

MINUTES – MAY 17, 2021

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, May 17, 2021.

Members present: David J. Owen, Chairman, Jeremiah Jefferies, Vice Chairman, William E. Carter, John D. Dickerson, Nathaniel Hall, Rick McVey, Steve Oestreicher. Also, present: Josh Atwater, Hyco Lake Board Chairman, Bryan Miller, County Manager, Brian Ferrell, County Attorney, and Debra Ferrell representing The Caswell Messenger. Ashley K Powell, Interim Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

Members absent: All members where present.

WELCOME
MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

Chairman Owen welcomed everyone to the May 17, 2021 Board of Commissioners meeting.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The Board of Commissioners and all the guests in the attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC HEARING - RESIDENTS OF THE SOUTH EAST PORTION OF CASWELL COUNTY REGARDING LAND USE REGULATION, PROPERTY CONCERNS, AND QUALITY OF LIFE CONCERNS CLOSE-OUT

Chairman Owen questioned the County Manager and the Interim Clerk if they had received any additional public comments were received within the 24 hours' time frame. Mr. Miller and Mrs. Powell replied no. Commissioner Hall made a motion to close out the public hearing for the residents of the South East portions of Caswell County regarding land use regulations, property concerns, and quality of life concerns, seconded by Commissioner McVey. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING -UNIFIED DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE CLOSE-OUT AMENDMENTS TO ARTICLES 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, & APPENDIX A

Chairman Owen questioned the County Manager and the Interim Clerk if they had received any additional public comments were received within the 24 hours' time frame. Mr. Miller and Mrs. Powell replied no. Commissioner McVey made a motion to close the public hearing on the UDO amendments to articles 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10, and appendix A, seconded by Chairman Owen. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING - RESOLUTION OF INTENT TO SELL OR OTHERWISE CONVEY ITS HOME HEALTH AGENCY, CASWELL COUNTY HOME HEALTH AGENCY (THE

“AGENCY”) IN A MANNER THAT ENSURES THE CONTINUED PROVISION OF QUALITY HEALTH CARE TO THE COMMUNITY IT SERVES.

Chairman Owen questioned the County Manager and the Interim Clerk if they had received any additional public comments were received within the 24 hours’ time frame. Mr. Miller and Mrs. Powell replied no. Commissioner McVey made a motion to approve the resolution of intent to sell or otherwise convey its Home Health agency in a manner that ensures the continued provision of quality health care to the community it serves and to close out the public hearing, seconded by Chairman. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Earl Nelson, Caswell County resident. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Bruce Pleasant, 268 Painter Road Prospect Hill. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Leslie Zimmerman, Leasburg NC. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Earl Wrenn, 2927 Egypt Road Prospect Hill. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Mark Zimmerman, Leasburg NC. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Earnestine Hamlett. Requested that the Board offer some help or assistance to the residents of South East Caswell.

Dr. Martinelli, Gunn Poole Road. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Keith Newcomber, 926 Stanfield Road Anderson Community. Spoke in regards of the wording on the ballot and how it should have been clearer and more education on zoning for residents.

Phil Barfield Suggest that the Board look at how their constituents voted in each district for zoning.

Lindsay Page, 1709 Rascoe Dameron Road. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Susan Faison, Spoke in favor of zoning.

Dale Kemper, 802 Russell Loop Road Prospect Hill NC. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Bryon Shoffner, 150 Shoffners Loop Burlington NC. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Anita Foust, 2501 Hughes Mill Road Burlington NC. Had concerns about air and water quality, with polluting industries coming into the county.

Ed Dougherty, 2685 Ridgeville Road Prospect Hill NC. Spoke in favor of zoning.

Elin Claggett residing at 108 Jaye Ln., Providence, NC Requested that this public comment be read at its entirety. On March 15, the BOE reviewed a budget which included \$1.5 million COVID & Stimulus Relief funds. They concluded by asking for a 17% increase in County appropriations. Prior to your joint meeting on May 3rd, the school board reviewed \$3,031,337 from phase II & \$6,783,810 from phase III of the Stimulus Relief funds. These budgets duplicate financing of several line items which the schools have asked you to pay from County funds. For example: *3 year of salary for a **Social Worker** position, *3 year of salaries for a Psychologist & a Dropout Prevention Specialist (AKA **Risk-Support Social Worker**), and *\$500,000 allocated for **HVAC** systems this year and another \$1,000,000 over the following 2 years. *Teachers are scheduled to receive a 10% State raise over 2 years plus bonuses totaling \$3,000 this year & \$1,000 in Oct. 2022. \$2,000,000 of ESSER funds are budgeted for **teacher supplements** over the next 3 years. In addition to HVAC funding, other Capital Outlay Expense requests are dubious: ***Civic Center** request for \$50,000 included cleaning supplies & utilities. The cost of utilities dropped \$80,000 in 2019-2020 and another \$61,000 was saved last year when students were home. Their previous budget already covered utility costs, so why ask for another \$48,000? Certainly COVID funds covered \$2,000 for cleaning supplies. ***Landscaping** \$120,000! Paving perhaps but landscaping?? Recently, volunteers landscaped, with plants & mulch, the Gunn Memorial Library because the County budget did not cover these landscaping costs. ***Activity bus** for \$90,000. How many surplus busses are sitting in their maintenance lot? These could be sold, just like county vehicles, & dollars reallocated. Do you recall the Activity Bus requests noted in 2020 & 2021 adopted budgets and the \$2.3 million Unrestricted Funds? ***Superintendent** salary is \$146,880. The state pays her a maximum salary of \$117,276. The \$29,604 salary variance is paid from local funds. Unlike the Financial Officer and Asst. Superintendent salaries, this salary was omitted from the presentation. ***Payment to Charter schools.** Presentation states that requested funding will "... meet the needs of our students by offering high-quality instructional programs and a school system we can all be proud of." Caswell is ranked 89th academically in N.C. which hurts economic development. Charter schools, primarily outside the county, were open when Caswell schools were closed for a year. Some parents have chosen Charter schools so their children can have a better education. Local funds requested include payment of \$230,000 to Charter schools. **STATE & LOCAL per pupil expenditure or funding.** You were given a statement that 'The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 states a local education agency shall not, in fiscal year 2022 or 2023 reduce per-pupil funding for any high-poverty school.' Over 10 years, the number of students has dropped from 3,000 to 2,324 students and the total local spending should have drop proportionately. High poverty and small tax base are the reasons our Local funding is ranked 99th out of 115 districts. The good news is the State recognizes this and compensates Caswell Public Schools with Low Wealth Supplemental Funding of approx. \$450 per pupil (\$1.0 million) PLUS Small County Supplemental Funding of \$606 per pupil (\$1.5 million). Thus, Caswell's State funding of \$8,922 per pupil is 13th highest in N.C. With County and Federal dollars added, Caswell per pupil funding is \$10,966 per student and in the top 25% of the state. This nearly \$11,000 per student far exceeds funding in surrounding counties: Alamance @ \$8,929; Rockingham Co. @ \$9,308; & Person Co. @ \$9,706 PPE. Additionally, CARES ACT & Stimulus Relief Funds total \$11,325,708 - above and beyond their normal \$31 million budget - averaging \$4,873 per student over 3 years. There are over half-million dollars of requests for items that are covered in the Stimulus Relief budgets and not amended in the budget request for County dollars. After this past year, I'm no longer surprised by omissions and selective disclosures. Like the people who hoarded toilet paper last year, I'm sure there are motives & "reasons" for these choices. The school board members may be friends and family, but their management of per pupil funding is poor. Caswell Public Schools are already receiving \$1,300 - \$2,000 more per student than surrounding counties, are scheduled to receive \$9.8 million more in Federal funds and still want 17% more from taxpayers.

The new BYHS won't change poor academics but will increase taxes. Higher tax rates, like higher gas prices, hurt the poor disproportionately. Please take the time to review ESSER II & III spending plans in addition to line items requested by the BOE.

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

RECONIGITIONS

Chairman Owen stated that it was EMS week, and thanked the EMS and 911 for the great job that they have done. Then recognized Jason Julian and Wright Archer from the NCDOT they gave the Board a brief update on future projects.

APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA

Commissioner McVey made a motion to a amend the agenda adding a closed session, seconded by Commissioner Dickerson. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

1. May 3rd, 2021 regular meeting minutes-stand approved
2. May 10th, 2021 special meeting minutes-stand approved

RESOLUTION TO EXEMPT SHADOW RIDGE ROAD SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PROJECT FROM N.C.G.S. 143-64.31 "THE MINI-BROOKS ACT"

Mr. Miller presented the Board with the resolution "The Mini-Brooks Act".



CASWELL COUNTY LOCAL GOVERNMENT

RESOLUTION TO EXEMPT SHADOW RIDGE ROAD SPECIAL ASSESSMENT PROJECT FROM N.C.G.S. 143-64.31 “THE MINI-BROOKS ACT”, WHERE THE ESTIMATED PROFESSIONAL FEE IS LESS THAN FIFTY THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$50,000)

WHEREAS, G.S. 143-64.31 requires the initial solicitation and evaluation of firms to perform architectural, engineering, surveying, construction management-at-risk services, and design-build services (collectively “design services”) to be based on qualifications and without regard to fee;

WHEREAS, the County proposes to enter into one or more contracts for “design services” for work associated with the Shadow Ridge Road “Special Assessment”; and

WHEREAS, G.S. 143-64.32 authorizes units of local government to exempt contracts for “design services” from the qualifications-based selection requirements of G.S. 143-64.31 if the estimated fee is less than \$50,000; and

WHEREAS, the estimated fee for “design services” for the above-described project is anticipated to be less than \$50,000.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED BY THE CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CASWELL:

Section 1. The Shadow Ridge Road “Special Assessment” project is hereby made exempt from the provisions of G.S. 143-64.31.

Section 2. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

This the 17th day of May, 2021.

David Owen, Chairman
Caswell County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

Ashley K. Powell
Interim Clerk to the Board

HYCO LAKE AUTHORITY UPDATE

Mr. Atwater stated that there had been several upgrades to the community docks, camping and beach area.

COUNTY MANAGERS UPDATE

1. Opioid Litigation
2. Budget Meeting – May 24th at 6:30 (Sheriff Department, Administration, and Finance)

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

Commissioner Hall had several request and comments:

1. Annual reports from Boards and Committees by the first meeting in July.
2. Economic Development report for the fiscal year.
3. Back up line for internet at Co-Square.
4. County Email
5. Follow up on the \$50,000 appropriations for Caswell County Schools refer back to June 12, 2019 minutes.

Commissioner Dickerson requested Solid Waste be on the next agenda.

Chairman Owen stated that the NCACC Conference is coming up.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner McVey made a motion to go into closed session, seconded by Commissioner Dickerson. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner McVey made a motion to go out of closed session, seconded by Commissioner Hall. The motion carried unanimously.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Carter made a motion at 8:15pm to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Dickerson. The motion carried unanimously.