

MINUTES
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF EDGECOMBE COUNTY
TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 5, 2023 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, Mr. George Thorne, Mrs. Viola Harris, 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, Mr. Michael Matthews, Assistant County Manager, Mrs. Linda Barfield, CFO 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 MEETINGS PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL.

Rev. Hines moved to approve the minutes of the August 1, 2023 and August 7, 2023 meetings as presented. Mr. Webb seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

5. SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT(S):

A. Bob Pike, President of Carolinas Gateway Partnership, introduction.

Mr. Norris Tolson introduced Mr. Pike, new President of Carolinas Gateway Partnership.

Mr. Pike thanked the Board for allowing him to serve the people of Edgecombe County.

B. Chayce Bryant, Boys & Girls Club, reported on his experience at the NCACC Conference that he attended last month.

Mr. Bryant stated that his mother instilled in him to be accountable and responsible. He stated that overall, he had a good experience at the conference. Topics discussed were the principles of leadership and emotional intelligence. He stated that he was disappointed and humiliated that there were no Edgecombe County Commissioners at the Saturday morning event. Out of 77 counties represented, no commissioner there to represent his County. Mr. Bryant stated that the humiliating part was when other County Commissioners volunteered to sit with him at his table or chose not to. He was tempted to sit with the Nash County delegate that traveled with him, but his table was fully represented. The disappointment came when he felt this was the time that he truly wanted to be an advocate for teenagers in his county and discuss those issues previously presented to the Board in the hopes of finding ways to manage bullying, mental health and poverty, but unfortunately that did not take place. He asked the Commissioners to all be true leaders in Edgecombe County and be more accountable and responsible to the teenagers that live in the County.

C. John Easterling, KTS Strategies, to provide State lobbying update.

Mr. Easterling was joined by his colleague Mr. Nelson Freeman. Mr. Freeman stated that we still remain in a budget stalemate between the House and the Senate. We were in an accelerated path to work through a very large budget surplus this year. The State continues to maintain a track of putting in to strategic savings reserve funds to safeguard against future natural disasters. Eastern North Carolina continues to suffer from prior natural disasters that have not yet been solved and the legislature, in the future, would like to be able to fund more of that more quickly if given that chance. Part of that means that there is less money to

spend on other projects that legislators may bring forward as they are contemplating both those levels of projects as well as continued tax reform and certain revenue generating activities. The discussion that was thought to conclude on July 1st continues now into September and could be done next week or on October 1st. Once a State budget is passed it does take 45 to 60 days for funds that have been appropriated to be distributed. You can begin to encumber those activities once a budget is signed into law by the Governor.

Mrs. Harris asked if there has been anything specific for Edgecombe County that they have walked both sides of the hall for since the County engaged their company.

Mr. Easterling stated that there are a number of items that they have worked on in coordination with the County's delegation, Senator Candi Smith and Representative Shelly Willingham. One was equipment and uplift of the Edgecombe Works Innovation Camp campus at a cost of \$3 million; Kingsboro sewer extension phase II was put in; the Animal Shelter, which has been an area of discussion for a new outfit of \$2 to \$5 million; and Sheriff's vehicles for \$1 million. He stated that Edgecombe County received some damages from the recent tornado and they have had conversation with the Governor's Office about how can they get some funding in the area of about \$1 million for some of those damages.

D. Courtney Richardson and Na'im Akbar, Rural Opportunity Institute (ROI), present to introduce and inform the Board of work ROI is doing in the County.

Ms. Richardson provided information on the work they do in conjunction with Rural Opportunity Institute and Edgecombe County community. They work to find innovative solutions to affect change in our communities in a number of ways through building resilience in our communities and building opportunities for Workforce Development and policy improvements. They work closely with the Edgecombe County Sheriff's Office, as well as the Tarboro Parks and Recreation. She stated that over the past year and a half they spent time in the community doing deep listening, understanding more about what the community's needs are and what the community would like to see in terms of how they support. They presented on:

- ROI's Policy Program.
- Aiming to disrupt Prison to Pipeline system (Working with SROs).
- Workforce Development (Internships with high school students).

E. Brett Brenton, My Future NC, presented on statewide efforts and recommendation of local goals.

Mr. Brenton presented on:

- House Bill 664: To ensure that the State remains economically competitive, the State shall ensure that by the year 2030; 2 million 25-44-year olds will have completed a high-quality credential or postsecondary degree.
- Edgecombe County's LEAKY Education PIPELINE
- Local Educational Attainment Collaboratives.
- An Opportunity for all.
- 2022 County Attainment Profiles.
- County Profile Snapshots.
- Next Steps.
- Accelerate Action.

After the presentation Mrs. Harris moved to approve Resolution to Support the myFutureNC Attainment Goal. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

F. Mrs. Tarasa Lewis, Tax Administrator, presented the proposed Schedules, Standards and Rules to be used in the 2024 reappraisal of real property.

Mrs. Lewis stated that the proposed Schedules, Standards and Rules to be used in the 2024 reappraisal of real property in Edgecombe County is being presented to the Board of Commissioners tonight. In accordance with North Carolina General Statute 105-317(1); a copy of the schedules will be placed in the Office of the County Manager and in the Office of the Tax Assessor where they will remain available for public inspection. A date for the public hearing on the proposed Schedules, Standards, and Rules needs to be set. Mrs. Lewis proposed that date be held by the Board of Commissioners at the

regularly scheduled meeting on Monday, October 2, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. in the Jonathan Felton Commissioners Room.

Rev. Hines moved to call for a public hearing to be held at the October 2, 2023 meeting. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

6. **PUBLIC PETITIONS.**

Mr. Larry McNeil, 303 William Walston Lane, Tarboro, stated that Mrs. McNeil got into the transportation company to build a service and serve the community and she has done exceptionally well. He stated that they are not here for the Board to change their mind about renewing their contract, but there are things that could have been done better when it comes to the drivers and the people of Edgecombe County that they were serving. A three day notice to let them know that their contract would no longer be honored, he did not know where that came from. He stated that this did not hurt Fountain Transportation, but it did hurt the people of Edgecombe County. He stated that he has been in a couple of meetings with Mr. Evans regarding Get off the List and with what was done and how it was done more people were added to the unemployment line, added more people who cannot get to their appointments on time and missed appointments because they did not have any way to get there. Mr. McNeil stated that he was very disappointed in Edgecombe County. If it was known that the contract was not going to be renewed they should have been told that it was their last month by giving a thirty-day notice.

Mr. Evans provided context to the process stating that the service that Mr. McNeil is referring to is the non-emergency Medicaid eligible transportation coordinated through DSS. Our primary transportation provider is Tar River Transit. We found the need to have a secondary company to fill in the gaps where Tar River Transit is not able to meet those needs adequately. Over the years, we have had different companies to do that. Mr. Evans stated that a couple of months ago we went back out to solicit proposals for this service as we should do as part of our procurement process. Multiple proposals were received. Mrs. Battle, DSS Director, and her team members reviewed those proposals and rated them based on a rating system that was included in the RFP that was published. Based on their review of that criteria it was used to make the recommendation for the company selected. That recommendation was brought to the Board and it was a different company. He stated that they knew that we were going through this proposal process and they would not have known whether they would have been selected or not until the process was complete. Citizens who rely on that service still can get that service. It has to be coordinated through DSS. Mr. Evans stated that we were doing our due diligence to go out and solicit other proposals.

Mrs. Harris asked how long has Fountain Transportation been providing the Service.

Mr. Evans stated about two years.

Mrs. Harris stated that she did not recall it coming before the Board, but she remembers the new company. She asked if the three days' notice correct.

Mr. Evans stated that he would have to verify that. He stated that they have been aware that we were soliciting proposals and that process was going on.

Mr. Wiggins stated that what comes before the Board is the recommendation of who will get the contract. The Board is not involved in the selection process.

Ms. Tamika Brown stated that she lives in Edgecombe County. She stated that the day those riders found out that they had to find their own way there, all of us do not have it easy. Some of us had to come out of pocket. Some of us go to dialysis using this transportation. Where we could not find other people to come get us we are missing dialysis treatments behind this. We definitely do not want to ride with Rocky Mount Transit, because if you have to get up at 3:00 in the morning to catch ride and your appointment is not until 6 or 7:30 and you are on this van until then. They pick you up whenever they get ready. I have been sitting out there getting off the machine at 2 o'clock and did not get home until 6 o'clock, sometimes 7 or 8 o'clock. She stated that Rocky Mount Transit are some of the rudest, disrespectful people she has ever seen in her life. If you are overweight they do not want to put you on the ramp. Instead of them coming to your door they will leave if you are not out there in five minutes and they are not coming back to

get you. Fountain opened up a lot of doors. They were given time enough to be home to eat breakfast in the morning and got us home in time to get some of our kids off the bus. Ms. Brown stated that she learned that day that she did not have a ride. There are people who have not been able to come to dialysis because they do not have a way to get there. The ones that are picking up now are using their personal cars that smell like marijuana, sex and every other thing that you can imagine. A car that Social Services put them in. She stated that missing dialysis is a problem. She stated that it not only took from her, it took out of drivers and family members mouths because it was decided to not renew a contract. She stated that this will not be the last time she will be seen. Until the contract is given back they will be at every meeting.

Ms. Brenda Lyons stated that if you have to go to Greenville, they only have three days a week and if you do not make that appointment with them those three days a week you do not get there. She stated that last Thursday her wheelchair needed repair and she had medications she needed to pick up and she had a new doctor. She could not get to the doctor's office and when she called Social Services they told her she had to ride Tar River Transit. She stated that they did her wrong. She almost died on Tar River Transit van one day. The driver ran in front of cars and the rider beside tore the arm of her chair off. She stated that she called Mrs. McNeil because she was tired of Tar River Transit. Ms. Lyons stated that Tar River Transit treated them like dirt and did not fix her chair. She stated that they broke the light on her chair. She stated that they are on the van all day long and are hungry and have to use the bathroom. They should not be treated like dogs. She stated that it should be no problem for them to ride Fountain Transportation. Fountain Transportation treats them nice and are there when you call and say you are ready.

Ms. Regina Cantey, Tarboro, stated that Fountain Transportation did propose a contract for non-emergency medical driving. She stated that they submitted it June 6th. They have been working with Edgecombe County for three years and four months. When it was a problem with rates they always came together to negotiate a rate for Edgecombe County. She felt as if this issue is personal, because she has had issues with Ms. Betty Battle, the Director, through email. A personal issue to attack Fountain Transportation. She did not think it was they out bided them or their bid was lower. That is not the case. Ms. Cantey stated that they received an email on August 28th telling them that they no longer had the bid and the reason why was because she kept emailing Ms. Betty Battle and cc'd Mr. Evans. She never received a response from Ms. Betty Battle. She had one of her personnel folks to email her an attachment from her. She never responded back. She asked Mr. Evans to please check his email from August 31st and September 1st and he will see so many emails from dialysis clinics and hospitals that will let him know that citizens have missed numerous appointments, because they have no transportation. She stated that she is not for pity. They are here to serve Edgecombe County and she is unemployed because of the termination of the business. She stated that she has four kids and she need her job. She stated that the procedure was done incorrectly.

Dr. Tracy Phillips, 1109 US Highway 301, Whitakers, stated that at a recent Board meeting, she stood before the Board with deep concern, ignited by unsettling discoveries in the State Auditor's report. These revelations exposed a series of alarming issues: unapproved Board Amendments, IRS payment delays, incomplete bank accounts purchasing policy violations, employee overpayments, and excessive insurance costs. In response to this severe mismanagement of our county's resources, she boldly called for the County Manager's resignation. To her dismay, the Board Chair endorsed the County Manager's performance, pledging that Mr. Evans would remain in his role. While this endorsement may have been well-intentioned, it inadvertently signals tolerance for ineffective job performance. This is a leadership concern that carries grave implications for County employees and Edgecombe County as a whole. It's like a slow-acting poison, gradually eroding our foundations. This leadership failure has condemned Edgecombe County to the lowest statewide rankings, marked by poor health statistics, persistent child poverty, underperforming schools, housing crises, stagnant economic growth, and a shrinking population. Moreover, a startling 24% of our population is aged 65 or older, contributing to a dwindling tax base. Leadership must bear responsibility, and Mr. Wiggins, who has served as Chair for over a decade, must reflect on his role in our County's current state. Dr. Phillips stated that her concern goes beyond acknowledging failure; it centers on embracing change. Failure, while not a death knell, can become one if we stubbornly refuse to change. The evidence is clear: the current approach is not working. Adding to our challenges, this Board imposes the second-highest property tax rate statewide. But at this September meeting we are to hear plans of upcoming increases in assessments. The assessments should be frozen for 3 years. Rising property taxes

disproportionately burden low-income households, increasing the risk of defaults and foreclosures. There is a way to alleviate this burden. The Board has the opportunity to use the \$10 million surplus from FY-22 and consistent surpluses from FY-20 to FY-22 to reduce our property taxes from .95 to .67. This adjustment would align our tax rate with Nash County's, promote economic growth, and benefit our citizens and businesses. She implored the new CFO Mrs. Barfield to evaluate this proposal and confirm its benefits and feasibility. It is disheartening to witness the County Government's inexplicable expansion while our population dwindles. Edgecombe County has seen a 13%[©] decline compared to Nash County's 1.4% increase since 2013. Yet, County Government is adding six new positions, including an additional tax collector, while the Board rewards itself with 10% salary hikes. In stark contrast, our protective services, including EMS and Sheriff/Detention services, the backbone of our community, receive a mere 5% increase. Hope dims further as our once-promising Kingsboro Industrial site, a symbol of economic promise, flickers with no workforce in site. The County's persistent decline reflects failed leadership, exemplified by the recent "Get Off the List" campaign. Remarkably, this was the first time in over two decades that the County Manager engaged with the community to address our abysmal statewide rankings in well-being, mortality, and overall quality of life. Regrettably, County commissioners were conspicuously absent from these community meetings. To make matters worse, the County Manager audaciously informed attendees that services could be improved, despite commendable community efforts. Given this disheartening track record, the Board offers taxpayers zero return on investment. Instead, it shifts the burden of mismanagement and poor decision-making onto our children and grandchildren. This feels like a slap in the face to generations deeply invested in our community. Trapped in a mentality of chronic underperformance, a culture of blame, and providing band-aid solutions to deeply entrenched long-term problems, the citizens of Edgecombe County don't want to merely survive but to live. And they deserve a future. We expect better. We deserve more. Enough is enough.

Mr. Abram Pretty, driver for Fountain Transportation, stated that Fountain Transportation is a good company to work for. He stated that they reassure people that they are going to take them to their appointments and back home as quick as possible. The riders love them because they do not just drop them off at their driveway and leave them. They help the people and are polite to them. Mr. Pretty stated that he would hate to see the company go.

Curmilus Dancy, 127 Midway Lane, Tarboro, P O Box 1391, Pinetops, stated that the last time he was here, he is always coming about the Sheriff's Office cars and other stuff. He stated that after he left the last time he learned that the Sheriff's Office does not have the Federal prisoners anymore. He stated that it brought in a lot of income. He did not understand why that money could not have been used to get cars. Mr. Dancy stated that on last Thursday morning he left home to go to work and his transmission went out. He stated that he would hate to see, or need a Sheriff's Deputy to come to his house, in his neighborhood or anywhere in the County and their car put them down like his did. He stated that he is here again asking that we get some cars for our Sheriff's Office in the near future.

Mrs. Harris stated that the Board did not get a 10% increase. She stated that they live in the County and pay the same tax rate. Mrs. Harris stated that she lives in Tarboro so she pays city tax and county tax. She stated she is not throwing anything on anyone that she does not have to pay.

Mr. Wiggins stated that he has heard sufficient information from some of the public in terms of the transportation. We need answers as it relates to the transition company that just got the contract. We need information on Tar River Transit in terms of the conduct. There were allegations made that and the Board needs answers to those concerns. Mr. Wiggins stated that relative to other complaints, sometimes they do not have all of the information when they come to complain to the Board, as a Board they have a policy not to necessary exchange with the public in terms of giving answers here, because it might take some investigation from staff to respond to some of the concerns. The Board honors what staff recommends in terms of the process that they take to do contracts and Mr. Evans will review that process.

Mr. Thorne asked can we not have more than one provider that they choose reimbursement for.

Mr. Evans stated that typically we have just one in addition to Tar River Transit. There just has not shown enough need for multiple providers and if you spread that to thinly, it is difficult for a

company to ramp up, purchase vans, hire staff to be able to provide that service if they are not sure if they are going to get an adequate volume of riders.

Mr. Wiggins stated that these are backups to the initial provider.

Mr. Evans stated that Tar River Transit has a broader route and because of a broader route they are not able to provide a timely service. Which is another reason for having a second provider, who has more flexibility. The initial approval has to go through our Department of Social Services to make sure it is Medicaid eligible and it is approved and then it is scheduled with the provider.

Mr. Thorne asked why is Tar River Transit always first.

Mr. Evans stated that Tar River Transit has an overall contract with Nash and Edgecombe County to provide service. Not just Medicaid related transportation, but also the Rural Transportation grant that we get through the North Carolina Department of Transportation, they administer that for us as well.

Mr. Boswell asked if the providers have a code of ethics or operations or safety rules.

Mr. Anthony Davis stated to Mr. Evans that he has contacted him on several occasions and was told that you would call me. He has been sitting by the phone waiting on him to call. He stated that the new company called him and said they were out in front of his house and he told them that they could not be in front of his house, because he was in front of it. Mr. Davis stated that the driver told him she was at an address in Tarboro. He resides in Rocky Mount. The right address was given to the driver. That was the same day he called Mr. Evans and was told that he was in a meeting and would call as soon as he comes out of the meeting. He stated that someone's back is getting scratched with this new company because they do not have the vehicles to accommodate two wheelchairs.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Approval of calling for a public hearing for the Community Development Block Grant-Neighborhood Revitalization grant application.

Mr. Evans stated that at the last meeting, we discussed NC Department of Commerce's Community Development-Block Grant – Neighborhood Revitalization (CDBG-NR) program. The program provides funding for the renovation and replacement of substandard housing for low-moderate income families. Funds may be spent on rehabilitation (including scattered site housing), acquisition, clearance, relocation, substantial rehabilitation, replacement housing and emergency repairs. We planned to have the second required public hearing at this meeting, but the final program guidelines were only recently released, and the due date for applications is November 15, 2023. Therefore, we need additional time to prepare the application before we present it for public comment. Mr. Evans stated that under the CDBG-NR program, projects must incorporate at least one of the following livability principles as a focus:

- **Promote equitable, affordable housing.** Expand location and energy-efficient housing choices for people of all ages, incomes, races, and ethnicities to increase mobility and lower the combined cost of housing and transportation.
- **Support existing communities.** Target federal funding toward existing communities – through strategies like transit-oriented, mixed-use development, and land recycling – to increase community revitalization and the efficiency of public works investments and safeguard rural landscapes.
- **Value communities and neighborhoods.** Enhance the unique characteristics of all communities by investing in healthy, safe, and walkable neighborhoods – rural, urban, or suburban.

Mr. Evans stated that we are currently drafting an application to provide scattered-site housing rehabilitation. This type of assistance for existing housing stock continues to be a great need here in Edgecombe County, and there are few other sources of funding to meet that need. In housing rehabilitation, we are typically able to perform comprehensive repairs to address major structural, mechanical, and even accessibility needs for low-to-moderate income residents.

Rev. Hines moved to call for the second public hearing to be held at the October 2, 2023 meeting. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B. Approval of budget amendments.

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

C. Approval of Interconnection Agreements between Water and Sewer Districts.

Mr. Webb moved to recess regular meeting of the Board of Commissioners and convene as Governing Body of Water and Sewer Districts 2 and 6.

Approval of Interconnection Agreement Resolution for Water and Sewer District 2.

Mr. Matthews presented for approval a resolution authorizing the County Manager to execute an Interconnection Agreement between Edgecombe County Water & Sewer District No. 2 and Edgecombe County Water & Sewer District No. 6. The Interconnection Agreement will allow water and wastewater to travel between the two districts.

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

3. Approval of Interconnection Agreement Resolution for Water and Sewer District 6.

Mr. Matthews presented for approval a resolution authorizing the County Manager to execute an Interconnection Agreement between Edgecombe Water & Sewer District No. 6 and Edgecombe County Water & Sewer District No. 2. The Interconnection Agreement will allow water and wastewater to travel between the two districts.

Mr. Webb moved to approve the resolution as presented. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Webb moved to adjourn as Governing Body of Water and Sewer Districts 2 and 6 and reconvene the regular meeting. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

D. Approval of Amendment No. 2 to the Grant Project Ordinance for Water and Sewer District 6.

Mr. Matthews presented for Board consideration Amendment No. 2 to the Grant Project Ordinance for the Edgecombe County Water & Sewer District 6 Water and Wastewater System Improvements project. The amendment offers additional subsequent grant funding in the amount of \$2,327,000.00, bringing the total project budget to \$9,401,000.00.

Mrs. Powell moved to approve Amendment No. 2 to the Grant Project Ordinance as presented. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

E. Approval of contract with T.A. Loving Company for Water and Sewer District 6.

Mr. Matthews presented for Board consideration the construction contract with T. A. Loving Company in the amount of \$5,918,826.25. Bids for the Edgecombe County Water & Sewer District No. 6 Water and Wastewater System Improvements project were opened on March 31, 2023 and T.A. Loving Company was the lowest responsible bidder.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the contract with T.A. Loving Company as presented. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

F. Approval of Change Order No. 1 with T.A. Loving Company for Water and Sewer District 6.

Mr. Matthews presented Change Order No. 1 to the District 6 Water and Wastewater Systems Improvements Contract with T.A. Loving Company. Change Order No. 1 will increase the current construction contract of \$5,918,826.25 to \$7,877,346.25. The additional \$1,958,520.00 was made possible by additional USDA-RD grant funds. Mr. Boswell moved to approve Change Order No. 1 as presented. Mr. Throne seconded the

motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

G. Approval of Amendment No. 2 to the Water and Sewer Operations Ordinance.

Mr. Matthews presented for Board consideration Amendment No. 2 to the Water and Sewer Operations Ordinance, originally adopted June 28, 2023 as part of the Budget Adoption. The purpose of this Amendment is to make corrections to the Water and Sewer Incentive Rate Schedule for FY-24.

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

H. Approval of Eagles Road Water Line Extension Project.

Mr. Matthews stated that we received notice from the NC Department of Environmental Quality of a grant award for the 2022 Eagles Road Water Line Extension Project. The award, which are federal ARPA funds, totals \$1,126,850. The project will extend an 8" water line along Eagles Road, which will provide potable water to approximately 20 residences. Mr. Matthews recommended that the Board approve the resolution, grant project ordinance and budget amendment as presented.

Mr. Webb moved to approve the resolution, grant project ordinance and budget amendment as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

I. Approval of Resolution to Authorize Application for Infrastructure Funds.

Mr. Matthews stated that the Board previously adopted a resolution to authorize the submission of an application for grant funding available through the NC Department of Environmental Quality. The 2023 General Water System Improvements application were not awarded in the first three rounds but is eligible to resubmitted.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the resolution as presented. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

J. Approval of Phase 1B of Compensation Plan implementation.

Mr. Evans stated that on June 28, 2023 the Board approved the Phase 1A of our new Compensation Plan. In that, we created new compensations structures for Sheriff/Detention, EMS, Healthcare and General County Offices. Based on the market study conducted by Mercer, increases were approved as follows:

- Sheriff/Detention: 5%
- EMS: 5%
- Healthcare: 8%
- County Offices: 10%

Those increases were effective July 21st for staff employed as of June 20, 2023. Those increases were in our most recent pay, and on behalf of our entire team, Mr. Evans thanked the Board. He stated that was a tremendous step forward for us in closing the gap with our surrounding labor market and will be a tremendous help in slowing down turnover. We have not yet implemented the new pay scales, therefore new staff coming in are still being paid with our long-outdated pay scale. Mr. Evans recommended that the Board consider implementation of Phase 1B, to apply the new pay scales. Since sharing the last proposed pay scales with the Board, we have made some changes to improve them. These changes not only made further improvements to relative position placement, gave clearer opportunities for career opportunities for career growth, and modernized some of our position titles, it also minimized the financial impact of implementing the new scales. Mr. Evans stated that the next step, Phase II, will build in a relevant years of service model. We will further study that plan to revisit it when we present the FY-25 budget in the Spring. Mr. Evans recommended that the Board approve the Compensation Plan Ordinance that will apply the new pay scales under our overhauled compensation plan as presented.

Mrs. Johnna Sharp, Consultant, provided a refresher of the overall new structure and some of the changes and improvements that have been made.

Mr. Wiggins moved to approve the Compensation Plan Ordinance as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by a vote of 5 to 2. Mr. Thorne and Mr. Boswell opposed.

K. Approval of recommended safety improvements for the County Administration Building.

Mr. Evans stated that in light of the unfortunate truth that we live in a time where safety for employees in public buildings is a growing concern, along with reoccurring incidents our staff have faced where they were concerned for their safety, we have explored ways we can improve security in our buildings. Something that quickly came to our attention is that several of our offices are more vulnerable than others, which we need to address immediately. Whereas in most of our buildings, we now have a combination of doors, counters, and glass shields that form a protective barrier for our staff. However, right here in the Administration Building, we have several offices where that is not the case. A relatively easy and cost-effective way to improve security in these offices is to install entry locks with key fob access and doorbells. In two offices, windows also need to be installed in the main entry doors. The estimate for the cost of the project is \$60,000. Mr. Evans recommended that the Board take two actions that would greatly help improve security in this building. First, to approve the budget amendment to appropriate an additional \$60,000 to Maintenance. Second, approve Environ as the sole source vendor for that service.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the budget amendment as presented. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the quote and contract with Environ as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

L. Approval of request for the naming of Daniel Street Extension.

Mr. Evans stated that he received a request from Mr. Joe Pitt requesting that Daniel Street Extension be named in honor of Mr. Clark Jenkins. This request ultimately must be approved by the NC Transportation Board, but they ask for support of the local governing board. He stated that if the Board would like to support Mr. Pitt's request, he will work with them to submit the application that must be first reviewed by NC DOT staff. If it meets their requirements, he will then present a resolution for the Board to consider, which will accompany his application before the Transportation Board.

Mr. Wiggins moved to support the request for the naming of Daniel Street Extension in honor of Mr. Clark Jenkins. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

M. Approval of Sole Source purchase contracts.

Mr. Evans presented for consideration the quote to upgrade the SCADA (Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition) system, along with the annual maintenance agreement for the Utilities Department. The quotes and maintenance agreement are provided by SEI (Systems East INC.), who is our current SCADA system vendor. According to our Financial Policy, under "Competitive Bidding" when goods or services are only available from a single source, those items can be purchased or contracted through "Sole Sourcing" but must be approved by the governing body prior to purchase award.

- SCADA Upgrades with SEI (Systems East Inc.)
- Recycling Contract with Recycling and Disposal Solutions
- Key Fob System with Envirocon, Inc.
- Ammunition Purchase with Vista Outdoor/Keisler Police Supply
- Ambulance Purchase with Nottoway Rescue Squad, Inc.

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

Mr. Boswell moved to approve budget amendment 5B for SCADA System upgrade as presented. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

N. Approval of Memorandum of Agreement with NC Emergency Management for Tornado Recovery Funding.

Mr. Evans stated that the NC Department of Public Safety is appropriating \$100,000 to Edgecombe County to assist with debris cleanup from the recent tornado. Though this is likely not enough to cover the cost to remove all associated debris, we are thankful for this, especially considering we did not have enough homes substantially damaged to qualify for a disaster declaration. The total estimated cost of removing the debris, including tipping fees is \$367,375. If we waive the tipping fees and absorb the cost of grinding the vegetative debris with our usual debris grinding, then the total estimated cost is \$147,250. Mr. Evans stated that we will continue to work with the State to secure additional funding for debris cleanup. However, to proceed with removing the debris, he recommended that the Board approve the MOA with NC Department of Public Safety, waive the tipping fees, and appropriate from fund balance an additional \$50,000.

Mr. Boswell moved to excuse Mrs. Powell from voting. Mr. Thorne seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the MOA as presented, waive the tipping fees and appropriate the \$50,000. Mr. Webb seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

O. Approval of Edgecombe Community College Capital Improvement Project.

Mr. Evans stated that Edgecombe Community College plans to expand its student lounge in the Barnes Building on the Rocky Mount Campus. This will accommodate a new grill area and catering kitchen for the Edge Academy. They will request funds from the State Construction Infrastructure Fund to cover the construction costs. However, approval is needed from the Board of Commissioners since the expansion will result in additional utility costs. Once the expansion goes online, we can expect their funding request to the County to include these additional costs, which are estimated to be \$2,265.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the request and authorize the Manager to execute the documents. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

P. Approval of request to add Putters Lane to the State Road system.

Mr. Evans stated that staff with NC DOT have submitted a petition to add Putters Lane near Pinetops to the State Maintenance System. They have verified that it meets the standards set forth by NC DOT.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the petition to add Putters Lane to the State Maintenance System. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Q. Approval of the Annual Agreement with North Carolina Forestry.

Mr. Evans presented for Board consideration the agreement with the NC Forestry Service. This renews our annual cooperative relationship with the Forestry Service to provide forest protection, development, reforestation, management, and improvement. This agreement requires a 40% cost share, or \$119,920 appropriation from the County, which is included in this year's budget.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the agreement and authorize the Manager to execute the same. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

8. PLANNING BOARD REPORT: *Received*****

Mrs. Katina Braswell, Planning Director, presented the Planning Board report.

1. Rezoning request from Donna Matthews and Elizabeth Hill for property located at 12615 US Alt. West, Rocky Mount from AR-30 to B-2.

Mr. Thorne moved to called for and hold the public hearing at the October 2, 2023 meeting. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

2. Rezoning request from C.B. Daughtride for property located on Colonial Road, Tarboro from AR-30 to R-20.

Mr. Thorne moved to called for and hold the public hearing at the October 2, 2023 meeting.
Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

3. Minutes of the August 21, 2023 meeting.

9. AFTERLISTS AND RELEASES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the afterlists and releases as presented. Mr. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

10. CONTRACTS FOR REVIEW AND/OR APPROVAL.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the contracts as presented. Mr. Wiggins seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

11. DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS FOR REVIEW.***Received***

A. Water and Sewer update.

Mr. Thorne commended the Department on the decrease of water loss.

B. Monthly Financial Summary.

C. Overview of County debt and interest rates provided by Mrs. Linda Powell.

D. Solid Waste Fee Schedule for public presentation.

E. Update on the sale of decommissioned computers.

F. November municipal election schedule.

12. MANAGER'S REPORT.***Received***

A. Major events and meetings.

B. Workforce Development Indicators.

C. TDA financial report.

D. Consolidation of Eastpointe and Sandhills MCO's.

E. Update on Countyline Merger.

F. Update on Get Off the Lists initiative.

G. County response to State Auditor's Report read by Mr. Evans.

H. Overview of Fleet Lease Proposal.

Mr. Thorne moved to call for Special Meeting Work Session to discuss Fleet Management and Leasing Options for County Vehicles at a date to be determined. Mr. Wiggins seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

13. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

Mr. Thorne stated that we need a call and email return expectation set from everyone. He stated that he has to return a call received by voicemail within 24 hours.

Mr. Wiggins stated that we need to return calls but did not agree with putting a time frame on that.

14. ATTORNEY'S REPORT.

None.

15. CLOSED SESSION.

Mr. Boswell moved to go into closed session to discuss:

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

B. Personnel. [N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(3)]

C. Attorney-Client Privilege. [N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(3)]

Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Rev. Hines moved to go out of closed session and resume the regular meeting. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion.

16. OPEN SESSION:

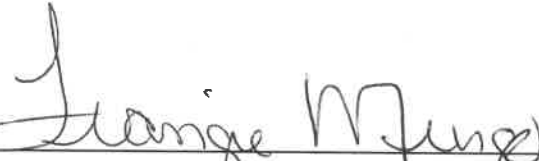
A. Approval of amendment to the Inducement Agreement with Corning.

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

17. REV. HINES MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING UNTIL OCTOBER 2, 2023 AT 7:00 P.M. MRS. POWELL SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY

UNANIMOUS VOTE.

Approved October 2, 2023.



Frankie Mungo, Clerk to the Board