

October 24, 2023

The Washington County Board of Commissioners met in a Special Called Joint Meeting with the Creswell Town Council on Tuesday, October 24, 2023, at 6:00 PM in the Creswell Town Council Room, 109 W. Main Street, Creswell, NC. Commissioners Ann C. Keyes, Carol V. Phelps, John C. Spruill and Julius Walker, Jr. were present. Also present were County Manager/County Attorney Curtis Potter, and Clerk to the Board Julie J. Bennett. Commissioner Tracey A. Johnson was unable to attend.

Attendees for the Creswell Town Council: Joel Harris, Ron Ambrose, Mayor E. Ray Blount, Syble Spruill, Brenda Logan, Town Clerk Penny Chapman.

Chair Walker called the Board of Commissioners' meeting to order and welcomed all who were in attendance. He then asked the Commissioners to introduce themselves.

Mayor Blount called the Creswell Town Council meeting to order and asked the Town Council Members to introduce themselves.

Item 1 Items for Discussion

- a) Grant Writing: Mr. Harris said he understands that Washington County has hired a grant writer and asked what they can do for Creswell. Mr. Potter said yes, we hired someone and are in the process of training her. Ms. Laurie Zoll is the new Grants & Procurement Manager. She is also making a list of all the grants the County is involved in, She is also doing Procurement. She cannot write all grants for everyone but can facilitate working with others to train them. He said he talked with Ms. Zoll today about holding a training meeting for the Town's folks. Mr. Harris said it would be nice to be able to use her. Creswell needs a grant for repairing their streets. Mr. Potter said he just received an email from Mr. Lou Manring of the Plymouth Downtown Development Association (DDA) with 17 pages of available grants. He will ask the County Clerk to send the list to the Creswell Town Clerk.
- b) Law Enforcement: Mayor Blount thanked Deputy Chief Arlo Norman for attending tonight's meeting. Mr. Harris thanked Deputy Chief Norman for all the Sheriff's Department does and knows that they have a lot to do. He states that they need more enforcement on Main Street whenever possible. Mr. Harris said he appreciates all they do for Creswell. Deputy Chief Norman said the Sheriff's Office is working on hiring more deputies but will have to send them to train first to become certified. He also said it is a slow process so please bear with them. He hopes to have a better presence in the town. Mr. Harris asked if there were any areas of crime he would like to address. Deputy Chief Norman said there are some things that are being worked on which he cannot elaborate.
- c) Intergovernmental Cooperation Opportunities: Mr. Harris said he would like to see more meetings with the Board of Commissioners--maybe once a quarter or twice a year. Commissioner Keyes said we are all in this together and want to enhance the lives of all our citizens. Commissioner Spruill said we need to do a better job of working together. There seems to have been a separation of the towns and the County over the years. We all need to pull together. Commissioner Phelps said he enjoys coming to the Town meetings. He told

the Town Council to get up with him if there is anything he can do. Chair Walker said we will put everything from all the agendas to see how we can work together and pull together. We are not meeting just to be meeting. Ms. Logan said thanks for listening to their needs. Sometimes they do feel left out and thanked the Commissioners for coming tonight. Ms. Spruill stated that the more active you are in the community the more active you are in the County. She said she appreciates the Commissioners. Mayor Blount said he appreciates the Commissioners and wants us all to work together. Commissioner Keyes said that if they know what to expect from each other we are not working against each other. She cited the Ordinances as an example of something that could be improved on together. We all need to share resources. Mr. Harris thinks that keeping the lines of communication open now and, in the future, and identifying resources is a good start. Commissioner Keyes said that we need a resource database from all towns. Mr. Harris said maybe they could borrow a backhoe or dump truck, as an example, if needed for wastewater activities.

Commissioner Spruill asked what their #1 need is. Mr. Harris said 8th Street and Palmetto Street need the most repair. They have tried repairing potholes. He also mentioned 6th Street and Main street are mostly handled by the State. New businesses need parking areas marked. All streets need something. Commissioner Spruill asked if there were any other pressing issues. Ms. Logan stated WATER! Mr. Harris said he does not know if the County can help with that. She also said it would be nice to have a park area in town. Maybe there is a grant for that? Mr. Harris said he would also like to see their schools utilized after the new school is built. Mr. Ambrose asked has if there is a designated area for an LZ helicopter landing in Creswell. Mr. Potter said there may be something in the Motorsports Grant (at the OBX Speedway in Creswell). It is in the planning process. Mr. Potter said there is a well for Creswell in the County's Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). Mr. Ambrose thanked the Commissioners for all they do. He said he knows there is only so much you can do with the money available. The Commissioners do a good job of keeping the public informed and believes in communication. These meetings are a good way to let our citizens know we are working together. We need prayers for the Town of Creswell's water situation. A lightning strike took out some of their system. Mr. Potter said we need to send Creswell information on the well and the LZ landing zone. The County now has a CIP to try and fund major projects for the County. It is a two-year plan. There is a community action board that has started in Skinnersville. Remember to work with your Commissioner and the County Manager.

Commissioner Keyes told the Creswell Town Council that when you have a solar farm in your area, sometimes they will help the areas they are in, for example, they may give a donation of some kind.

Commissioner Walker thanked the Creswell Town Council for their reception of wanting to have this meeting. The Commissioners will get together after all these Town meetings to see where to go from here.

Commissioner Phelps noted that the County's Veterans Day Service will be on 11/11 @ 11:00 AM and will be on Main Street in Creswell. He also noted there was a Fall Festival on 10/27 from 4:00-7:00 PM and the Christmas Parade is on 12/9 at 11:00 AM. Line-up is at 10:00 AM.

Mr. Ambrose said the County's Veterans Day event is a big deal. There needs to be an area set up to be able to move the monument to and have a nicer area that is more accessible to folks with disabilities.

Item 2 Public Forum—no comments.

Mayor Blount again thanked the Commissioners for coming tonight. Mr. Ambrose said it does him good to see this participation.

Mr. Harris noted that Creswell also needs a gas station. Mr. Potter asked if the Dollar General in Creswell is owned by a local person. No one knew. Mr. Potter said that some Dollar Generals have gas tanks. One citizen said he has looked into it and it would not make any money. A gas station would need a convenience store too.

Mr. Potter said maybe they could look into an electrical vehicle charging station for Creswell due to the number of travelers going through the town to the Outer Banks.

Mr. Harris said it is having the connections--knowing who to talk to.

One citizen noted that Creswell needs more vegetable stands in the area.

Commissioner Keyes said it may be easier to get grants if we all work together.

Mayor Blount dismissed everyone at the meeting.

Julius Walker, Jr.
Chair

Julie J. Bennett, MMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board