

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

February 11, 2022
OTHERS PRESENT

Rick McVey, Chairman
David Owen, Vice Chairman
Nathaniel Hall
Jeremiah Jefferies
Steve Oestreicher
John D. Dickerson

Bryan Miller, County Manager
Ashley K. Powell, Admin. Assistant
Debra Ferrell, The Caswell Messenger
Brian Ferrell, County Attorney (Joined Remote)

The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in special session on Friday, February 11, 2022 at 9:00 am in the Historic Courthouse.

WELCOME:

Chairman McVey called the meeting to order and paused for a moment of Silent Prayer. Then the Board of Commissioners and all the guest in attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS:

The following individuals appeared before the Board to make public comments:

Elin Claggett, PhD, 108 Jaye Ln, Providence NC

The 2020 budget audit deficiencies included a recommendation for management to develop, oversee and evaluate the services performed and accept responsibility for the results. Last board of commissioners meeting (January 3, 2022), you approved a financial service contract with Isley, CPA . The contract for the” first \$30,000” at a rate of \$210/hr plus benefits would pay for approximately 17 days of work. The finance director, retired finance director and newer assistant finance director apparently need more expertise “to help straighten this out as well” (Miller on 1/3/2022). Finance budget increased 160% over the past 2 years from \$233,000 to \$377,000. The county manager also referenced “the growing number of public records requests.”

Questions I asked December 30, 2021 were: What is the cost for the 2020-2021 fiscal year budget audit and when will it be available to the public? How many days do you anticipate retaining services for Mr. Isley in the next 6 months and does Ms. Vaughn continue to receive the equivalent of full-time pay? These are not hard questions and answers require a sum of 50 words or less. Questions were ignored, resubmitted on January 6, 2022, and Commissioners were copied. The response from Mr. Miller was “Currently we are working on several projects and several FOIA requests. We will process your request as soon as possible.” After another two weeks of being ignored, these questions were resubmitted on January 20th in a more formal FOIA format. An additional question was added seeking how much Caswell Co. Government has paid for total legal/attorney fees in the past 2 years. IRS required this information by January 31, 2022 so should be readily accessible. On January 28th, you identified better communication with the public as a need, yet failed to even mention the lack of replies for public information requests. After that meeting, Commissioner Dickerson inquired on the status of my FOIA

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request stating “I have spoken to Bryan about this. He says that some of the information is not public record. And only the finance department has some of it and they are busy with the other issues they are dealing with. So that part will take longer.” That was 2 weeks ago. I do not know which information is not public as there has been zero communication from the manager or finance in over a month. The budget audit and its cost should be public. County employee or consultant pay information from 1099 line 1 “Gross Distribution” or W-2 line “Wages, compensation” will suffice and should be public. Legal fees for additional specific cases, such as election districts, should be itemized in the budget and be public. Commissioners, ignoring FOIA request is not a software problem. Questions aren’t going away.

RECOGNITIONS:

There were no recognitions

AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Owen and seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher and **carried unanimously** to approve the agenda. (Commissioners Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, and McVey voted in favor)

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. January 3, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes
- b. January 28, 2022 Work Session Minutes

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Owen and **carried unanimously** to approve the consent agenda. (Commissioners Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher, Dickerson, and McVey voted in favor)

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

PROJECT CEAD UPDATE:

Dr. Senegal presented the Board with an update on Project CEAD. (Presentation to follow)



Piedmont Community College's



MISSION STATEMENT

The Center for Educational & Agricultural Development

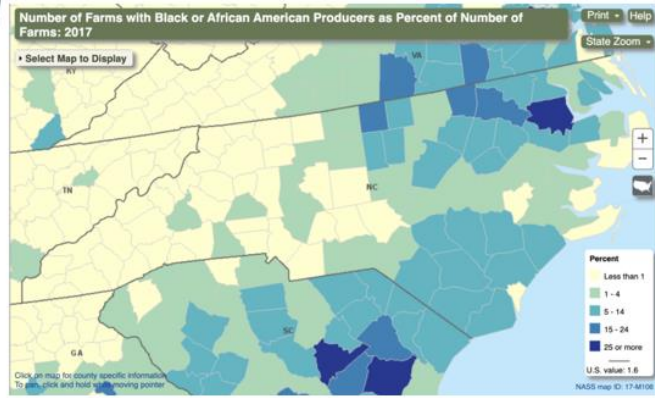
We **educate** students and the community on agribusiness practices
and **incubate** local food and agriculture enterprises
to **build** thriving rural economies and food systems.

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Population Statistics

- ▶ Caswell is classified as Tier 1.
- ▶ 99% of population lives in rural census tracts.
- ▶ Pelham residents (and surrounding area) have some of the worst health outcomes in the state (preventable disease).
- ▶ 75% of Caswell's farmers are aged 56 and over.
- ▶ 15% of Caswell's farmers are African American.
 - ▶ Ranked 1st in Piedmont Triad (Alamance follows in 2nd with less than 5%)
 - ▶ Ranked 4th in NC



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Planning Process

- Priority Strategy of Caswell's Economic Development Strategic Plan
- Portland, Maine Trip
- Community Meetings
 - Continuous Community Input
- Feasibility Studies
- Food Hub Visits
- Incubator Farm Visits
- Caswell County Board of County Commissioners Meetings

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Our Partners

4PFOODS



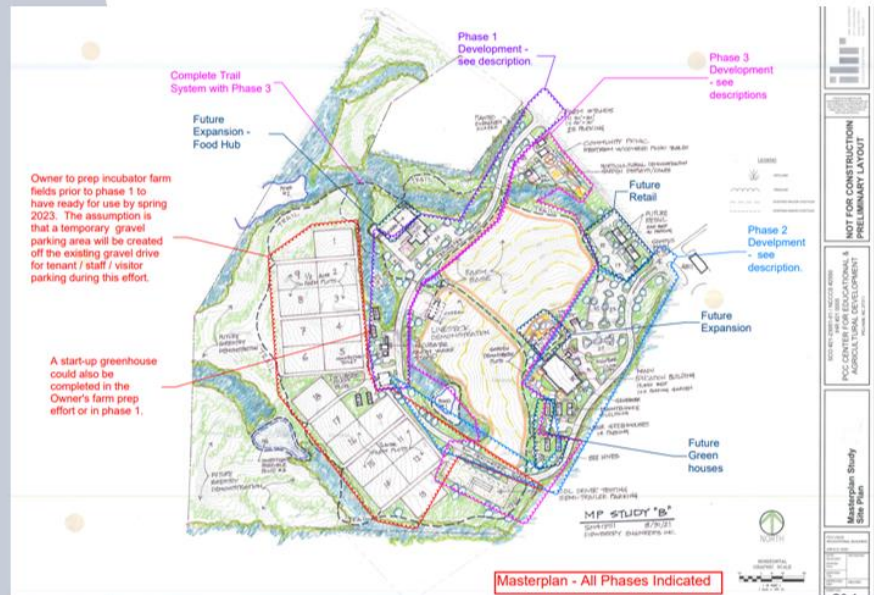
Caswell County



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.



Returned to
Phased
Implementation
Approach



From 2019 to
2022,
Construction
Costs and
Scope Changes

Phase 1 Scope	Budgeted Amount	Notes
Food Hub	\$ 3,910,000.00	
Food Hub Site Infrastructure	\$ 1,555,000.00	
Food Hub Equipment	\$ 92,700.00	
Incubator Farm Barn and Support Buildings	\$ 1,155,000.00	
Incubator Farm Site Infrastructure	\$ 900,000.00	
Inspection Fees	\$ 60,000.00	Local inspections, special inspections retaining wall(s), fire protection system, etc.
Construction Budget	\$ 7,672,700.00	
CMAR Services	\$ 383,635.00	5% of Construction Budget
	\$ 8,056,335.00	
A/E Fee Budget	\$ 960,000.00	12% of \$8M for Design Services
Soil Borings	\$ 4,000.00	
Rock Allowance	\$ 17,500.00	
Promotional Material	\$ 30,000.00	Renderings, and other material needed
Administration and Legal Fees	\$ 30,000.00	
Miscellaneous	\$ 2,165.00	
Owner Contingency	\$ 700,000.00	7% of \$10M
Owner proceed with Incubator Farm independent of A/E team in 2022	\$ 200,000.00	Budget allowance for Owner effort, field prep, remove roots, stumps, amendments, fencing, cover crop, etc.
Project Budget - Phase 1	\$ 10,000,000.00	

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Phase 2
Costs Higher
than Original
Estimates

PCC CEAD - Phased Development		
Phase 2 Scope	Budgeted Amount	Notes
Education Building	\$ 7,907,000.00	
Education Site Infrastructure	\$ 4,100,000.00	
Maintenance and Greenhouse Buildings	\$ 861,000.00	
Inspection Fees	\$ 70,000.00	Local inspections, special inspections retaining wall(s), fire protection system, etc.
Construction Budget	\$ 12,938,000.00	
CMAR Services	\$ 646,900.00	5% of Construction Budget
	\$ 13,584,900.00	
Inflation	\$ 679,245.00	5% on construction (unknown longevity to get funding - assuming during 2023-2024)
	\$ 14,264,145.00	
A/E Fee Budget	\$ 1,710,000.00	12% of \$14.25M for Design Services
Soil Borings	\$ -	Do for all locations in phase 1
Rock Allowance	\$ 55,000.00	
Promotional Material	\$ 30,000.00	Renderings, and other material needed
Administration and Legal Fees	\$ 55,000.00	Access drive for neighbor etc.
Owner Contingency	\$ 1,211,000.00	7% of \$17.3M
Project Budget - Phase 2	\$ 17,325,000.00	rounded

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Phase 3 Costs Follow Trend

PCC CEAD - Phased Development

Phase 3 Scope	Budgeted Amount	Notes
Livestock Building	\$ 825,000.00	
livestock site infrastructure / pastures	\$ 500,000.00	
CDL training pad	\$ 551,000.00	
Trails	\$ 555,000.00	
Picnic shelter & Farm Stand	\$ 575,000.00	
Demo plots near shelters, dog runs, pond, and miscellaneous	\$ 395,000.00	
Inspection Fees	\$ 40,000.00	Local inspections, special inspections retaining wall(s), fire protection system, etc.
Construction Budget	\$ 3,441,000.00	
CMAR Services	\$ 172,050.00	5% of Construction Budget
	\$ 3,613,050.00	
Inflation	\$ 361,305.00	10% on construction (unknown longevity to get funding - assuming during 2024-2025)
	\$ 3,974,355.00	
A/E Fee Budget	\$ 480,000.00	12% of \$4M for Design Services
Soil Borings	\$ -	Do for all locations in phase 1
Rock Allowance	\$ 50,000.00	
Promotional Material	\$ 10,000.00	Renderings, and other material needed
Administration and Legal Fees	\$ 50,000.00	
Miscellaneous	\$ 1,000.00	
Owner Contingency	\$ 350,000.00	7% of \$5M
Project Budget - Phase 3	\$ 4,915,000.00	rounded

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Total Project Costs

Summary		
Phase 1	\$	10,000,000.00
Phase 2	\$	17,325,000.00
Phase 3	\$	4,915,000.00
	\$	32,240,000.00

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Phase One Shortfall

State Funds			
	Connect NC Bonds	\$1,400,000.00	
	Legislative Allocation (2020) *	\$1,170,000.00	
	Capital Project Allocation (2021) **	\$3,001,442.00	
Private Grants			
	Danville Regional Foundation	\$2,400,000.00	
	NC Tobacco Trust	\$358,300.00	
	TOTAL	\$8,329,742.00	
	Estimated Phase 1 costs	\$10,000,000.00	
	Shortfall	\$1,670,258.00	
*SB61 passed with \$1.170m CEAD funding (\$2 State per \$1 non-state funding).			
** 21-22 SCIF allocation divides this amount over four years in equal amounts beginning 21-22			

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Going Forward

- ▶ EDA application for \$4.6 million not considered because region's funds already allocated. Will resubmit for other EDA programs. Limited in scope. (January 2022)
- ▶ Met with Golden Leaf officials, max project size \$250K (December 2021)
- ▶ DRF will consider additional support given overall increase project size (Spring 2022)
- ▶ Meeting with federal legislative delegation about project needs (February 2022).
- ▶ Meeting with NC Agriculture project (February 2022).
- ▶ Short session legislative allocation potential (Spring 2022).
- ▶ May need to reduce scope of subsequent phases...

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Commissioner Owen questioned when did the B.L.A.S.T program start at Stoney Creek Elementary School. Dr. Senegal this past fall, due to COVID we have had some restrictions on how the students can interact. Commissioner Owen questioned if they plan to expand into other elementary schools. Dr. Senegal replied that they are partnering with A & T University to study how well students do with participating with the program. We think this will cause an increase in the student's math, science, and their interest in agriculture. We hope to receive other grants and programs to be able to expand to all the other elementary schools in Caswell County.

Commissioner Owen questioned when will phase one start. Dr. Senegal said with phase one, because the North Carolina Tobacco Commission has granted funding for this project for the incubator farms in 2022, we will begin to clear the land and start incubator plots. Commissioner Dickerson questioned if there are any grants or programs that they have for local farmers. Dr. Senegal replied that she would check with the Cooperative Extension Director and see what they have available. Commissioner Oestreicher questioned the date for phase 2 and 3. Dr. Senegal replied that they have not listed formal dates with those phases until they have the proper funding lined up. What could happen is with an allocation from legislation it could easily fund phases 1, 2, and 3; their preference is to do everything at once to save taxpayers' dollars. Commissioner Oestreicher questioned about the number of plots. Dr. Senegal replied that there 18 plots, and they can be subdivided depending on the number of tenants. Commissioner Oestreicher questioned the guidelines on what could be planted in those plots. Dr. Senegal replied that they have reached out to Orange County, and they are following the same guidelines that they follow. Orange County has been very successful with their program. Then she thanked the Board for all their support on program.

COVID UPDATE:

Mrs. Eastwood gave a brief update.

- Numbers are starting to trend down.
- Expecting to see more variants/subvariants in the future.
- Get vaccinated. If you are eligible for a booster and have not received it, you are not considered fully vaccinated.
- Working with school system on changes to contact tracing and case investigating.
- 50% of the population in Caswell County has received at least one dose, 47% have been fully vaccinated.
- Social Distancing and Masking guidelines are still in place.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT COMMERCIAL SPACE RENTAL:

Mrs. Eastwood stated that they have a couple of programs in the Health Department that are care management programs. Then she gave a brief overview of the CAP program, which is a Medicaid only program. They have recently changed how those programs were being paid to the Health Department. They originally were paid per unit, but now they are paying per member per month. This is such a valuable program to our community. The other Medicaid only programs that we have are care management programs. This program works with high-risk pregnancy and children that are at risk. These programs are community based. We are finding that because these programs are located at the Health Department, due to the general perceptions of the Health Department, people do not want to be involved with them. The general thought is to get these programs in a community centered location where these programs could be more successful. Then she presented the Board with a 3-year lease agreement. Mr. Miller stated that this lease has been approved by the Board of Health. Commissioner Owen questioned if the revenue from these programs would cover the lease agreement. Mrs. Eastwood replied yes. Commissioner Owen questioned will it cover the set up of this facility. Mrs. Eastwood replied yes, it is covered in the lease agreement. Commissioner McVey questioned if the County Attorney had reviewed the contract. Mr. Ferrell replied yes. It is a standard commercial lease, and it needs some work to conform to Local Government standards. Mr. Ferrell will work with Mrs. Eastwood on this matter. Commissioner Oestreicher questioned the monthly cost of the new facility and if there will be a need for additional staff. Mrs. Eastwood replied that the rent will be \$1,850.00 per month, and they will relocate staff.

PAYROLL DISCUSSION:

Mr. Miller stated that Commissioner Jefferies has requested a special meeting with Department Heads to discuss payroll. The Board to have this special meeting at the library at 9:00 a.m. on February 18, 2022.

COUNTY MANAGER'S UPDATES:

- CATS using \$12,895.00 of Cares Act funding that was allocated to their department to install air filtration systems on their buses/vans.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Commissioner Dickerson commented that we have some budget pressures on the horizon with the new high school, and we are looking at the salary study. We need to look at the budget and find ways to save money to prevent tax increases.

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Commissioner Jefferies suggested working the budget earlier this year.

Commissioner Oestreicher agreed with Commissioner Jefferies.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

- February 21, 2022 - Commissioner Meeting at 6:30 p.m.

CLOSED SESSION:

A **motion** was made at 10:04 am by Commissioner Owen and seconded by Commissioner Jefferies and **carried unanimously** to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee, which privilege is hereby acknowledged NCGS 143-318.11 (a) (6) and to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential, which privilege is hereby acknowledged NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1). (Commissioner Carter, Dickerson, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, and Owen voted in favor)

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Owen, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher and **carried unanimously** to return to open session at 10:35 am. (Commissioner Carter, Dickerson, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, and Owen voted in favor)

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made at 10:38 am by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Owen and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Owen, Oestreicher and McVey voted for the motion)

Ashley K. Powell
Administrative Assistant

Rick McVey
Chairman