

MINUTES
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF EDGECOMBE COUNTY
AUGUST 1, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M.
IN THE JONATHAN FELTON COMMISSIONERS ROOM
COUNTY ADMINISTRATIVE BUILDING
TARBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

1. MEETING CALLED TO ORDER BY CHAIRMAN LEONARD WIGGINS AT 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Mr. Leonard Wiggins, Chairman, Rev. E. Wayne Hines, Vice-Chairman, Mr. Donald Boswell, Mrs. Viola Harris, Mr. William Wooten, Mrs. Evelyn Powell and Mr. Ralph Webb.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Eric Evans, County Manager, Mrs. Natalie Bess, Deputy County Manager, Mr. Michael Peters, County Attorney and Ms. Frangie Mungo, Clerk to the Board.

2. SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS.

Safety instructions provided by Mrs. Bess.

3. PRAYER.

Prayer provided by Rev. Hines.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL.

Rev. Hines moved to approve the minutes of the July 5, 2022 meeting as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

5. SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT:

A. Tarasa Lewis, Tax Administrator, presented the 2021 Annual Settlement.

Mr. Webb moved to approve the Resolution accepting the Tax Collector's Annual Settlement for Fiscal Year 2021-2022 and Prior years as presented. Mr. Wooten seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Wooten moved to approve the Order to Collect taxes remaining unpaid for the years of 2012 through 2022. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

(Recommended action: Approve the Tax Collector's Settlement as of June 30, 2022 and recharge the Tax Collector with collecting taxes for years 2012 through 2022.)

6. PUBLIC PETITIONS.

C. B. Daughtridge read the following to the Board of Commissioners:

Thank you, Mr. Chairman, ladies and gentlemen of the commission, and staff for allowing me to continue voicing my concerns over the unfairness of unequal funding of our Edgecombe County public and charter school students.

I have read Senate Bill 382 which probably does allow you to fund students at different amounts.

However, I am amazed the school board, parents of the students involved, and Edgecombe County taxpayers have not "bent your ears" on this subject. It is totally unfair, irresponsible, and unnecessary.

What is right about paying Edgecombe County students in the Nash-Rocky Mount System \$335.85 in gap funds, plus paying an unequal Capital fund expense? We are paying for new

schools in Nash County and to my knowledge we have not built a single new school in Edgecombe County in forty-five years, except in a case of disaster.

How can we fix this? Well, we missed one opportunity last month. So, now we can put forth and pass a motion to do equal funding for all Edgecombe County students or you can revisit the demerger motion.

I realize you probably do not want to hear this issue readdressed. But, let me tell you, we are missing the best opportunity we have had to pass demerger and fund the cost.

- 1) *There have been over five-hundred (500) new homes built in Edgecombe County in the past eighteen (18) months which will be taxed which is underpredicted.*
- 2) *Home and land prices are at an all-time high.*
- 3) *You have a new tax evaluation which will reflect these new values, not the valuation you had last time which reflected a picture of many foreclosures and a weak market - more tax dollars.*

Please, prioritize this new money to improve our educational system for all our students equally with new much-needed vocational training programs to meet the demands of local industry and business.

Thank you, CB Daughtridge

Teresa Letchworth, 1769 Pinetops/Crisp Road, expressed her concerns of abandoned property in her neighborhood. She provided pictures of two houses that have been abandoned for some time. She stated that her concerns were this being an eyesore, safety concerns, drug activity going on in the area, homeless people are starting to reside in the houses, affecting the property for the other part of the neighborhood (values). She stated that she has been addressing this with the Planning Department and was told they would send someone out. Someone came out but there was no call back. She called back again and was told by the Planning Department that a courtesy letter could be sent out to the property letter, but they did not know where to send the courtesy letter. Ms. Letchworth stated that one of the houses did go into foreclosure and was purchased by someone and there is a mailing address. The other one is probably getting ready to be in foreclosure. She asked what does a courtesy letter entail and was told that they would ask the owners to come out and board up the property. Ms. Letchworth stated that she did not think that anyone would want to live next to this and boarding up the property does not make it look any better. She stated that her wish is that something can be looked into as far as having the owners held accountable for their property or it needs to be torn down. It needs to be addressed.

Mr. Wiggins asked Mr. Evans how we would process this.

Mr. Evans stated that there are two issues here. One is the grass. One is the home itself, which we have Minimum Housing Standards that there is somewhat of a lengthy process to address that, but something we can start. The grass, in the County, we do not have a grass ordinance, which is difficult to implement in a County, but often times letters are sent to property owner stating that there have been complaints about the grass. Often times you see some results from that. Mr. Evans stated that he would need to find out more details from the Planning Department and follow-up.

Mr. Wiggins stated that it is a complaint now and the Manager will address it.

Nehemiah Smith came forth with the following statement..."Let's stop lying to the public. The narrative surrounding the contrived issue of the merger is rooted in a lie. The very language is purposely deceptive. De-merger does not apply to this instance. Uncouple, break-up perhaps, but de-merger, no. The deception has led those who are otherwise rational to make irrational statements and decisions. The push should not be to reclaim children. They have never belonged to the County school system. These children, majority African American, are the legacy of a

defunct system of Rocky Mount City Schools, who has been left to languish in inadequate buildings, and low performing schools and our now being used as political to further the agendas of a Nash County megalomaniac and toothless leadership in Edgecombe County. What will be the financial impact? What will be the transitional impact? What will be the effect on the tax rate? How are you going to match the teacher supplement of Nash County? Who is coming to Edgecombe County to work for less pay in this economy? What kind of half-schooled legal advice are you getting? You seem to be thinking and working in the context and parameters set by someone else. Re-focus and do what is best for all children in Edgecombe County. What is best for those children in the City and in rural areas. Let's start thinking outside the box. Let's push for our local legislative delegation to introduce a bill that will remove Edgecombe County's responsibility to fund anything outside the city limits. Remember this was not a county/county merger. It was a city/county merger. Nash County has carved out its own brand of legislative influence, while Edgecombe County twiddles it's proverbial thumbs. Let's move away from knee jerk reactions to counterfeit public issues and toward the push for all parties involved to improve academic performance and become producers of young people who are prepared for the world of work and higher education opportunities."

Curmilus Dancy, 127 Midway Lane, Tarboro, P O Box 1391, Pinetops

Good evening,

I was not feeling well during the July meeting so I didn't attend the meeting when you voted on the demerger of Edgecombe County Public Schools and Nash County Public Schools.

I began in the late 80's attending the ECPS board meetings and challenged the system for years. I remember the bond referendum that NCPS received and it appears that ECPS got little out of it.

I attended and videoed all of the public meetings that were held for the community to attend about the demerger and it was hard missing the meeting when you voted. I was very disappointed in the vote. I don't understand why the vote failed because the facts of how Edgecombe County has been treated and as it stands, it will not change unless Edgecombe County bring our children back home where they belong. I am not going into the details of why because this board know what has transpired over the years.

I was very disappointed in Commissioners Viola Harris and also Ralph Webb voting against the demerger. It was clear to me in previous meetings where Commissioners Donald Boswell (my district) and William Wooten stood. I don't understand why anyone that is politically inclined and knowledgeable of what is at stake, that they would not want to see the demerger take place.

Someone said they are worried about what they don't know. But my problem is what we do know. We know there are around 1700 students that will come back to ECPS. We know staff, facilities, transportation and other that they receive now will be needed in Edgecombe County so what is the problem? We know that the monies from the state and other that are going to NCPS now will be coming to ECPS.

I believe the Edgecombe County Commissioners and Edgecombe County Public Schools joint meeting in Princeville to discuss the demerger in February 24, 2020 that I recorded and has it on [YouTube](#) explains it well about why the demerger is on the table and what it will take place after the demerger.

I arrived a little late at the February meeting because I got off work at 3:30 PM attended the Rocky Mount City Council meeting at 4 PM and then arrived at the meeting in Princeville shortly after it had begun. The presentation by the County Manager and the ECPS Superintendent and her team was awesome to me. I got it.

What I got back then; I get today. Add two years to what was discussed and it mean that the cost has risen. It means that the longer we wait it will continue to rise.

I will end now because I think you got my message.

However, I want to end on the following note. As I viewed Commissioner Harris video of the public comments, I seen Rev. Roosevelt Higgs address this board and he used my physical address as he was to give his name and his address. It is a fact that he just registered

with the Nash County Board of Elections March 30, 2022 that he lives at 2820 S Church St Rocky Mount NC. At least 4 of you know that he does not live in Tarboro and know he has not lived in Speed since the 1999 flood but used that address until this change. Higgs also confirmed he has been living at the Nash County address for several years on WNCR TV Bronson Williams Morning Show when he talked about when his son beat him up.

I am asking this board to address Rev. Roosevelt Higgs for giving this board my address when he addressed you.

Thanking you in advance.

Curmilus Dancy II

Edgecombe County Active & Engaged Citizen

Mr. Wiggins stated that if in fact Roosevelt Higgs did use Mr. Dancy's address, he asked Mr. Peters to take care of it.

Tricia Wilson, 3767 Howard Avenue Extension, Tarboro, stated that they own Saint Anne's Chapel and have noticed a large increase in the noise of vehicles (trucks, motorcycles). They understand that it is a busy intersection and happy to know that there is an industrial park down the road, but in the last two years the trucks and the motorcycles have gotten excessively louder. They are a retreat center. They do meditations twice a week. It is very difficult to have a meditation and stress reducing programs and all of a sudden you have a loud vehicle that they have to stop their program to allow it to go over because you cannot hear their music. She stated that she also is a sound healer and she has been doing healing sessions on her front porch because of COVID and she has to stop her program because of the loud noise. Ms. Wilson stated that she called to find out if there is an ordinance and apparently we do from 1980. She stated that Edenton has a noise ordinance that is strictly enforced by the Police, Sheriff and Highway Patrol Offices. She stated that anything the Board can do will be appreciated.

Mr. Wiggins asked Mr. Evans and Mr. Peters to look into this.

7. **OTHER BUSINESS:**

A. **Approval of budget amendments.**

Mr. Wooten moved to approve the budget amendments as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B. **Approval of Chief Financial Officer Position.**

Mr. Evans stated that in order to recruit a person with the requisite skills and experience needed to run the finance department and manage the County's financial operations, he suggested the creation of a Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position. He presented to the Board for consideration a draft job description and recommended that the Board approve the addition of a Chief Financial Officer position at a grade 30 on the Salary Scale.

Mr. Wooten moved to approve the addition as recommended. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

C. **Approval of Planning Technician Position.**

Mr. Evans stated that in the Planning Department, we currently have a Senior Planner position, which is filled, and a Planner, which is vacant. Katina Braswell, Planning and Inspections Director, recommends that the operations of the office will be better served by creating a Planning Technician position to fill instead of a Planner. Mr. Evans recommended that the board approve the addition of a Planning technician position at a grade 11 on the Salary Scale.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the addition as recommended. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

D. **Approval of Deed of Right of Way to NC Department of Transportation.**

Mr. Evans stated that Leonard Wiggins Parkway has been constructed and now connects Kingsboro Road and Highway 64 Alternate through Kingsboro Industrial Park. This is a NC DOT maintained road, and therefore the road's right-of-way needs to be transferred to NC DOT. Mr. Evans recommended that the Board approve the Deed for Highway Right-of-Way and the Voluntary Donation Acknowledge.

Rev. Hines moved to approve as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

E. Approval of Opioid Settlement Program.

Mr. Evans stated that a settlement was reached on the nationwide opioid litigation. Every county in North Carolina will receive an annual allocation for the next eighteen years to be used to fund opioid remediation activities. We have received our first allocation of \$103,202.87, and we expect to soon receive another in the amount of \$226,963. The 18-year payment schedule is included in the agenda packet. The program provides a list of eligible activities for which we can use the funds. Our CORE Committee (Coordinated Opiate Recovery Effort) has considered which activities would be most impactful for Edgecombe County, and recommend to include:

- Evidenced-Based Addiction Treatment
- Recovery Support Services
- Syringe Service Program
- Naloxone Distribution

Mr. Evans recommended that the Board approve the Grant Project Ordinance and budget amendment for the Opioid Settlement.

Mrs. Powell moved to approve the Grant Project Ordinance and budget amendment as presented. Mr. Webb seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

F. Approval of amendments to the Budget Ordinance.

Mr. Evans stated that a few corrections are noted for our FY-23 budget ordinances, including the General Fund Ordinance, ARPA Fund Ordinance, Water and Sewer Operations Ordinance, and Solid Waste Ordinance. This is to correct errors and omission, miscalculation, and typographical. None of these result in a change in the overall budget nor do they require additional fund balance appropriation.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the revised ordinances as presented. Mr. Wooten seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

G. Approval of correction to Personnel Policies.

Mr. Evans stated that in 2018, the Board approved updates and corrections to our Personnel Policy that included a change to Section 10 on Workers' Compensation found on page 50. The change was to not allow employees out on workers' compensation to use sick and vacation leave to make up for the difference they receive in workers' compensation, being that it only pays 2/3's of the employee's wage. Allowing leave to be used creates a disincentive to returning to work. Being that workers' compensation is not subject to federal and state taxes, allowing the use of leave to make up the difference puts the employee's take home pay at, if not slightly above, what they usually make. Mr. Evans stated that we noticed that another relative section in the Personnel Policy (page 38) was not changed at the same time, and it now creates conflicting statements in our policy. Therefore, he recommended that the Board approve amending the Personnel Policy on page 30, in Section 3 to state, "An employee may not use sick leave to supplement workers' compensation benefits up to 100% of gross salary".

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the corrections to the Personnel Policies as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

H. Approval of Sheriff's application to the North Carolina Governor's Highway Safety Program.

Mr. Evans stated that Sheriff Atkinson plans to apply to the NC Governor's Highway Safety Program. This is the second year of a four-year grant. The funds are used to designate a full-time deputy to address traffic collisions, speeding complaints, and other issues related to traffic safety and education. The grant does require a match of \$19,394, which will come from funds already budgeted in the Sheriff's office.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the resolution authorizing the submission of this application to the NC Governor's Highway Safety Program as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

8. AFTERLISTS AND RELEASES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.

Mr. Wooten moved to approved the afterlists and releases as presented. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

9. APPROVAL AND/OR REVIEW OF CONTRACTS.

Mr. Wooten moved to approve the contracts as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

10. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS FOR REVIEW.***Received***

- A. Water and Sewer update.
- B. Monthly Financial Summary.
- C. Solid Waste Annual Report.
- D. ARPA Funded Community Impact Program.

11. MANAGER'S REPORT.***Received***

- A. Workforce Development indicators.
- B. Update on Bridge Construction Projects in Edgecombe County.

12. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT

13. ATTORNEY'S REPORT.

None.

14. CLOSED SESSION.

Rev. Hines moved to go into closed session to discuss:

- A. Economic Development. [N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4)]

Mr. Wooten seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Rev. Hines moved to go out of closed session and resume the regular meeting. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the Economic Development and Incentive Agreement related to Clairmont Land Holdings Incorporated as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the Release Agreement regarding Clairmont Land Holdings Incorporated as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the \$50,000 payment appropriation to the Industrial Incentive line in the economic development account from fund balance relative to the release agreement regarding Clairmont. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve a revision to the Water and Wastewater rates to include incentive rates for industrial clients that will use at least 100,000 gallons per day as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

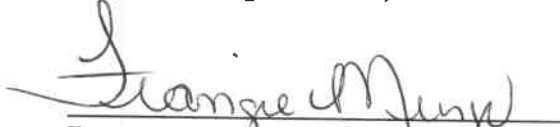
Mr. Evans stated that we are required to respond to our FY 2021 audit findings within 45 days of the audit being presented to the Board. He presented to the Board the list, which spells out what has been done or what will be done to address each of those findings. They have to be presented to the Board to vote on approving this response and to submit it to the Local Government Commission.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the response as presented and to authorize the submission to LGC. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Evans provided an update on the Water & Sewer District #4 USDA funding.

- 15. REV. HINES MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING UNTIL TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 6, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M. MRS. POWELL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.**

Approved September 6, 2022.


Frankie Mungo, Clerk to the Board