

MINUTES
REGULAR SCHEDULED MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
OF EDGEcombe COUNTY
NOVEMBER 7, 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, Mrs. Evelyn Powell, Mrs. Viola Harris, Mr. Donald Boswell, Mr. William Wooten 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.

Mr. Wooten moved to approve the minutes of the October 3, 2022 meeting as presented. Mr. Webb seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

5. SCHEDULED APPOINTMENT:

A. Birthday recognitions for Ms. Cassie Smith, Ms. Pauline Lawrence and Ms. Lucille Harris.

Mrs. Powell presented to Ms. Cassie Smith (108 years old) and Ms. Pauline Lawrence (106 years old) recognitions from Governor Roy Cooper, Representative G. K. Butterfield and Edgecombe County Board of Commissioners.

Mrs. Powell moved to approve the Resolution in Celebration of the 108th Birthday of Cassie Smith. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Powell moved to approve the Resolution in Celebration of the 106th Birthday of Pauline Lawrence. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

Mrs. Harris presented to Ms. Lucille Harris (103 years old) recognitions from Governor Roy Cooper, Representative G. K. Butterfield and Edgecombe County Board of Commissioners. Mrs. Harris is the daughter-in-law of Ms. Lucille Harris.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the Resolution in Celebration of the 103rd Birthday of Lucille Harris. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

6. PUBLIC PETITIONS.

None.

7. OTHER BUSINESS:

A. Approval of budget amendments.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve October 2022 budget amendments 1 through 21, with the replacement of budget amendment number 17 as presented. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

B. Approval of Resolution to Support Operation Green Light for Veterans.

Mr. Evans stated that the NACo and the NCACC are promoting and encouraging an effort called Operation Green Light to show support for our veterans in the County. Mr. Evans asked Sherry Johnson, Veterans Service Officer, to come forth and read the resolution.

Ms. Johnson provided an overview of veterans services and read the resolution.

Mr. Boswell moved the Resolution in Support Operations Green Light for Veterans as presented. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

ECC Veterans Coordinator, Meosha Bellamy was introduced and came forth to give an overview of what is offered by the college for veterans.

C. Approval of amended Memorandum of Understanding for Upper Coastal Plains Rural Planning Organization.

Mr. Evans stated that in 2002 Edgecombe County executed a Memorandum of Understanding along with Nash, Johnston, and Wilson Counties, as well as their participating municipalities, which created the Upper Coastal Plain Rural Planning Organization. The RPO works with the NC Department of Transportation on short-term and long-range transportation planning for our region. We collectively receive funding from NCDOT and provide a local match to cover staffing costs and planning activities. Nash County has served as the lead administrative and planning entity, but that role will now be assumed by the City of Wilson. Therefore, the MOU amends the agreement accordingly.

Mr. Webb moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding as presented. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

D. Approval of proposed changes to the Human Services Bylaws.

Mr. Evans stated that the Human Services Board Bylaws currently state that both the Social Services Advisory Council and the Health Advisory Council are to meet monthly to more closely study and discuss issues pertaining to Social Services and Health in order to advise the Human Services Board. We have found that it has not been necessary to meet that often. Therefore, we propose amending the bylaws to require that they meet at least bi-annually. Mr. Evans presented the proposed change on page 6. Each Advisory Council has the option to call a meeting if needed. This is forwarded with a favorable recommendation from the Human Services Board.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the proposed changes as recommended by the Human Services Board. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

E. Approval of Bad Debt Write-off for the Health Department.

Mr. Evans stated that the Edgecombe County Health Department's Bad Debt Write Off Policy states that a patient's account will be handled as Bad Debt when there has been no activity on the account for more than six months. This does not mean that there will be no efforts to collect the debt. In fact, if there is any new activity on the account, for example the patient presents at the Health

Department for services, then the account is reactivated. This action is an accounting method whereas the written off debt no longer shows on our books as a receivable.

Mr. Boswell moved to approve the Bad Debt Write Off as recommended by the Human Services board. Mrs. Powell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

F. Approval of Extraordinary Pay Policy.

Mr. Evans stated that in the last couple of years, all employers have experienced higher than normal employee turnover, and Edgecombe County has certainly not been the exception. Though there are multiple factors contributing to that, some of which may be debated, an undeniable result is that the same, if not growing demand for government services has been shouldered by fewer people. Some departments have experienced that more than others. For our team members, who are experiencing those extraordinary workloads, Mr. Evans asked for the opportunity to provide additional but temporary compensation. He presented for the Board's consideration the Extraordinary Pay Policy. Unlike the hazard pay policy the Board previously approved, this will not be as widely applied. Department heads will have to request Extraordinary Pay for an employee and provide justification, the anticipated duration, and a plan for how the extraordinary conditions will be mitigated.

Mr. Evans stated that Ms. Betty Battle, DSS Director, has some units in her department where normally they would have in that unit six employees that might have one or two employees in that unit. Those caseloads do not slow down just because you do not have enough employees. Mr. Evans asked Ms. Battle to come up and describe the challenges that they have been facing.

Ms. Betty Battle, DSS Director, stated that the Extraordinary Pay will assist her department with retention. She stated that they looked at some other things such as remote work, which started November 1st. She stated employees are leaving to go to other counties, after being trained, for more money. Ms. Battle stated that the Extraordinary Pay and the remote work will help with retention.

Mr. Wooten moved to approve the Extraordinary Pay Policy as presented. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

G. Approval of 2023 Holiday Schedule.

Mrs. Powell moved to approve the 2023 Holiday Schedule as presented. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

H. Approval of calling for a public hearing to amend Solid Waste Management Ordinance re: Solid Waste.

Mr. Evans stated that the Board previously approved an amendment to our Solid Waste Ordinance to enact a solid waste permit requirement. As we prepare to renew those permits, we recommend changing the ordinance to remove the specific reference to a "placard" being that we will transition to an easier to manage form of permit. Other language is recommended to change for clarity. An ordinance change requires a public hearing to be held. Therefore, he recommended that the Board call for a public hearing to be held at the December 5, 2022 meeting.

Rev. Hines moved to call for a public hearing at the December 5, 2022 meeting. Mr. Webb seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

I. Approval of the sale of Service Weapon to retiring Chief Deputy Gene Harrell.

Mr. Evans stated that NC Statute 20-187.2 allows the Board of Commissioners to award a retiring officer his/her service weapon. It specifically states you may do so at a price determined by you as the governing body. Sheriff Atkinson has requested that consideration be given for retiring Chief Deputy Gene Harrell. To show the County's appreciation for his exemplary service, and to provide a memento to that service, Mr. Evans recommended that the Board approve the transfer of his service weapon at a price of \$1 upon the retirement of Chief Deputy Gene Harrell.

Mrs. Harris moved to approve the sale of this service weapon to retiring Chief Deputy Gene Harrell. Mr. Boswell seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

J. Approval of Easement Agreement with Piedmont Natural Gas.

Mr. Evans stated that Piedmont Natural Gas plans to replace and upgrade gas lines in the County, and part of the project requires both temporary and permanent easements from Edgecombe County at the Sheriff's Office. Based on our assessment, the project will not be disruptive to County operations and the offer made for the easement is reasonable.

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

K. Approval of appointment of Chair and Vice-Chair for the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board.

Mr. Evans stated that when the Board created the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, they reserved the authority to appoint the Chair and Vice-Chair. The Advisory Board has voted to nominate candidates for these two seats, and presented for Board consideration:

Kentay Knight – Chairman

Calvin Adkins – Vice-Chairman

The Chair and Vice-Chair will serve for a two-year period and may not serve for more than two terms. Mr. Evans recommended that the Board approve the nominees as presented.

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

9. AFTERLISTS AND RELEASES FOR REVIEW AND APPROVAL.

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

10. APPROVAL AND/OR REVIEW OF CONTRACTS.

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

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

A. Water and Sewer update.

B. Monthly Financial Summary.

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

A. Workforce Development indicators.

B. TDA financial report.

C. ARPA Enabled Urgent Needs Repair Program.

Mr. Evans stated that the Board agreed to set aside \$100,000 of the funding received from the American Rescue Plan Act for programs similar to other emergency repair programs. This will provide assistance for the

repair/replacement of heat and air units, as well as handicap accessibility modifications (wheelchair ramps, handicap showers).

Mr. Evans stated we are part of the Down East Home Consortium and the City of Rocky Mount is the lead entity. They received American Rescue Funds as well for the Consortium that is supposed to be targeted towards addressing homeless needs. They just got notification that they are going to receive some additional funds. That program requires that they have a public hearing to inform the public of the money that is being received and how they plan to use it. Mr. asked that the Board to call for a public hearing.

Mr. Boswell moved to call for a public hearing to be held at the December 5, 2022. Rev. Hines seconded the motion, which carried by unanimous vote.

13. COMMISSIONERS' REPORT.

Mrs. Harris asked what was going on with broadband, where are we moving, did we get money from the State.

Mr. Evans stated that Cloutwyze received the State grant and they are still going through that paperwork process with the State and as soon as they finish that they will come to the Board and give an update on their proposal.

14. ATTORNEY'S REPORT.

None.

15. CLOSED SESSION.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Wiggins stated that a discussion regarding Board officers should be discussed in this meeting and not wait until the December meeting. He asked Mr. Peters to talk about the Organizational Meeting, which has probably been done different that the statute.

Mr. Peters stated that it is really our own ordinances. Our ordinance states that there will be an Organizational Meeting before the regular meeting to swear any newly elected members and to vote for officers.

Mr. Wiggins stated that the new member is sworn in and has a vote on the new officers. He stated that is why he asked Mr. George Thorne to stay. Mr. Wiggins stated that he did want the Board to clear up what is the Board's pleasure in terms of rotating and we need to decide that here in this meeting. He stated that if the Board is going to rotate the Board needs to decide how they are going to do it.

Mr. Wooten felt that the Board should be rotating.

Mr. Wiggins stated that he is opposed to it, not necessarily for him to stay as Chair, but he did not think that a person should stay as a Chairperson for a year. A person needs to have experience, especially in the area of what we have going on in economic development.

Mrs. Harris stated that she has been on the Board for 21 years. She goes to new board member training every two years. She has been to leadership training every

year. She stated that she agrees that just one year is not enough. She felt that as long as there are more men it is always going to be a man, when the women put in just as much time.

Mr. Wooten stated that it should not be about man or woman or race. He stated that he agrees with Mr. Wiggins that the Chairman role needs more than a year, but he believed it should be rotated, even if the Board says two or three years is the time that you hold a Chairmanship and then it rotates.

Mr. Webb felt that the Board should go to a rotating basis with a standard of three years.

Mr. Wiggins stated that if the Board is going to change it to rotating, when will it start and how will it be done.

Rev. Hines stated that he was opposed to rotating.

Mr. Boswell stated that his concern is how the Chair can represent the County and if the Chair has the time. He stated that he never thought about rotation that much.

After discussion Mr. Wiggins stated that it appears that the nomination will be open and he wanted Mr. Thorne to hear the discussion and have some input in it.

Mr. Thorne, newly elected Commissioner, introduced himself. He will represent Mr. Wooten's district.

Mr. Evans reminded the Board that we still have an active State of Emergency for COVID. We have not used it in any way in a very long time. He recommended that the State of Emergency be terminated. With the Board's consensus, the State of Emergency was terminated.

16. REV. HINES MOVED TO ADJOURN THE MEETING UNTIL MONDAY, DECEMBER 5, 2022 AT 7:00 P.M. MR. WOOTEN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED BY UNANIMOUS VOTE.

Approved December 5, 2022.


Frankie Mungo, Clerk to the Board