

MINUTES

LENOIR COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

January 19, 2016

The Lenoir County Board of Commissioners met in open session at 4:00 p.m. on Tuesday, January 19, 2016, in the Board of Commissioners' Main Meeting Room in the Lenoir County Courthouse at 130 S. Queen St., Kinston, NC.

Members present: Chairman Craig Hill, Vice Chairman Jackie Brown, Commissioners, Roland Best, Mac Daughety, Reuben Davis, Eric Rouse, and Linda Rouse Sutton.

Members Absent: None

Also present were: Michael W. Jarman, County Manager, Tracy Chestnutt, Finance Officer, Lashanda Hall, Deputy Clerk, Joey Bryan, MIS Director, Robert Griffin, County Attorney, members of the general public and news media.

Chairman Hill called the meeting to order at approximately 4:00 p.m. Ms. Brown offered the Invocation and Mr. Best led the audience in the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC INFORMATION:

Mr. Johnny Craft, Hugo Fire Department, stated he is present to make the Board aware of their future project. When Hugo Volunteer Fire and Rescue began servicing the Grifton Fire District over five years ago, we began researching and thinking of ways to make sure the citizens of this section of Lenoir County were provided with the fire service they deserve. One of our major goals has been to acquire land in the Grifton area to build a station to house at least one fire engine. Residents would see the distance of the nearest fire engine decrease from 3-6 miles down to 1-4 miles. In addition, the construction of this additional station would allow the department to place one of its tankers back into permanent service. This apparatus has been on standby since the acquisition of an aerial platform ladder and tanker over two years ago. By placing this tanker back in service, Hugo will have a sufficient amount of water available to its district, resulting in better grades on the water supply section of the ISO rating. Overall we believe this is the best move for our department versus a past idea of expanding our Station 3. Research by leaders of Hugo Fire and Rescue has been done to inquire the best location for an additional station to house an engine. Following consultation with Management Solutions for Emergency Services, Hugo Fire and Rescue feels that the area around Grifton-Hugo Road and Skeeter Pond Road would best accommodate the department's needs. Hugo Fire and Rescue has negotiated a deal with a private landowner to lease a portion of land on Grifton-Hugo Road to build a one-bay fire station. We believe, for the cost of this project, this would be highly beneficial to the residents of the old Grifton fire district. In addition, this station would also help increase response to the entire Hugo fire district by placing another station within three (3) miles of ten (10) or more firefighters and many residents in the Northern part of the district. Mr. Craft thanked the Board for their time. Mr. Rouse asked about the number of staff. Mr. Craft replied currently on the roster is seventy (70) volunteer and Junior Fireman.

Mr. Hill stated he is sure the community is very excited. Mr. Craft stated they are committed to stay involved with the School system and the community at- large.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Ms. Geraldyn E. Barbour, Chairperson, African-American Heritage Commission, stated an article in the Free Press informed our community that Kinston and Lenoir's own Maceo Parker has been selected to receive a 2016 North Carolina Heritage Award. He will be honored at a reception in Raleigh on May 24, 2016, and will receive his award on May 25th. The Commission request that, in honor of our world-renowned musician, the week of May 23rd through May 28th be declared "Maceo Parker Week". At the end of the week, the Commission has planned for a Health and Heritage Festival highlighted by a tribute to Mr. Parker. We expect the Festival will attract thousands of residents and visitors, which will be an economic impetus and also a historical and educational success for our community. For this year's Festival, a budget of \$45,000 will enable us to accomplish this undertaking which will be an advantage to our area economically, culturally, historically, and educationally. Our expenses include partial payment for the exhibit at the Arts Council; rental and decoration of the Adkin High School Complex; rental of lighting and sound equipment; security; professional entertainment; souvenir programs; refreshments; and publicity/marketing. Proceeds will be used for advancing the purpose of the Commission. We ask the Lenoir County Board of County Commissioners for your financial and moral support. Mr. Hill asked about the \$45,000 budget; and if the Commission is searching for funding from various entities. Mr. Jarman stated the Commissioners in the past have not funded any outside agencies beyond what was budgeted for in FY 15-16.

CONSENT AGENDA:

1. Approval of Minutes: Regular Board Meeting: January 4, 2016.

Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Best, the consent agenda was unanimously approved.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENTS/RESOLUTIONS:

Item No. 2 was a Resolution Approving a Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy for Lenoir County Transit. Ms. Angie Greene, Transit Director, stated on March 10, 2008, Lenoir County Transit (LCT) took over operations in-house. This included complying with North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) in all areas of operations which involve Safety Sensitive employees. As a sub-recipient of Section 5311 funds, Lenoir County Transit is required to have a Substance Abuse Program in place, including a policy that meets the requirements of 49 CFR 655.15 LCT's Drug and Alcohol Testing. Also, the policy requires that Safety Sensitive employees submit to Drug and/or Alcohol testing in a variety of circumstances, including but not limited to, Pre-Employment and Random Selection. LCT must ensure that all DOT Drug and Alcohol Testing requirements are being met. Upon a motion by Mr. Daughety and a second by Ms. Brown, Item No. 2 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 3 was a Resolution Approving the Purchase and Installation of a Mac's Lift Gate on one (1) Wheeled Coach Ambulance: Select Custom Apparatus: \$12,135.00. Mr. Roger Dail, Emergency Services Director addressed the Board. The Lenoir County Emergency Services Department (EMS) maintains a fleet of twelve (12) ambulances, none of which are equipped to handle an obese patient. Mr. Dail stated North Carolina is currently ranked 13th in the nation for obesity, with 29.1% of its population is classified as obese. According to statistics as recent as May of 2015, 36% of Lenoir County's population is classified as obese. The EMS Director is recommending the purchase and installation of Mac's Lift Gate on one (1) Wheeled Coach Ambulance. The Mac's Lift Gate is a hydraulic lift mounted on the chassis of the ambulance. It has a maximum lift capacity of 1,300 lbs. The installation of this lift will provide a bariatric ambulance, which will minimize lifting injuries. It will also assist in avoiding damaging equipment, and provide a safe means of treatment and transport for the bariatric patients. It is further recommended that the lift gate be installed on the EMS Unit currently being remounted. Approval of this purchase will allow for the encumbrance of funds and payment to the vendor upon delivery of the ambulance. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Daughety, Item No. 3 was unanimously approved.

Item No. 4 was a Resolution Approving Citizens to Boards, Commissions, Etc. Upon a motion by Ms. Brown and a second by Mr. Davis, Item No. 4, was unanimously approved for Ms. Della S. Rouse to the Lenoir County Nursing Home & Adult Care Board, Mr. Bryson Stevens to the Kinston-Lenoir County Tourism Development Board, and Mr. Jim McLain to the Lenoir County Economic Development Board. Since it was the first appearance for others no action was needed at this time.

Item No. 5 was Items from the County Manager. Mr. Jarman shared with the Board information he received regarding Concealed Weapon Permits from the Clerk's Listserve, Pitt County Employee Survey, and Pitt County Ordinance. Mr. Jarman stated he wanted to get the requested information to the Board and allow them the opportunity to review and continue their thought process and determine how they wanted to proceed forward. Mr. Hill stated he was pleased with the contents of Pitt County's survey. Mr. Hill suggested looking at other districts and seeking copies of their resolutions, and moving forward with our employee survey. Once we have all of the information we can determine if we should prepare a resolution or proclamation, or vote on it. This is not something we want to rush into, but at some point in time, we will have to deal with it and arrive at a point where we either make a decision one way or the other. Mr. Hill stated the survey from Pitt County will help the Commissioners understand where county employees stand on the issue. Mr. Hill mentioned the Board would also want to hear from law enforcement about their concerns, both the positive and the negative sides if we decided to move forward with this change of policy. Mr. Hill encouraged the Board to research different articles and literature regarding concealed weapons and shares anything they find of interest. Mr. Jarman stated once he received the results and shared them with Sheriff Ingram they can schedule the meeting. This will give Sheriff Ingram the opportunity to have the information to include in his thought process when he is addressing the issue.

Mr. Jarman stated on last Saturday, there were few bidders present at the auction for the donated Temple property that proceeds would go to Kinston High School for scholarships. For the 29-acre tract, ten (10) of which was cleared, the high bid was \$36,000, and the bid on the 40-acre tract, eleven (11) was cleared, the high bid was \$41,000. Although all of this money will go to the school for scholarships, I still think we need to be as responsible as we can to get a fair value for the land.

We had a lady who works here in Lenoir County and lives in Jacksonville wishing to purchase the smaller tract to build her retirement home. There is a tract right next to that particular acreage of the same size that sold last November for \$ 90,000. We don't know the timber value and I have had a couple of people call since the sell to state they were not aware of the auction taking place. It would be nice to have the property back on the tax books and a new resident here but we still want to do what's fair, and I am asking you to decline the bid at this time. The other property sold for \$41,000 and I think you should turn that one down as well. The gentlemen who placed that bid called back Friday around 6:00 p.m. and I like to continue discussion with him. The proposed buyer stated he had actually starting drawing plans for a small sub-division. Although we can appreciate the sub-division and the economic development growth, the wishes of the person who left the land was that the money would go towards scholarships, we should seek to get a fair price, I haven't discussed this possibility with the attorney yet. This person actually said that if the scholarships and the money were going to the school that would be a good tax right off for him and he may be willing to bid more for the land as well as make a stipulation to give a donation to the school for scholarships. Ultimately what we were trying to accomplish would happen. I am asking you to turn both offers down and let's see if we can be fair to this lady's wishes, and give the right amount of money to Kinston High School. Upon motion by Mr. Davis and a second by Mr. Best both bids submitted for the donated Temple property was declined.

Mr. Hill asked if we would recoup the cost of the sale. Mr. Jarman replied yes. It doesn't hurt us one way or another but we need to honor the donor's last wish in the best way that we can. Mr. Davis asked Mr. Jarman if he knew the Lenoir County tax value on the properties. Mr. Jarman replied one was \$120,000 and the other was \$130,000 and there will be some adjustments taking place in that area with the new revaluation. Based on the most recent sales they will both be somewhere in the \$90,000 - \$110,000 range.

Item No. 6 was Items from Mr. Rouse. Mr. Rouse stated the Bridge project is thirty percent (30%) complete and progressing. Mr. Jarman stated the Sheriff's office called and informed us that the block of Queen Street in front of the courthouse will be closed next week. They need the street clear of cars to allow the huge girders entrance because they have to back the entire way to the bridge. Mr. Rouse stated due to the conditions of the weather the progression of the River Walk has slowed down. Mr. Rouse stated the Association of County Commissioners meeting in Raleigh was very positive. They mentioned several things they wanted to focus on going forward such as: (1) focusing on seeking legislation to repeal the statutory authorization under NCGS 115C-431C that allows local school boards to file suit over county Board of Commissioners dealing with county appropriation for education, (2) seeking legislation to authorize local option revenue sources already given to any other jurisdiction, and (3) to support legislation regulation funding that would preserve local option and authority where needed to employ community broadband systems and ensure community access to all broadband services which is getting internet out to some of your lower income parts of the county that general go without.

Mr. Hill stated as a result of Gordon Vermillion's recent City Council election, he has resigned from his allotted position as the County Transportation Committee Chairperson. I would like to personally thank and commend Mr. Vermillion for the job he has done, and also his recognition in the transportation area.

I also would like to recommend that we appoint Mr. Bill Whaley into the County allotted spot replacing Mr. Vermillion and also would recommend him to be chairperson of that committee as well. His background in banking and economic development, as well as his service on the Transportation Board would lead him to be a very strong candidate. Upon a motion by Ms. Sutton and a second by Mr. Best, the Board unanimously approved Mr. Bill Whaley's appointment as Chairperson to the Transportation Committee.

Attorney Griffin asked who was responsible for appointing Mr. Whaley in his current position.

Mr. Hill replied Mr. Rouse is the appointee for him, so the Board will have to appoint the chairperson. Mr. Jarman stated Mr. Whaley is currently serving as a representative of the Economic Development Board.

Mr. Hill stated about six (6) months ago there was a discussion regarding the Confederate Flag. With the date of March 4th approaching, I think we need to have some discussion as to rather on not we want to revisit this subject. After waiting several months to see how the state was going to respond, I asked Attorney Griffin to look into Lenoir County and the State of North Carolina Resolution to see what it stated. After reviewing the minutes, we found out that the original proclamation from 1992 only approved flying the flag in March of 1992. As a result, we have continued flying the flag without the supported documentation from this Board. At this time, we would need to notify the group that brought the flag forward and ask them to bring forth another proclamation, or we would not have the authority to fly the flag at this time, or either we could possibly develop a proclamation ourselves. At any rate, we would still need to notify the group.

Attorney Griffin stated the resolution was simply for that one (1) year.

Mr. Hill stated the proclamation for the State was also for one year and had to be renewed each year. Mr. Hill stated at this time, his recommendation is for the County Manager to notify the gentlemen that brings the flag to us of our findings and go from there.

Meeting Adjourned at 4:45 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Vickie F. King". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Vickie F. King
Clerk to the Board