Managers of the other counties to see if Washington County is interested in continuing looking at the merger.

Commissioner Manning said he feels that discussions are warranted.

Commissioner Phelps said he feels that the MTW Health Department has cut and cut and has tried to get their finances in order and would like to wait and see how they are doing since they made the cuts. Commissioner Phelps has directed the MTW Health Department to work on

two plans--staying open alone or merging. Commissioner Phelps is concerned about the people who will lose their job--they are citizens of Washington County.

Mr. Potter said that one of Mr. Parks' recommendations said that the MTW Health Department could look to other single counties to merge with (possibly Hyde County).

The Commissioners feel like they need more information before making a decision.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)

Ms. Nancy Hodges, Area Consultant for NC Dept. of Public Safety, has requested that the Board approve their recommendation to appoint Rev. Jimmy Hagwood and Lee O'Neal to the JCPC.

Both have agreed to serve if appointed.

JURY COMMISSION

Ms. Denise Moulden, Clerk of Court has requested that the Board approve the recommendation to re-appoint Ms. Syble Spruill to the Jury Commission.

Ms. Spruill has agreed to serve if re-appointed.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve Rev. Jimmy Hagwood and Lee O'Neal to the JCPC and Ms. Syble Spruill to the Jury Commission. Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT: Mr. Milazi asked if the Board had any questions about the Finance Officer's Report. Commissioner Manning questioned the EMS finances. Commissioner Manning said it looks like EMS is already over where they should be at this point in the year. Mr. Milazi said he will discuss this more in depth next month when the EMS Director is present.

Commissioner Phelps asked Ms. Darlene Fikes if this amendment is what needs to be done. Commissioner Phelps said he was concerned about the fact that Ms. Fikes had not signed the Budget Amendment.

Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve Budget Amendment #4 for the Sheriff's Office for the \$1,500 grant received; Budget Amendment #6 for the \$700 grant received for gas for the airport generator; Budget Amendment #5 that Mr. Milazi initiated to move \$5,000 from IT to Tax Office for programming to add Creswell taxes and additional Drainage Districts to the County Tax Bills. Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Milazi said the auditors will be at the November meeting to present the County's audit.

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

The November Board of Commissioner's meeting will be held at the Strader Building and will begin at 4:30 PM with the Cooperative Extension's "Report to the People", and then dinner then the Commissioners' meeting will begin at 6:00 PM.

Mr. Potter stated that the advertisement of upset bid for the airport timber will be in The Roanoke Beacon this week.

Mr. Potter also stated that Beaufort County Community College (BCCC) will start classes today at the Washington County Center. BCCC will try to coordinate a ribbon cutting in the near future for the Center.

Commissioner Phelps asked Mr. Potter to obtain marketing materials from BCCC about the Center.

Commissioner Walker made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(6) (personnel). Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Back in Open Session Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve Lynn Swett's PD100's as signed by the DSS Director. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve the terms of the DSS Director's contract as written pertaining only to the accrual of vacation time and have the County's personnel policy changed to mirror Chowan County's. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11 (a)(6) (personnel). Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.

At 9:45 PM with no further business to discuss, Commissioner Johnson made a motion to recess the meeting to October 19, 2015. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.

William R. Sexton, Jr.
Chair

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