

April 4, 2016

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a regular session on Monday, April 4, 2016 at 6:00 PM in the Commissioners' Room, 116 Adams Street, Plymouth, NC. Commissioners Johnson, Manning, Phelps, Sexton and Walker were present. Also present were County Manager Willie Mack Carawan, Jr., Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett, County Attorney/Assistant County Manager Curtis Potter and Deputy Finance Officer Missy Dixon.

Chair Phelps called the April 4, 2016 to order. Reverend Bob Moulden gave the invocation. Iyanna Boston and Hunt Ipock, both 5th grade students at Pines Elementary School, led the pledge of allegiance.

ADDITIONS/DELETIONS: Chair Phelps noted that there was one deletion--- to remove Item 10— PSAP Discussion and one addition—to add to the Closed Session--NCGS §143-318.11 (a)(3) (attorney-client privilege).

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

- a) Approval of Minutes
- b) Resolution Specifying Finance Officer Designation

Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC FORUM: Ms. Melanie Perry, 4686 NC Hwy 32 South, Plymouth gave an update about Washington County Hospital. She noted that WCH has purchased a new wheelchair and are starting a facelift of the lobby area. She meets daily with the managers to talk about any issues. WCH has been partnering with Sentara for MRI services and Sentara is donating furniture as they are remodeling. WCH is currently searching for a health provider that understands the needs of a rural hospital. Ms. Perry said she has met with Greg Fox about a facelift of the yard. However, if that doesn't work out, the managers will get together to do the work. Ms. Perry also noted that the parking lot is being worked on. Ms. Perry said she is available at 252-793-7654.

Mr. Lloyd W. Jones, 842 Gourd Neck Road, Lees Mill Township, told the Board he is still having problems with the trash pickup drivers. The end of his ditch tile has been run over and messed up. A guy in the water treatment plant cleaned it out and fixed it, but now it is caving in again. On March 22, GDS picked up the two weeks' worth of trash that day since they didn't pick up the week before. Mr. Jones said he was in the yard when they came through but the driver wouldn't talk to him. Mr. Jones said he doesn't want GDS to be able to put in a bid for the County's trash pickup when it comes time to go out for bid. Chair Phelps asked Mr. Potter and Mr. Carawan to follow up on this. Mr. Potter said it has been discussed for our trash pickup to go out for bid but since the County was in the process of joining ARSWA, the County didn't feel it was in our best interest to make a change, but will look into it now.

PUBLIC HEARING: **Commissioner Manning made a motion to open the public hearing on the Zoning Text Amendment. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion passed unanimously.**

Ms. Ann Keyes spoke to the Board reiterating that the Washington County Planning Board is asking the Washington County Board of Commissioners to approve their recommendation to amend the zoning text in the Washington County Zoning Ordinance.

The existing text under Article 3A R-A Rural Area—Single Family Detached Residential District (C) Uses Permitted by Special Use Permit:

d) Commercial outdoor recreational activities, including hiking, hunting, boating, horseback riding, swimming, skeet and trap shooting, shooting preserves and fishing

The recommended text is:

d) Commercial **indoor**/outdoor recreational activities, including hiking, hunting, boating, horseback riding, swimming, skeet and trap shooting, shooting preserves and fishing

Ms. Keyes stated that the Planning Board is trying to work with the citizens within the County in a manner that would not compromise the intent of the ordinance and assist the citizens of the County as well.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to close the public hearing on the Zoning Text Amendment. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion passed unanimously.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion approve the Zoning Text Amendment above as recommended by the Planning Board. Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.

STRATEGIC PLAN: Chair Phelps stated that he asked for the Strategic Plan to be put back on the agenda. The Commissioners and staff started working on the Strategic Plan in 2013/14. Chair Phelps said the Commissioners need to work on the vision for the County and wants the thoughts of the Board so things can move forward. Commissioner Sexton would like the Board to get together to look at the accomplishments and see what other items the County may need to have and how to address other issues that were in the plan from the beginning.

Chair Phelps asked Ms. Bennett to speak about where the County is at on the Strategic Plan. Ms. Bennett explained that staff was in the process of setting up meetings with people from the community and County staff when the former County Manager retired. It was felt that the process should be put on hold until a new County Manager was hired so they would have a say in the Strategic Plan. In the meantime, more of the community folks have changed: Dr. Davis, WCS Superintendent and Cameron Highsmith, WCH CEO are no longer here. Their replacements will need to be contacted. Chair Phelps asked Ms. Liverman if she had anything to add. Ms. Liverman said the Commissioners are nearing the mid-year point of the Strategic Plan and that we do need to get back on track. We need see what we have accomplished and what direction we need to go in. Chair Phelps and the Board asked Ms. Bennett to get the committees to meet and then have the chairs of the committees give a report at the July Board of Commissioners meeting with their recommendations. Chair Phelps doesn't want the vision to get lost.

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW: Ms. Bennett gave oaths to the Commissioners so they could convene as the Board of Equalization and Review.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion to convene as the Board of Equalization and Review. Commissioner Sexton seconded; motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Sherri Wilkins, Tax Administrator explained that there were no appeals at this time.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to recess the Board of Equalization & Review until May 2, 2016 at 6:00 PM. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH: Chair Phelps mentioned this is the third award presented. He also reminded staff that nominations can be turned in until the 15th of every month. Chair Phelps told the Board and the audience that the employee receiving the Employee of the Month Award has been with the County since January 5, 1975. Chair Phelps went on to say that this nominee is known all across the state and says herself that she ‘came over on the Ark’. She is also referred to as “the Queen”. Chair Phelps presented Ms. Ann Keyes, Emergency Management Director and Planning & Safety Director with a certificate of appreciation. Ms. Arnold took Ms. Keyes’ picture and it will be placed on the wall in the foyer of the County Administration Building.

OPTIONS FOR TAX DISCOUNTS: Ms. Wilkins said she is here to answer any more questions regarding the tax discounts. Commissioner Sexton said, in looking at the list provided to the Commissioners of places that offered discounts, that Roper, Creswell and Plymouth have done so in the past.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion approve the Resolution for Tax Discounts. Commissioner Walker seconded. Mr. Walker said it is a win/win situation. The County is giving the citizens a chance to pay early and receive a discount and the County will have cash flow during the months of July and August (which they don’t usually have). **Chair Phelps, Commissioners Walker and Sexton voted aye. Commissioners Johnson and Manning voted nay. Motion carried.**

CRESWELL CLINIC LEASE APPROVAL: Mr. Potter told the Board that it staff’s recommendation is to approve the Creswell Clinic Lease.

Commissioner Johnson made a motion approve the Creswell Clinic Lease. Commissioner Sexton seconded, motion carried unanimously.

CRESWELL CLINIC PROPERTY MANAGEMENT: Mr. Potter told the Board that the Creswell Clinic sits on an approximately nine (9) acre tract of land owned by Washington County. Apparently some time ago, the northern part of this tract consisting of approximately four (4) acres began to suffer from lack of mowing and general maintenance and was becoming unkempt and overgrown.

In an effort to resolve this issue, Ms. Syble Spruill approached Mr. Freddie Spencer who farms the adjacent track to the east of the county-owned property and asked if he might be able to keep the four (4) acre section of the county-owned property maintained in exchange for using it seasonally to attempt to grow crops. This arrangement was verbally approved by prior County administration.

Given that the County is planning to lease the Clinic to RCCHC, Ms. Spruill brought this issue back up so that it could be more formally addressed, and so that if the County has any additional plans for the 4 acre tract in the immediate future, Mr. Spencer does not inadvertently plant the property and then lose the ability to harvest the crop.

Mr. Potter said he spoke with Mr. Spencer who informed him that he was planning to plant either soybeans or cotton this year but would not know for sure until the end of April, and that planting would not start until early May. He would anticipate harvesting in October/November. He indicated that he started cultivating and planting the 4 acres at Ms. Spruill's request to keep this section of the property from becoming overgrown. Much of it is low lying and suffers from water inundation/flooding during heavy rainfall events.

Mr. Spencer indicated to Mr. Potter that one of the drainage ditches that drain this property has become silted in and is in need of state maintenance which might help substantially reduce the water inundation issue.

Mr. Potter said that Mr. Spencer is not interested in paying any rent for the continued use of the property because according to him, he essentially breaks even on the value of its usage given its poor condition.

Mr. Potter also said Mr. Spencer is willing to continue farming this section of the property which would benefit the County by keeping the property cultivated and mowed and prevent it from growing up and requiring additional maintenance.

Mr. Potter recommended that the Board consider a year to year arrangement. Chair Phelps said this would be a good time to talk to the Town of Creswell in how they would like to develop those existing 4 acres. Commissioner Sexton said at one time there was talk of having a landing pad for helicopters at that end of the County; however, Commissioner Sexton also noted it is a pretty wet piece of land and it would take some work. Chair Phelps said at one time there was a plan for other things on that acreage. Commissioner Johnson said there were talks of there being a library, housing EMS, having a Sheriff's station and a 911 station—for that area to be a Public Safety Center.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to authorize the County Manager to lease the four (4) acres at the Creswell Clinic Site on a year to year basis to Mr. Freddie Spencer. Commissioner Manning seconded, motion carried unanimously.

SOFTWARE TRAINING: Mr. Carawan said there were some gaps in the County's training with Edmunds. Mr. Carawan has had several conversations with Edmunds. Mr. Carawan would like to have Edmunds come on site here to Washington County because it would help staff by them using the County data on County computers. Staff have had some glitches and Edmunds is working on a fix.

Mr. Carawan explained that it would cost \$1,200/day for them to come here--for no more than 5 days--for an amount not to exceed \$6,000. Mr. Carawan said he also needs Edmunds to tweak our chart of accounts (they should be 11 digits—not 9 digits). Commissioner Johnson asked where this money for training would come from. Mr. Carawan said it would have to come from fund balance. Commissioner Sexton asked if Mr. Carawan has looked into the software enough. Should the County look at a new program rather than dumping money into this program? Staff knew going in that Edmunds had not worked with County finances before and Commissioner Sexton has reservations about spending \$6,000

on training if the County isn't getting what we thought we were getting to start with. Commissioner Sexton reiterated that he doesn't want to waste money on training. Mr. Carawan said staff are in the throes of this, and if we were to solicit for new software we would be 2 years out in getting something new. Mr. Carawan told the Board he has talked to Ms. Wilkins about new software for the tax office and that what they use now does meet their needs but in the future, she will need to go to new software. Mr. Carawan would like for the tax office and finance office to use the same software. Mr. Carawan has asked Ms. Wilkins to start looking into this—tax software with the finance component. Mr. Carawan said he still felt that staff needs training. Commissioner Manning asked how many folks would be trained. Mr. Carawan said it would be himself along with Mr. Potter, Ms. Fikes, all of the Finance Office and department heads with remote access. Chair Phelps asked if \$1,200/day was the best Edmunds could offer. Commissioner Manning asked why five (5) days. Mr. Carawan said that he feels that would give staff what they need to function. Commissioner Manning asked what the County has invested in Edmunds. Mr. Potter said \$75,000 initially and \$12,000 per year for maintenance. Other bidders were over \$150 K. Commissioner Sexton said he feels the County learned a hard lesson by taking the cheapest route. Chair Phelps asked about the five (5) days. Mr. Carawan said he picked that amount of days, but can send them home early if needed. Commissioner Sexton asked does the County still have to pay for Edmunds' staff hotel and travel or is it included in the \$1,200/day. Mr. Potter said he will check on that. Chair Phelps said the County needs to go ahead and start looking for a new software company. Commissioner Johnson asked does the County still have issues with Edmunds on writing programs. Ms. Dixon said Edmunds has been writing new programs when issues were found. She said when Edmunds was here they focused on payroll. Ms. Dixon said she received a five-minute training on journal entries. Commissioner Manning said the County should push for a reduced price since we didn't get full training in the beginning. Ms. Dixon said Edmunds has been helpful by phone when needed. Commissioner Johnson said since the employees have a better grasp on it now, will it help to have Edmunds on site for just 2 or 3 days? Ms. Dixon deferred to the County Manager. Commissioner Sexton asked the same thing. Mr. Carawan said the County needs to be able to utilize the software that we have now and we don't have a clear understanding of the program so there needs to be some training. Mr. Carawan said 75 to 90% of the issues could be solved in those five (5) days of training.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve Edmunds coming to train staff for no longer than 5 days and not more than \$6,000. Commissioner Walker seconded. Commissioners Johnson, Manning, Sexton and Walker voted aye. Chair Phelps voted nay. Motion carried.

BUDGET AMENDMENTS: Mr. Carawan presented budget amendments and revised budget amendments to the Board:

- BA#2016-004 Sheriff's donations (Revised)
- BA#2106-005 Tax & IT programming (Revised)
- BA#2016-006 EM Domtar Generator Grant-Airport
- BA#2016-007 Emergency Management First Call Alert System (Revised)
- BA#2016-008 Senior Center—Vidant Health Foundation Grant
- BA#2016-009 EM—Regional Hazard Mitigation Plan (Revised)
- BA#2016-010 Landfill Caterpillar Repairs (Revised)
- BA#2016-011 Senior Center (Revised)
- BA#2016-013 Social Services (Revised)
- BA#2016-014 ARSWMA Buy-In (Revised)
- BA#1016-016 Sheriff's Office (Revised)
- BA#2016-020 Insurance Proceeds—Durango (Revised)

BA#2016-022 Commerce Center IDF Grant (Revised)
BA#2016-032 Emergency Medical Dispatch

**Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the budget amendments listed above.
Commissioner Walker seconded; motion carried unanimously.**

FINANCE OFFICER'S REPORT: Mr. Carawan provided the Board with a summary by fund. Commissioner Johnson said she would like to have the report show the percentage of each budget shown on the summary. Chair Phelps said he would like the date to be cut off sooner so that the finance report can be sent out in the Board's agenda package.

Commissioner Sexton had a question for Ms. Wilkins regarding how the Commissioners can look at the statistical report to find out how much money the County is receiving from the foreclosures from Zacchaeus. Commissioner Sexton would like to see what extra monies they are bringing in. Ms. Wilkins explained her report. Commissioner Manning asked Ms. Wilkins if the foreclosure process is working. Ms. Wilkins said yes, it is definitely working.

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

Commissioner Johnson reminded the Commissioners of the NCACC Eastern District Meeting being held at the Vernon James Center on April 6 @ 5:30 PM. At least thirteen counties should be in attendance.

Chair Phelps said the Creswell Primary Clinic opens on April 11, 2016. The ribbon cutting will be June 1st at 2:00 PM with Rep. Butterfield in attendance.

Commissioner Johnson congratulated Ms. Bennett on her upcoming swearing-in as President of the North Carolina Association of County Clerks on April 16.

Chair Phelps said that the school board will be holding public meetings to discuss their long range plan. The dates are April 6 at the Pines Elementary School, April 7 at Washington County Union School and April 11 at Creswell High School. All meetings will start at 7:00 PM. Chair Phelps asked Mr. Potter to give a brief overview of the meeting held last week with the school board. Mr. Potter stated that he, Chair Phelps and Commissioner Walker met at 4:00 PM as scheduled, and four (4) Board of Education Members were present although only three (3) sat up front and participated in discussions. They were provided with blue notebooks labeled as "Facility Discussion Plan" which were divided into 4 sections and contained:

- 1: Pines Relocation Plan A & B
- 2: Engineering Report for Pines recommending Roof Replacement & Interior Modifications and HVAC Re-haul at approx. \$6.7M
- 3: NC Dept. of Public Health and Human Services Division of Public Health Memorandum dated 3/30/16 summarizing prior inspections and making recommendations to control humidity although no visible mold was observed.
- 4: Educational Program Recommendations (4pgs) outlining \$34M projected cost to build a new high school, new Pines, convert Creswell High School to Early College, and renovate Union.

During the discussion it became clear that the Board of Education was not yet in full agreement on what it wanted to request from the Board of Commissioners. However, they do appear to be recommending that something be done to address mold concerns at the Pines school immediately and prefer Plan A to Plan B to accomplish this in the short term. However, the emphasis on the need to do something immediately was lessened by the Public Health Memorandum which did not indicate any visible mold findings as a result of their inspection. The School Board also appeared to agree on the need to consolidate the High School as stated within their materials.

As previously mentioned there are a series of public forums scheduled for public input on their long term plan. Mr. Potter said that when he asked the Board of Education if their recommendation might change after these meetings the response was that it might. Commissioners were encouraged to attend the public forums.

During the meeting, Commissioner Walker emphasized the need for the School Board to take the lead on its planning process, to make a unified recommendation, and not to simply ask the Commissioners to figure this out.

The data and numbers presented were not yet finalized and in some cases based on single quotes that were obtained before the meeting. The need for better data and competitive quotes was discussed.

Chair Phelps congratulated Ms. Ann Keyes again on being Employee of the Month.

Mr. Potter said he has been working with the Forestry Service regarding timber at the airport. Some sections that were harvested before have now been replanted.

Mr. Potter said that work is continuing on the Trillium playground grant. Mr. Potter, Ms. Arnold and Mr. Fulford have been meeting regularly on this.

Mr. Potter spoke about the Ambulance Franchise Board meeting held last week. Two franchises re-applied, one did not, and one new application was received.

Mr. Potter also met with Mr. Reynolds and Roper's Mayor Blount regarding using their facility in Roper for the E911 office. These meetings are proceeding well.

Chair Phelps said that the Board will recess until April 18. Ms. Bennett stated that Dominion Power will be here to discuss the transmission lines crossing between Washington County and Beaufort County. Commissioner Manning said Dominion Power is meeting with Beaufort County tonight.

Mr. Keith Sawyer said open house for FSA/Soil & Water will be April 21 @ 10:00 AM and he encouraged the Commissioners to attend.

Commissioner Sexton made a motion to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS §143-318.11 (a)(6) (personnel) and §143-318.11 (a)(3) (attorney-client privilege). Commissioner Johnson seconded, motion carried unanimously.

Back in Open Session, **Commissioner Sexton made a motion to approve the budget amendment BA#2016-033 for a transfer from General Fund Balance of \$439,911.37 to E911. Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

At 8:30 PM with no further business to discuss, **Commissioner Sexton made a motion to recess the meeting to Monday, April 18, 2016 at 6:00 PM. Commissioner Walker seconded, motion carried unanimously.**

D. Cole Phelps
Chair

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