

MINUTES
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF EDGECOMBE COUNTY
JULY 3, 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, Mr. Ralph Webb, Mrs. Viola Harris and Mrs. Evelyn Powell.

MEMBERS ABSENT: None.

OTHERS PRESENT: Mr. Eric Evans, County Manager, Mr. Michael Peters, County Attorney and Ms. Frankie Mungo, Clerk to the Board.

2. SAFETY INSTRUCTIONS.

Safety instructions provided by Mr. Michael Matthews, Assistant County Manager.

3. PRAYER.

Prayer provided by Rev. Hines.

4. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING PRESENTED FOR APPROVAL.

Rev. Hines moved to approve the minutes of the June 5, 2023 meeting as presented. Mrs. Harris seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

5. SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT:

A. Chayce Bryant, Boys & Girls Club, was present to introduce himself as the Edgecombe County Youth Delegate at the Annual NCACC Youth Voice Summit in August. Mr. Bryant was accompanied by Mr. Durell Petway, Director of Operations with the Boys and Girls Club.

Mr. Bryant encouraged the Board to attend the Saturday session to discuss the issues in which he felt are important to the youth. The issues were: Mental Health, Peer Pressure and Poverty.

6. PUBLIC PETITIONS.

None.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Approval of purchase agreement for 100 E. Hope Lodge Street.

Mr. Evans stated that we are purchasing the property at 100 E. Hope Lodge Street here in Tarboro for the new DMV-Driver's License Office. He presented for Board consideration the agreement of purchase and sale in the amount of \$270,000.

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

B. Approval of Resolution to Support the My-Future NC Goal.

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

C. Approval of Resolution to Oppose Senate Bill 675.

Rev. Hines moved to approve the Resolution to Oppose Senate Bill 675 "Land Use Clarification and Changes" as presented. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

D. Approval of acceptance of the Governor's Highway Safety Grant award.

Mr. Evans stated that Sheriff Atkinson plans to apply to the NC Governor's Highway Safety Program. The funds will be used to designate a full-time Deputy to address traffic collisions, speeding complaints, and other issues related to traffic safety and education. This application is requesting grand funds in the amount of \$37,734, and requires a match of \$37,734, which will come from funds already budgeted in the Sheriff's office.

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

E. Approval of Water Shortage Response Plan.

Mr. Evans stated that we are required to submit an annual Water Shortage Response Plan to the NC Division of Water Resources. He presented the plan which describes the water conservation measures we would implement in response to a drought or other water shortage conditions.

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

8. APPOINTMENTS:

A. Edgecombe County Memorial Library Board.

Mrs. Harris moved to reappoint Ms. Joy Chafin as recommended. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

9. AFTERLISTS AND RELEASES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.

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

10. CONTRACTS FOR REVIEW AND/OR APPROVAL.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the contracts as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion.

Mr. Thorne stated that he loved the work that Mrs. Johnna Sharpe does for the County, but asked if this is an ongoing contract we will have every year from this point on.

Mr. Evans stated that probably not. The plan is to outgrow her.

Mr. Thorne asked, regarding the Mercer contract, if it has already been expensed, the increase of \$15,000. He asked if they are sending an invoice.

Mr. Evans stated that they have not invoiced us yet. He stated that the contract of \$95,000 has already been approved and this is a request of a change order to that contract.

Mr. Thorne asked if it is for work that they have already done or are they going to do more work.

Mr. Evans stated that it is for work that they have already done.

Mrs. Harris state that she thought it was for the additional work for next year.

Mr. Evans stated that will be a separate contract.

Mr. Thorne stated that there are still things that they have not brought back that has been asked for. We asked for all the data on how they came up with all those numbers and still have not been given that.

Mr. Evans stated that he will be providing more information later on in the meeting.

The motion carried by a vote of 6 for and 1 opposing. Mr. Thorne opposed because of the Mercer contract.

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

- A. Water and Sewer update.
- B. Monthly Financial Summary.

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

Mrs. Powell asked about the start of the application process for home improvements.

Mrs. Katina Braswell, Planning Director, stated that her department is not currently taking applications. URP-23 will be their next program, which will hopefully be approved by the Board at the August meeting.

Mr. Evans stated that the program that was funded by the ARPA funds, they have closed applications on that.

Mrs. Harris asked for an update on the Water/Sewer District 6 project since the funding of approval has been approved by LGC.

Mr. Matthews provided an update. He stated that we are anticipating a Notice to Proceed this month and anticipating equipment being on the ground in August and completed by August 2024. They will be replacing and overhauling seven of the eight lift stations, several point repairs, several manhole renovations, and new sewer line installation in some areas and a lot of slip lining.

A. Update on the implementation of the New Compensation Plan.

Mr. Evans stated that we have discussed the implementation of the New Compensation Plan and on June 28th the Board approved the proposed structure of the New Compensation Plan that includes creating four new compensation structures:

- Sheriff/Detention
- Emergency Medical Services
- Health Care
- County Offices

On June 28th the Board also approved the recommended increases for each of those pay structures to help close the gap between the current pay and what the market study showed to us. That included a 5% increase for sheriff and detention; EMS 5 % increase; Health Care 8% increase; County Offices increase of 10%. These increases will be effective July 21st for those currently employed as of June 20th.

The Board did not yet approve the applied pay scales. Therefore, the current pay scale will continue to be used. Those pay scales will have each of the positions listed and in talking through it with Mercer it was realized that if we implement those now we will have employees that are currently with us and employees coming in starting at the bottom of the pay scale. In some cases, their pay can be higher than existing employees. Mr. Evans recommended, as the Board has already approved, to implement those increases for existing staff, effective July 21st and then that we will bring back those fully built out pay scales to show you how many employees would fall below that, what it will cost to move them up and then we will make that recommendation to the Board in September. The plan in Phase II would be to fully build out our pay plan using the model Mercer talked about by using the years of relevant service model. Mr. Evans stated that we need to work through that through the rest of this fiscal year and then take a look at what the budgetary impact of that might be for next fiscal year and bring that back to the Board in the spring of next year. Again, the recommendation for Phase II would be that we will work through and create policies and procedures to implement the years of relevant service model. We will evaluate the budgetary impact and the goal is to have that complete and ready for recommendation with the approval of the FY 25 budget.

After Mr. Evans' update the Board had questions and concerns regarding the New Pay Plan.

Mr. Boswell had concerns regarding not knowing what the dollar amounts are going to be on this until we go back to review everybody to find out what the bottom line is. He stated that we broke our own rule by going below 15% reserve and we do not know what this whole thing is going to cost. He stated that he is against this, but felt that when you hire a company to come in and they pick out counties like Beaufort and Pitt, which we have no business being compared to. We do not have the tax base as a lot of these counties and we will never get to where a lot of these counties are. Mr. Boswell stated that we want to do the best we can whatever it might be, but you don't throw a \$1.7 million program out there when you don't have all of the facts and figures and the budget committee never indicated that they were 100% in favor of this. We did not even know what it was and still do not.

Mr. Thorne stated that we have gotten two change orders in a week since we have been presented this and now they are being told of having another increase. He stated that we are supposed to be good stewards of the budget. At this point it was first presented as \$1.6, then we voted on \$1.7 and now they are being told that we do not know what the number is going to be.

Mrs. Harris stated that if we have a range why do you have start at the lowest. That is why you have a range. You can move it over and not start everybody at the beginning. That is why we keep losing people.

Mr. Wiggins stated that it is a work in progress. The reason for the study is that we have been a training ground and we cannot just say we want to develop a pay program so that we can begin to recruit people that we can start beyond those minimum pay grades. This is no different from other things we do. We have budget amendments and contract amendments on most things that we do. It is ours now to perfect and as we move forward the manager will bring us those change orders and we will make the decision to approve them or not.

- B. Workforce Development Indicators.
- C. TDA financial report.
- D. Tarboro's intent to annex property along Highway 258.
- E. Notification of Retirement Contribution-based Benefit Cap.
- F. Update of Countyline Merger.
- G. Closing on property at Kingsboro.

13. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

Mr. Thorne stated that the Personnel Committee was never asked to meet with Mercer and that is the definition of their job is personnel. Mr. Thorne also talked about the need for a Vehicle Maintenance Plan. He stated that he is disappointed that we do not have vehicle leasing numbers yet.

Mrs. Harris stated that she was shocked that we do not have a Vehicle Maintenance Plan.

Mr. Webb expressed his concerns regarding the vehicles for the Sheriff's Office.

14. ATTORNEY'S REPORT.

Mr. Peters stated that he will be attending the NCACC County Attorney Conference.

15. CLOSED SESSION.

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

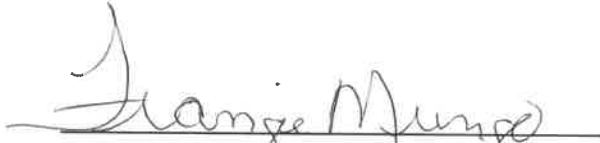
- A. Economic Development. [N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(4)]
- B. Attorney Client Privilege. [N.C.G.S. 143-318.11 (a)(3)]

Mr. Webb 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.

16. MRS. POWELL MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING UNTIL AUGUST 7, 2023.
REV. HINES SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS
VOTE.

Approved August 7, 2023.


Frankie Mungo, Clerk to the Board