

February 18, 2019

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in an Emergency Session on Tuesday, February 18, 2019 at 5:30 PM in the Commissioners' Room, 116 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Phelps, Riddick, Sexton and Walker were present. Also present were County Manager/Attorney Curtis Potter and Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett.

Chair Johnson called the meeting to order.

Commissioner Riddick made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11(a)(3) (attorney-client privilege) to discuss the Washington County Hospital. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried 4-1. Commissioner Phelps voted nay.

Back in Open Session, **Commissioner Phelps made a motion to approve the transmission of the Right Of Reverter letter to be sent to CAH Acquisition Company #1, LLC, and to authorize the County Manager to execute and deliver the Chapter 7 involuntary bankruptcy petition as a creditor of Washington County Hospital. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Johnson asked what the next step is. Mr. Potter said it is to work through the bankruptcy court processes and get a hospital trustee to help find what bills need to be paid and how to continue its operations.

Mr. Potter said he has a meeting tomorrow with various State DSS folks and others regarding the hospital licensure and regulatory issues. Information that is learned from that meeting will help the County determine what can be done.

Mr. Potter said the County will solicit individuals who want to run the hospital and see it be restored to a working hospital as soon as feasibly possible, which is what the Board would like to have happen.

Chair Johnson asked what the deadline is for the petition. Mr. Potter replied that the deadline is 21 days beginning upon day of service. There are lots of things the County can be doing during those 21 days. Mr. Potter noted that the bankruptcy court selects the Trustee. Chair Johnson asked if the County gets a say in whom the trustee is. Mr. Potter said the County could propose a Trustee to be appointed. Chair Johnson asked Mr. Potter if he foresees another Emergency or Special meeting being called. Mr. Potter said yes, because of the importance of this subject it may necessitate additional meetings, but can't say when they may occur.

Commissioner Phelps said he and Mr. Potter worked hard on Friday by talking to Senator Steinburg, Representative Goodwin, the Governor's office, Butterfield's office, and the State Auditor's office just to make sure they know what is going on with the hospital. Commissioner Phelps wants to make sure the hospital employees get paid. Commissioner Phelps also wanted to check to see if there any discretionary funds (at the State/Federal level) that could be used for

purchasing the County's two new ambulances because the County may be doing more transports with the hospital being on diversion.

Mr. Potter also said that a neighboring hospital sent info saying they had job openings for RN's and LPN's.

Chair Johnson was contacted by someone who wants to have an employee fair for the hospital employees; however, she requested just a little bit of time before doing so, so the County can sort things out.

Chair Johnson spoke with Mr. Sprayberry, State EM Director, and he said he considered the closing of the hospital as a national emergency. He said he will do some checking and may be able to help the County with funding the new ambulances. Chair Johnson said she also talked with someone in New Hanover County to see how they are handling their hospital along with Franklin County who created legislature for this type of event.

Chair Johnson said this is something we saw coming down the road. She thanked Commissioner Riddick and Phelps for getting information to the Board and to others so the County can move forward.

Commissioner Phelps asked if Chair Johnson could declare a state of emergency. Chair Johnson said Mr. Sprayberry did not have an answer as to whether or not she could do that, but he will check into it. Ms. Keyes said she is going to see what kind of grants the County could write to be sent to the State EM office.

Commissioner Phelps asked if the County did do the state of emergency, would the County be eligible to have costs reimbursed. Mr. Potter said some things might be able to be, but since this is something new, the County would have to work some things out, and there is a threshold that has to be met also.

Mr. Potter apologized for the information regarding the radio broadcast that didn't happen today (with Melanie Perry), but it is supposed to be on Magic 95.9 tomorrow at 9:05 AM.

At 6:08 PM with no further business to discuss, **Commissioner Riddick made a motion to adjourn . Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

Tracey A. Johnson
Chair

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