

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

January 27, 2024
OTHERS PRESENT

Jeremiah Jefferies, Chairman
Finch Holt, Vice Chair
Ethel Gwynn
John Dickerson
Rick McVey
Frank Rose

Tony Smith, County Manager
Melissa Williamson, Deputy County Manager
Carla Smith, Clerk to the Board

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in a work session on Saturday, January 27, 2024 at 8:00 am at CoSquare.

WELCOME:

Chairman Jefferies called the meeting to order and said thank you all for coming to the Planning Work Session this Saturday morning. This shows your commitment to moving the county forward. Then all paused for a moment of Silent Prayer, and Chairman Jefferies asked the Board to remember the families of Commissioner Nathaniel Hall, Chief Michael Adkins, and Gordon, Satterfield, a former Commissioner, who all passed last year. Following that the Board of Commissioners and all the guest in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

AGENDA:

Chairman Jefferies said why are we here today? We are here to review our achievements for 2023 and celebrate some of our wins.

YEAR INREVIEW:

- Passing of Commissioner Nathaniel Hall on January 16, 2023
- First time in history, the Clerk of Court appointed the Commissioner, Ethel Gwynn, to fill the remainder of Nate Hall's term.
- Completion of the RDOF Grant for broadband
- Awarding of the GREAT Grant to Zitel and the 2nd phase to Charter/ Spectrum
- Caswell has received Opioid Funds from the Settlement
- Loss of Chief Michael Adkins at the Sheriff's Department June 3, 2023
- Hiring of new County Attorney, Russell Johnston
- Passing of Gordon Satterfield, former County Commissioner in July 12, 2023
- We updated the Gun on Premises Policy after an incident at Parks and Recreations and have posted signage at all county offices.

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- Completed the installation of the Electric Car Charger, which is located at Parks and Recreations. Charge for charging is \$2.00 per hour.
- Some of the Ford Focuses have been sold to decrease the number of vehicles the county has to maintain.
- Had some shootings in the Town of Yanceyville and throughout the County so
- DOT will start work on the Doll Branch Road in 2024.
- Going through the process of recruiting a County Manager with the assistance of the NCACC and finally hiring Scott Meszaros who starts February 5, 2024.
- The historic Courthouse ceiling and walls have been repainted and the job was completed January 24, 2024.
- We are awaiting bids to update the sound system in the historic Courthouse.

Vice Chairman Holt said asked when will they be done with the painting of the ceiling in the Historic Courthouse? Interim County Manager Smith said by next Friday we should have the room cleaned and done. Then Vice Chairman Holt asked about the bids on the sound system. Interim County Manager Smith said he didn't have the bids in yet, but hopefully can have them in by February 5th.

DETERMINING BOARD PRIORITIES:

Chairman Jefferies said we need to focus on our priorities for 2024. What do we need to do to be the best of the best?

Commissioner Rose said we need to focus on getting the audits completed. With the Reval coming up, we need to get the figures as quickly as we can. The housing market will be a sticker shock to taxpayers. I would like to see something in the Industrial Park, and we need signage. We need to get off of the UAL or Unit Assistance List. These things go hand in hand. I know this thing came about prior to me being on the Board, but it's here. I own part of it just like every other Commissioner does. I understand it takes time, but I think it's time we get this done. That in and of itself, I feel is what is holding Caswell back from making certain decisions. They are supposed to bring something up on February 5th, but I have no clue what it is. The only other thing I will bring up is what everybody is bring up about Alamance County School System and all the money being spent. We have a new high school and some older schools. The Board just needs to be aware of the issues. I hope this issue doesn't come up here. I think they are facing a huge amount of money over there.

Commissioner Gwynn said that is one thing I really would like to see is the audits completed, but I need to give some thought as to other priorities for the coming year.

Commissioner Dickerson said to start off I will touch on a couple of things from Commissioner Rose. If that issue comes up here down the road, what I want to see is a Comprehensive Plan and

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control of that money. I look at that \$15 million that came from the State, and I look at what the taxpayers are going to be paying in addition to that for that new high school. We got this beautiful looking façade on the front of it, and then they came back to us in the last meeting talking about we need more money. You were allotted what was asked. Then they come back after the job is completed and ask for more. Another thing, if you do the math, they were talking about the current year they were down 600 students. Every time they lose a student, it's roughly \$10,000 State and Local funding lost. That's \$6 million dollars they would have to take care of a lot of the issues. No one is focusing on why the students are leaving. Some are even going to adjacent counties to public schools. If we don't figure out why they are all fleeing the system, we are going to be throwing money at them all day and it won't change it. In the last budget they were given an extra \$100,000 that I want to reexamine because we never had time to talk about it. What did the school system do with the money their money? There needs to be some accountability and better results. Then Commissioner Dickerson said he would move on to the cars. The rental cars in the count. I was under the impression that when we approved car leases for the county and new rental cars were brought in that the old cars owned by Enterprise were auctioned off. Now I'm being told that that's not the case. A lot of times those cars are owned by the county and they are being allocated to other departments. Is that true. I'd like to know what's happening to the old cars. Are we increasing the fleet? I'll use the Landfill for example here. We heard nothing but how bad of a shape that old truck was in. He was given a new truck, but the old one is still being used by the Landfill. If we are going to put all this money in new vehicle, with the justification of we are saving money by replacing the old ones that were falling apart. If the county is still paying for them, something needs to be done. If we replace vehicles, then the depreciation if the other one needs to be sold or moved unless this Board approves that the vehicle be given to a new person. If we are growing the fleet, we are in a sink hole that will be very expensive before it is over with. So I would like to know how many cars have been sold, who's driving them, and the justification. The other thing is the take home vehicles. I can see the Sheriff's Office Deputies taking their vehicle home. But I understand that we have two guys in Animal Control who drives their trucks home also. I wonder how many after hour calls they receive to go out. I would like to know the justification for take home vehicles across the board. Is it critical to their jobs to take home the vehicle? If someone is hurt driving home, it's a worker's comp. claim.

Commissioner Gwynn said who is responsible for the upkeep of the grounds at Parks and Recreation? Commissioner McVey said Maintenance, but Parks and Rec. mow the lawn themselves. Commissioner Gwynn said there have been a lot of complaints about the holes in the walking path. I received a call that the person would sue if they fall. Interim County Manager Smith said they are going to pave the area later, but Maintenance did fill some of the areas with gravel to smooth the surface. They had other areas where the roots pushed up the asphalt, but they will have to cut that out and put something there. Next time we do asphalt work we will try to put something there in some of those areas. Commissioner Gwynn said so do they keep

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regular check on the area? Interim County Manager Smith said Maintenance does. R.D. Hayes, Maintenance Director, does good of looking ahead. If he sees a problem, he tries to fix it.

Vice Chairman Holt said we have a disagreement on the revaluation. If they say you have a house at \$50,000, now it is \$70,000. Do you think that will be the taxes on that house? My understanding from Amy Cannon and Russell Johnston and others is that there will have to be a tax neutral on the revaluation. It is not a given that the taxes go up. Commissioner Rose said I understand that. If you take it back to revenue neutral, you are pulling it all the way back down. Commissioner Rose said a lot of it depends on the audit. Let's say it comes in with three to four million dollars less money than we think we have, the reval will take a part in that. Because we have services that we have to continue to fund. That's the reason I'm saying the audit needs to be done complete. We need to be able to see how much money we got. The reval will be a sticker shock anyway. If my property comes in at \$100,000 more than what it was last year, and we have revenue neutral, the taxpayers will already get an increase because of the homeowner's insurance because the home is worth more. Do you add that additional coverage or leave it at the old value? That is on the homeowner, and they will have an increase there already. The County Tax Director has to take it back to revenue neutral. Vice Chairman Holt said the only way it is going to go up is if we do a tax increase. Commissioner Rose I don't want it to come in at the last minute and we have to crunch these numbers to get everything done. It should be a process where we start looking at the numbers. We have to look at the school down here also because there hasn't been anything on that. Commissioner McVey said I begged you all last year to get started. Vice Chairman Holt said I'm in agreement on the school. I don't understand why didn't except I heard we had a lot of COVID money. That was a bond issued, if I'm not mistaken. So the taxpayer realized that. Commissioner McVey said they voted for the school. I begged them last year to put that one cent tax on for the school and nobody wanted to put it on. Commissioner Dickerson said because we had all that COVID money. Commissioner McVey said that bill is going to come because the people voted for it.

Vice Chairman Holt then said I also wants to talk about take home vehicles. Commissioner McVey said I thought we got rid of the cars at an auction. I did not realize we were keeping any of them. I can remember the Bill Carter did an auction down here at the Sheriff's Department. Commissioner Dickerson said some have been gotten rid of, but others have been shifted out of a department into another department. I know the one being used by A.J. Fuqua is still being used by the Landfill. I remember the justification for buying that new truck was that the other one was falling apart and too much upkeep. We approved to replace it and it was shifted to another individual. The Ford Focuses says some were sold to decrease the number of vehicles. We had that conversation here in the last budget meeting over here at CoSquare. The reason these were put on lease was because these were deemed unusable and too small. We replaced them and now you redirect some of them. Why didn't they get rid of them all? The Board needs to be aware of this, and decide why they are given to someone else. Not just ever increasing the fleet always. Commissioner McVey said I understand what you are saying and I thought things were being

gotten rid of by Enterprise or we had our sale. Interim County Manager Smith said we did try to recycle them. There were auctions held from time to time. We have not bought anything since I have been here. We took an inventory of the vehicles and all vehicles are assigned to department. Then we evaluated the cars and decided to get rid of the ones not needed. That was four in this case. Vice Chairman Holt said you moved the van from the library to the trash because it cost too much to fix. Commissioner Dickerson said so if it cost too much to fix in one department then it makes no sense for another department to try to fix it. Those are the kind of things I would like to bring out to figure out what is going on. Correct me if I'm wrong, when an Enterprise vehicle is delivered, it doesn't automatically go to auction. That is a county call. I think that is where the Board has misunderstood. Interim County Manager Smith said we had to initiate that auction. Commissioner Dickerson said I don't think we fully understood and I just wanted to get everyone on the same page.

Scott Meszaros, the newly hired County Manager said I don't want to speak out of term, and I have the context. When we leased vehicles at the city, we would lease purchase our trucks. The fire Department takes care of their trucks so we keep them, but the Sheriff's Department cars are used for four to five years and dumped because of their value. So the Enterprise Program lets us roll them in and get credit while there is still value. Then a new one is rolled in. You are gaining leases, but you are not increasing vehicles. Commissioner Dickerson said I was under the impression that that was what was happening. I thought when we gave them back and started a new lease that was what happened, but it is not. Interim County Manager Smith said I think in the past it has been handled that way. Scott Meszaros said ultimately over time you will have a vehicle shortage. You are trying to acquire through the leases and in the long run it will save you more money. Interim County Manager Smith said each department should justify why they have this many vehicles, why they have to take them home, and you make the decision if it is justifiable or not. Melissa Williamson, Deputy County Manager, said didn't we not long ago do this. Did the information not get to you all? Commissioner Dickerson said Bryan Miller was talking to me about it, and he gave me some. Melissa Williamson said so you never got it. I just remember the conversation and that you all requested it. Commissioner Dickerson said I never got anything in reference to who's taking them home or the justification. Melissa Williamson said I remember an email went out to the departments, and I don't know what happened after that.

Vice Chairman Holt said the big one that I have is I feel like we're at a fork in the road. The County is either going to be a bedroom county or we are going to have industries. It's not going to happen without water and sewer. I know Scott got grants in Alaska, and I would like for us to start looking at getting some. Interim County Manager Smith said we need to talk to Yanceyville and see if they have capacity, and I think they do for water and sewer, if they have the desire to reach outside the city limits a little bit and go toward Orange County. We need to see what it will cost to go up that area. Then we can start working on grants. Melissa Williamson said we have been talking to Homegrown, and we have a meeting with him this week. They are going to put

together a list of possible grants that we may be eligible for to help with infrastructure. In the next ten days we should get that report. That's a starting point. The county will have that to look at for the Pelham Industrial site. We had the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) come out, and we received their final report. It will be presented to the Board on February 5th. They are going to look at all this information and see if they can help us with the NC Department of Commerce to get grants that will help us. Vice Chairman Holt said my understanding is that Danville has an ample supply of water and sewer because they had all those mills there that have closed. I think the northwest part of the county could probably tap on. I don't know what it would cost to tap into water and sewer if they would be open to it. We would have to get some kind of lease or something before we start pushing that. That would be my thoughts for 25% of the county sewer and water wise. It would really help and that would be a quick fix if we could get some kind of agreement with them. It is plenty of industries that want to come to this state. We really are in a good location. Look at Randolph and Rockingham counties, they are exploding but they were just like us 10-15 years ago. Interim County Manager Smith said that is something we need to work on in the near future. We have more land available than I thought in the Yanceyville Industrial Park. We have about 60 acres there behind the fairgrounds. You could subdivide it into 5 acre tracks and water and sewer is available there. Vice Chairman Holt said when they put this movie production building here, what happened to that. Who owns that? Interim County Manager Smith said the owner went bankrupt and didn't have funding to do what he wanted to do. Vice Chairman Holt asked is anybody using it? Interim County Manager Smith said it think it is used for storage primarily. Commissioner McVey said I think someone is leasing it. Vice Chairman Holt said who owns it? Interim County Manager Smith said it has changed hands so many times. I don't know who owns it. Commissioner McVey said it is a huge warehouse. Interim County Manager Smith said it is a specialty building because the ceilings are so high. Most industries are not going to want to use it.

Vice Chairman Holt said one last thing. What happened to the filming of the movie? Interim County Manager Smith said they moved it back to April. They couldn't get the funding? He said he would be back in April to do production.

Commissioner Rose said I'm going to go back to the Opioid settlement. How much was that? Melissa Williamson said it was \$2,020,926 to be paid over a period of 18 years. We are having our first meeting, Jaime of the NCACC and I, next Tuesday. Jennifer Hammock said that \$218,995.28 has been received and deposited on September 18th. For fiscal year (FY) 2024, we still have about \$70,413.72 still to come in. Each year the amount we get fluctuates. For FY2024-25, we can expect \$145,032. Commissioner Rose said how is this money going to be allocated for use? Melissa Williamson said that is why we are meeting Tuesday. There are guidelines that you have to follow as to how you can spend this money. We are very fortunate to have Jamie Andrews from the NCACC. He is very aware of the regulations and how we can spend the money. As of now, none of the funding has been spent. One of the big things is for narcans to be given to the Fire Departments because they are the first ones on the scene.

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Commissioner Dickerson asked of the approved uses did you see anything on there to address the problem of what we can do to help the addicted people? Melissa Williamson said I'm just taking this over, but the board will look at helping people overcome their addictions, put programs in place for that, having narcan on hand, vending machine with narcan in them, needle boxes at Parks and Recreation for used needles. There are lots of things you can do.

Commissioner Dickerson said did you see anything on prevention or things to get people off drugs rather than just getting narcan. Melissa Williamson said we will look at ideas at the meeting. Vaya said when they first came into the county, that they were willing to see some of the people who get arrested prior to them going to jail. They have mobile units that can help get them headed in the right direction rather than sending them straight to jail. Commissioner Dickerson said do we have anything here or with neighboring counties as far as counseling? Melissa Williamson said I know we work with Vaya, who works with us and the neighboring counties. Vernon Massengill said to answer your question, Surry County, a couple of years ago, put in a nice program, and it was for the prevention of that. They work with psychologist, the community paramedics and pharmacist to get them suboxone, if they wanted to get off. Then the Community Paramedic made the visit to the home to help administer the first couple of doses so that there wouldn't be any side effects. Commissioner Rose said in my opinion, I can see the good and bad with the vending machines. I think we need to do as much as we can with this money as far as education to get people off drugs. The vending machine offers them a lifeline and doesn't help to fix the problem. Narcan does bring them back when they overdose, but we need to do more to educate them to get off. Treatment is what the money is for. Melissa Williamson said the goal of next week is to get the ideas and see if they will fall in the guidelines of things to do. They have found things that have been proven to work in other counties. Jaime Andrews has worked in Person County also.

Commissioner Gwynn said when the board is set up, I know Vaya is set up here. The board you have set up; what expertise does that require. Melissa Williamson said the board includes Sheriff Tony Durden, Melissa Poole, Barry Lynch, Dianne Moorefield, Jason Watlington, Aubrey Fuqua, Jennifer Eastwood, Williams Crumpton, Compassion Health, Town Manager, Randy Jefferson, Tony Smith, Melissa Williamson, and Dr. Pamela Senegal, Piedmont Community College President.

Shannon Moretz said can I interrupt you to provide a little context? One of the reasons this decision is so difficult for Caswell is because Caswell County does not currently have any government existing relationships with the providers of the services. So there is no unit within the Health Department or Department of Social Services that concentrates on substance abuse. So right now all of your substance abuse services are provided by private companies, private entities, and non-profits. A lot of those are actually based outside of the county. Your private companies and local non-profits are working to hold them accountable for providing the services. That's where a lot of the disconnect is coming in because there is not an existing structure for county government or town government to be involved in those communications as far as what

services are provided. Commissioner Gwynn asked does Vaya Health provide those services? Shannon Moretz said Vaya Health is what they call a managed care entity. So their role is to contract with service providers to route Medicaid dollars. Vaya works with local community partners to access needs and to make sure they are trying to recruit the mental health professionals to go into the school systems. They are not a direct service provider. Commissioner Gwynn said they don't provide direct services? Shannon Moretz said they only provide direct services in the way of care coordination and system coordination. If a resident from the county calls a Vaya number, they are linked to a private provider. North Carolina privatized mental health services a long time ago. When they did that, the centralization, the control of services, and the accountability of services provided disappeared. So Vaya is now basically a broker for mental health professionals. They operate the crisis line, which in turn allows them to page out a private professional they are contracted with to show up at the scene. That's why the conversation is a little bit slower in Caswell County.

Commissioner Rose said one last question. This money coming in, one year if we don't spend the whole amount, does it continue to sit there? Melissa Williamson said yes. From my understanding we can keep this money over the 18 years. Commissioner Rose said what I was thinking is we got a good opportunity to do something good with this money. If we budget this money right, we have a chance to have a self-sustaining program for 18 years. Melissa Williamson said we will get over \$2 million. Commissioner Rose said does the amount goes down each year? Melissa Williamson said in FY 2025-26 it will be \$161,000 and the next year it will go to \$126,000. The next year it will jump back to \$134,000 to \$140,000, then to \$124,000, and then it will gradually keep going down. Commissioner Rose said I guess my question is will the remainder of funds from one year sit there until the next year. If you have less coming in, you can add to it. Melissa Williamson said right.

Commissioner McVey said I want to throw something out there that got mentioned a while ago. Narcan, I've seen it do a fantastic job. Being one of the first responders, I've seen people whose heart has stopped, get narcan and within minutes they are walking out to the ambulance. That is amazing to see what narcan does. You brought up the fire departments or having the fire departments involved in this. I think this Board is going to have to look and the future Board is going to have to look at possibly putting on some paid firemen in this county. The reason I say that is the volunteer part of it is not there like it used to be. We are going to have to come up with some way to put some firemen somewhere in this county as full time. In Casville, there is three of us there. Everyone else is working. We are a geritol group, one limps, one has cancer, and one has heart troubles. We are dependent on other stations being able to send us whatever they have. The Board needs to anticipate that. There are no paid firemen. Vernon Massengill said none are paid, but several of ours work in town. Commissioner Gwynn asked do we recruit for volunteer fire fighters? Commissioner McVey said we recruit all the time. Commissioner Gwynn said how do you recruit? Commissioner McVey said we recruit on Facebook, by mouth, and placed ads in the paper before. Where you run into problems is with these young people that have sports

events for their children. Commissioner Gwynn said before the county starts paying, I would like to see all the recruitment because we don't have money. To hire a fireman, it is really expensive. I feel like we can do more recruitment in that area. I'm on Facebook and I haven't seen it.

Commissioner McVey said have you looked under our fire station? Commissioner Gwynn said I look every once and a while. I would like to see that before it becomes a paying thing.

Commissioner McVey said you are going to have to start thinking somewhere along the lines of paid firemen. Whether it be in town and one or two somewhere else to be able to assist. My point being in the future, you need to look at putting some paid firemen around the county.

Commissioner Gwynn said another fire station is being built at the intersection of Park Spring and Allison Road. Commissioner McVey said that is a substation. Vernon Massengill said for information, that substation in Providence was built to include some homes that were not in an insurance rated district. Now they are in an insurance rated district, which drops their insurance considerably.

Scott Meszaros said is it a lack of infrastructure and water and most of them have retainer trucks? Vernon Massengill said yes sir. We had a structure fire last week and had nine or ten trucks there. Commissioner McVey said each department is depending on other departments in a great way during the day now. I can get a truck to a fire, but I can't fight a fire like I used to.

Chairman Jefferies said I think we need to really focus on is doing something on the north side. We don't have a lot of land there that you can do a whole lot with. It would cost a lot of money to fill in the gullies. I think maybe we need to think about buying some property over there, and see if Danville will run sewer and water out there. This county, years ago, used to have Yanceyville buy sewage and water. There was a certain amount of sewer and water we were entitled to. This has stopped now. The county could have had the town pump the water over there and sewage. We have to start looking at that in order to move Caswell County forward. We need to look at some land that is level so we can do something. In my township we got RV parks and they are filled up because of the racetrack and casino. We may could make some money over there if we had water and sewer. Virginia already has it in North Carolina, but we need to get Danville to extend it out there. It's not going to get any better. We need to get with the Town because we used to help the Town of Yanceyville with water and sewer. Interim County Manager Smith said I think you are right. There are a lot of opportunities with the casino. I think we need to look beyond that and look at some of the rural areas too for water and sewer.

Commissioner Rose said I guess the first thing we would have to look at is how much capacity can the existing sewer system handle if we add on to it? You are going to have to expand it. I don't know how much more that system can do. I don't know the specs of it. Commissioner McVey said the same goes for water too. Putting water in different areas of the county, is this lake going to support all the needs for a casino or a housing development? Commissioner Dickerson said part of that would be if we can get Danville on the north end. That would take a lot of that burden off of us. Commissioner McVey said I was thinking we need to see the capacity of the lake. Vice Chairman Holt said Farmer Lake, it's kind of deep. Commissioner

Rose said we have had some industries in the county before so we may could reach out to them and see what type of infrastructure grants are out there. Commissioner McVey said I know at one time that Dan River water deal was out there. That was before me, but there was an opportunity there to get water from the Dan River. You have to look at your different sources.

Commissioner Dickerson said Mr. Smith, going back to the Economic Development and all the different properties and things we would like to see done. All that requires money, and it comes back to trying to cover the expenses going forward. We talk about bringing industry in and you were talking about the land that is available outside of Yanceyville with sewer and water there already, what about retail development? Where we bring in more retail outlets allowing people to spend more of their money in the county rather than going to Danville. Is it any kind of property in or around 86 that we can get or we have access to already where we could try to recruit some of these places to come in? I think it is a win-win situation. Interim County Manager Smith said just yesterday I spent some time on the GIS looking, and I did find some nice sized tracks between here and Danville that are privately owned. I thought maybe the county had some properties out there, but we do not. It could be that we have Danville extend the lines down 86 because currently I think we are connected to North School. The Town of Yanceyville come up to North School. We could possibly try to go down new 86 toward Yanceyville. Commissioner Dickerson said I would just like to see those possibilities explored because I think we got a whole lot better chance of bringing outfits in here and starting that up. Then we would have the money off of that in taxes. I like to think ahead. Instead of after the money is coming in we say we are going to spend it on this issue or that issue, I think part of any money that comes in off of bringing in industry or retail and increases our tax base should be reallocated to start bringing in more industry and retail into the area. Let it be self-sustaining. If you bring in \$500,000 extra in a year off of their efforts, all of that should not just be spent on services. Part of that should be earmarked for creating more and continuing to help. Interim County Manager Smith said I agree. I want to talk to the Board about the money coming in from the Pelham prospect and keeping that in Economic Development to do things with that with the Board's approval. Vice Chairman Holt said if it is approved by the Board, and interim County Manager Smith said sure. It is on my agenda to talk to the Mayor at the next Economic Development meeting about their capacities, their capabilities and utilities in different areas of the county.

Vice Chairman Holt said I don't know if I am jumping ahead or not Mr. Jefferies. What is his RV park you have on the agenda? I hadn't heard about it. The clerk said it is just an example so that you know things that we could have in the county. I don't think it is the potential that one is coming. Vice Chairman Holt said I didn't know if someone had discussed it or brought it up.

Commissioner Dickerson said the billboard policy, was that ever implemented. The Clerk said a public hearing coming up on February 5th on that. Interim County Manager Smith said it was pushed back when the Planning Director moved on to another county. Commissioner Dickerson said I think that is something we really need to take a look at or we will look like the road to South of the Border if we don't put some kind of restriction in place.

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Chairman Jefferies said we put the Personnel Policy on there for employees in Social Services because we are losing our people. What can we do to make employees happy and keep them here? I don't want to move too far, but I want to ask the new County Manager his ideas. When I came to your interview, I asked you to come back, you were talking about grants and water situations. I think it is a lot of things out there that can reduce some of the cost for economic development. You need to talk on that before we go any further.

Scott Meszaros said a lot of the issues and topics you are talking about today are things seen in all communities. I think the key piece as a Board is to really look at the long term and have a strategic plan with someone facilitating it. Then to transition into it is critical right now with this budget cycle. I don't criticize the people before but it has to start in January with a kick off. It needs to be a longer process so that you have that stuff upfront rather than being reactionary when you find out here's what the assessments are and here are what some of our obligations are with the schools. You have people from the NCACC helping, but it doesn't mean the auditors and services you are using now are best being external. But when you don't have the internal resources, it is really important to incrementally get those things put to bid, figure out where you are, address them. Things brought to my attention already is there was an election and you need to take capacity of incurring those funds that the Board has approved because if you don't it will have to come out of your general funds. That will impact all these things. I think there are recommendations so start getting a plan together. You have to go incrementally year by year. By March or April, we should have a bunch of these closed out. I think it sounds like you are in better shape than what the negative could be. Having been exposed to one of the cities in my county, Spring Lake, knowing the UAL process and knowing that you have 100 vehicles and not knowing what happened to them. That doesn't just happen overnight. Those are processes. A lot of the things you are talking about today like staffing, you have to hire a great staff and team. Your role is to say hey we'd like to see where these vehicles and leases are. Give your team enough heads up. It creates thoughts for the staff and you need to give expectations and be timelines that are achievable. The Personnel Policy is a bit dated. It is 2018. There are obviously things the staff internally with resources could look at it. The Association people would do that. It is important to know other concerns you want to know about in here such as accruals. I can tell you for retention and keeping people here, that it is hard because it is rural. You are competing with the people around you. You have to look at those parameters and what this job pays in these types of markets. You want to be competitive, but you don't need to be the top tier. When you do compensation evaluations, the fiftieth percentile is an excellent place to be. When I was in my last job, our city was in the tenth percentile of payers. It's really hard to get the choice people when the really choice people are going to start \$12,000 higher in the same community. You have to know these things, but we can't always afford to pay. We are not a big county with a lot of resources or money. It is important to meet with the staff and representing that team. You want to take of the team that takes care of the citizens. It's a whole picture. It's important to get the big picture and overall you have to have some evolutions and take some deep dives. See the big picture and what you need to do with strategic planning. I pull from the people I have worked

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with and the leagues, but when I was in Alaska it was small and rural, the legislatures have to talk to every small state. They had to talk to the managers, and what we did was a legislative priorities list. We took everything that was like storm water, harbor, roads, and emergency services and made a list of anything on our radar. We put these things together big picture with our strategic plan, and then we gave those to our legislatures. When they say hey there's CARES money, you don't have to tell them we have a bridge that floats in the harbor. They know that because they have our list. Then on an annual basis, a 5-10 year capital list, what do we have to pay for with the schools. Thank goodness in NC we don't do roads in the county, because roads are never great. I think it is just that structure, and that can't just happen overnight. It's going to take time and work. I think it is critical to start looking at those things like you are today. With the budget, I think that process is going to be a lot cleaner than it has been in the last few years just because you are getting the numbers reset. The reval is going to be important and some issues that staff know about so notices need to go out rapidly. Some of those things just need to be done, and it is no fault to anybody. We need to be holistic and do a big overview of where we are with the policies. Some of the policies such as the take home car policy, that's nothing special to you. I had that when I started in my last city. I had people driving 40 miles home and never went to call outs. Those are things you can fix with a policy. When you have problems with transitions and not retaining people, you need to be a little sensitive to maybe that is the reason they do work here. Is it worth the cost? Is it effective? Those are hard things to evaluate, but I think it is important that the team start having the ability to look at those things and bring them back. It is kind of whittling off those issues you have concerns with. It takes time to get to excellence. With the audit, it's a process. When they get through the process, you are going to know where you sit and then we will move forward with the progression of keeping on top of that. I think it is important to be hungry and ambitious like you are, but to also have the big picture and orchestrate that. You need to be responsive to the citizens on issues that come up, but have the ability to do it right and not just address things. If you change things and not do it holistically, it's going to have other issues that need to be addressed in six months. I'm excited by what I hear and you have a lot of great ideas. Accountability issues need to be addressed but some of that may be that you don't have excessive budgets. We have to do the best we can and be good stewards of what we have. It is also important to have that vision of where we are headed.

Commissioner Gwynn said Mr. Meszaros, I think you have your work cut out for you. We are going to be supportive of you because we realize there are a lot of things that need to be done. We are very much aware of that. Scott Mesazaros said it is about the work team and the Board. Commissioner Gwynn said yes, it is about working together. We have some inconsistencies in departments and that is something we are responsible for. We need to work on that. Scott Meszaros said as a legislature, you need to have the big picture, and we are a tool to get things done for you. I was concerned because in my last city, every person was up for election every 2 years. They don't have staggered terms so what happens is you get this current board who does a bunch of work, plans and starts engineering and design, and the next board says oh no we don't

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like those designs. The project gets stopped. I think it is important to have that master plan and strategic plan so that whether we are here or others when work begins for a sewer system or whatever that takes 5-15 years, you aim for that goal. If you have it spelled out and have attainable goals that all agree on, you don't lose traction or pursuit of those things. It is important to know where the target is because without that road map we don't know when we get near the destination or if we have arrived. It takes work., but it is good work. People on your team have passion. I haven't met all of the staff, but it is important to make them feel secure and supported by the Board. We are all teammates. In your role it is important to be supportive of staff, give credit where credit is due, and empower individuals. We have to figure out the issues and address what we can. If you have turn over, that may be one of the things we have to figure out.

Vice Chairman Holt said I think one of the disadvantages here is we are one of the poorest counties in the area. The advantage is most of the people that live here and grew up here, love this place. They have kids in school and homes so they don't actually want to leave. It is expensive to drive to Burlington or Greensboro. Hopefully that balances out what we've got. Scott Meszaros said you can always bring in industry and train people. You may have things that you don't know about until you survey them. There might be some niche here and have people wanting to connect with us. The goal is to rise salaries up and get better primary jobs with benefits. We do that holistically, and see those thing develop. The other side of that is you have the character in this community and county, but you have to have the right kind of growth that fits the culture and keeps that community environment that you have. Without commercial and industrial tax rates, the citizens can't just burden the cost all the time. It helps to offset that when you get industrial rates and have commercial sites. It helps when there are not issues with the taxes. A lot of that is going to come under partnering with other cities. Our goal is to support those cities. It's important for us not to lose sight of that.

Chairman Jefferies said I didn't hear all of the beginning of the meeting so can we have the clerk review what was said in the beginning of the meeting. Commissioner McVey said I don't have a problem with the clerk reading it back to you.

Vernon Massengill said I have to go to another meeting. This has probable already been done, and I'm sure the Board has heard about the proposed insurance increases. As Fire Marshall, our firemen have busted backside to get our insurance down. The Department of Insurance has proposed raises all the way from 99% on the coast and in the mountains down to 44.7%, I believe was Caswell County. If the Board would entertain sending a letter to the Insurance Commission, and the Town has already done it, saying we oppose this. Causey is up for reelection so he may not do it. That is my suggestion. Thank you.

Commissioner Dickerson said I find it interesting that the rate of increase is 99% at the coast. For years we have been subsidizing the coast with our rates inland. I wonder what happened that caused them to try to balance the scale. I'm glad to see it's going that way. Does anybody know that back story on that? Commissioner Rose said he didn't but his took a jump this year.

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Commissioner Dickerson asked are we going to draft that letter? Interim County Manager Smith said yes sir. We will take care of that.

Then the Clerk reviewed the beginning of the meeting with the Chairman to be sure he heard all the topics addressed at the beginning of the work session.

Chairman Jefferies asked Interim County Manager Smith to take a look at the walking trails at Parks and Recreations to see what we can do before there is an accident. I thought when we sold those cars. I thought we got rid of all of them. Interim County Manager Smith said no we just got rid of 4 cars.

Commissioner Gwynn said who makes that determination for moving vehicles from one place to another? Interim County Manager Smith said I made that decision as to what I thought was best for the county.

Chairman Jefferies said these cars that we were talking about, I know this was before you took over. You sent us an email out about these cars that were coming in and going to the Sheriff's Department. Interim County Manager Smith said the Sheriff's Department ordered 5 vehicles about two years ago and they finally came in or are ready to be delivered. So we found out that we cannot lease those vehicles because we are on the UAL with the State. A lease is considered the same thing as a loan. We cannot exceed \$50,000. We have to go before the UAL board to get approval next month to be able to lease those vehicles. We can't do anything. Our hands are tied.

Commissioner McVey said I think we are going to find ourselves in pretty good shape when we get this audit.

Interim County Manager Smith said unfortunately we will still be on the UAL until we are totally caught up. I wanted to give the Board an update too. We talked a little bit about the audit. I've got the audit in my system, and I was going to send it out the first of the week. I'm going to send it to all of the Commissioners so they can have a week or so to review it prior to the auditor coming in to talk to us on the 5th. Commissioner McVey said do it look like we are in good shape? Interim County Manager Smith said well it looks like we are not in bad shape. Some numbers are up and some are down, but I think overall I was pleased. Now 2022-2023, and 2024 is current as we go. I feel good about where we are headed with the audits. We are working concurrent on 22-23 as we move forward. We are doing bank recons and all at the same time. The goal is the end of the first quarter to have it ready to send to the auditors. We will send both at the same time. By October we should be totally caught up and off the UAL.

Commissioner McVey said I asked a thousand times if those bank reconciliations had been done. It is even in the minutes where I was told yes.

Chairman Jefferies said I think I heard something about the audit that we hadn't received. When is the 2021 audit going to be done? Interim County Manager Smith said the audit is ready, and I will send it to you on Monday or I can send it to you over the weekend. It is in my system so I

can forward it so everyone can review it. The auditors are coming in Monday the 5th to present to the Board.

Vice Chairman Holt said is it fairly easy to understand. Interim County Manager Smith said no. Vice Chairman Holt said if we have questions, who can we ask? Interim County Manager said look at it and prepare questions for the auditors.

Scott Meszaros said did they have many findings? Interim County Manager said there were some findings, and Melissa Williamson said we expected that.

Commissioner Rose said were the findings explained? Interim County Manager Smith said they are in depth.

Chairman Jefferies said did the auditors talk about giving us a little discount since it has been so long? Don't someone need to talk to them. Interim County Manager said the other thing is we need to sign the contracts for the audits for 2022-23. We couldn't do that until the 2021 audit was complete. Now we have prices for that, and we will be talking about that at the Board meeting.

Commissioner McVey said I think you need to look in the future at maybe switching auditors. I was a little bit disturbed at some of the stuff that got by, but I really couldn't do anything about it. But it got by with the auditors in the past like reconciliations.

Commissioner Rose said the only question I got is if we are paying them to get all this stuff done and if they are saying we need this much more money, I understand what they are doing is because of our problems, but can it be a timeline. Can we say we want it done by this date? Melissa Williamson said are you talking about the Isley Group or the auditor? Commissioner Rose said the auditors. We are paying it and I understand they wouldn't have the problem if it didn't come from us. I understand that. It looks like we could ask to have it done by a specific date. Commissioner McVey said that is the very reason I am saying we need to examine other auditors. Scott Meszaros said is this the same auditor that has been doing the audits? Interim County Manager said they have for some years. Melissa Williamson said I know right now they are doing it at the same time as other people are finishing up. That's one of the reasons I've heard because they were just getting into other peoples audits already. I know we are ready to push ours through, but we are so far behind. Commissioner Rose said I thought this thing would be done before we got into dealing with the budget. It sounds like it is probably not a 100% going to be finished. Interim County Manager said I went to a meeting in Chapel Hill. It was the UAL class, and there were people in the auditorium simply because they could not get an auditor to do it. Scott Meszaros said GASB changed and there are a lot of auditors that are not doing that work because of the new requirements. Commissioner Rose said I know we don't want to say if you can't get it done, we'll find somebody else. Then you have to start back over. Commissioner McVey said my point is those auditors should have told us a long time ago about the problems that are occurring instead of us hearing about one or two findings each time.

Commissioner Dickerson said any time a question was asked we always got it's basically nothing to see here. We are taking care of it. Commissioner McVey said we need to look for different auditors. If I trust them to do that, which I did, and it doesn't happen, then we end up with this mess, where does that leave us? We always had one or two finds and you are not going to do everything right, but it never got fixed. That's what put us in the shape we are today. Interim County Manager said it started in 2020. Commissioner McVey said it started before that. It started in 2016 when I started on the Board. Vice Chairman Holt said 2020 is when it all fell apart, and Commissioner McVey said I think you are right. Commissioner Gwynn said how far did it go back? Commissioner McVey said I don't know if it went back further than 2016 because that is when I came on the Board. In 2016 there were little findings there, and we were told everything was taken care of. I trusted the people we were told by. Commissioner Gwynn said you were told that by the auditors or the workers? Commissioner McVey said the auditors and the workers. Chairman Jefferies said but we don't know when it all started. The auditors did find some things. It wasn't fixed, but on the other hand, somebody else should have caught it too before it got this bad. Commissioner Gwynn said who should have caught it? Chairman Jefferies said the County Manager should have caught some of this. Some of the Finance staff received certificates for doing a good job from the auditors. Melissa Williamson said yes, it was in the paper. Commissioner Gwynn said these are auditors that we hired? Commissioner McVey said yes. When we went to the new software, that is what really caught it. Commissioner Gwynn said I understand changing software, but it should not have gone on this long. Commissioner McVey said I'm saying the new software is what caught all of this. Chairman Jefferies said we have to move forward. Melissa Williamson said when they first did training it was during COVID. From my understanding at that time, the Finance Director was the one who received training, and it was not the current Finance Director. Then she ended up retiring shortly after that. Commissioner Gwynn said did the new person go for training after that? Melissa Williamson said Munis did come in and start doing some training, but at that point we had to start trying to find out where all that money was supposed to be. That's what led to getting Isley involved. We, staff, had one round of training when a lady came in from Munis and was at the library. That training was about an hour. Commissioner Gwynn said that was not even reasonable. Melissa Williamson said they have gotten lots of training since then. Interim County Manager Smith said everything is current now. At the end of this year we will be current and right.

Commissioner McVey said so I asked about the Solid Waste balance the other day, and they could not give me a current Solid Waste balance at this time. Everything has not yet been posted or complete. So anybody trying to get a current balance, you cannot receive a current balance at this point. Restricted fund balance, they do not have that at this point. That is what I was told by Finance. Commissioner Gwynn said but we need that. Commissioner Rose said but you are not going to get it until the audit is done. Commissioner Gwynn said I hear what you are saying, but you keep saying we got 2021 complete. I'm wondering about 2022, 2023, 2024.

Scott Meszaros said I had a really good Finance Director. Commissioner Rose said have you been through what we are going through with the auditors and catching up. How long does it take? The reason I'm asking this question is because when I can on the Board this was already here. I own it now, but I would love for the auditors to tell me how many hours a day they are working on this? Scott Meszaros said the 2023 audit, right now it is tax time for people and everybody is closing out all the municipal audits last month. Having them work on your stuff right now if they have a lot of other clients, them working on your audit is probably not as heavy as all the other things they are working on. It's unusual to have any place more than a year behind. Interim County Manager said I think the deadline for counties is by the end of October. If we get it to them by December, we are not in really big trouble. You have a lot of counties running into the end of December, so you won't be on the UAL. That's behind us now. We are already on the UAL, and we will be on the UAL until the end of October when we will be current.

Vice Chairman Holt said the Finance Committee, Jennifer Hammock has a big layout and she is doing a good job with it. She has all the dates, and she almost hit the date for the 2021. 2022 and 2023 she has the date, and 2024 is this coming December. Then we will be caught up. Melissa Williamson said that will be a good question to ask on February 5th. Commissioner Rose said if I do a job and they ask how long this will be. If I tell them, and I don't hit that date, I have some explaining to do. It is not like we are not trying to get off that UAL, we are at the mercy of the auditors. Melissa Williamson said they say we are really in good shape with the other ones because the books are what they should be. They should move quicker. Commissioner Gwynn said I will believe it when I see it. The said 2021 is fine, but when 2021 comes up we had some more tweaking to do. Interim County Manager said I will send this out later today. Johnna Sharpe is coming in for the Finance meeting later this week, and she will be here for the auditors.

Commissioner McVey asked is that what we will be there for at 4:30? Melissa Williamson said no. That is from back in June when we had the International Economic Development Council come out. They have finally finished their final report, and they want to present that to the Board. Commissioner Gwynn said when is that? Melissa Williamson said that is at 4:30 on the 5th before the Commissioners meeting.

Commissioner Rose said things are kind of going forward hand in hand with the reval because if we don't know where we are standing or know what we have, then the reval is coming up. Let's take it back to revenue neutral. If we brought in \$10 million and now with the reval it's going up to \$20 million in revenue based off of reval amounts. If you take it back to revenue neutral and you set your tax rate, but then you find out we have a \$40 million shortfall in this budget. Hypothetically speaking, with this shortfall you still have to continue to provide those services we have. That is what I don't want to see happen. People are not happy about their taxes, but I told them I understand where you are coming from. Do you think Commissioners are exempt from paying taxes? We are not.

Scott Meszaros said incrementally over time, taxes creep up with more services. Commissioner McVey said in 2016 the tax rate was 0.679, and today it's 0.7350. So that is an increase of \$0.056. If you increase it 5.5 cent, and we spent 3.69 cent on the fire tax that we implemented that is a one point something percent increase in taxes. At that point I went back and looked at our Solid Waste fee. In 2015, we were paying \$84 for our Solid Waste fee. In 2016, we dropped it to \$64. In 2017 because it was so much money being built up in that restrictive fund balance and we were advised we need to spend some of it, it dropped down to \$44. In 2018 it was \$44. In 2019 it went back up to \$59 because we started spending some of that money. In 2020, we went up to \$60 to bring some of that back. Now it is at \$113. Since 2015 we have gone up \$29 in Solid Waste fees a period of seven years. I was told there was a deficit in there, but according to the ladies in Finance they can't tell me if there is a deficit in that budget because of everything is not complete. So over a 7 year period you have gone up \$29 on your Solid Waste fee and 5.5cent in taxes. That means 3.69% of that went to a fire tax. Our tax increase has not been terribly bad.

Commissioner Rose said I think what has happened is the housing boom a year or so ago has drove these rates up. Now if you don't watch it, in the next year the way houses are selling for astronomical prices but they will drop. That is my opinion.

Chairman Jefferies said I thought you could only spend this Solid Waste money on Solid Waste. Commissioner McVey said we went in there several times because it was recommended. We got several things that they needed and some equipment was bought. When COVID hit the trash went out of sight as far as hauling it off. Chairman Jefferies said they had a million dollars and we took some for fund balance. Then they said the money had to be spent on Solid Waste. Commissioner McVey said that is why we bought the equipment for them. Chairman Jefferies said I think the fee for Solid Waste is too high for the people to pay. We can't continue spending a lot of money. How can we save? What we got here is taxpayers in this county. Years ago we had Hanover and Williamsburg and people was making a lot of money. Your tax base was low. All these things are gone. So now the only thing here to produce is taxpayers. We have to look at what we can do to save money. I heard someone say today about driving cars home. The Sheriff's office should because they may get calls in the middle of the night. But a whole lot of people are driving cars and the gas costs, it shouldn't be.

Commissioner McVey said how many years did Caswell County go without an Economic Developer? We just sat her. When Caswell County hired an Economic Developer, we got that River Street Furniture Company, the CEAD project started, and we have had several projects get started. This building here was done off of grant money. We had a lot of projects start when we got an Economic Developer, but Caswell County went for years without anybody here promoting this county. Chairman Jefferies said I'm not knocking Economic Development. We need one. But how can we save right now? Commissioner McVey said but without someone searching for this business we're not going to have it.

Commissioner Rose asked about Royal Park out on 86? Melissa Williamson said it is a Furniture place. Commissioner Rose said is the whole place being used? Interim County Manager Smith said I can't say they are using the entire building.

Commissioner Rose said Scott I want to welcome you to the job starting February 5th. I do not envy stepping into your shoes. I will say if we run into any issues, let us know in a timely manner. Scott Meszaros said sure. Commissioner Rose said even if it means we have to meet other than our scheduled meetings rather than waiting and having to make a decision on the fly. We are on the UAL and our budget is coming up. The Board sometimes don't like to hear certain thing, but we know it is political. You are never going to please everybody. Scott Meszaros said we have to be good visionaries of what needs to happen like dropping those rates and zoning. Commissioner Rose said I would love to figure it out and balance it with education. How can we accomplish things with the taxpayers? Melissa Williamson said they did try to go out to areas in communities to try to educate them, but people would not show up. Matthew Hoagland, the past Planner, tried to do that. Commissioner Rose said we are trying to be the best stewards for the taxpayers' dollars and do what is best for all. Kids are leaving the county for better pay. Caswell County back in the day was the richest county in the state, and we kind of stopped while everyone else moved on. Commissioner McVey said after tobacco left.

Commissioner Holt said we used to be the number one dairy producer, but now we don't even have a dairy farm.

Scott Meszaros said things are changing, but we have to take advantage of what we do have. What that is, we may not know until we look at that. Commissioner McVey said and when the survey was done about what the people want in the county, it was to primarily stay rural and agricultural. Scott Meszaros said I can understand the sporting, outdoors, and camping, but you have to capitalize on some of that. Get industries and businesses that can help with that. You can't just build more house and neighborhoods. That increases the demand for more services. It's a balance, and some of that has to be commercial and industrial for higher tax rates. Commissioner McVey said when you bring more houses here, you are putting more pressure on the fire departments, EMS, and all of them. I mentioned years ago, before I became a commissioner, an impact fee when someone moves here because it impacts the garbage pickup and fire departments, etc. I got shot down. Commissioner Gwynn said the garbage pickup doesn't serve the whole county. You have to pay for it coming to your community.

Commissioner Rose said I have had citizens ask me if they live on a private road and they have a dumpster. Why do they have to pay a solid waste fee? Commissioner McVey said they don't. I went to the Tax Department and let them know there is no solid waste coming from that land. It will come off. Scott Meszaros said there is a process. They have to come in. Commissioner Rose said but I think you have to have documentation. Scott Meszaros said have those people call the Tax Office. AS elected officials you get calls about everything. Have them call the main number and we will put them in touch with whoever they need. The more armed you are, the more

educated you are, the more supportive you are, the better. Commissioner Rose said they think we can solve everything. Scott Meszaros said we try to do our best with what we are allowed to.

Commissioner Rose said we need to give a free day at the dump so people can bring their stuff. I don't know if we did it this time or not. Commissioner McVey said that was yard debris waste. It has not been done lately. We did it when we had the hurricane or big storm come through here a year or so ago.

Vice Chairman Holt said I have a separate question. You are starting the 5th and Tony Smith will be going back to Economic Development. Tony Smith said I will spend a couple of days with him and help with whatever he needs. Chairman Jefferies said when Scott comes in, Tony, you will go to Economic Development, but Melissa Williamson can help him. So that will free you up Tony. Tony Smith said I think I need to spend a little time with him because there is some thing I may know that Melissa may not know. Scott Meszaros said it is going to take a learning curve and some time to get up to speed.

Commissioner Gwynn said you've heard a lot of negative things, but let me add something positive. We are a really good county and really good people, but one of our resources, and it was recently told to us, our community college is among the top 15 in the nation. They have a wonderful president. Commissioner Dickerson said why has that not been used for a recruiting tool. Commissioner Gwynn said it should have been celebrated and put in the newspaper. Dr. Senegal is a good resource and she is over the campus in Caswell and Person County.

Vice Chairman Holt said where I was leading was can you give us an update of what you are pushing or what you are working on in Economic Development. Things that you may have coming up. I know you have been busy here. Tony Smith said I have not had time to pursue it. I want to talk to the City of Danville and Raleigh. I want to look at what land you have available. I talked to the Town of Yanceyville about utilities. I have a list of things I want to jump on. Vice Chairman holt said I found out yesterday there is 600 acres in the northwest part that would be sold for anything that would help Caswell County. I will get with you on that. Tony Smith said to expand on that, I talked with a couple of Commissioners about me going from full time to part-time. 20 hours a week starting immediately. It will save the county half the salary. Right now this is not a full time job. I've got things I'd like to do. Commissioner Rose said do you think you will be able to get everything accomplished that you want to in 20 hours. Tony Smith said I think I can. I will not leave something that is not wrapped up.

Commissioner McVey said do we have any money in the budget for Economic Development? Tony Smith said yes.

Vice Chairman Holt said I don't have a problem with saving the county money, and it may not take 40 hours a week.

Commissioner Rose said where do we stand on the last update on the Pelham project? Tony Smith said they asked for a letter of intent, I got the attorney to write the letter of intent, and I sent it to them last week. It's in their lawyer's hands. I was hoping to have that at the next

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meeting. Commissioner Rose said I heard something on the radio about a tobacco company coming to Danville. Tony Smith said that is a different processor.

Commissioner McVey said in that contract is the stuff you and I talked about. Is that in the contract. Tony Smith said that will be in the deed. It was in the letter of intent as well.

Tony Smith said what they want to do is take some of the adjoining land and grade that. They will take that dirt and fill in holes. Vice Chairman Holt said will that be dirt that is needed for labor. Tony Smith said a knoll to create a level path. Commissioner Gwynn asked will they agree to put back the top soil? Tony Smith said yes. That is part of the deal. Vice Chairman Holt said and seed it. Is that timber now? Tony Smith said they cruised the area and all you will get is \$15,000 to \$20,000 is all you will get. The timber has been cut not too long ago. Vice Chairman Holt said I'm just looking at hauling it off. They going to take care of all of that. Tony Smith said it will be clean cut. You got to leave some timber for streams and so forth.

Chairman Jefferies said how long do you think you will need to work with Scott Meszaro, County Manager. Tony Smith said a week. Chairman Jefferies said I definitely want Melissa Williamson to spend some time with the County Manager. I want to free you Tony so that you can work on getting Caswell County a little piece of the businesses coming in like the casinos. I know you have one big issue on the table. The State don't want us telling what it is because once we have a deal they will have some state representation or the Governor come in to make a presentation.

Chairman Jefferies said I think everyone is growing impatient. I appreciate everyone coming out this morning. It's been a long time since the Board got together to discuss things, and we may need to do this more often. I hope the new County Manager got something from this. Scott Meszaros said I think everyone talks about things that are in their heart.

Commissioner Rose said I just wish we could get the public more involved. I don't think they realize the difficult situations and answers we have to come up with. I don't know how we can educate them. You said you were going to meet with the department heads, but if I can give a word of advice, meet your employees. That is where you get your best source of information. Mr. Jefferies I did come by Thursday and looked at the Historic Courthouse. It really looks good.

Scott Meszaros said the sound systems and audio visual stuff, every place always has those projects. It's hard to find something that really effective and works well so that people can hear. Commissioner Rose said we actually got some new chairs that don't squeak.

Vice Chairman Holt asked if the Historic Association still did the tours. The Clerk said yes, just let me know when you want to do the tour. The Tour Guide, Jeff Nidle, is there on Wednesdays. He will take you through the jail, school house and the Historic Courthouse.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

- February 5, 2024 4:30 pm Special Meeting for IEDC Report at Gunn Memorial Library
- February 5, 2024 6:30 pm Board of Commissioners Meeting at Gunn Memorial Library
- February 15, 2024 Joint Town Meeting at 6 pm at the Yanceyville Town Hall
- February 19, 2024 Board of Commissioners Meeting at 6:30 pm at Gunn Memorial Library

ADJOURNMENT:

The work session was adjourned at 10:40 am by Chairman Jefferies.

Carla R. Smith
Clerk to the Board

Jeremiah Jefferies
Chairman

January 27, 2024