

September 6, 2011

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Tuesday, September 6, 2011 at 6:00 PM in the County Commissioners' Room, 116 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Alexander, Collins, Johnson, Manning and McCray were present. Also present were Interim County Manager Cheryl Young, Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett and Finance Officer Frank Milazi.

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

ADDITIONS / DELETIONS:

CONSENT AGENDA: Commissioner Manning made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda as listed below:

- a) Approval of Minutes
- b) Tax Refunds & Releases and Insolvent Accounts
- c) NC Education Lottery Public School Building Capital Fund—Pre-fabricated Storage Shed—Plymouth High School—\$9,789.09; Free Standing Sign with Mascot—Plymouth High School—\$7,098.88
- d) 2011 Single Family Rehabilitation Program Assistance Policy and Disbursement Policy
- e) Permit Fees Waiver
- f) Resolution for a Moment of Remembrance on September 11, 2011

Commissioner Collins seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Chair Johnson reminded everyone to please participate in the national moment of silence at 1:00 pm on Sunday, September 11. Chair Johnson asked Ms. Bennett to send out a memo to staff with this reminder.

PUBLIC FORUM: None.

PUBLIC HEARING—FY2011-2012 RURAL OPERATING ASSISTANCE PROGRAM: Commissioner Manning made a motion to open the public hearing. Commissioner McCray seconded.

Mr. Jerry Rhodes, DSS Director, spoke to the Commissioners regarding the Rural Operating Assistance Program. As per the grant instructions, the public hearing notice for this meeting was published August 24, 2011. Mr. Rhodes explained that Washington County has applied for and received these grant funds in the last few years. County governments are the only entities allowed to apply for these funds.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to close the public hearing. Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to submit the application on behalf of Washington County for the FY2011 – 2012 Rural Operating Assistance Program. Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Manning made a motion to allow for distribution of funds by DSS once they are received from the FY2011 – 2012 Rural Operating Assistance Program. Commissioner Collins seconded, motion carried unanimously.

HURRICANE UPDATE: Ms. Ann Keyes gave the Commissioners an update post-Hurricane Irene.

- Power has been restored to all of Tideland customers and all but one (1) Dominion customer. (An inspection was needed before power could be restored). Not everyone in the county lost power. Some customers on Morratack Road, Long Ridge Road and a few in town never lost power. The Emergency Operations Center (EOC) was in constant contact with Dominion Power and Tideland.
- One pre-approved Hurricane Shelter was opened on Friday evening at 6:00 pm, August 26<sup>th</sup>. Mr. Rhodes and his staff, the Red Cross, Health Department, Washington County Sheriff's Department and the Salvation Army did an outstanding job at the shelter. Washington County housed shelterees from Tyrrell County as well. The EOC was called at approximately 1:00 am on Sunday, August 28<sup>th</sup> to see if Washington County could house 80 team members from Task Force 8 that were in route to Hyde County. Washington County was able to house them at the shelter. 390 hot meals were served at the shelter.
- Flooding was a big issue in Creswell again. EOC personnel assessed the Creswell area three times. Also on Friday night, August 26<sup>th</sup>, a tornado touched down in Creswell. Four businesses were damaged or destroyed.
- Washington County had our Damage Assessment teams on the ground Sunday morning, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 am to complete damage assessments. The Damage Assessment Leader was Chip Main, Tax Administrator. An aerial assessment of the entire county was conducted and this assessment was provided to FEMA as well as STATE EM.
- EM provided over 4,000 lbs of ice, water and meals to the entire county. EOC staff even picked up meals that were left over in Martin County to give to our citizens. Citizens were informed by First Call of the actions taken on their behalf.
- Ms. Silverthorne of Plymouth Housing assisted the EOC with providing apartments for displaced citizens.
- The Disaster Recovery Center opened at 12:00 noon today, September 6<sup>th</sup> at the Plymouth Municipal Airport and a First Call message was sent out to inform the citizens. Sister Arcadia also helped the EOC to reach the Hispanic population.

- Washington County was declared for Individual Assistance from FEMA on Friday, September 2<sup>nd</sup> and Washington County has been submitted for approval of Public Assistance per Emily Young, Public Assistance Manager with the State Division of Emergency. This assessment was completed around 8:30 pm Friday night.
- Early estimates are ~ \$195,699 in structural damage and ~\$28.3M in crop damage in Washington County.

Ms. Keyes thanked all emergency responders and county staff for all of their assistance during the response and recovery efforts.

Commissioner Alexander and Chair Johnson thanked Ms. Keyes for all she did during the storm. It was also noted Social Services served over 1,000 citizens last week for replacement food stamps and they usually only serve 1,300 citizens in a month for all programs.

COMMUNICATION—ADVANTAGES OF USING SOCIAL MEDIA (FACEBOOK, TWITTER): Ms. Young stated that Ms. Keyes did an outstanding job of getting word out to the public during the hurricane using the First Call messages; however, some citizens' phone lines were down so they were unable to receive any information. Some citizens that did not have phone lines did have internet services. Ms. Mary Wayt, Beacon Editor, sent out information on the Beacon's Facebook page during the storm to help the EOC get the information out to as many citizens as possible.

Ms. Young noted there could be benefits to the County if the County had a Facebook page and/or a Twitter account. (Facebook has 750M active users.) Ms. Young proposed that a Washington County Facebook page be created with Ms Young and Ms. Bennett as the administrators. The page would be used for informational purposes only—to keep citizens aware of what is going on in the County.

Commissioner Collins stated that all he had access to during the Hurricane was his Smartphone and it helped him to keep informed when he didn't have power or phone service.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve going forward with creating a Washington County Facebook page and Twitter account. Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

FOODBANK OF THE ALBEMARLE: Ms. Liz Reasoner, Executive Director of the Foodbank of the Albemarle was in attendance. Ms. Reasoner addressed the Board stating that the Foodbank of the Albemarle has partnered with the Plymouth Food Pantry for over 25 years. The Foodbank of the Albemarle has a new partner in town, People's Faith, who is also working with them. Ms. Bennett read aloud the Hunger Month Proclamation. Ms. Reasoner mentioned their webpage: [www.afoodbank.com](http://www.afoodbank.com). Ms. Reasoner mentioned that the Foodbank of the Albemarle always needs volunteers! Ms. Reasoner thanked the Board for their part in helping to stop hunger.

Mr. Sam Rogers, President of the Plymouth Food Pantry mentioned that long time patron of the Plymouth Food Pantry, Mr. Rufus Carroway, passed away on Friday. Mr. Rogers

informed the Board that over 200 households a month are served over 2000 meals on a monthly basis.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT—LOCAL ELECTED LEADERS ACADEMY (LELA) PRACTITIONER LEVEL OF RECOGNITION: Chair Johnson was recognized as achieving the Practitioner level by the Local Elected Leaders Academy during the NCACC Annual Conference held in Cabarrus County August 17-21, 2011.

A Practitioner must have acquired a minimum of 48 credits, including 18 orientation credits earned by attending the Essentials of County Government Schools since 2009, 18 credits earned by attending in-depth courses and seminars sponsored by one of the three partner organizations, and 12 elective credits by attending the NACo or NCACC annual and legislative conferences, district meetings and legislative update sessions.

Commissioner Manning presented Chair Johnson with the LELA Certificate.

WATER METER REPLACEMENT PROGRAM: Mr. Louis Manring, Public Utilities Director, explained to the Board that replacing water meters is the last project that the County needs to do to account for unaccounted high water usage. ¼ of a gal to 2 gal is what flows through a home. This accounts for some of the inaccuracy in meter readings because some meters are over 10 to 20 years old and can't test at low flow rates. Mr. Manring would like to apply for a full 100% grant (no matching grant funds) to replace the County's water meters. There is a preliminary engineering fee of \$1000 but Mr. Manring has money in his equipment fund to cover that expense. That money will be reimbursed if the County receives the grant.

Commissioner Manning asked if the replacement water meters would be the same type as we have now. Mr. Manring explained that they would basically be the same, just better engineered. Also the new meters will be 'radio read' water meter which means the meter readers can drive by a water meter and pick up the radio signal to obtain the meter reading. Currently Mr. Manring uses 10 man days a month reading water meters; with these new water meters, his staff will be able to complete this task in 1 ½ days which will free them up to do other maintenance items.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve going forward with the grant for the Water Meter Replacement Program. Commissioner Alexander seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve the resolution for the grant for the Water Meter Replacement Program. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.

GROUNDWATER MONITORING WELL FOR CRESWELL SHERIFF'S ANNEX:  
Ms. Young informed the Board that she had received a request from Groundwater Management Associates, Inc. for access to the property commonly known as the Creswell Sheriff's Annex, for groundwater monitoring. Ms. Young has reviewed the request and recommends the Board grant permission for this action.

Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve the request for the groundwater monitoring well at the Creswell Sheriff's Annex. Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF AGREEMENT FOR FIRE PROTECTION BETWEEN WASHINGTON COUNTY AND THE TOWN OF PLYMOUTH: Ms. Young noted that the aforementioned document was just a restatement of the County's ordinance; it had gotten messy over the years and now has the correct Plymouth Fire Department District map.

Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve the agreement for fire protection between Washington County and the Town of Plymouth. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES: Chair Johnson spoke to the Board regarding the following Board and Committee appointments.

#### **Washington County Senior Center Advisory Board**

Ms. Joyce Sexton is scheduled to expire on September 30, 2011 from the Senior Center Advisory Board. Mr. Michael Todd-Stone, Director of the Senior Center would like for the Board of Commissioners to re-appoint Ms. Sexton.

Ms. Sexton has agreed to serve on the Washington County Senior Center Advisory Board if re-appointed.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to approve this appointment as presented. Commissioner McCray seconded, motion carried unanimously.

#### **FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT:**

Mr. Milazi discussed the following Budget Appropriation Amendment/Adjustment:

- Budget Amendment 12005—NC Education Lottery—Replace floor of Pines Elementary School (\$50,137.14)
- Sales Tax Summary  
Mr. Milazi stated that regarding the 1 cent tax, we are at 103% of what was budgeted with one month to go for receipts.

Mr. Milazi also noted that he will give the Board an EMS update at the next meeting, after the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter ends. Mr. Milazi stated Washington County Hospital owes the County \$50,000 and they are paying \$5,000 a month; however, he is trying to get them to make a higher payment.

Commissioner Johnson asked David Clary, EMS Director about overtime in EMS. Mr. Clary stated that before the hurricane, EMS was doing well; however, EMS did have an increase due to the hurricane, but those costs will be reimbursed. Mr. Clary feels comfortable with his budget at this time. Ms. Keyes did concur with Mr. Clary that EMS will get money back for fuel and overtime costs associated with the hurricane.

OTHER ITEMS BY CHAIR, COMMISSIONERS, COUNTY MANAGER, CLERK, ETC: Mr. Clary spoke to the Board about two grants he would like to submit this week. One grant is for vehicles and the other is for equipment. They are FEMA grant applications and must be submitted by 5:00 pm this Thursday, September 8, 2011. The total for both grants is \$574,154. Mr. Clary will be using \$300,200 for equipment such as cardiac monitors, ventilators co2 monitors and personnel protective equipment. Two (2) new ambulances are also being requested in the grants.

Each of the grants are a 95/5% matching grant. Mr. Clary would like to request adding \$29,626 into next year's budget in 2012 for the 5% match needed for the grants. The timeframe for spending the grant money is September 1, 2012 to September 30, 2013. Mr. Clary also informed the Board that if two new ambulances were received, the County would sell two of the current ones that are nine (9) and ten (10) years old.

Commissioner Alexander made a motion to approve going forward with the grant submittals and adding \$29,626 into next year's budget in 2012 for the 5% match needed for the grants. Commissioner Collins seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to go into Closed Session. Commissioner Alexander seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Collins made a motion to recess the meeting. Commissioner Alexander seconded, motion carried unanimously.

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Tracey A. Johnson  
Chair

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Julie J. Bennett  
Clerk to the Board