

March 10, 2016

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a recessed session on Thursday, March 10, 2016 at 6:00 PM at Beaufort County Community Colleges' Washington County Center, Roper, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Manning, Phelps and Sexton were present. Also present were County Manager Willie Mack Carawan, Jr., Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett and County Attorney/Assistant County Manager Curtis Potter. Commissioner Walker was unable to attend.

Chair Phelps called the March 10, 2016 meeting to order.

PSAP BACK-UP DISCUSSION: Chair Phelps called on Sheriff Barnes to speak to the Board. Sheriff Barnes reiterated that Washington County needs a location to operate the back-up PSAP. Sheriff Barnes was approached by Roper's Mayor and a Town Council member about a location in Roper that is available. It's a 2500 sq. ft. building. Sheriff Barnes likes the building. Roper wants the E911 presence there. All the County has to do is put walls in it and lay out the design. The Roper Mayor and Town Council members are willing to work with the Sheriff's Office. Commissioner Manning asked about the price. Sheriff Barnes said the Roper Mayor has to talk with her Town Council. Ms. Delisa Johnson said it would make a good area for E911 and then have the back-up PSAP in the Courthouse. Ms. Ann Keyes, Emergency Management Director said the building is large enough to have a back-up EOC in that building and the Fire Marshal has said this would cause no issues from his perspective. Ms. Darlene Fikes, IT Director said there shouldn't be any problem with running internet and having a dedicated line to that building. Roper Mayor Blount said they are already looking at internet for that area and for the FSA building, so those items will be available. Commissioner Sexton asked would the County have to finish the building like we are having do for the FSA. Roper Mayor Blount said no because there are less employees and a firewall is already there. Commissioner Johnson asked how it would work as an EOC back-up. Ms. Keyes said she could get a grant for a generator and it would also be able to be used by E911.

Mr. Potter said the Board previously asked staff to draft a list of vacant facilities in the County. Facilities available range anywhere from 1400 to 2500 sq. ft. and \$800/mth to \$2500/mth for rent. Square footage needs have to be determined to see what else could be put in various facilities to compensate for the money needed for rent (getting the most for our money). The old radio station in Plymouth is 1400-1600 sq. ft. and might be inadequate for the PSAP back-up.

Mr. Carawan is in agreement with the Sheriff. He wants to be sure that it is ok to have the back-up facility in the Courthouse and that the new location would meet E911's needs. Mr. Potter would like to look into writing an agreement as to what has been presented by the Mayor Roper after her Town Council approves it. Chair Phelps stressed that the facility in Roper would be E911's primary location.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to move forward with pursuing the building offered in Roper as the primary location for Washington County's E911 Center if the Roper Town Council approves the partnership. Commissioner Johnson seconded. Commissioner Sexton discussed that the County needs to work out

the money part also. Commissioner Johnson said this needs to come back to the Board for the approval of the terms. Sheriff Barnes said that money for new consoles can be provided by a grant. Chair Phelps said he visited the potential new site for E911 today and sees where it can even be expanded for other things. **Motion carried unanimously.**

DISCOUNT TAX OPTIONS: Mr. Carawan explained to the Board that based on the information that Ms. Wilkins sent the Board, you will see that the County's expenditures in the first two months of the fiscal year usually exceed its revenues for those months thus the need to generate revenue for those first months of the fiscal year.

Chair Phelps reiterated the discount tax structure and what it would be. The discounts would only be offered if the County raises taxes. Discussion ensued. The Board instructed Ms. Wilkins to create a resolution to send to the Department of Revenue showing the 2% discount to be offered in July and the 1% discount to be offered in August. This discount can be rescinded at any time. Some Board members vaguely remembered that discounts were offered in years past, but no one could remember if it worked well or not.

Commissioner Manning said he's riding the fence on this. He is looking at the taxpayers as businessmen. Commissioner Manning said he would take advantage of the discount. He doesn't think that other taxpayers who struggle now would see this as an advantage. Commissioner Johnson asked when the resolution could be rescinded. Mr. Carawan said it could be rescinded at the end of the fiscal year. Mr. Carawan went on to say that even if Ms. Wilkins turns in the Resolution now to the Department of Revenue, it can be rescinded before this July. Chair Phelps said he feels that people would take advantage of the tax discounts. Mr. Carawan said he would encourage the Board to at least try the tax discounts for one year. Ms. Keyes said she does remember when it was offered before and discounts were taken by a lot of taxpayers.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to proceed to offer a 2% discount for July and 1% discount for August for the 2016-2017 fiscal year. Chair Phelps seconded and called for the vote. Chair Phelps and Commissioner Sexton voted aye. Commissioners Johnson and Manning voted nay. The motion died.

Ms. Wilkins mentioned that May 1st is when the resolution would have to be in the Department of Revenue for the County to offer any discounts at the beginning of FY 2017 (which begins July 1, 2016). Chair Phelps would like this item to be brought back to the April 4, 2016 Board of Commissioners meeting.

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

Chair Phelps mentioned that the Lady Vikings basketball team will be playing for the State Championship in Chapel Hill on Saturday.

Chair Phelps also mentioned that Judy Justice and Warren Judge were both in attendance tonight. Ms. Justice said she was in Washington County earlier in the week and feels she understands things in our County a little better now and wants to represent Washington County. Mr. Judge said it is good to be on the other side of the table for the

PSAP and tax discussions. Mr. Judge thanked the Commissioners for allowing him to speak and he wants to represent Washington County as well. He knows Washington County needs infrastructure and broadband in all areas, along with better education.

Ms. Bennett mentioned to the Board that they are invited to a meeting at the Albemarle Commission on March 22, 2016.

Ms. Bennett also mentioned the upcoming NCACC Eastern District Meeting being held in Roper at the Vernon James Center on April 6, 2016. Commissioners Manning and Sexton asked Ms. Bennett to register them. (All other Commissioners are registered.)

NCACC "MEETING IN A BOX": Senator Smith-Ingram was in attendance to hear the legislative concerns from the Commissioners. The Senator said she always enjoys visiting in Washington County. She has been working on some infrastructure programs. There are grants out there for doing secondary roads and water. She is going to work with Chair Phelps on finding ways for Washington County to apply for these grants. Two citizens were in attendance and interested in having their road paved. The Senator asked for the citizens to give their information to the Board Chair and the Senator will look into it. The Senator said she has spoken with the Airport Director, Mr. Knapp Brabble and will look into airport funds. She is excited about the NC Connect bond because it will have funds for recreation at Pettigrew State Park and Goose Creek Park. Chair Phelps clarified that the formal requests for the roads to be paved should go through Ms. Ann Keyes office. Ms. Keyes said she would like to give Senator Smith-Ingram a list of all the unpaved roads in Washington County. Commissioner Johnson spoke about trying to get a PARTF grant and the County having to pay half of it and the County just doesn't have it. Commissioner Johnson said she has heard talk of the restructuring of County designations (such as Tier 1, Tier 2) and hopes that if that is the case that it helps Washington County, not hurts us.

Chair Phelps went through the following items that are of interest to Washington County and that Senator Smith-Ingram may be able to take to the legislature for the County.

Drainage has always been an issue in Washington County. The Board recently passed a resolution regarding the water level at Lake Phelps and hopes that it is well-received because it can make a difference. Senator Smith-Ingram said there is some funding to help drainage issues--\$250,000 from the House and \$250,000 from the Senate.

Commissioner Sexton mentioned that there are many canals that need to be cleaned out and funds have been cut for doing such things and then regulations are so strict as to what can and cannot be done. The silt is what is actually holding the water back. Senator Smith-Ingram said she will meet with her colleagues and discuss this. She also said she is trying to have a meeting where the citizens can come and express their concerns on these issues. She asked was hydrilla a problem in Washington County. Commissioner Manning said it is beginning to be an issue in Washington County.

Regarding Recreation, Senator Smith-Ingram said she has been looking into the County's resolution regarding the fence around the Pea Ridge Park. Chair Phelps said he

would like to have counties pay a percentage rather than a set amount for the PARTF grant match by the County.

Senator Smith-Ingram spoke about the redistribution of sales tax distribution. That money is supposed to be used for education K-12 and infrastructure. The County needs a plan to show how this money will be spent in Washington County.

Mr. Carawan said that money for PSAP is an issue for the smaller counties for doing these projects. If the County does receive a grant, it is usually for brick and mortar and then the County is restricted as to how the money can be spent. It may be needed for new consoles.

Discretionary Money for Cherry Bridge: Representative Tine has said this money is available and he is to have information sent to Senator Smith-Ingram by April 19.

Ferries: Commissioner Sexton said the RPO is having to deal with this. If the state doesn't come up with the money, the counties will have to fund new ferries out of our district money. The Senator said their hands are tied until the Study Commission has completed their report and can't take any action until then. Commissioner Sexton would like for them to just charge the tourists a toll for the ferry ride and give the residents a pass. Senator Smith-Ingram asked Commissioner Sexton how he felt about tolling. Commissioner Sexton said he wasn't against it, but feels that the residents who are going there to work should get a break.

Lottery Funding: Chair Phelps stated that Washington County needs more lottery funding. We were supposed to be getting 40%.

Chair Phelps said Washington County needs economic development. Senator Smith-Ingram said when walking with Chair Phelps through downtown Plymouth, she asked him were there plans for a 'facelift' for downtown. The Senator wants to work with Washington County and Tyrrell County on getting grants for this.

Commissioner Sexton said Washington County needs internet at the Commerce Building area on Airport Road to be able to market our building and for the airport to use and also for the existing businesses in that area to have access. Senator Smith-Ingram said she sees where it cuts Washington County out of E-commerce by not having internet in that area.

Commissioner Johnson said Washington County needs money for Cooperative Extension and ways to mediate between the School Board and the Commissioners so they cannot sue.

Mr. Carawan made another statement about the ferries. The residents feel the ferry is their highway and what they use to get to work.

Education: Chair Phelps said there is a need to look at the higher level education for children in Washington County.

Chair Phelps thanked Senator Smith-Ingram for attending the ribbon cutting and the Board's meeting.

Chair Phelps said the NCACC's Eastern District meeting will be in Washington County for the first time on April 6 at the Vernon James Center, beginning at 5:30 pm. Commissioner Johnson will report on Washington County's needs/issues at that meeting.

Back in Open Session, **Commissioner Sexton made a motion to appoint Mr. Carawan as the Interim Finance Officer and Ms. Missy Dixon as the Deputy Finance Officer. Commissioner Manning seconded.** Discussion ensued. Chair Phelps stated that he is opposed to this motion and it is nothing personal against the County Manager, Chair Phelps is just concerned regarding the public perception and potential conflict of interest of the County Manager holding two titles simultaneously. **Commissioners Johnson, Sexton and Manning voted aye. Chair Phelps voted nay. Motion passed.**

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve A Master Resolution and Authorization for Depository Accounts and Treasury Management Services and A New Finance Official Authorization. Commissioner Johnson seconded. **Commissioners Johnson, Sexton and Manning voted aye. Chair Phelps voted nay. Motion passed.**

At 8:35 PM with no further business to discuss, Commissioner Johnson made a motion to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.

D. Cole Phelps
Chair

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