MINUTES – JANUARY 7, 2019

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at the Caswell County Historic Courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, January 7, 2019. Members present: Rick McVey, Chairman, Jeremiah Jefferies, Vice Chairman, William E. Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Steve Oestreicher and David Owen. Absent: Sterling Carter. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager, Brian Ferrell, County Attorney and Luke Burris representing The Caswell Messenger. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

Chairman McVey stated “At this time I would like to make a brief statement before we have a Moment of Silent Prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Caswell County would like to offer its condolences to the family of Alexandra Black who was killed at the Conservators Center last Sunday, December 30, 2018. Our thoughts and prayers are with her family at this time. Caswell County would also like to offer our thoughts and prayers to the other families and emergency services workers that were involved in this incident. Thank you.”

Chairman McVey opened the meeting with a moment of Silent Prayer.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman McVey stated “We need to make a couple of amendments to the Agenda. If you don’t mind I would like to take Item #9 and move it to Item #7 and then we will go down the list after that.”

Commissioner Owen stated “I would like to add to our Agenda if it pleases the Board a short discussion on the Commissioner’s Work Session for Monday.”

Commissioner Oestreicher stated “I would like to add an item to discuss the reorganization of the first floor.”

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher to approve the agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Oestreicher stated “I have a couple corrections. On the list of attendees for the December 17th regular meeting and special meeting it shows Ken Travis in attendance and my name was not included. Also with paragraphs 2, 4, 5 and 6 have Ron Bradsher’s name misspelled. Thank you.”

Commissioner Jefferies moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

The following item was included on the Consent Agenda:

A. Approval of Minutes of December 17, 2018 Special Meeting

B. Approval of Minutes of December 17, 2018 Regular Meeting

C. Approval of FY 2018-2019 Budget Amendment #3

D. Approval of FY 2018-2019 Budget Amendment #4

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman McVey opened the floor to Public Comments.

Mr. Earl Wrenn came before the Board and made the following statement:

“Good morning. Earl Wrenn, 2927 Egypt Road, Prospect Hill. Thank y’all for giving me this opportunity to talk to you all this morning. I got a concern at Prospect Hill on the Wrenn Road. There is a strong rumor going around that there is going to be a rock quarry put in. I don’t know if you are aware of that. I am not even sure which Commissioner is from my district.” Commissioner Oestreicher responded “Probably me.” Mr. Wrenn continued “I did not see you on my ballot when I vote in Prospect Hill so I am not sure. Any way a rumor is going around out there and there has been a lot of test drilling going on at that site and with this drilling a lot of the wells, 6 or 6 ½ wells are being left open. Some of the drilling goes on 2 or 3 days and it goes on at night. I think they are kind of deep but I don’t know but what really concerns me was our water table, our wells, you know, we depend on them and with the wells being left open I called the state. I work over at the Williamsburg Plant over in Caswell County so I do environmental, I deal with the state so I called the state up and I talked to the Environmental Engineer Shawn Fox, he’s over the Department of Environmental Quality for wells for water quality and he suggested that I call Donnie Powell and he gave me his contact information. I talked to Donnie last week and he was not aware of this and I don’t know if you guys are aware of what is going on out there. That is the reason why I am here today just for informational purposes and to share this with you, ask for your help. Has there been any environmental studies done or has anyone actually followed up on this or how it affected the wells out in Prospect Hill I mean as of yesterday I saw one well that was still uncovered and I don’t know how many more, there was a lot of wells over a period of 2 or 3 month period this has been going on. I think there is something going on with our wells and I can’t say this is the cause of it but it can’t be good to leave a well open. Where I work at the Williamsburg Plant the state required us that if we had open wells we had to fill them in. I think Jeremiah you probably that when we worked at BI together but as a concerned citizen from Prospect Hill I am asking you guys for any help you can give. That proposed site if that is what is going to be there or that is what we are hearing, there is a Methodist church right across the road from it, there’s families with small kids around it, it’s a farming neighborhood and you guys know if we have something like that to come along there will be a lot of truck traffic, there is a concern for the wells but also for our neighbors that try to farm and they don’t want to be ran over by a truck but that’s it. I just wanted to bring this to your attention and I appreciate any help that you can give. Thank y’all.”

Chairman McVey asked if there was anyone else that would like to speak during Public Comments. With no further comments Public Comments was closed.

RECOGNITIONS

There were no recognitions given.

N.C. DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE REPORT ON FIRE DEPARTMENT RATINGS

Mr. Vernon Massengill stated “Thank you Mr. Chairman. First of all, before I get to say what I would like to say I would like to introduce Mr. Brian Taylor, he’s the Director of Fire Services under the Department of Insurance in North Carolina and he will introduce Commissioner Causey.”

Mr. Brian Taylor stated “Thank you Chief Massengill. Good morning Chairman, Councilmembers and other elected officials here. Thank you for letting us to come before you today on this very special day for not only the fire service for the citizens of Caswell County. It’s a very monumental day to come before you today to look at the fire service here in your community. In the mid-2000s the North Carolina Legislature tasked the North Carolina Department of Insurance to provide the rating inspections for all fire service under the population of 100,000. Since then we have improved the rating schedule and the inspections program and under the leadership of Commissioner Causey we have been able to loosen some of the requirements or basically do a better evaluation and become revolutionized in the new century. Knowing that recruitment and retention in the fire service has been very difficult we have been able to go and have some of the administrative rules changed to lessen some of the requirements of rosters of 20 personnel to 15, some of the substations to lower the equipment requirements for those departments to keep up with times and it’s a very tough task with volunteerism across the country but here in North Carolina and of course you should see here in Caswell County. Now as I said today is a day I will be really proud of for the fire service here. It’s a three year process for the fire service here to get ready for this rating. They water hauled for the entire fire service, the 10 fire departments here in Caswell County which is a very difficult task especially to see 10 departments to all work together is a monumental task that we see across the state. In the last year we have been able to see 90 departments to improve their ratings through the inspections program through our office and 30% of those are going from a 9S which is the lowest rating or the standard rating for insurance ratings and of course the departments here in Caswell County are in that area of the 30%. At this time I would like to recognize a few individuals, of course Chief Massengill is what we would consider the leader of the fire service here in Caswell County, sits on the Fire Commission Board and makes decisions for the fire service across North Carolina and of course he was the lead for our ratings staff here. Derrick Clause which is the Deputy Director, he is here today with us as the Ratings Division of Fire and Rescue. Vernon Ward and Brian Fox were the inspectors that done inspections here. At this time I would like to introduce the Commissioner of Insurance. Most people don’t realize in North Carolina general statute says the Insurance Commissioner is also the State Fire Marshal. He was elected two years ago and lives in Guilford and lives in the area that has a rural fire department so he knows the importance of a volunteer fire department. It is an honor to serve under Commissioner Causey. At this time I would like to introduce North Carolina Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal Mike Causey.”

Commissioner Causey stated “Thank you Brian, Mr. Chairman, fellow members of the Caswell County Commissioners thank you for having me here. It’s an honor to be here today. It’s an honor to serve as State Fire Marshal. Mr. Chairman I want to thank you for your kind words on the tragedy and I want to thank you for the emergency responders there. This is a big day for Caswell County. It’s not often that we see a county that has multiple fire departments that get an increased rating in the fire service where all the fire departments received increased ratings is a real big deal. It helps the citizens in a number of ways and I am glad to see a number of insurance agents and homeowners that are here today. This is important because the rating that your local fire department has has a direct bearing on what you pay for homeowners insurance within that fire district so I applaud the efforts of all the fire departments and I didn’t realize this until today but I especially want to thank the Piedmont Electric Membership Cooperative for what they have done in their outstanding work in providing grant money to the fire departments and they told me a little while ago that they were number one in the whole United States for the grant monies. I want to thank our team of fire inspectors as the State Fire Marshal under the leadership of Brian Taylor. When I took office in January of 2017 we were a little bit behind, the Department of Insurance was a little bit behind in inspecting fire departments and we got a lot of criticism. We had fire departments in this state that had not been inspected in 25 years. We had one in Buncombe County that had not been inspected in 28 years and I asked why is this and the answer was simple we only had 5 people, 5 inspectors to cover 100 counties and at that time 20,051 buildings or fire stations scattered across North Carolina so it was physically impossible with those five individuals to keep up with everything so I went to the legislature and convinced them to let us hire additional fire inspectors and we hire 3 new fire department inspectors and those 3 additional inspectors has really helped up with the backlog. Towards the end of the year we did not have any fire departments that still needed to be inspected so we are pretty much on tract and to keep on tract maybe every 5 years or so. It is just an honor for me to stand before you and to say that I like to get out of Raleigh every chance I get. To have so many fire departments and Brian if you want to go ahead and make the presentations. I am going to let Brian called the fire departments up.”

Mr. Taylor stated “Not only the fire departments but your water system took place in this and Communications took place in this so there was a lot that played into these new ratings. We took at the water systems that you have in place and also 911. We will call up each department individually and we have media here to take pictures. We will start with Anderson Township Volunteer Fire Department. There classification was a 9E/10, the E means it exceeds its district, it has a 6 mile district and the 10 means that they were not rated as far as insurance goes. Those individuals outside that 6 mile district have special provisions so they are now rated a 6/9E district. Casville Volunteer Fire Department, they were a 9E/10 they have improved to a 6/9E. Providence Fire and Rescue, they were a 7/9E and they reduced it to a 5/9E. Leasburg, 9E/10 to a 6/9E. Milton Volunteer Fire Department 7/9E to a 6/9E. Pelham Volunteer Fire Department 9E/10 to a 6/9E. Prospect Hill Volunteer Fire Department a 9E/10 to a 6/9E. Semora Volunteer Fire Department 9E/10 to a 4/9E, that’s a tremendous jump there, a big jump. Congratulations on that. Cherry Grove Volunteer Fire Department 9E/10 to a 6/9E. Yanceyville Fire and Rescue from the Town of Yanceyville 5 to a 4 rating. Chief if you will stay with us for the Rural District of Yanceyville Fire and Rescue a 9E to a 5/9E. At this time Mr. Chairman I will entertain any questions that you or the council or Commission staff may have since we do have the experts here with us, any questions for us.”

Chairman Hall asked “Good morning I am Nate Hall, one general question, this is great for the county and this is something that we have worked on for quite a while, what kind of rate decreases can our citizens expect on the average for a 2 to 3 point drop as I looked at these numbers?” Commissioner Causey responded “Where are our insurance agents? That depends on the insurance company but I will say that we have seen that across the state. I know down in Pamlico County about last fall or late summer I was down in Pamlico County and I was at a Farm Bureau Insurance agency office down there and the agent said they had people calling their office thinking there was some mistake because they got their homeowners renewal notice and they didn’t have an increase, they actually had a decrease and that was only in one particular area in Pamlico County near the coast so it depends on the area and it depends on the insurance company but it certainly whether someone gets a decrease or not it certainly helps keep down any future increases.”

Commissioner Oestreicher asked “It is my understanding that this is effective April 1st, is that correct?’ Mr. Taylor responded “April 1st, yes sir.” Commissioner Oestreicher continued “Thank you.”

Mr. Vernon Massengill stated “Thanks Commissioner Causey for your time and your effort to make it up to Caswell County today. Mr. Commissioners, Mr. Chairman 3 years ago we started this process. I think needless to say there were many doubts even maybe on the Board of Commissioners and maybe even in the public but you gave us the chance. There was never a doubt in my mind because I know the personnel in the fire service in this County. I knew what we could accomplish and what we set forth to accomplish we did. Thank you for the funding to allow us to do that. Everybody remembers the saying it takes a village in this instance it’s the truth. If the Commissioners would bear with me a minute I’d like to thank some of those who did help us. First of all, you as the Commissioners we’re grateful. Three, 2 ½ years ago I stood right here and presented you with a packet about three or four inches thick and we’re here today after many, many meetings. I’d like to thank the county manager; he was the calming effect on me. When I would get a little uncalm he would put his hand on my shoulder and say calm down we’ll get it done so I appreciate his effort. I’d like to thank, as you heard Derrick gave Big Vernon and Little Vernon names, he did not want to say Vernon and two people answer his question so Big Vernon essentially had to pay Caswell County property taxes and by the way did you pay it this year, he lived in Caswell County so much over the past 2 ½ years to 3 years. Every question we had, every meeting we requested, every time I had a problem Big Vernon was there to help. I’m sure his wife wondered where and what was happening in Caswell County but I assured her he was with us. Big Vernon would you take just a couple of minutes to say a couple of things.”

Mr. Vernon Ward stated “Well the biggest thing is it’s been a pleasure working in Caswell County. The best thing I saw here is that everybody worked together and there was leadership seen here. There was 60 some fire trucks here on Saturday that day, we do this across the state and everybody thought it was the most organized event I have ever seen. I actually kind of wrote a policy model based on that. Caswell had to develop water hydrant points and they did an excellent job doing that. They worked really hard too. Now you have to keep working to maintain. Keep working together and this is great for the citizens and they should see a reduction in their insurance rates. From my perspective I think the fire service is working safer and you are more professional. I appreciate working with you and I enjoyed working with y’all this whole time.”

Mr. Massengill stated “Thank you sir. You also brought 10 inspectors in and we appreciated all of them. Brian Cox was one of the inspectors. We thank you guys, each department had a different inspector and it did not matter what time, what day or what hours it was. One group I would like to thank that helps us a lot and that is Piedmont Electric. They made the monies available at either low or no interest for a time period to assist fire departments in this county to purchase new vehicles, apparatus or new buildings so I will thank Susan the Piedmont Electric for your efforts in all of that. I would like to thank our Fire Committee, the Fire Committee represented the Chief’s Association, Chief Everett from Station 4, Chief Dodson from Station 7 and Mitch Foster who is the President of the Fireman’s Association, we met many times with some Commissioners to work out all the details. One of the most important aspects of the fire service in Caswell County is the families. The spouses and the children of the fire service give up birthdays, give up Sunday lunches, give up Christmas, my wife was picked up on the side of the road because I got a call and she had to get a ride home. Our families are the backbone of the volunteer fire service in this county and I thank them. I would like to thank the chiefs and the firemen of this county, what a great group of workers. I’ve been told that I don’t see how you can get 10 chiefs to agree that the earth is round and the sun rising in the east and I said that is easy this is Caswell County and we are blessed. We have to work together; we know we need each other. I think it is an honor to serve the fire service in this county, the friendships, camaraderie, the respect I have for each member of the fire service is immeasurable. I see firsthand every day the commitment that is displayed by these fire personnel. I’ll say it again thank you Commissioners, thank you for believing in us. I hope we exceeded your expectations. One last tidbit buckle up, take your vitamins and stand by for Act II of the fire service plan in Caswell County.”

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

RECOGNITION

Chairman McVey stated “At this time I am going to ask Commissioner Hall, he has a young man that he would like to introduce to us today, if you would Mr. Hall.”

Commissioner Hall stated “Thank you Mr. Chairman and citizens of Caswell and fellow Commissioners I would like to present one of our next door neighbors Mr. Ray Jeffers. Ray is Commissioner for over in Person County. Tell us about yourself and what you are going to do for us this year.”

Mr. Ray Jeffers stated “Good morning, my name is Ray Jeffers. I am serving my third term in Person County. I am also a past president for the Association of County Commissioners and I have received an honor this year to serve as the 2nd president for the National Association of Counties and I do appreciate Caswell County’s support. We are trying to model Person County on what you all are doing with the fire departments. We just started the fire tax last year as well so we hope to duplicate what you all are doing here. I appreciate the opportunity to address you all this morning and to have your support as well.”

Chairman McVey stated “Thank you.”

TELAMON CORPORATION’S SUBMISSION OF FY 2019/2020 COMMUNITY SERVICES BLOCK GRANT (CSBG) APPLICATION

Ms. Latorya Carter and Ms. Jessica Schneider came before the Board to received feedback on the application for the 2019/2020 Community Service Block Grant. Ms. Carter stated that this money pays for their clients to go back to school, helps with gas money or first month’s rent if needed.

Commissioner Owen stated that he was familiar with the program. He added that Caswell County does not have a representative on the Telamon Board and he wanted to know how Caswell County could fill those voids. Commissioner Owen asked Ms. Carter to pass the information on to the county manager. Ms. Carter stated that there would be a meeting this Thursday. Mr. Ray Jeffers stated that he serves as the chair for this advisory board and that it did need an elected official from Caswell. He added that the meetings are also held in Caswell County because it is a central location.

Chairman McVey asked Commissioner Oestreicher if he would fill this vacancy. Commissioner Oestreicher agreed to serve on this advisory board.

SOUTHERN HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

Mr. Miller stated that no new information has come in for this issue and he did not expect any more information. He added that the County did have a bill that is dated from October in the amount of $110,397.99 from the Department of Safety and this bill needed to be paid. Mr. Miller stated that once the bill is paid the County would look into recouping some of the monies back.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if paying this bill would weaken the County’s ability to get reimbursed. Mr. Ferrell responded that he did not think it would. He added that the county would send a formal notification.

Commissioner Oestreicher moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to pay this invoice with the stipulation to pursue repayment.

Commissioner Hall asked if these funds were in place or does the Board need to do a budget amendment. Mr. Miller responded that the funds to pay this bill would need to come from fund balance so a budget amendment would be necessary.

Upon a vote of the motion, the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hall moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to do the appropriate budget amendment to make this payment. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hall stated that it would be beneficial for the Board to look at the insurance coverage at the detention center in conjunction with the county manager, the Board of Commissioners and the Sheriff’s Office.

Chairman McVey stated that this item would be put on the agenda at the Commissioner’s Work Session on Monday, January 14, 2019. All the Commissioners agreed. Chairman McVey asked the clerk to add this item to the Work Session agenda.

DISCUSSION ON LEGISLATIVE GOALS PROPOSAL

Commissioner Owen stated that he had emailed the goals to the Commissioners and he wanted to get a consensus from the Board on which goals it is in support of or do not support at all. Commissioner Owen went through each category. Commissioner Owen informed the Board that he was trying to meet with the federal representatives or office staff about the federal goals that will be turned in.

DISCUSSION ON MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING BETWEEN BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS AND BOARD OF EDUCATION

Mr. Ferrell stated that the Board had asked to take a look at the initial draft of the MOU that was presented by the Board of Education at the joint meeting just prior to the holiday break. He informed the Board that he had placed a couple of items in front on them regarding this. The first item is a 1 ½ page draft of preliminary issues that he feels are worthy of consideration as he goes through the specific changes to the agreement as well as some changes to the cooperative agreement itself. Mr. Ferrell stated that he would go through the changes that have been made and then he will be asking for some directions at the next Commissioner’s meeting to compile another draft to present to the School Board’s attorney. Mr. Ferrell stated that as he was reading through the agreement it led him back to the state grant agreement as well as the USDA’s funding requirements and the thinks the county manager and the superintendent will need to work together to go back to the state and the USDA to get some of these high level issues ironed out. Mr. Ferrell stated “There are several preliminary issues related to The Needs Based Public School Capital Fund Grant (the “Grant”) to resolve in connection with the Agreement as follows: A. The Grant Application as well as SL 2017-212 both state that grant funds ‘shall be used for the construction of new school building only.’ This might be interpreted to mean that the grant money can’t be used to pay for the architectural work, or for any equipment, or for other expenses that do not arise directly from putting “bricks and mortar” in place. I recommend that the County Manager and Superintendent of Schools clarify what the Grant funds can be used for with the Department of Public Instruction or other relevant entity as early as possible. B. The Agreement has been revised to state that the County and not the Board of Education is the recipient of the Grant funds. The Grant Application indicates that it is a county that received the grant funds, and even more importantly the legislation states that grants shall be awarded “to counties” and uses language such as “recipient county.” See especially SL 2018-5, Section 5.3.(e1) which states that: “A county receiving grant funds pursuant to this section shall enter into an agreement with the Department of Public Instruction detaining the use of grant funds.” C. The USDA has stated that it requires all grant funds to be spent prior to drawing down USDA funds. However, the matching fund requirement from the Grant requires that a grant fund progress payment may not be made unless proof is provided that the matching requirement has been met. There is interplay here with the Grant fund requirement that those funds can be used for “construction of new school buildings only.” For example, USDA might agree that borrowed funds can be used to pay the architect even before any grant funds are expended, and then those funds previously used to pay the architect can be allocated as the County’s “match” for grant funds used for construction alter on. I recommend that the County Manager and Superintendent of Schools clarify how the timing of the flow of funds from the USDA and the Grant.” He continued by saying in Section III. “As currently structured, this project is likely not eligible for a refund of the sales and use tax liability indirectly incurred by the County on building materials, supplies, fixtures, and equipment purchased for the project. The high school and all related facilities are currently owned by the Board of Education. Section 5(c) of the Agreement states that the Board of Education will retain ownership of the property during and after construction. The sales tax refund allowed under G.S. 105-164.14 only applies to sales and use tax liability indirectly incurred by a government entity on building materials, supplies, fixtures, and equipment that become a part of or annexed to any building or structure that is owned or leased by the government entity. The project does not appear to be eligible for the significant sales tax refund unless the ownership of the high school is revisited.”

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if the matching funds could be used for those soft costs. Mr. Ferrell responded that this will need to be clarified. He wanted clarification on the grant as far as if it can be used for some of these soft costs or only for the “vertical” construction. Mr. Ferrell informed the Board that he also included a redline version of the agreement the Board of Education presented to the Board. He highlighted some of the main changes: the WHEREAS section is just introductory in nature. Mr. Ferrell stated that an important change is in Section 2. is the initial agreement had a committee that was to make binding decisions regarding the contract and the committee consisted of all the members of the School Board and it could make binding decisions on behalf of the Board of Commissioners on various aspects of the project. He added that in the revision there is a series of delegated authorities and the School Board is still responsible for overseeing the design and equipping of the high school project. Mr. Ferrell stated that the County is responsible for the funding of the project and the disbursement of funds. He added that the County is responsible for entering into the design services contract and the School Board and County Commissioners will work together on the Request for Qualifications (RFQ) that will become an exhibit to the Agreement. Mr. Ferrell stated that the county manager and superintendent will jointly work on this RFQ which will go out for responses and then the county manager and superintendent will review those responses and make recommendation for the ultimate selection of the architect. He added that from this point on the architect handles the project and makes recommendations for approval to the contracting parties. Mr. Ferrell stated that if the concept of a committee remains in the Agreement he suggested are 2 members of the Board of Commissioners and county manager, 2 members of the Board of Education and the superintendent to get information back to the respected boards. Mr. Ferrell stated that there have been quite a few revisions to the Agreement and suggested that the Board review the redline version and then look at the clean version of the Agreement with all of the changes made and this can be discussed at the next Board meeting.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he understand that the architect is chosen after the RFQ process but he asked if the agreement explained the remainder of the bidding process through the architect will need to follow the procedures in the general statutes. Mr. Ferrell responded that it is expressed in the agreement that the process needs to follow state law. Commissioner Oestreicher continued by saying since the selection of the architect has been mentioned in discussions in the past he asked if there are any provisions to waive this process of the selection of an architect through the RFQ process. Mr. Ferrell responded that the Mini Brooks Act does allow for projects of a certain size to be waived but this project exceeds that amount so in this particular process there is no waiving of those requirements.

Commissioner Hall asked if during a review that the RFQ specs have been met does the Board have the opportunity to approve and move forward with the project. Mr. Ferrell responded yes if the Board of Education has the score sheets and everything has been met with the RFQ process.

Mr. Ferrell stated that the county manager and superintendent have some work to do on the funding sources and there are quite a few changes in the agreement that the School Board would need to have time to consider. He suggested that the Board review the agreement and make those changes at the next meeting and then another draft will be made and given to the School Board.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if this could be put on the agenda for the Work Session to be reviewed. Chairman McVey responded yes if the answer can be received by that time. Mr. Ferrell added that hopefully the county manager and superintendent will have time to get the answers to the funding questions that he raised in the memorandum.

Commissioner Owen stated the he did not think the School Board would have enough time to review the agreement before the Work Session. Mr. Ferrell responded that the School Board presented their initial draft and so it is the County’s turn to react so the next reaction needs to come from the Board of Commissioners before being presented to the School Board’s attorney. He added that the drafts could be given to the School Board but the Board needs to agree collectively before presented its draft to the School Board.

Commissioner Jefferies asked if the committee would be made up of 2 members of the Board of Education and superintendent and 2 members from the Board of Commissioners and the county manager. Mr. Ferrell responded yes but that decision is ultimately up to the Board of Commissioners. Mr. Miller added that it is his understanding that the committee is used for informational purposes only. Commissioner Jefferies asked if it was too late to do a bond. Mr. Ferrell responded that this is a bond project and it will be using the authority that was granted to the County to issue bonds in the referendum so it is still a general obligation of the County to repay the dollars using bond funds and the USDA will be consumer of those bonds and the USDA has offered repayment terms that are much more favorable in terms of length of repayment schedule than the County would be able to get using alternate funding sources due to the Local Government Commission requirements. He added that there are alternate borrowing paths but it would require shorter terms limits than what the USDA offers. Commissioner Jefferies stated that the School Board never had a committee before and 62% of the people vote to build a school and he does not understand why this is needed. He added that the Board needs to have two members and the School Board have two members and he does not understand this. Mr. Ferrell responded that the difference is the USDA requires that the County be the contracting party and before the School Board was the contracting party and the USDA does not allow this.

Chairman McVey asked the clerk to get this item on the work session agenda.

Mr. Ferrell asked the Board if it wanted him to be at the work session. Commissioner Oestreicher responded yes at least for this portion of the work session.

Commissioner Hall stated that general counsel brought up some questions that need to be answered. He added the county manager can contact those agencies and get a written response. Mr. Miller responded that this is correct but he thinks it is prudent for him to work with Dr. Carter to get those answers and to have at the work session.

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

DISCUSSION ON COMMISSIONERS WORK SESSION

Commissioner Owen stated that he did not know how the Commissioners would approach the work session but now he knows the MOU and the insurance for the detention center. He added that he would like to know what the items are before coming to the meeting. Commissioner Owen stated that he would like to see Budget direction for the county manager on the work session agenda. He added that he would really like for the Board to get the budget early this year. Commissioner Owen stated that if there are other items the Board would like to see on the agenda to get them to the Clerk.

Commissioner Hall stated that the Board needs to know what was on the agenda last year so action can be taken on those items this year. He added that he has a meeting at 1:00 so he would need to leave.

Chairman McVey stated that he would be late coming to the meeting because he has an appointment but Commissioner Jefferies has agreed to start the meeting.

Commissioner Owen stated that he thought the 3 items already discussed would take up most of the time especially the MOU. Commissioner Oestreicher suggested starting the work session with the insurance for the detention center.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked Commissioner Hall if there were certain that he could recall that still needed to be discussed. Commissioner Hall responded no but the idea of a work session is to look at the big picture for what the County wants to do for the next 2 or 3 years. Commissioner Oestreicher asked how to frame this item. He added to call this item strategic overview or perspective. Commissioner Hall agreed with this suggestion.

REORGANIZATION OF THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE HISTORIC COURTHOUSE

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that it had been discussed before to have the county manager to look at how the first floor is set up to provide more safety for the people working down there. He added possibly moving the receptionist’s desk more towards the front door and move the county clerk and county manager’s offices towards the back and to increase the sound proofing on the floor as just a few suggestions. Commissioner Oestreicher asked the Board if it agreed to have the county manager to look into this and make a recommendation.

Commissioner Owen stated that he agreed. He added that the reception or administrative assistance should maybe be moved to the front of the building.

Chairman McVey asked if this was going to be discussed during the work session or if this was a motion. Commissioner Oestreicher responded in the form of a motion.

Commissioner Hall stated that he did not think this would address the big picture since the back door is not being addressed. He added that this needs to be thought through before changes are made. Commissioner Oestreicher responded that maybe the back door access needs to be restricted. Commissioner Hall stated that this is where the elevator is at the back door.

Mr. Miller stated that he may be best to look at the entire building and it may be the best it can be now but it will be looked at to come up with a safety and security plan for the building and look at the design of the first floor.

Commissioner Oestreicher moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to ask the county manager to look into changes for the whole building to enhance safety aspects and to improve the confidentiality of some of the offices. The motion carried unanimously.

COUNTY MANAGER’S UPDATES

Ice Skating Rink

Mr. Miller gave the Board a brief overview of the Ice Skating Rink which is located on the Town’s property in front of the Pavilion. He added that it was a joint project between the Caswell County Government and the Town of Yanceyville. Mr. Miller stated that since the rink opened the week before Christmas there has probably been about 350 people to come and skate. He added that the children ranging in age of 2 to 10 seem to enjoy the ice skating rink and the demographic age group has been between age 2 to age 80. Mr. Miller stated that initially the County was going to charge for the skate rental on Friday, Saturday and Sunday but he was happy to inform the Board that the County received a $1,000 donation to cover that cost and he felt this money would cover the cost for the remainder of the time the skating rink will be open. He asked the Board to make a motion that skating would be free for the reason of the time the rink is open.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher to remove the charges of the ice skating rink due to the generous donation of $1,000 to cover this expense. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner W. Carter asked how long the ice skating rink would be open. Mr. Miller responded that originally the rink was planned to close the rink at the end of January but it will remain open until February 14th and end it with a Valentine Day Skate for the children.

IT DIRECTOR

Mr. Miller introduced the Board to the new IT Director David Norris. He added that Mr. Norris come to the County from Lab Corp where he spent 32 years as the IT Director over DNA testing data. Mr. David Norris added the he was Director over the DNA testing for 17 years and prior to that he served in various IT roles. He thanked the county manager and the Board for the opportunity.

The Board welcomed Mr. Norris.

ANNOUNCMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

A. Commissioner Planning Work Session – Monday, January 14, 2019 @ 9:00 a.m. – 911

Center

B. State of the County – Tuesday, January 15, 2019 – Caswell Pines – More information to

come.

C. Caswell County Board of Commissioners, Town of Yanceyville and Town of Milton Joint

Meeting – Thursday, February 7, 2019 at 6:00 p.m. – Thomas Day Tavern, Milton.

Commissioner Owen updated the Board on the Utility Box Art Project that the Board had previously discussed. He has met with the Arts Council director several times and this information was shared amongst their committees and shared in their newsletter. Commissioner Owen stated that there was one local artist who has expressed an interest in doing this project and then there was a group that was interested in this project. He added now that the Arts Council is working on a rough cost so the county can get local donations to cover the cost of the art supplies that are needed and for the charges of the artist if they charge. Commissioner Owen stated that there is another project that a group from outside the county has approached the Arts Council about doing a mural. He added that it is his understanding that this group will sketch the mural and local artist and others will complete it but this project is still in the early stages. Commissioner Owen stated that he is excited about this and thinks arts are very important to the community.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to go into Closed Session to consider the compensation, terms of appointment and performance of an individual public officer (NGS 143-318.11(a)(6)) and to preserve attorney/client privilege (NCGS143-318.11(a)(3)). The motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR SESSION

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Hall to resume the regular meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hall stated that he would like to discuss some items that were discussed in closed session. Commissioner Hall stated that the Board discussed the items for the work session earlier and one of the items discussed was strategic planning and one of the problems the county is having with the professionals in this county so the Board needs to develop a strategic plan on how to handle this. He added this plan needs to include growing our own employees and promote within. Chairman McVey agreed that the county needs to have someone ready to step in when someone retires.

ADJOURNMENT

At 11:43 a.m. Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner W. Carter to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Paula P. Seamster Rick McVey

Clerk to the Board Chairman

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