

**CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**  
**MEMBERS PRESENT**

**September 19, 2022**  
**OTHERS PRESENT**

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Rick McVey, Chairman  
John Dickerson  
Nathaniel Hall  
Jeremiah Jefferies  
Steve Oestreicher  
H. Vernon Massengill  
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Bryan Miller, County Manager  
Carla Smith, Clerk to the Board  
Brian Ferrell, County Attorney (Joined Remote)

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The Board of Commissioners for the County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in regular session on Monday, September 19, 2022 at 6:30 pm in the Historic Courthouse.

**WELCOME:**

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

**PUBLIC COMMENTS:**

**John Claggett:** I reside at 108 Jaye Lane, Providence, NC 27315. Good Evening. Item #9 on your agenda this evening is “Proposed Emergency Services Building”. With the current EMS building having been renovated a few years ago and the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new high school in the not so distant future along with still being underwater debt wise with the detention center, I believe the Caswell County taxpayer would also be interested in your thoughts regarding upcoming renovations concerning the Guilford Mills building located at 339 Wall Street in Yanceyville, NC 27379. As you know, this building houses Caswell County Family Services, Caswell County Maintenance, and other offices. It has small trees growing on its roof an in an exposed hole on its upper level. Just how physically and environmentally safe is that? Thank you.

**Thomas Wright:** of 559 George Russell Road in Yanceyville, NC. I’m here to report to you about one of your employees, Mr. Thomas Bernard down at the Tax Office. For the last 15-20 years, I have been trying to get my tax record straight and haven’t heard nothing back. I been here several times to this Board trying to get things straight. I think by this Board employing him, you should look into it and get it straightened out. If you don’t know and I don’t think you do know how to straighten stuff out, but you need to get somebody to straighten it out. You spend money for everything else, you can’t have a man in the Tax office running wild down there. You don’t know what he doing, and you not looking into it. Why you don’t, I don’t know. Maybe he your friend, but I have friends too. I don’t want none that lie and steal from people. I want you to do something about it, or I’m going to do what I can do. It won’t hold because I know I’m right. You not doing nothing, and you not trying to nothing. You not looking at the

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evidence. Your man got it down there. He done took my money, and you not worrying about it. I am, and I'm going to do something about it. Thank you.

### **OPENING STATEMENT:**

Commissioner Hall said at the last meeting, I made a comment which probably was a negative comment concerning the Planning Board. This comment was to the extent that we, the Commissioners, appointed that board and we, the Commissioners, could un-appoint that board. I think that based on what I've learned since then, that comment was inappropriate. I want to apologize to the Planning Board for saying that. I'll just leave it at that. I think it was inappropriate. Thank you.

### **RECOGNITIONS:**

There were no recognitions.

### **AGENDA:**

#### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA:**

Chairman McVey said we are going to amend the agenda. We're going to take off the tax structure and proposed Emergency Services Building, and add the Extension Services will be put on the agenda.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Hall and **carried unanimously** to approve the agenda as amended. (Ayes: Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey)

#### **APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

- a. September 6, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes
- b. FY 2022-2023 Budget Amendment #2

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Hall and **carried unanimously** to approve the consent agenda. (Ayes: Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey)

### **DISCUSSION ITEMS:**

#### **COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:**

Chairman McVey said first we have from Extension Services, Susan Kelly. Susan Kelly said good evening, Commissioners, Mr. Miller, and staff. It's a real pleasure to be here in Caswell County tonight. I'm Susan Kelly. I bring you greetings from the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. I'm the Assistant Director for Extension, and I work with county operations. Last time I was here seeing you, I was a District Director over this district. So I have a different position now. I'm very proud of the Caswell County Extension Office and also our

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partnership. I'm here to recognize you all for being one of our five counties that we selected this year as an outstanding partner with Cooperative Extension. You may have already heard about this, but I wanted to make sure that we came here in person so everybody in Caswell County knows what a great partnership this is. It was a difficult decision, and you will see that all the other counties that won the award are much larger in population. The partnership might be easier in a place like that. So I really do appreciate the partnership here in Caswell County, especially the CEAD Project that you've engaged extension in and all the things that they are able to work very closely with in county government and County Commissioners. So congratulations on becoming a 2022 Extension County Partnership Award winner. We are very proud of this partnership, and you do have a little plaque. I think Travis Hoesli has some announcements.

Travis Hoesli said yes, I'd like to take this opportunity to introduce two new agents we've hired. We've had some changes in our office this spring. Bailey Perkins is our new livestock agent. We hired her in May. She's been on board this summer helping us, getting to know the county, and doing a good job. Then Matt Solomon, he's our new crops agent. We hired him he started today. So this is his first day on staff with us, and we've got him going. They're both kind of local. Bailey's just barely over the Rockingham County line on the south end of the county, and Matt's a Prospect Hill resident. So we're proud. We have some really good applicants locally that we could look at, and we think we've got our two positions filled with some really qualified candidates to help the residents of the community in those different areas. So we want to welcome them on board. Then Randy's here tonight with our leadership club. They're marking a citizen engagement task off of their list that they're doing. So they're kind of watching the Commissioner meeting for a little bit while we're here presenting the award as well. We just want to thank you for all the support you've given us in the Extension Office and helping us build a better community here in Caswell County. Thank you.

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, I have just one thing that I wanted to add. This award was presented initially at the NCACC Annual Conference and Commissioner Hall accepted the award on behalf of Commissioners. So to put this in perspective, this award was accepted and every other county that was represented at the NCACC saw Caswell County receive this award. This is kind of a big deal.

### **ACTION ITEMS:**

#### **BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS APPOINTMENTS:**

Chairman McVey read the Boards and Committees that had members whose term was expiring on September 30, 2022. The Commissioners voted on the person they chose to and appointments were made based on a majority vote. The following were appointed to the designated boards and committees.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if they were going to appoint them one at a time, and Chairman McVey replied yes. Some of these did not receive any applications. So we will do it one at a time.

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**ABC Board:** We have one member, Jon A. Crispin, whose term will expire on 9/30/2022. We received two applications, Jon A. Crispin and Patricia Thompson. Jon Crispin received 4 votes (Dickerson, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey) and Patricia Thompson received 2 votes (Hall and Jefferies). **Mr. Jon A. Crispin will be reappointed to the ABC Board.**

Commissioner Massengill asked are there term limits on this? Chairman McVey said yes. Commissioner Massengill asked if he had term limited out? Chairman McVey said evidently it runs out at the end of this month. County Manager Miller said there is a term for the appointment, but there's no maximum number of terms you can serve.

**Agricultural Advisory Committee:** There are 3 current members who will term off the Committee as of 6/30/2022. They are as follows: Hester Vernon, Tony Kirby, and Emily Buchanan. No Application were received and it will be re-advertised.

Commissioner Massengill said it says re-advertise. Are we going to re-advertise or are we going to nominate her? Chairman McVey said we have re-advertise, but I've got that we received an application from the person previously on the board. Then the clerk said they were re-advertised from the previous month. We had these same boards on there previously when we did it, so we re-advertised and received one application.

**Heritage and Cultural Preservation:** We have one member, Sue Seamon-Rusciano, whose term will expire on 6/30/2022. **Sue Seamon-Rusciano received 5 votes and will be reappointed to the Heritage and Cultural Preservation Committee.** (Ayes: Massengill, Oestreicher, Jefferies, Dickerson, and McVey. Nays: Hall)

**Juvenile Crime Prevention:** We have 1 member, Dustin Gantos, terming off 6/30/2022. You have one application received from Jennifer O'Briant. **Jennifer O'Briant received 4 votes and will be appointed to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.** (Ayes: Massengill, Dickerson, Oestreicher, and McVey. Nays: Hall and Jefferies)

Commissioner Hall asked if Dustin submitted an application and the clerk replied no.

**Recreation Commission:** We have 3 current members who will term off the commission as of 9/30/2022. They are as follows: Eddie DeLuca, Natashia Wiley, and Stephen Harrelson, Jr. We received one application from Stephen Harrelson, Jr.

Commissioner Massengill asked has this been re-advertised? The clerk replied this is the first time for this commission because their term is just expiring. We can re-advertise for the other vacancies. Commissioner Massengill said Mr. Chairman I recommend we just wait and re-advertise on that because that's relatively important to me considering what's going on. I'd like to table that, re-advertise, and see what we get. Commissioner Hall said no, we have Stephen Harrelson that has already filled out an application. Commissioner Massengill said you have one that has applied and three seats open. Commissioner Jefferies said so leave two seats open since the man has already applied. Commissioner Massengill said I have no problem with that, but we need to re-advertise the other two positions.

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Massengill and seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher and **carried unanimously** to appoint Stephen Harrelson, Jr. to the Recreation Commission and re-advertise for the other two positions. (Ayes: Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey)

**Senior Center Advisory:** You have 3 members terming off, and they are Edith Gentry, Lou Ann Reaves, and Brenda Long. No Application were received and it will be re-advertised.

**Social Services Board:** You have one-member termed 6/30/2022, Patricia Thompson. No Application were received and it will be re-advertised.

Commissioner Hall said Mr. Chairman, I voted no a couple times, and I wanted to explain why. I changed that no on the Recreation Commission. This county is roughly 34% African-American. The Recreation Committee is the only person that I see and recognize as an African-American. Now I think we have to do a better job. If we have to re-advertise these things again, then so be it. But to ignore 34% of the population, we're doing a big injustice. I'm not going to ignore them. I'm not going to ignore us. You guys can if you like, but I'm going to bring it to your attention.

#### **COUNTY MANAGER'S UPDATES:**

The County Manager said Commissioners, I do have just a couple of quick updates for you. First in your agenda packet you had a budget amendment. Just for transparency, I wanted to talk a little bit about the budget amendment, and let you know what the budget amendment is for. I know you've read your agenda packets, and you understand. But the public may not. So the library received a grant for \$25,002 to do a story walk. So it encourages physical activity. It encourages people to get outside, and become active. The way it works is as they walk along the trail, they read different pages from a book. I think one is planned for Milton, and I think another one is planned for Yanceyville. So that is grant money we have coming in that will be expended for the purpose of the story walk, and that's from the state library. Are there any questions? So there's also a donation from the Caswell Friends of the Library for \$2,800 to be included in that. Friends of the Library do a tremendous job in supporting our library, our patrons, and our staff. So I will say that it's very important committee, and they do great work. The second thing I want to update the board on...Commissioner Massengill said Mr. Miller, may I ask a question? Is there a time frame as to when that \$25,002 needs to be spent? County Manager Miller said I'm not sure if there is a time frame, but I will assume that it needs to be done in this fiscal year. I know that they have been working on the construction and putting pieces of this project together for quite some time. They've already had conversations with Milton, and you're all aware that Milton was planning to do some trails in and around downtown Milton. That trail is one of the trails that the story walk will be on. We've had trails like this in downtown Yanceyville before at Maude Gatewood Park. There's even been trails before not necessarily trails before, but we've had story walks before at Parks and Rec around the walking track. So this is not a new concept,

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but they are expanding that because it's been so successful. So I think it needs to be done this fiscal year. Are there any additional questions about the budget amendment?

So Commissioners as you know I attended the NCACC Board of Trustees annual meeting last week. At that meeting there was a former county manager now commissioner from Stokes County that serves on the Board of Trustees as well. He mentioned to me that he was very interested in realigning with Caswell County. And if you remember, you used to have joint meetings with Rockingham and Stokes. He is really interested in getting that back together. I told him I would reach out to this board, and let the board know that there was interest in doing joint meetings again now that it seems we've got over the COVID hump. So I'm bringing it to your attention. You can move on it, take it and run with it, or whatever you'd like to do. But there is interest in having those joint meetings again. Commissioner Massengill said you said he was from Stokes. Have you talked to anyone from Rockingham? County Manager Miller said the County Manager at Rockingham and I talk about that occasionally. I think there's interest from Rockingham too. Commissioner Massengill said then there should be interest from us, and County Manager Miller said yes. There's a lot of synergies that we can form if we work together with Rockingham and Stokes. They face some of the same problems we do. They go through some of the same pitfalls that we seem to go through and have some of the same type of issues. So I think us coming together and learning from each other is probably possible. Then Commissioner Massengill asked did they give you a time frame? County Manager Miller said no, they didn't. I think he was going to speak with the rest of his board about that and try to make something work. Chairman McVey said we used to do that. Commissioner Massengill said could you come back to us at the next meeting with a time frame or schedule? The County Manager said I can. Commissioner Oestreicher said and with interest from Rockingham, Stokes, and maybe even Alamance. County Manager Miller asked if this Board would like to host that meeting? Commissioner Massengill said we can do it. County Manager Miller said all right, I'll set it up and see what we can do. Those are the only updates I have for you now. I'm happy to answer any questions you have or provide you with any updates you'd like to hear about. Commissioner Dickerson asked can we reach out to other counties like Alamance and Person to try to build a bridge there as well. County Manager Miller said if the Board wants to I'm happy to reach out to those counties as well. Commissioner Dickerson said I'd like to try to network as much as we can. Commissioner Oestreicher said I had just mentioned Alamance as well.

### **COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:**

**Commissioner McVey:** I have a comment to make about the Planning Board. We, at the last meeting, talked about going to the Planning Board meeting because they had not wanted to meet with us. That is what we were told. Well I done a little investigating on it. I talked to a board member and talked to the chairman. I found out that the vice chairman had recommended this because of the litigation process that they're in at this time. It's taking up so much of their time. So my recommendation is... I think Mr. Hall talked to a board member and I know Mr. Jefferies talked to a board member. You may have Mr. Dickerson. We all pretty much got the same

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answer. I think you did Mr. Massengill. So I'm going to recommend that we just leave it alone. There's no need for us going to the board meeting knowing what has taken place so far. If that's agreeable with everybody, I'll get a consensus on that. Mr. Dickerson said I agree with you wholeheartedly. Commissioners Hall, Jefferies, Massengill, and McVey all agreed and Commissioner Oestreicher disagreed 100%. We will just discontinue that at this time until they get through with the litigation that they're going through.

#### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:**

- September 20, 2022 at 9:00 am Ribbon Cutting for CEAD Project (Across from the Pelham Industrial Park)
- September 24, 2022 starting at 9:00 am Brightleaf Hoedown
- September 27, 2022 at 1:00 pm Planning Board Meeting at Gunn Memorial Library
- October 2, 2022 from 2-4 pm Ribbon Cutting & Open House at Bartlett Yancey High School
- Commissioners Meeting October 3, 2022 at 9:00 am
- October 10, 2022 at 12 noon Board of Education Lunch and Meeting at the School Board
- Commissioners Meeting October 17, 2022 at 6:30 pm

#### **CLOSED SESSION:**

A **motion** was made at 7:00 pm by Commissioner Massengill and seconded by Commissioner Jefferies and **carried unanimously** to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, fitness, conditions of appointment, or conditions of initial employment of an individual public officer or employee or prospective public officer or employee. NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6). (Ayes: Commissioner Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey voted in favor)

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Oestreicher, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies and **carried unanimously** to return to open session at 8:06 pm. (Ayes: Commissioner Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey voted in favor)

#### **ADJOURNMENT:**

A **motion** was made at 8:08 pm by Commissioner Jefferies and seconded by Commissioner Massengill and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Ayes: Commissioner Dickerson, Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey voted in favor)

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Carla R. Smith  
Clerk to the Board

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Rick McVey  
Chairman

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