

May 4, 2015

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a budget work session on Monday, May 4, 2015 at 4:00 PM and in their regular session at 6:00 PM in the Washington County Commissioners Room, 116 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.

Chair Sexton called the budget work session to order. Mr. Rhodes stated that the copy of the budget the Commissioners currently have before them is not balanced. Mr. Rhodes said the focus during today's work session is EMS. Mr. Milazi explained the Expenditures and Revenues of EMS.

Commissioner Phelps stated that at one time the Commissioners discussed renegotiating the Tyrrell County contract. Mr. Potter stated that he has not sent that notice yet, but he can. EMS staff is being rotated through Washington County and Tyrrell County.

Chair Sexton asked if most counties run their EMS through their general fund or an enterprise fund. Mr. Potter replied most counties run their EMS through their general fund. Commissioner Phelps said he understands that the major cost in EMS is based on salaries. Mr. Rhodes noted that when the Board increased EMS overtime pay to time and a half, EMS costs jumped. Chair Sexton asked if an additional shift could be added, would it help reduce costs. Mr. Milazi stated that if EMS hired an additional shift then that would increase the amount of people the County would have to pay and more benefits therefore it would not be cost saving. Mr. Milazi said EMS employees are guaranteed 64 hours of overtime at time and a half each month. Ms. Wallace estimated that EMS has 20+ part-timers.

Chair Sexton questioned what would happen if EMS stopped doing transport. Ms. Wallace, EMS Interim Director, said that EMS transport is the only thing making money. Ms. Wallace also said that you can't predict transports for any given day, week or month--transports fluctuate.

Chair Sexton asked how much more does it cost for Washington County to have paramedic level EMTs. Mr. Milazi said he has looked into that. During that time, the County was reminded it is good for our citizens to have EMT's at the paramedic level. Ms. Wallace said there is one paramedic on each ambulance; therefore citizens can be treated in the ambulance.

Chair Sexton wondered if the County put EMS back to 12 hour shifts if it would save the County money.

Mr. Milazi reiterated that EMS is really draining the County's general fund.

Commissioner Phelps asked Mr. Rhodes to work with Ms. Wallace to bring back proposals on straight time cost, having or not having EMTs or changing the shift hours and what the savings would be.

Next, discussions centered on water rates. Mr. Milazi said the County needs to learn to collect money for water before increasing water rates.

Commissioner Manning asked about the DSS budget. Mr. Rhodes said he has made some cuts in their administrative area.

Chair Sexton asked Jonathan Taylor, Executive Director, Washington County Chamber of Commerce, to speak about what he uses the Chamber budget for. Mr. Taylor said he has balanced the Chamber's budget. His request to the Commissioners is for \$20,000. Mr. Taylor is trying to promote revenue by working with Travel & Tourism. Commissioner Johnson said she has noticed that the Chamber seems to be backing some politicians. Mr. Taylor said the Chamber is non-partisan. He said the Chamber supports policy based on research. Commissioner Manning commended Mr. Taylor on the recent AG expo. Commissioner Manning attended it and it seemed to be well received. Mr. Taylor stated that he wants to help the County's economic development without taxing the county funds. Mr. Harvey West spoke as one of the members of the Chamber Board, and said he sees more excitement from the current Chamber Board than he has in the past. Mr. West said the Chamber has the time and the knowledge to bring economic development to the County. Mr. West is advocating for the funding requested (\$20,000) so the Chamber can show what it can do.

Chair Sexton invited Mr. Taylor to come back to a Commissioners meeting after July to work on a plan for moving forward on some of his ideas.

Chair Sexton asked Mr. Rhodes about the Daycare DCD in the DSS budget. Chair Sexton said DSS is asking for so much more this year than last year and they didn't spend all they had last year. Mr. Rhodes said that is all federal money, no county money is involved. There is no way to predict how much money DSS will need.

Mr. Rhodes said the Martin-Tyrrell-Washington Health Department has asked for each of the three counties to double their contributions to them. The budget currently is at 75%. The three managers agreed to be consistent and all do the same contribution.

Commissioner Manning asked Ms. Terrell Davis, MTW Health Department Director how many positions they currently have. Ms. Davis said they have 74 positions and 69 employees right now. Some positions rotate through the three counties.

Chair Sexton asked Ms. Davis if she thinks the Health Department funding will level out since they won't be doing the primary care over 21. Ms. Davis said she hopes so and they have implemented some new programs. Ms. Davis said the Health Department is also being monitored by the State since the Health Department is close to the 8% required fund balance. The Health Department is at 9% (\$900,000) and if they fall below that, the State may come to the County to ask for funds to assist them. Commissioner Manning asked Ms. Davis if she has checked into adding additional counties to cover the costs. Ms. Davis stated that all counties are suffering. She also stated that Washington County does not have an ob-gyn or pediatrician in this county and the Health Department is supposed to make sure these services are available.

Mr. Rhodes said there are only two (2) vehicles being requested in the budget this year and these are in the Sheriff's Office budget.

Mr. Milazi stated that the following items are in the budget:

- a 2% COLA increase for employees which equals \$138,000
- Part-time person for Recreation.
- \$50,000 for hospital pension plan
- \$78,000 for teachers supplement.

Commissioner Johnson asked if the 4 cent that the fire departments receive can be adjusted to be able use some of it towards balancing EMS.

Discussion ensued regarding “general fund balance”.

**Commissioner Manning made a motion for the staff to go back over the budget looking at the EMS and the general fund for cuts. Commissioner Walker seconded; motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Sexton called for a motion to adjourn the May 4, 2015 budget work session. **Commissioner Phelps made a motion to adjourn the May 4, 2015 budget work session; Commissioner Walker seconded, motion passed unanimously.**

Chair Sexton called the May 4, 2015 meeting to order. Commissioner Manning gave the invocation; County Attorney Potter led the pledge of allegiance.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: DELETE Item 5--Resolution to adopt the NC Public Employee Deferred Compensation Plan (Mr. Davis had a death in the family and will not be in attendance.)

CONSENT AGENDA: **Commissioner Johnson made a motion to approve the Consent Agenda with administrative changes made to the minutes and a revised Item G:**

- a) Approval of Minutes
- b) Tax Refunds & Releases and Insolvent Accounts
- c) Resolution in Support of Alternative Method of Recognition for Veterans Status to WWII Coastwise Merchant Mariners
- d) Proclamation for Older Americans Month 2015
- e) Resolution to establish the Northeastern Workforce Development Consortium
- f) Resolution in Support of Reallocating the Distribution of Sales Tax from Point-of-Sale to Per-Capita Basis
- g) Letter of Support for Metropolitan Community Health Services, Inc.

**Commissioner Walker seconded. Motion carried unanimously.**

PUBLIC FORUM: None.

PUBLIC HEARING: AMBULANCE FRANCHISES: Mr. Potter said that a public hearing is required before approving any Ambulance franchises.

**Commissioner Phelps made a motion to open the public hearing; Commissioner Walker seconded, motion passed unanimously.**

Mr. Potter said that three (3) transport services have applied for Washington County Ambulance Franchises. Commissioner Manning asked Ms. Jennifer O'Neal would three (3) franchises cause too much competition with our own transports. Ms. O'Neal said there are currently more than three (3) operating in the County now and it would actually cut it down to just three (3) transport companies operating in the County. Ms. O'Neal went on to say that no impact should be felt with all of the home transports and transports from the nursing home. The franchises will be for pickups and drop-off within Washington County. Mr. Potter said the franchise contract will require the franchises to participate in the EMS Peer Review. Mr. Potter said that if the County finds the franchises do negatively impact the County's EMS transports the franchise may not be renewed after one year. Transport services applying for a franchise pay a one-time application fee of \$2,500 and then \$1,000 fee every year after that. Chair Sexton asked if any transport companies have been turned down. Mr. Potter said he would have to check--one applicant might have been missing some paperwork. Mr. Rhodes said having franchises could help the County with evaluating point to point transports. Mr. Rhodes said he felt it would be safe to approve these three (3) applicants.

Jeff White, COO of MedEx Medical Transport (one of the applicants) told Commissioner Johnson that they have been in business since 2010. They also serve Lenoir, Greene and Pitt Counties. His company will have a local presence and their home office is located in Ahsokie.

Carol Atkins, GM of Bertie Ambulance Service (one of the applicants) said they currently serve Washington County but wants to be a franchise to be able to do point to point transports. Ms. Atkins said they have an office located in Windsor and one in Belhaven. Ms. Atkins said they serve Henderson, Nash, Warren, Halifax, Bertie counties and two (2) counties in VA. They have been in operation since 1996. They have paramedic transports and non-emergency medical transports. They can be used as back up in any sort of disaster.

Commissioner Johnson asked if Ms. Wallace if she had any thoughts on the County accepting franchises. Ms. Wallace said that she thinks accepting franchises will help the County because the transport services that do not join the franchise will not be able to run in the County.

**Commissioner Phelps made a motion to close the public hearing; Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion passed unanimously.**

**Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the Ambulance Franchises for MedEx Medical Transport Service, Coastal Medical Transport and Bertie Ambulance Service. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion passed unanimously.**

SUNENERGY1 DONATION: Ann Keyes told the Commissioners that SunEnergy1 is donating an inflatable Fire Safety Smokehouse to the County Emergency Management Office to be used for demonstrations. It is mobile (on a trailer) and can be taken everywhere for demonstrations. Steven Saunders, SunEnergy1 Project Manager said that it has been a blessing to work with Ms. Keyes. Commissioner Manning thanked Mr. Saunders for his investment and hopes SunEnergy1 will continue to invest in Washington County.

EDMUNDS SOFTWARE UPDATE: Staff from Edmunds Software was not in attendance during the meeting. The Tax Office staff said they were unaware that Edmunds was not coming tonight. The Tax Office staff also said that they have not received the conversion from Edmunds. The Tax Office staff said they were supposed to be in training mode and that has not happened yet either. Commissioner Manning requested that the Tax Office staff ask Edmunds staff to come to the June meeting.

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW:

**Commissioner Manning made a motion to re-convene as the Board of Equalization and Review. Commissioner Johnson seconded; motion carried unanimously.**

Ms. Bennett noted that Ms. Sherri Wilkins, Tax Administrator could not attend tonight's meeting, but left word that there were no appeals at this time.

**Commissioner Johnson made a motion to adjourn the Board of Equalization & Review. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

STRATEGIC PLAN DISCUSSION: Rebecca Liverman asked if the Board had any questions from the information (Action Plan) that was gathered at the last Strategic Plan Discussion. Ms. Liverman recommended that the Board rank (order, prioritize) the items. The Department Heads should give their input on the prioritization of items as well. Next summer will be the half-way point in this 3-year plan. This Action Plan is considered the appendix of the finished document. Ms. Liverman suggested that the following steps be taken. After the items have been prioritized by the Board and the Department Heads, Ms. Liverman suggested that the Action Plan be put on social media (Washington County website and Facebook page). Ms. Liverman also suggested a link should be published in The Roanoke Beacon to both social media sites so the community can read the document. A public meeting should be held soon after.

EMS BILLING RECOMMENDATION: Mr. Rhodes said that the County published an RFP for an EMS Billing company and nine (9) proposals were submitted. The bids were opened on Friday, April 24, 2015 at 4:30 pm. The proposals were scored based on various criteria. The #1 recommendation was Colleton Software. They met all the criteria. Ms. Wallace said Colleton well exceeded the criteria asked for by the County. It was noted that all four (4) evaluators rated Colleton highly.

Dave Pickren and Brian Gurkin of Colleton Software were in attendance and spoke to the Board. They said they had been in business for 21 years and that they only do EMS billing. Colleton Software has 30 active clients in NC counties. Colleton Software also works with private companies. Their headquarters is in Walterboro, SC. They also have an office in Erwin, NC (Harnett County). They collect between \$25M - \$30M in EMS billing per year. Mr. Pickren said he was thankful that the County approved their bid. Mr. Rhodes stated that a strong point is that Colleton is willing to meet with the County on a regular basis and evaluate the current billing and willing to do write-offs if needed, but would rather try to collect revenue. Mr. Pickren said it important to them to continue to meet with the staff they are working with and how important communication is to them. The contract is for 3 years with a 60 day no fault clause.

**Commissioner Johnson made a motion approve Colleton Software's bid for the County's EMS billing. Commissioner Walker seconded; motion carried unanimously.**

ALBEMARLE REGIONAL SOLID WASTE AUTHORITY (ARSWA): Mr. Potter said the ARSWA contract was in the Commissioners' Board packages. The resolution that Mr. Potter distributed authorizes Washington County to join the ARSWA. The real intent is to show that the County is interested in joining ARSWA. Ms. Bennett read aloud the following resolution.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING WASHINGTON COUNTY TO JOIN THE  
ALBEMARLE REGIONAL SOLID-WASTE MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY  
("ARSWA")**

**AND TO EXECUTE AND DELIVER NECESSARY INSTRUMENTS RELATED  
THEREUPON UPON THE SATISFACTION OF CERTAIN CONDITIONS PRECEDENT:**

**WHEREAS**, The Washington County Board of County Commissioners has studied and considered the possible benefits of joining ARSWA for a considerable period of time; and

**WHEREAS**, County Staff has been directed to pursue negotiations in order to permit Washington County to join ARSWA, and has expended considerable time and resources to do so; and

**WHEREAS**, Upon information and belief joining ARSWA will result in significant long-term cost savings for the citizens of Washington County by securing a lower solid-waste disposal fee than Washington County currently enjoys under its existing contract; and

**WHEREAS**, Joining ARSWA will also permit Washington County to enjoy the benefit of certain pooled resources shared by member counties including without limitation administrative staff and will also enable Washington County to enjoy a more powerful collective negotiating position with respect to certain related services; and

**WHEREAS**, The attached instruments including the "Second Amendment to Resolution Establishing Albemarle Regional Solid Waste Management Authority", the "First Amendment to Waste Supply and Disposal Agreement", the "Member Waste Management Agreement", "Licensing of Waste Collectors", and "Municipal Waste Management Agreement" represent the material terms and conditions which Washington County is required to agree to in order to join ARSWA; and

**WHEREAS**, The Washington County Board of County Commissioners desires to authorize the execution of such instruments or of similar instruments containing substantially the same terms and conditions for the purpose of joining ARSWA, subject however to obtaining certain clarifications and/or assurances from ARSWA/REPUBLIC prior thereto.

**NOW THEREFORE, THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY  
COMMISSIONERS RESOLVES AS FOLLOWS:**

1. That the Board Chair be authorized to execute and deliver into the possession of the County Attorney, the signature page(s) of the attached instruments reflecting Washington County's general agreement to the terms thereof in order to join as a member of ARSWA; and

2. That the County Attorney be directed to seek and obtain from ARSWA/REPUBLIC certain written clarifications and/or assurances as follows prior to delivering such executed instruments into the possession of ARSWA and/or REPUBLIC.
  - a. That nothing contained within any instruments including without limitation the franchise/"license agreement" shall have the effect of restricting or prohibiting the continuing operation, and use by the general public and/or any unfranchised/unlicensed waste hauler, of C&D waste only, to the Washington County local C&D landfill.
  - b. That Washington County shall bear no responsibility for, or be held in breach under any of the instruments for, the failure to obtain fully executed Municipal Waste Management Agreements from each of the three incorporated municipalities within Washington County, provided however that Washington County shall exercise good faith efforts to do so by the July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 deadline or as soon thereafter as can be accomplished.
  - c. That Washington County shall be entitled to a reasonable extension of the July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 deadline for adopting a franchise/license ordinance to the extent required to comply with applicable laws and/or procedures, provided however that Washington County shall exercise good faith efforts to do so by the July 31<sup>st</sup>, 2015 deadline or as soon thereafter as can be accomplished.
  - d. That nothing contained within any of the instruments restricts or prohibits Washington County's ability to freely advertise and seek out (including without limitation by the use of a Request for Bids or Proposals process) competitive bids for the provision of solid-waste hauling services, and that no obligation shall be created by operation of the instruments to exclusively utilize Republic for providing such services.

ADOPTED THIS 4<sup>th</sup> DAY OF MAY, 2015,

BY THE WASHINGTON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

\_\_\_\_\_  
WILLIAM R. SEXTON, JR., CHAIR

SEAL

\_\_\_\_\_  
JULIE J. BENNETT, CMC, NCCCC  
CLERK TO THE BOARD

ATTEST

**Commissioner Manning made a motion to approve the resolution allowing Washington County to join ARSWA. Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

## BOARDS & COMMITTEES:

### COASTAL CARE/ECBH GOVERNING BOARD

At the April 6, 2015 Board of Commissioners meeting, Mr. Dave Peterson of Coastal Care/ECBH asked for the Commissioners to appoint two members to their new Board. Commissioner Tracey A. Johnson and Ms. Terrell Davis, MTW Health Department Director has both agreed to serve on this Board if appointed.

**Commissioner Phelps made a motion to appoint Commissioner Johnson and Ms. Terrell Davis to serve on the Coastal Care/ECBH Governing Board. Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

### DRAINAGE COMMITTEE

The Washington County Drainage Advisory Committee met on March 12 and now asks the Board to appoint the following members.

Chairman: Guy Davenport  
Vice-Chairman: Mike Harris  
Secretary: Keith Sawyer, WCSW  
Rep. from Commissioners: D. Cole Phelps  
Drainage District 5: Guy Davenport  
Town of Plymouth: Mike Wright  
Town of Roper: Charles Sharp  
Town of Creswell: J.D. Melton  
Scuppernong River South: Doug Maxwell  
Scuppernong River North: Freddie Spear  
Pungo River: Charles Fletcher  
Kendrick's Creek: Lloyd Jones  
Conaby Creek: Jerry Rhodes  
WCSWBS: Steve Barnes  
WCSWCT: Keith Sawyer  
Albemarle: Buster Manning

Commissioner Phelps stated he would like to have another Commissioner serve on this committee other than himself. Chair Sexton volunteered to replace Commissioner Phelps on the Washington County Drainage Advisory Committee.

**Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the membership of the Washington county Drainage Advisory Committee. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

LAKE PHELPS ADVISORY COMMITTEE: Mr. Keith Sawyer spoke to the Board regarding the Lake Phelps Advisory Committee. This committee was formed many years ago but has not been active. The gates have been let open at the Lake and this has caused excessive flooding.

Mr. Sawyer asked for the following members to be appointed:

County Commissioner from Washington County and Tyrrell County  
Soil & Water from Washington County and Tyrrell County  
Superintendent from Lake Phelps (Doug LeQuire)  
Town of Creswell  
One from Southside of the Lake (Steve Barnes)

**Commissioner Manning made a motion to approve resurrecting the Lake Phelps Advisory Committee with the abovementioned membership. Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

Chair Sexton asked the Clerk to the Board to contact the Town of Creswell and ask them to appoint a Town Council member to the Lake Phelps Advisory Committee.

Chair Sexton appointed Commissioner Phelps as the Chair of the Lake Phelps Advisory Committee.

Chair Sexton would like to send a letter to the County's Representatives relaying the issues with Lake Phelps such as water control structures that are broken and the silt issue.

**Commissioner Manning made a motion to authorize the County Attorney to write the letter to be sent to the County's Representatives on behalf of the Board to obtain funds for fixing the issues at Lake Phelps. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

The Clerk to the Board was asked to assist in setting up a meeting of the Lake Phelps Advisory Committee after all the members have been put in place.

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT: Mr. Milazi came before the Board with Sheriff Barnes regarding medical expenses (from Vidant) for an inmate which will be ~\$15,000 (instead of ~\$114,000 --Vidant reduced the bill.) The total the Sheriff asked for was \$20,400: \$15,000 for medical expenses for the inmate, \$880 for transport and a hospital bill of \$4,000.

**Commissioner Johnson made a motion to authorize the Finance Officer to pay the Vidant bill of \$15,000. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

Mr. Milazi noted that EMS was audited by the State last year for the year ending June 30, 2010. Ms. Wallace and Finance worked tirelessly to make sure the County did not have to pay back funds. However, non-emergency transport has been being put on the cost report when only emergency transport should be on the cost report. EMS is being audited again this year for the year ending June 30, 2011.

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

Mr. Potter distributed a table of legislative items. The Sales Tax item seems to have stalled.

**Legislative Update:**

FYI: The crossover deadline originally scheduled for May 8<sup>th</sup> was moved up to April 30<sup>th</sup> by Legislative Action and has passed as of this update.

BILL DESIGNATOR	DESCRIPTIONS	AS OF 1123AM ON 5/4/15	Crossover	Local Action
S258	Vacancy in Sheriff's Office filled by Exec. Committee of Party, not Board (like 46 other counties)	Passed Senate, Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading House, Referred to Committee on Elections	Y	Related to next item:
H462	Special Election Authority for filling Sheriff Vacancy	Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading in House Only, Referred to Committee on Elections	N	Local Resolution Sent
S544	School Building Lease Reform	Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading in Senate Only, Referred to multiple committees	N	Local Resolution of Support Sent
H236	Jail Purchasing Exemption for Food	Passed House, Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Senate, Referred to Committee on State & Local Gov't	Y	Discussions w/ Rep. Tine and Sheriff
H640	Outdoor Heritage Act (Sunday Hunting)	Passed House, Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Senate, Referred to Committee on Rules & Operations	Y	Resolution opposing Hunting on Sunday Sent; After failed amendment to exempt Washington County, Committee Sub adopted that would permit individual counties to prohibit Sunday hunting by local ordinance.
H390	Move Washington County under BCCC	Passed House, Passed 1 <sup>st</sup> Reading Senate, Referred to Committee on Rules & Operations	Y	Local Resolution Sent; Attorney and Clerk attended House Committee Hearing in defense of legislation.

**At 7:40 PM, with no further business to discuss, Commissioner Manning made a motion to recess the meeting until May 18 at 6:00 pm. Commissioner Phelps seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

---

William R. Sexton, Jr.  
Chair

---

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