

CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
MEMBERS PRESENT

September 6, 2022
OTHERS PRESENT

Rick McVey, Chairman
John Dickerson
Nathaniel Hall
Jeremiah Jefferies
Steve Oestreicher
H. Vernon Massengill

Bryan Miller, County Manager
Carla Smith, Clerk to the Board
Brian Ferrell, County Attorney (Joined Remote)

The Board of Commissioners for County of Caswell, North Carolina, met in regular session on Tuesday, September 6, 2022 at 9:00 am 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:

There were no public comments.

RECOGNITIONS:

There were no recognitions.

AGENDA:

APPROVAL OF AGENDA:

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

- a. August 5, 2022 Special Meeting Minutes
- b. August 15, 2022 Regular Meeting Minutes
- c. August 18, 2022 Joint Meeting Minutes

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

September 6, 2022

DISCUSSION ITEMS:

LEGISLATIVE GOALS:

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, late last month many of you submitted legislative goals to the Clerk to the Board. The Clerk has included the legislative goals you submitted in your agenda packet. So this is the time of the Board can talk amongst themselves and figure out what legislative goals you want to put forward to the NCACC. I'm happy to read the legislative goals that were submitted if you would like. Then County Manager Miller read the goals submitted.

Legislative Goals 2022

Nate Hall:

1. The State of North Carolina to pay counties Payments In-Lieu of Taxes (PILT) in counties with prisons and Wildlife Lands to help support Emergency Management Services, Law Enforcement, Fire Services, 911 Communications and Water and Sewer Services.
2. Legislature to remove barriers to local farmers so that they can provide meats, vegetables and produce to School Systems and Prisons.

Jeremiah Jefferies:

Department of Social Services

1. NC Adult Guardianship and Adult Services

Per Census data, the elderly population is our fastest growing population and will continue to be until 2037.

Since 2018 North Carolina has seen an increase in the total number of adults requiring assistance through DSS Guardianship and Adult Protective Services.

The number of guardianship cases appointed to DSS have risen since the NC Mental Health System and Health Department were removed as Disinterested Public Guardians. Since this change, the complexity of cases has risen, as have costs, with little specialized training made available and decreasing financial assistance offered by North Carolina Health and Human Services. Current aging projections for North Carolina predict this issue will only continue to broaden.

North Carolina has seen a 3-year trend of rising Guardianship and Adult Protective Service cases. During the same period, State funding for both services has decreased leaving the primary non-reimbursed cost increase on local county funding. While the largest population of those needing Guardianship services continues to be those 65 years of age and older, Department of Social Services are seeing a substantial increase in adults age 18 to 64 needing these services.

State funding needs to be increased to support local DSS agencies in providing Guardianship and Adult Protective Services.

September 6, 2022

2. NC Child and Adult Welfare Services-Social Workers

Counties across NC are struggling with staff shortages within their Department of Social Services, especially in their ability to recruit and maintain Social Workers. Legislative mandates require that services be provided to our most at risk populations to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Salaries for these positions fall short of those received by other similar professionals. Even during the COVID Pandemic, DSS Social Workers were not included in the definition of those eligible for "Hazard or Incentive" Pay. Yet they respond to allegations of Child Neglect and Abuse, Adult Abuse and they maintain contact with the many children in the custody of Department of Social Service, their families and others as necessary/required. Department of Social Services lose quality Social Workers because they feel they are not appreciated for the extremely important work they do and the long hours they work to protect our citizens.

Legislative consideration of this inequality would be most appropriate and appreciated.

David Owen:

1. Increased funding for NCDOT to permit them to move forward on rural road improvement regarding projected increased traffic that impacts safety.

Further information - many projects that were to be completed two or three years ago are now projected to be completed in the 2023-33 plan. Some of these will become major safety issues for rural counties.

Steve Oestreicher:

1. Higher Quality teaching standards, with greater emphasis on the basics (Reading, Writing, Math)

- Proposed goal language: *
We must have higher quality teaching standards, with greater emphasis on the basics (Reading, Writing, Math, and Basic "Life" Skills)
- Share any background or further explanation for proposed goal. *
Our teachers are far too focused on teaching our children "How to Pass the Advancement Tests." and not on teaching them the basic knowledge they need to advance their learning skills. Basic "Life" Skills include: Checkbook/Account balancing, Critical Thinking (emphasis on Thinking), Meal Planning & Preparation, Health Management, Safe/Defensive Driving, etc.

2. Prohibit politically biased teacher input

- Proposed goal language: *
Prohibit politically biased teacher input.
- Share any background or further explanation for proposed goal. *
There are far too many examples of teachers indoctrinating our children with examples and lessons with their personal views, "showing" how one Political Candidate is better than another, how Socialism or Communism is a better governmental system than a Democracy or Republic, etc.

September 6, 2022

3. Increase State DOT funding for improving Rural County roads

- Proposed goal language: *
Increase State DOT funding specifically for improving Rural County roads, especially in areas impacted by pending high traffic developments (Danville casino).
- Share any background or further explanation for proposed goal. *
Roads and highways are the lifeblood of Rural counties. Better roads, with provisions for better traffic flow and density, are essential infrastructure to allow new Business Development in Rural counties.

4. Increase support for Rural County New Business Development Programs and Projects

- Proposed goal language: *
Increase State support for Rural County New Business Development Programs and Projects.
- Share any background or further explanation for proposed goal. *
Rural Counties need appropriate new businesses and support for developing businesses to bring new jobs and increase the tax base. These factors reduce the burden on existing residents to pay for the ever-increasing demands and cost of local infrastructure and county services.

John Dickerson:

- Would like to see this provision struck from state law. GS 14-4 now has a major carve out in subsection (c). No person can be found guilty of a local ordinance violation if the person produces proof of any of the following (1) no new alleged violation of the local ordinance within 30 days of the date of the initial alleged violation.

So Commissioners, if you like we're happy to submit all of those goals to the NCACC.

Commissioner Oestreicher said I believe Commissioner Hall mentioned when this topic was discussed last meeting or put on the agenda, maybe Mr. Owen, mentioned that there really was no need to put in our goals, our suggested goals, the broadband and unfunded mandates because those would go on there anyway. I would suggest that we make sure that's the case because those are important goals, and we certainly don't want to appear not to be interested in those goals. I believe from the discussion that those would be on there. Is that correct Mr. Hall? Commissioner Hall said yes, that's what they suggested at the conference. Commissioner Oestreicher said was it just the two or am I forgetting the third one. Commissioner Hall said no, it may have been just the two. Those were the two that I remembered, but there are some that goes for years and years. When those commissions start looking at them, they decide they want to continue them at will. We don't need to repeat some of those that have been on there for years.

Chairman McVey asked if there were any more questions or discussion. Would you all like to have all those submitted? The consensus of the Board was to submit all the legislative goals. Chairman McVey asked that Mr. Miller if you'll submit all those goals for us.

ACTION ITEMS:

BUILDING INSPECTIONS REVENUE FORCAST:

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, a meeting or so ago I informed the Board that we would see a new fee schedule submitted to the Board for approval for our Building Inspections Department. I'm happy to say that after review, we do not believe that a new fee schedule is warranted. However during our examination, a few other things came to light. One was as we cost accounted for changes in the Building Inspections Department, our revenues far exceeded our expenditures but that will be somewhat offset in other departments when the cost accounting is applied to those departments as well. I believe Mr. Powell's going to tell you that after the first two months of the new fiscal year, we are experiencing about a 62% increase in revenue that does not include any of the five major projects we expect to occur in this fiscal year. Environmental Health has always been a leading indicator for Building Inspections. Our Environmental Health Department has already seen this year its all-time record month in revenue. We saw some of those trends occurring last fiscal year but we did not want to be too assertive in our revenue projection. However, now with the leading indicator data and the 62% increase thus far year over year, we believe we should reevaluate these projections. Mr. Powell will explain to you why we need to reevaluate these projections. These items are usually handled through the budgeting process. After seeing the increase in revenue over the past two months coupled with several large projects, we believe we will be well over our projected revenue which will support an additional building inspector position which is needed. Our current Building Inspector currently schedules as many as 25 inspections a day, and we're regulated by the state on how many days that we can put on hold an inspection. Twenty-five a day is too many, and this impacts economic development in a large way. So I want to ask Mr. Powell, our Central Permitting Director, just to give us an overview of the data that he's collected.

Donnie Powell said so this new fiscal year is definitely starting off crazy busy for both Environmental Health and Building Inspections. Our environmental health fees have increased from last year which was a record year for us. But the first two months of this year, our revenues have increased by 50% over last years. So the trend is going toward us doing much more business than expected. Also with Building Inspections, the first two months of the fiscal year, we were about 62.9% over last year's same two-month period, and the trend has been increasing since that period last year in July and August. So the trend has been increasing quite a bit. Ken Caison, before he left, had kind of projected the revenues to come in around \$244,000 for this current upcoming year. I think conservatively, we'll probably come in more like \$325,000 if not more. If you project out what we've already done plus look at these five major projects that we have that are moving along actually now fairly quickly, ... There's two projects in Yanceyville, there's one in Pelham, one in Providence, and then another one down in the Williamsburg area. So these major projects will potentially bring in revenues between \$135 to \$175. Part of that's because we don't really know the scope of the work. The Shady Grove project, they built the shell building with a permit fee of about \$20,000, and now the upfit for that building is actually

September 6, 2022

going to be more than the actual shell. Then they're proposing a second building, and in that building, they're expecting the fees for that building to be around \$60,000. So you've got multiple major projects that are going to be happening this year. One of the things that we've noticed is the number of inspections is picking up. The statute requires that once an inspection is called in you have 48 hours to actually do the inspection. If you regularly don't do those inspections in 48 hours and a complaint is made to the state, the state would actually come in and do those inspections. Then the county would be required to refund the fees for those inspections to the actual contractor or homeowner. So that's one thing we don't want to see happen. Also with fire inspections, as we all know right now in today's world, things can become very tumultuous if an accident or something bad happens. One of the things we don't want to have happen is we don't want to be in the news because we didn't do inspections at a school or at one of our major industries or something like that. We don't want to be in that predicament. So we really want to make sure these fire inspections are getting done. At the current rate though, it's just not possible for one person. Well I know he had 25 inspections not this past Friday but the Friday before, and you can only kick inspections out so many days. You're going to try to squeeze as many as you can into today because you know that in the following days you're going to have 14, 15, or 16 coming in. So it's just tough. It's hard to actually put them off any longer. I also included in my projection at the bottom some of the statutory requirements. I actually took excerpts from those statutes. Back in 2019, there was a new session law that required counties to make sure that all fees that are collected for building inspections are spent for building inspections and nothing else. They also tasked the counties with having a system that would adequately track these revenues and basically report whether or not they're going to supplement it by the general fund, or if they are supplementing the general fund. The basic gist is you can't supplement your general fund with building inspection fees. Not only that, now we're actually required to figure out or to keep up with it to make sure that we're tracking those revenues so that they're not being used for things they're not supposed to. So with that being said, like Bryan Miller had mentioned earlier, with these new projected revenues we can easily afford to hire another building inspector. We're really almost going to have to from a statutory standpoint because if we don't we're not going to be able to offset the fees that we're collecting. That's pretty much it in a nutshell. Does anybody have any questions?

Commissioner Oestreicher said first of all thank you for the presentation. Did you include the CEAD Project in any of your projections? Mr. Powell said yes. The CEAD Project is actually one of the five major projects. So yes. That's the one in Pelham. Commissioner Oestreicher said second question. We know and have heard numerous times how difficult it is to hire people. two-part question. Are building inspectors out there and available? And B is it possible to do this on a contract? Donnie Powell said so both of those are wonderful questions. No, they are not available. As a matter of fact, we're really a little nervous about the ability to hire somebody in those positions. Right now we have our inspector, who is either level three or getting his probationary level three. I'm not exactly sure where he's at in that process, but that's a big deal. Level three is the highest level you can go in building inspections. So he is now very marketable.

September 6, 2022

That's one of the things that's a little concerning. The other thing that Bryan Miller and I have talked about is, for lack of a better way of saying, it would be nice to get a homegrown type person that has some experience in building, electrical, or maybe HVAC. Somebody that we can grow into the position. We're going to be much more likely to hire someone like that than we are going to be to get a certified fully licensed building inspector. Because at that point the type of money you have to pay those guys is just a lot. Then on the contract basis, we actually do have a person this week that's doing some contract work for us. Shannon actually had a vacation that's been planned for quite a while so we have a contract person. The only thing about contract help is it's probably going to end up costing you nearly double what a building inspector would cost you. The good thing about that is you don't have the benefits and all of those things added to it, but it will become really expensive, really fast if we have to contract out inspections. It might come to that because we're at a point right now where it's just not physically possible to handle the workload. So it's certainly going to be interesting if you guys approve us to be able to do this. It's going to be interesting moving forward and trying to find somebody to hire for sure.

County Manager Miller said so Commissioners, if I could just build off that a little bit. We would anticipate the base salary for a building inspector probationary level one, which means they haven't passed their tests and they're just ironed in at probationary level one, at around \$50,000. With each certification they receive in individual trades it would equate to about \$1,500 per certification per trade in increase. So at current, I think Mr. Petry, our current building inspector, is at level 2 across the board. Is that correct? Mr. Powell said yes, he's at level two across the board, and he's in the process of getting his probationary threes. County Manager Miller said so it would equate to about a \$12,000 increase or \$11,000 for our current building inspector simply because he has completed the certificates that he needs to get into where he is now. That would provide these employees with specialized trades that require certifications, a career path, and it gives them incentive to work throughout that path. They know they can stay right where they're at, or they can keep learning, keep going to school, keep gaining certifications, and increase their salary. Hopefully what we would achieve by that is having another level four building inspector across all trades within the county like we did with Mr. Caison. So actually what we're doing today is asking you for two things. We're asking you to approve the additional building inspector's position, and we're asking you to approve this certification level pay style for the Building Inspections Department. We're happy to answer any questions you have.

Commissioner Massengill said I don't have a question. I have a comment. If the Board remembers during the budget work sessions, I was concerned on at least two of those work sessions and I think the third one that we were not hiring another building inspector after Ken Caison left. That concerned me for several reasons. Number one, fire inspections are lacking tremendously. As Mr. Powell just stated, if something were to happen the county could be on the hook for quite a bit of legal matters. Number two, if I am a contractor, I call in, I need a footing inspection, and I've got to wait five or six days, that's really putting the contractor in a bind.

September 6, 2022

That's not a good view of Caswell County for contractors wanting to come in and do things within the county when they can't plan. I was a proponent for the building inspector during budget sessions, and I'm equally, if not more so, a proponent of another building inspector as we speak in this meeting. That being said, I think that the current building inspector, Shannon Petry, maybe has been told that each certification he received, he would receive a step raise. To my knowledge, I don't think that's happened. We need to keep our word to those people that we give that to you, and we need to keep these building inspectors here and not looking for other jobs.

Commissioner Dickerson said you speak about effective revenues coming in that would more than cover the salary of an additional building inspector. You mentioned that you have four or five new projects in the county that are generated ordinarily fees that are far past what you bring in for an ordinary house. Mr. Powell said that's correct. Then Commissioner Dickerson asked do you think that is going to be the standard going forward? I mean we've made some projections on that, and we don't have those type projects coming in, revenue plummets, and the salary is not covered. Do you see that as an issue? Mr. Powell said I actually do not, and the reason why is this year has the potential to be literally a blowout year. When I conservatively estimated the new revenues at \$325,000, it was because of the stuff that's going on in the county right now. I was thinking over the weekend just trying to throw some numbers together, and I could literally see us in the next 12 to 18 months adding probably 20 plus million dollars to our tax base. The reason I say that is because we have in the past year done probably 25 new lots in the golf course. There are two major subdivisions that have been created. One of which is on Cherry Grove Road, and already has broken ground on new stick built housing, which is going to be built there. So we've got major subdivisions that literally ground has been broken already on new housing, and since the announcement of the casino, our phones are ringing off the hook. They're going crazy. We've got people asking about creating large RV parks and subdivisions for new housing. So this is something that we haven't seen in Caswell County for years and years. So this is kind of a little groundbreaking. Over the last three years our revenues have averaged about \$222,000, but there's been an upward trend. If you look at it over the last three to four years, it's been an upward trend from like in the 180s all the way up to the you know mid 200s in these fees. So I feel like that trend is going to continue especially looking at the build out on these major projects, and the housing build out is going to be substantial too for several years. So I do feel like unless the economy just completely crashes, and none of us have any idea when that's going to happen or if it'll even happen. I don't think though the economy crashing even when we were in our bad times, Caswell County doesn't seem to be that affected by it because we're already sort of a poor county. So things kind of still trek along at the same pace here, but now with the casino, it's just started to sort of explode. We've seen in environmental health where we're just doing new lots and major subdivisions left and right. So you're going to see a lot more houses in Caswell County over the next few years. Commissioner Dickerson then asked are you seeing those requests county-wide, or are they on the border of like Virginia and North Carolina? Mr. Powell said so right now the two we've got is at the golf course. There's been a lot of activity out of the golf course. There's a new owner now, and they've started marketing. There's just more

September 6, 2022

interest. You've got the golf course which is right in the middle of town, another major subdivision that's in the Cherry Grove area, and then another major subdivision is out off 158 West. So really we're not seeing a big push toward the northern part of the county like I expected, but we do have a lot that have entered into the planning process of doing major subdivisions from Park Springs north. We've had several people come in and sit down with the Planning Department and with Environmental Health to talk about how they want to move forward with really large projects. So we're expecting to see the northern end of the county start growing soon also. Honestly right now, it's kind of spattering around the county, but I definitely think we will see some stuff coming up from the south too because housing in the Triangle and Triad area is becoming unattainable. Caswell is going to start getting some of the overflow from those areas also. I think the subdivision on Cherry Grove is a planned subdivision with stick built housing, and I want to say it was maybe 15 to 20 lots. They're planning the houses to be in what they're calling the affordable range maybe low to mid 200s. I think it's going to be sustainable for several years.

Commissioner Jefferies said well Mr. Powell pretty much answered my question. Mr. Powell mentioned 2 million dollars increase to cover the tax base. I was going to ask him would it take extra tax for the salary and he answered that.

Commissioner Massengill said Mr. Powell you said that you expected another \$20 million increase. Just the Deed building down here is estimated at \$17, 900,000. That's the figure I got just last week. Donnie Powell said to be honest with you Commissioner Massengill, I wasn't sure if we included that in our tax base or not because I didn't know how they pay taxes and stuff. So forgive me for that. I just wasn't exactly sure how that was included in the tax base.

Commissioner Massengill said right now it's not, but once new ownership takes over it will be. Mr. Powell said okay, so maybe we'll be looking closer to \$40 million which is something we haven't seen in a long time.

Commissioner Oestreicher said Mr. Powell, in light of this discussion my thinking is would we really want an entry level inspector. That person needs to have the level three inspector to validate or go with them on the inspections. It doesn't really eliminate the extra work for the level three building inspector by having an entry-level person. My question is should we not be hiring a more experienced person? County Manager Miller said Commissioner Oestreicher I think you're exactly right. I think with the rarity of being able to find a qualified building inspector, I think what we're saying is we may have to take and train a building inspector, but if we can hire a building inspector, this scale that I suggested to the Board will help us move thru that process of \$1,500 per certificate per trade and set the salaries for those. So we can put that in a job advertising, and when we do that, they'll be able to calculate out what their salary would be. For level two building inspector with certificates in all trades, you're looking at about an average for the state of North Carolina at about \$62,000. That's where I came up with the numbers. So I think we'll be on track to pay what we need to at least keep and maybe attract some qualified building inspectors. Mr. Powell said the one thing I'll speak to that also is you are correct in that

September 6, 2022

there is a period of training, if we could hire someone that has some expertise in a trade. When you become a probationary level one, you do have to work under some supervision, but you can do a lot of that work on your own as long as you're under direct supervision. So a lot of the stuff that could be taken off of our level three building inspector like the school inspections and the bigger inspections on large projects, the newer person could capture the electrical stuff, the footings, and things like that to take that off of the level three inspector. Our ultimate goal would be to get somebody fully trained. That would be absolutely awesome, but I know what we're up against. It's going to be tough. It's dog eat dog. The inspector we have currently is being actively recruited by other places, and it's just a struggle. Chairman McVey asked if there were any more questions. If not, what is the pleasure of the Board?

A **motion** was made by Commissioner Massengill and seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher and **carried unanimously** to do two things in the motion. First thing is to proceed with advertisement and the hiring of a second building inspector. The second part of the motion is to give the step raises to the current building inspector and to advertise that each certification they get; they will get a step raise in salary. (Commissioners Massengill, Oestreicher, Jefferies, Hall, Dickerson, and McVey voted in favor)

I'm looking at the money \$222,000 has been the average over the years. That's should easily pay and has been used to pay for two inspectors.

COUNTY MANAGER'S UPDATES:

County Manager Miller said Commissioners, I'm happy to answer any questions that you have. I do have one specific update I want to give you this morning, and that's on broadband internet. So the Board is well aware of what's occurred with RDOF. That's the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund. Spectrum received that award. They've been working within the county for quite some time and have completed 627 passings. They expect to turn on additional passings on the 9th, and that is what I've been told. They expect to do about 500 per month. I think they were obligated for just a little over 4,000 passings. So you're all aware of that, and I have discussed that with the board several times and given you updates on it. What's new is a GREAT Grant award was given to a company named Zitel. Z-i-t-e-l. Zitel is a broadband internet service provider from Moneta, Virginia, and I think the business model for the most part is they lease start fiber, expand off the dark fiber that they lease, and deploy that to citizens within their service area. So they made the GREAT Grant application for Caswell County and were awarded four million dollars which is a substantial GREAT Grant award. I'm excited about that. I called Zitel's COO last week, Rodney Gray. I'm assisting him with the process to receive right-of-way permits from the Department of Transportation and from Duke Energy. I've sent out emails to both those organizations to try and help facilitate the contact between the two. I believe it'll be at least 60 days before the contract is actually signed between Zitel and the NCDIT, but after that it is done, I would expect them to start providing or start working within the county. They have 18 months to deploy this new

September 6, 2022

service. It will be fiber to the home. They are looking at moving... they do not have now, but they are exploring moving to synchronous packages. You know a lot of packages you'll have 25 up and 10 down, 25 down and 10 up or something like that, or a 100 up and 50 down. Zitel is looking towards moving to 100 up and 100 down. So your download and upload speeds are exactly the same. They will offer a Gig of service as their highest package with several packages falling underneath that. So I'm excited about the opportunity to have a second or third broadband provider within the county capable of providing gigabit speed. So that's great news for Caswell, and potentially there could be another GREAT Grant award given to Caswell. I think there's still 29 to 30 million dollars outstanding. So they're going through and looking at high scoring applications and trying to decide where to spend that money that was allotted for the GREAT Grant. So potentially we'll see another award to another provider. Zitel is committed to, I think within their application, make it a little over 3,000 passings. That 3,000 passings could turn in to about 4,000 when you consider serving both sides of the road not just the side of the road that I applied for. So the map that they provided me shows a little over 4,000 addresses that they think they may provide.

After the GREAT Grant, there's another state grant that we're eligible to compete in. That's the CAB grant. That's Completing Access to Broadband and the acronym's CAB. So the CAB program will allow us a little bit more flexibility as a local government to identify those addresses that are currently either not served or underserved as it relates to the state's definition of broadband. After the GREAT Grant award, we identify those addresses that are still underserved or not served, and we're able to send out an RFP for those addresses to providers. Providers are able to bid on those addresses, and through the RFP that we send out, we make a decision on who we choose. Then we'll move forward with that process.

After that process is complete, there's always going to be these providers that might not bid on the guy that lives down the four-mile road where it's going to cost them a \$100,000 to get to to be able to provide service to the customer. So there is one last program the state has available to us, and that's what I'm going to call the Last Mile. Deputy County Manager Melissa Williamson said last stop or last mile. County Manager Miller said anyway, it's designed to go out and get that customer that's at the end of the four-mile road. Any internet service provider would say yes we'll provide you service, but you've got to give us a \$100,000 to get to your house to be able to provide you with service. What this Last Mile program will do is create a process where the individual wanting service contacts the internet service provider, the internet service provider then contacts the State, and the State ends up paying that eighteen thousand or a hundred thousand dollars whatever it is to get service to that customer without a huge cost to the resident. So that's what's on tap to get Caswell 100% covered. What I am going to ask the Board to do is approve me creating not a new position, but just some new work inside the county. I am somewhat afraid that when it comes to our residents dealing with the state and dealing with these providers, some of our residents may get caught up in the bureaucracy that's going to occur in this Last Mile program. So I would like some of our existing staff to be able to help those

September 6, 2022

residents navigate that process to make sure that those last underserved residents get the coverage they deserve.

Chairman McVey said do you need a motion on that? County Manager Miller said just a consensus is fine. It involves no more money. It's just additional work that that we would take on. Commissioner Massengill said seems like to me that's your call. Commissioner Oestreicher agreed. Commissioner Massengill said I'm not even sure a consensus is needed that's the County Manager's call as to who does what.

Commissioner Massengill said question for you on Zitel. Do you know where they are going to be, and if they're overlap with Spectrum, Comcast, or places that Comcast supposedly are to serve and they're not being served? That's my question. County Manager Miller said what I can tell you is that during the process that they went through to receive the grant, there was a challenge process. The challenge process said they all had to submit the addresses that they were going to serve. If Spectrum, for instance, had those addresses already built out or they were in Spectrum's plan or coverage area through RDOF, then Spectrum could challenge those addresses and Zitel would not be able to print those addresses on that map. Spectrum did challenge some of those addresses, and I think won those challenges because some of those addresses dropped off. However, the way that I interpret the map, there is some overlap with Comcast. I do see addresses on the map that I think are covered by Comcast now. Evidently Comcast did not do a challenge when it probably could have. I do see overlap with Comcast, and I do see overlap with Century Link's Legacy type internet service. That probably will still be available to bid on through the GREAT Grant because CenturyLink wasn't providing the service or Lumen wasn't providing the service at high enough speeds that satisfied our state. So I do think there's some overlap. Commissioner Massengill said does Comcast still have the ability to challenge? County Manager Miller said no, the challenge period is over. Then Commissioner Massengill said can we get rid of Comcast period? County Manager Miller said here again, we're delving into the area of a private sector providing goods, services, and business within the county. I think if every resident had two internet service providers to choose from that would be great simply because then there's some price competition that would occur. So I think that's the individual's choice whether they would choose Comcast or choose Zitel. Commissioner Massengill said in my conversation with you yesterday, you indicated that Zitel may be close to Yanceyville. County Manager Miller said yeah, the map shows addresses in the downtown Yanceyville corridor. So that could lead to some benefits for the county in redundancy coverage for certain departments like the Sheriff's Office, 911, EMS, and the Health Department that really can't afford to be down. So yes, and that is there again some of the CenturyLink Legacy system that speeds may not be what they should be. Commissioner Massengill said that's what we have at 9-1-1. We have no redundancy whatsoever, and when a line is cut the Rocky Mount, it affects us. So I would hope you would follow up on that as soon as you can. County Manager Miller said absolutely, and asked are there any questions about broadband?

September 6, 2022

Commissioner Dickerson said I know you don't have a crystal ball, but you've been dealing with all the different providers. What kind of time frame do you see for completion of internet service across the county? County Manager Miller said that's a really good question. So I think 20 months from now Zitel will have to be finished. 20 months from the day. I think it'll take them two months to get the agreement signed with the state, and they have an 18-month build-out period where they have to be finished. So it may not take them that long, but contractually that's what they have. The CAB Program, we can start identifying those addresses, and we're working with PTRC to do that. Now that the GREAT Grant awards have been made, Zitel will provide us with the addresses that they cover, and we know the addresses that RDOF's covering. We will be able to extrapolate those addresses that are not covered in either one of those programs and move forward with the CAB Program immediately. We don't have to wait on that. The only hold up there will be the state. We're ready to move on the CAB Program now. Well when I say now, I mean as soon as we get the addresses from Zitel and from the state that our covered, then we can move forward with the CAB Program. I would anticipate that program being completed synchronous with the GREAT Grant program, and then the Last Mile, I can't give you a timeframe on that. I would say 90 to 95% of the county residents who want service will be covered within the next 20 months, and I only say 20 months because contractually that's when they have to be finished.

Commissioner Oestreicher said Spectrum is supposed to be done by the end of the year. County Manager Miller said not contractually, but they have said that they hope to be completed by the end of the year. There have been some delays, and we've discussed that. That has extended that timetable somewhat, but they will be in the county until they finish their build out in Caswell County. I would not think that would be too terribly much longer than the end of the year. It may go to January, February, or March. But as of right now, I would expect January, February, or March of next year for them to be finished with the RDOF build.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS:

Chairman McVey: I do have something I'd like to speak to the Commissioners about. I will be asking for consensus when I get through. For me I would like for our Board to sit down with the Board of Education and the Superintendent to find out what is going on. We have the grades back from the state. They send out the grades for the schools, and we have had all of our schools except two make D's. We had North who pulled in a low C, and we had Bartlett Yancey who pulled in a F. I'm getting all this information from the DPI, the Department of Public Instruction. There's a lot of other schools within the state that did not make good grades either. It seems like each district had some schools that didn't. I know Alamance County had some schools that made some F's too. But we always hear that the pandemic and money is the problem. Well I think there's more than just the pandemic and money that are the problem here. If you will recall when we met with the School Board back at the library during the budget time, I posed a question about or put out there that money was not the answer to everything, and that Board agreed with

September 6, 2022

me. But I think with the development that we're having in this county, we need to be finding out why our schools are not doing any better than they are doing. We spent 18.5 million dollars down here on Bartlett Yancey School. The taxpayers' money. All I heard was how that was going to bring teachers, and yes, everybody in the state of North Carolina is having trouble getting teachers. We were made all kind of promises, and I have not significantly seen any improvements whatsoever. I'm told that there's improvement in grades. Well what does that mean? I don't know what that means. I understand that there's certain principals that get bonuses for grades. Yet in my opinion you're rewarding failure because you're making low C's, D's, and F's. I think it's time for this Board to meet with the School Board to find out what their plan is, and what's going on. Are there any comments?

Commissioner Massengill said well in that meeting, I asked how many certified teachers we were missing. They could not answer, but said they would get back to me. They did not tell me when.

Commissioner Hall said I had to chuckle. I remember your questions, I remember Commissioner Massengill's questions, and some of my comments. I have been pessimistic about School Board. Number one, they're responsive and honesty to this Board. Number two, I am pessimistic now as to whether they know what to do. I know we got a problem. Hopefully they know we got a problem. I would agree that we need to meet, but at this point when we meet with them, we need to have a plan. If they didn't get back with Mr. Massengill, they didn't need to tell him that. To you or me, they didn't answer our questions, but they didn't intend to. That's the way I felt when I left that meeting that night or that day. They didn't intend to respond. So we need to have a plan, and I agree we should meet with them and tell them what we are going to do. One of the things I believe that we should do is immediately start funding schools based upon average daily attendance, not just giving them a whole bunch of money. Let them tell us whatever they want to tell us. It doesn't matter. They've enjoyed it for years. We come back and say they didn't respond, and they go back and say we'll respond next month. Then next year, they don't respond.

Chairman McVey said I'm under the impression at this point, they always ask for our questions ahead of time, but I'm not going to do that. We're not going to send in our questions ahead of time. I try not to sit too far to the right, and I try not to sit too far to the left. I try to be the middle of the road person, but ever since I've been on this Board, I've been promised year after year after year. I've been on this Board several years now. Where is the improvement in our school system? Is this low grade C an improvement? I think they need to go back for the last couple years, bring forth the DPI information and show us where they improved. Show us what growth or growing means because I don't know. I just don't see us gaining any ground especially if we have the kind of commitment from building and resources as the people that are born or moving in to Caswell County at this time. I wouldn't want to send my kid to a high school that's failing. We just spent 18.5 million dollars plus got a 15 million plus dollar grant to build that school. I can't help it. All I can remember is we're going to be able to bring the teachers in, and things are going to be so

much better when you get this building built. That ain't happening. So I'd like to get a consensus of this Board to go ahead and set up a meeting fairly soon with the Board of Education.

Commissioner Dickerson said quick question. Are employment contracts public documents? County Manager Miller said yes. Commissioner Dickerson said I would like to request a copy of Dr. Carter's employment contract before the meeting is held. I'd like to look at that. County Manager Miller said yes sir, and Commissioner Dickerson replied thank you.

Chairman McVey said at this time, I'll ask for consensus to meet with the School Board. Then Commissioner Jefferies said it's great to meet with the School Board, but I think in order to meet with the School Board, we have to go in there with a positive attitude. We can't go in there jumping up and kicking the ground because we thinking they haven't done their job. We need to let them know what we coming for so they can answer us. They didn't give you the answer before and I'll agree they should have. But at the same time, we can't go in there with our minds up in the air thinking we're going to kick them out. We got to go in there with a positive attitude, and let the people know exactly what we want and how we feel. But not jumping up and jumping on somebody. That's some of the problem with the School Board. It used to not be that way. But in the last 7 or 8 years, it has gotten bigger and bigger. I think it's the thing we need to think about, and how we're going to come together. We not hurting them, but we are hurting the kids. Chairman McVey said I agree with you. I don't want it to be a shouting match or whatever, but we need to come up with some answers. We're definitely need to do some stuff differently. Some things through us and some through the schools too. Commissioner Massengill said I agree with Mr. Jefferies. We need to go in there reconciliatory versus argumentative. Chairman McVey said correct. Then he asked for the consensus.

Then Commissioner Hall said one more comment. The only argumentative person over the last seven or eight years that he mentioned has been me. Everyone laughed. Commissioner Hall said I hit them with the hard questions and everybody else would be reconciliatory. What did they give us? Chairman McVey said nothing so far. Commissioner Hall said that's my point it. Chairman McVey said it got us one C and the rest of them D's and a F. Commissioner Massengill said okay so we'll go in there argumentative then. Commissioner Hall said the majority has been what he's suggesting. That's what I'm trying to say. That's the new jargon. They didn't answer my questions the last time, and I told them at least twice you didn't answer my question. They danced around it. So the majority have been reconciliatory. Commissioner Dickerson said Mr. Hall I beg to differ. I have been in the same book that you're in, and I've been very unsatisfied with answers I've gotten from the school. I felt like I got the run around and never received the proper information on what I asked for. I agree with you wholeheartedly.

Chairman McVey said I'd like you all to think to yourselves about what questions you would like to have answered. I need a consensus from this Board to do this meeting so we can set one up. We will have Mr. Miller set one up pretty soon if we can get them to meet with us again. What is the consensus. Commissioners Dickerson, Hall, and Jefferies agreed to ask for a meeting. Commissioner Oestreicher said I believe we ought to give them some concept of our concerns

September 6, 2022

and our questions. Certainly the grades the schools have received is something they need to explain to us, and what their plans are. Chairman McVey said so are you yes or no. I ain't giving them no more questions. We've asked questions, and we've asked questions, I've sit in the middle, and I am not giving them the questions we're going to ask. There'll be hard questions then Commissioners Oestreicher and Massengill agreed to the request for a meeting. Then Chairman McVey said all right Mr. Miller if you will, if you'll set it up for us to have a meeting as soon as we can if they can meet with us. I want the Superintendent there this time if we can possibly get her there.

Commissioner Oestreicher: In our last meeting, we said we wanted to meet with the Planning Board for the long range plan for the county. The Planning Board, I'll try to remove all the explicit, basically said we'll be happy to meet with the new Board in January, February, or March. In my opinion it's completely an unsatisfactory answer. I would propose that we put ourselves on the next Planning Board agenda in mass so that they can't run away from us and ask them what are they going to do to revise that plan, put in the new information, and gather information that they chose not to do in the current proposal. Chairman McVey said so you want the Board to be on their agenda. Commissioner Oestreicher said yes, all of us. Chairman McVey asked for a consensus.

Commissioner Massengill said when do they meet. Commissioner Oestreicher said the third Tuesday of every month at one o'clock.

Commissioner Hall said we have another option. We are the Caswell County Board of Commissioner. We appointed them. All we got to do is unappoint them. Then ask the next board to meet with us. They don't dictate to this Board, and we shouldn't have to chase them down. Commissioner Oestreicher said so what would your alternative be? Unappoint them today? Commissioner Hall said whatever the law requires you to do. Chairman McVey said I think we need to give them the benefit of a doubt first. Set up a meeting to tell them what we want before we kick anybody off the board. Commissioner Oestreicher said they have chosen not to meet with us on every occasion we have requested a meeting. Chairman McVey said well we can request one. Commissioner Oestreicher said well they have not updated that long-range plan in over nine years. Chairman McVey said then if it doesn't happen, we could proceed with whatever position that we need to take on it at that time. Commissioner Dickerson agreed with Commissioner McVey. Chairman McVey said let's give them one more opportunity to meet with us, and if that don't happen, we'll proceed to do whatever we need to do from that point. Commissioner Massengill asked so are you saying go to their meeting? Chairman McVey said it doesn't bother me either way. We can have them up here or we can go to their meeting. I don't mind. I'll do whichever the Board would like to do. Commissioner Massengill said well I think they've told Commissioner Oestreicher that they're not coming. So what is the process to get on their agenda if they don't want to meet with us. Chairman McVey said we'll have Mr. Miller set us up on their agenda. I understand where Mr. Oestreicher is coming from, but I want to give everybody a fair chance. They can't be telling us what they're going to do and what they aren't

September 6, 2022

going to do. As one of the Commissioners have said we appoint them. So we need to be on their agenda for their next meeting if that suits everybody. Commissioner Massengill asked when is it? County Manager Miller said September 20th at one o'clock. Then Commissioner Massengill asked where do they meet. Commissioner Oestreicher said at the library.

Commissioner Massengill asked when is the CEAD Ribbon Cutting? County Manager Miller said that is on September 20th at 9 am. It should be finished by 1 pm.

Commissioner Jefferies asked if their meeting room is big enough for the entire Board to attend the meeting? Commissioner Oestreicher said it is big enough. Chairman McVey said we are going to get in there is we have to squeeze in there. Commissioner Massengill asked how many are on the Planning Board, and County Manager Miller said 7. Commissioner Oestreicher said if they show. Chairman McVey said be sure you let them know we are coming.

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

❖ Commissioner Dickerson left the meeting at 10:16 am.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS:

- Commissioners Meeting September 19, 2022 at 6:30 pm
- September 24, 2022 Brightleaf Hoedown beginning at 9:00 am

Commissioner Hall asked if we could review the tax structure as an item on the next agenda.

County Manager Miller said I will be out of the office next week Tuesday thru Friday at the NCACC Risk Pool Meeting.

ADJOURNMENT:

A **motion** was made at 10:19 am by Commissioner Hall and seconded by Commissioner Jefferies and **carried unanimously** to adjourn the meeting. (Commissioner Hall, Jefferies, Oestreicher, Massengill, and McVey voted in favor)

Carla R. Smith
Clerk to the Board

Rick McVey
Chairman

September 6, 2022

Legislative Goals

Agriculture

- Support legislation that removes barriers from local farmers so that they can provide meats, vegetables and produce to School Systems and Prisons.

General Government

- Seek state funding for NCDOT to permit them to move forward on rural road improvement regarding projected increased traffic that impacts safety.
 - Many projects that were to be completed two or three years ago are now projected to be completed in the 2023-33 plan. Some of these will become major safety issues for rural counties.
- Support additional state funding to improve rural county roads.
 - Roads and highways are the lifeblood of Rural counties. Better roads, with provisions for better traffic flow and density, are essential infrastructure to allow new Business Development in Rural counties.
- Support legislation that promotes increased rural county new business development programs and projects.
 - Rural Counties need appropriate new businesses and support for developing businesses to bring new jobs and increase the tax base. These factors reduce the burden on existing residents to pay for the ever-increasing demands and cost of local infrastructure and county services.
- Support legislation to remove inequalities by striking the provision in GS 14-4 subsection (c) No person can be found guilty of a local ordinance violation if the person produces proof of any of the following (1) no new alleged violation of the local ordinance within 30 days of the date of the initial alleged violation.

Health and Human Services

- Support state funding for local Department of Social Services agencies to provide Guardianship and Adult Protective Services.
 - Per Census data, the elderly population is our fastest growing population and will continue to be until 2037. Since 2018 North Carolina has seen an increase in the total number of adults requiring assistance through DSS Guardianship and Adult Protective Services. The number of guardianship cases appointed to DSS have risen since the NC Mental Health System and Health Department were removed as Disinterested Public Guardians. Since this change, the complexity of cases has risen, as have costs, with little specialized training made available and decreasing financial assistance offered by North Carolina Health and Human Services. Current aging projections for North Carolina predict this issue will only continue to broaden. North Carolina has seen a 3-year trend of rising Guardianship and

Adult Protective Service cases. During the same period, State funding for both services has decreased leaving the primary non-reimbursed cost increase on local county funding. While the largest population of those needing Guardianship services continues to be those 65 years of age and older, Department of Social Services are seeing a substantial increase in adults age 18 to 64 needing these services.

- Support legislation that prevents inequalities in NC Child and Adult Welfare service social workers, and seek additional funding to recruit and maintain social workers.
 - Counties across NC are struggling with staff shortages within their Department of Social Services, especially in their ability to recruit and maintain Social Workers. Legislative mandates require that services be provided to our most at risk populations to ensure their safety and wellbeing. Salaries for these positions fall short of those received by other similar professionals. Even during the COVID Pandemic, DSS Social Workers were not included in the definition of those eligible for “Hazard or Incentive” Pay. Yet they respond to allegations of Child Neglect and Abuse, Adult Abuse and they maintain contact with the many children in the custody of Department of Social Service, their families and others as necessary/required. Department of Social Services lose quality Social Workers because they feel they are not appreciated for the extremely important work they do and the long hours they work to protect our citizens.

Justice and Public Safety

- Support state funding for Emergency Management Services, Law Enforcement, Fire Services, 911 Communications and Water and Sewer Services in counties with prisons and Wildlife Lands.

Public Education

- Support legislation that promotes higher teaching standards with greater emphasis on the basics (Reading, Writing, and Math)
 - Our teachers are far too focused on teaching our children "How to Pass the Advancement Tests." and not on teaching them the basic knowledge they need to advance their learning skills. Basic “Life” Skills include: Checkbook/Account balancing, Critical Thinking (emphasis on Thinking), Meal Planning & Preparation, Health Management, Safe/Defensive Driving, etc.
- Support legislation that prohibits politically biased teacher input
 - There are far too many examples of teachers indoctrinating our children with examples and lessons with their personal views, "showing" how one Political Candidate is better than another, how Socialism or Communism is a better governmental system than a Democracy or Republic, etc.

2022-2023 Revenue Projections Based on 2021-2022 Fiscal Year

21-22 REVENUES

TOTAL - \$220,944.00

JULY 2021 – AUGUST 2021 REVENUES _____ \$21,271.00 (9.6% OF ANNUAL REVENUE)

2021-2022 BUDGETED EXPENDITURES

APPROX. - \$220,000.00

JULY 2022 – AUGUST 2022 REVENUES _____ \$34,667.00 (62.9% INCREASE FROM 2021)

IF YOU TOOK THE COMPARISONS AT FACE VALUE, THIS WOULD EQUATE TO A REVENUE PROJECTION OF \$359,917.00 FOR THE 2022-2023 FISCAL YEAR.

There is no way to accurately make these projections. The trends do strongly suggest a substantial increase in revenues for the 2022-2023 Fiscal Year. For comparison, Environmental Health fees have increased 50% in the first two months of the new fiscal year as compared to 2021. With major projects currently under review, revenues can reasonably be expected to come in 50% above 2021-2022.

Three year average for Revenues from direct fees _____ \$222,000.00

FIVE major projects approximate fee Revenue _____ \$135,000.00 - \$175,000.00*

*(depends on total scope of work)

Conservative Estimate of 22-23 Revenues _____ \$325,000.00

(Earlier projections for 22-23 revenues were substantially lower at \$244,000.00)

In light of this fluid situation, it has become clear that one Certified Building Inspector can no longer be expected to handle the current and future workload.

I recommend hiring at least one additional Certified building inspector in order to meet Statutory (G.S. 143-139.4) requirements for inspections being performed in a timely manner. Without this additional employee, Fire inspections will ultimately not happen as required. In order to stay ahead of or at least catch up to the curve, it is imperative that we move quickly as recruitment is often very difficult for these specialized positions.

It is also important to note that (G.S. 153A-354(c) and G.S. 160A-414(c)) require that all fees collected by inspections must be used for that department and no other purpose.

(c) All fees collected under ~~the authority set forth in this section~~ shall be used for support of the administration and activities of the inspection department and for no other purpose."

Also, county governments shall provide information sufficient to track these money (see excerpt that follows):

SECTION 4.(a) In addition to, and in conjunction with, Section 21.1 of Senate Bill 99, 2018 Regular Session, the Secretary of the Local Government Commission, upon consultation with the Department of Insurance, shall revise the reporting requirements for units of local government under G.S. 159-33.1 to include information sufficient to track whether the fees collected by local inspection departments under G.S. 153A-354 and G.S. 160A-414 are used in accordance with those statutes, if the general fund of the local government supplements the inspection department and if the local inspection department is supplementing the general fund of the local government.