MINUTES – FEBRUARY 3, 2020

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, February 3, 2020. Members present: Rick McVey, Chairman, David Owen, Vice Chairman, Sterling Carter, William E. Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Jeremiah Jefferies and Steve Oestreicher. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager, Brian Ferrell, County Attorney, and Debra Ferrell representing The Caswell Messenger. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

WELCOME

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

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.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman McVey opened the floor to Public Comments.

Ms. Elin Claggett came before the Board and made the following statement:

“Good morning, my name is Elin Claggett and I reside at 108 Jaye Lane, Providence, NC. On today’s agenda is a resolution declaring support for protection of Second Amendment rights. First, I’d like to thank John Dickerson, who is running for Caswell County Commissioner At-Large, for bringing this important topic to this Board on January 21st during Public Comments. He also presented a template to serve as the basis for today’s resolution. Also, thank you to Commissioner Bill Carter who advocated last meeting for this resolution to be added to today’s agenda and to Commissioner Hall for his statements addressing current procedural issues to be utilized during Board of Commissioners meetings. This county has a long history of support for wildlife, hunting, and gun ranges. If the word “sanctuary” is a concern today, the definition of sanctuary is a “place of refuge and safety”. Your discussion may be interesting, but your votes will say more than your words regarding your support or lack of support for our Constitution’s Second Amendment rights. Thank you.”

Ms. Pat Warren came before the Board and made the following statement:

Good morning Commissioners. My name is Pat Warren and I live at 36 Main Street in Prospect Hill. I am requesting to be added to the Code of Caswell County, North Carolina under Chapter 14, Environment, that a submission of an environmental assessment as known as an EA and an environmental impact study which is also known as an EIA should be required from all polluting industries, and then a public meeting and a public hearing should be required. I thank you very much. I would also like to thank Matthew Hoagland, County Planner, for his timely and detailed response to me on this matter.”

Mr. Keith Newcomer came before the Board and made the following statement:

“My name is Keith Newcomer and I am a resident of the southern part of Caswell County. Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, I’d like to speak in favor of the adoption of the Unified Development Ordinance. Caswell County has always been an agricultural county, we rely on the water that is in the streams, that’s in the ponds and runoff and things of that nature. It’s estimated that probably over 90% of the people in Caswell County rely on wells, ponds, or run offs of streams for land. For contamination to take place would be disastrous for those farmers and for us as individuals, we rely on that. The crops, the animals we raise in this county would be disastrous. It would be irresponsible for us now at this time knowing that we can stop something that would happen in the future if we didn’t take action now. We need to protect our children and our grandchildren for their future. Thank you.”

Ms. Vonda Oakley came before the Board and made the following statement:

“Hello my name is Vonda Oakley; I live at 1425 Baynes Road, Burlington in the Anderson Community. Yesterday we had a community meeting in Anderson and we had people sign a petition to amend the Caswell County UDO and I have that right here. Can I give that to..? Yesterday we had a community meeting in Anderson where more than 60 people were assembled. The group left the meeting with an understanding of the eminent threat we have in our community from the permits which are in process by polluting industries. They were also educated about the recent moratorium which was adopted by the Commissioners on January 6, 2020 and the residents of Anderson were very grateful for the urgency in which the Commissioners were able to pass the resolution. Thank you. However we also realize that the moratorium has a one year limit and we understand that it does not override vested rights if they have been established. The moratorium was a good start but much more work is needed. Caswell County is the county we love. Years ago the residents came together to stop a mega dump from coming to the Pelham area. However it seems that battle was won but the lesson of strengthening our ordinance was not learned because here we are again. The residents of Anderson, Caswell County hold you accountable to take urgent action to prevent polluting industries from coming into our communities. We currently have no zoning to protect us and the Unified Development Ordinance is void of any mention of asphalt plants, cement plants, heavy mining, quarries, polluting industries, etc. etc. Again we are unprotected and you as Commissioners have been elected to protect us and resolve these matters. I call on you today to put this as top priority of your work. Yesterday in our community meeting everyone was united in the fact that strengthening our ordinances is urgently needed. The residents of Anderson signed a petition to this fact. I call on you to take action. Thank you.”

Ms. Caroline Laur came before the Board and made the following statement:

“Hi, my name is Carolina Laur and I live at 12671 NC Highway 62, 27217. I also attended that meeting yesterday and I am asking the Board to please consider any paths that you can come up with to help protect the citizens. I’m in favor and I think we got 100% in favor for our first meeting yesterday for a united development ordinance, UDO. I am asking for it because of several reasons. One is that the nearest home is 190 feet from the actual facility and I am asking for…even with it being setback we don’t have plans but even with it being setback we can’t see where it would be any more than 300 feet from the back door of the nearest facility. We’re asking you to take these kinds of things into account. This is a highly…if any explosion were to happen, the explosion impact but more so yesterday with our first group meeting together, coming together in Anderson, we found out that we have risk of multiple myeloma which is an environmental toxin, leukemia, these are within a mile of this facility, lupus, RA, COPD, double lung transplant, so we have many people that have really severe health issues. It is an older population and these people live with that in a mile and many of them live within 250 feet on Hughes Mill Road so we’re just asking you to please consider this ordinance. After sitting in the Planning meeting whether zoning goes through or not I think I understood Mr. Hoagland to say that these ordinances are additional layers that can protect the people as well. It is not in lieu of zoning but it’s just a layer that we need for any industry that comes in to protect people and this one definitely. It’s not something that I understand that we really have a good system for, for any kind of industrial ordinances to protect against large industries. Thank you, I’m done.”

Mr. John Dickerson came before the Board and made the following statement:

“My name is John Dickerson and I live at 7326 Blanch Road. In January I presented a proposal to make Caswell County a Second Amendment Sanctuary. I’d like to thank Mr. Carter for moving to have it put on the agenda today and I would like to ask each and every one of you to vote for this and to send a strong message to Raleigh and any anti-gun politicians there that may want to infringe upon our second amendment rights that we will do what we can and what we have to do to protect the rights of the citizens here. I think it’s more than a symbolic measure. It sends a loud, clear message to Raleigh. You can join a growing number of counties across the state and growing numbers in Virginia that have passed similar measures. I thoughtfully ask you to consider voting yes today. Thank y’all.”

Mr. Chris Newnam came before the Board and made the following statement:

“Hello, my name is Chris Newnam and I live at 1703 Alvis Boswell Road, Yanceyville in the Anderson Community. I’ve come here today to voice my concern over the recent developments with quarry, asphalt plants, concrete plants, and lack of protection against unwanted and harmful sites such as these. Not being a native of the county 16 years ago I chose Caswell. In that time I’ve purchased a home, land, and married. My wife and I choose to raise two kids, volunteer, worship, and otherwise spend time enjoying what Caswell has to offer. We choose to dream of our future in Caswell County, and the future of our kids, what kind of life we’ll live years from now, and the legacy we’ll leave behind. Now, you may be asking yourself why I keep saying choose. It’s because we all have a choice, and every day we choose something. That something might be as small as what to eat for supper, or at other times it might be as big as how to protect ourselves, our health, our livelihood, our kids, our environment, and our county from harm. For me this is an easy choice. I choose my family, the environment, our health and our county. Yesterday I attended a community meeting to discuss the proposed plants and the steps we as a community need to take to protect this from happening. It was mentioned the asphalt/concrete company representative stated that they have a “vested right”. I suppose they do. I supposed they have a vested right to make an investment and see a return on that. Well to that I say everyone here today, everyone in this county and the surrounding areas has a vested right as well. A right to live without worry over the increased traffic, potential health concerns, contamination of ground water, air pollution, damage to crops and diminished quality of life these facilities would bring. Let’s work together and exhaust every option we have to not only halt those that currently threaten our way of life, our beautiful county, our homes but ensure others can’t easily follow in their steps. I’ll leave you with this final thought…I choose Caswell County. Do you? Thank you.”

Mr. Ed Heintz came before the Board and made the following statement:

“Good morning Commissioners and Caswell County citizens, I am here on behalf of the Second Amendment Sanctuary that was proposed by John Dickerson and I also want to thank Ms. Claggett for getting up and speaking on behalf and clarifying the sanctuary part of it but we need our protection. I am a 65 year old honorably discharged disabled American veteran. I took an oath 47 years ago to protect my country and to protect my constitution, to protect my family and to protect my friends, that oath is still here today. When we take an oath to join the military and to serve our country and we take an oath to uphold our constitution then that’s exactly what we do. That is exactly what I intend on doing so today I bring before you and try to bring it up once again that we would like to have our Second Amendment Sanctuary. It’s something that gives us a clear definition of what we need to send to the state to let them know that we need our protection and I am quite sure there are a lot of veterans in here, we see veterans, we have veterans in here as well, many hunters in here and everyone that I know of I bet has a gun in their home. Those guns are meant to protect us. You take away our guns I guess we could use a nerf gun to defend ourselves with, a little humor, not much but a little bit, so I’d rather use my guns rather than a nerf gun because they don’t hit very good and they don’t work very well. So being that said gentlemen when you look at the resolution and I assume Chairman McVey we already have a resolution drawn up? Also when you read that resolution to us, be fitting as it probably is with no amendments to it whatsoever. We want a Second Amendment Sanctuary. We want to be covered and protected and send a strong message to Washington but mostly to our state legislatures in Raleigh but I will yield the floor to the next person. Thank you Commissioners. Thank you citizens of Caswell County. Thank you to all that served Caswell County and served your country as well. Thank y’all.”

Chairman McVey asked if there was anyone else that would like to speak during Public Comments.

Mr. Bill Compton came before the Board and made the following statement:

“Good morning, my name is Bill Compton, William Compton, and I reside at 153 Bill Compton Road. My wife also has a farm down at 12068 Highway 62 South which is right over the hill from the proposed construction and we have been having discussions about the asphalt plant. Now I would like to try to convince you, persuade you to adopt the UDO changes to restrict the distance that they can build to houses, they would have to stay away, noise ordinances, and we would like to have you consider trying to mirror, if not mirror closely mirror, Alamance County’s ordinance. They have setbacks from streams as well as from people’s homes. We need your protection to keep these companies from coming in here and driving people away from their homes. It is not just their health, that is bad enough but they are smothering them. I’ve got lung problems, I have calcification on my lungs and I am right over the hill from this thing. I got heart trouble and a lot of people have these sorts of things but there is quite a number of folks that are close to this place, we really need your support, not only just for the UDO changes but we want to try to get some sort of setbacks, additional setbacks from this place. Not just this one place but for any business that comes in. They need not come in there and work 13 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year spewing things out and making all kinds of noise and running people away from their homes and spewing out stuff to kill them. We need your help and we need your protection, we appreciate it. Thank you very much.”

Mr. Travis Barfield came before the Board and made the following statement:

“My name is Travis Barfield; I live in the Purley Community. I have one thing to ask, everybody here that believes in our second amendment rights please stand up? Nobody stood up from our panel, nobody, one man stood up, did y’all see that? We have second amendment rights, please stand by them. Thank you.”

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

PUBLIC HEARING – WHETHER THE COUNTY OF CASWELL, NC SHOULD ACQUIRE CERTAIN PROPERTY IN A HIGH SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION PROJECT

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies that the Board enter into a public hearing to receive comments on the whether the County of Caswell, NC should acquire certain property in a high school construction project. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman McVey stated that no one signed up to speak during the public hearing and asked if anyone would like to speak. There were no comments.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner S. Carter to close the public hearing on whether the County of Caswell, NC should acquire certain property in a high school construction project. The motion carried unanimously.

RECOGNITIONS

Commissioner S. Carter stated “I would like to recognize everyone that showed up today and I like to see the citizens of this county engaged regardless of the issue that they are here to advocate for. I’d love to see this room full every time we have a meeting so that this information can be spread throughout the communities, information is key to what we do and for what y’all can understand and to take to your fellow neighbors but I thank everyone for being here today for the second amendment although some of us didn’t stand up I am here to say that I do support it obviously but I do thank those that spoke and those that spoke on behalf of the Anderson community as well. This year has been one of engaging throughout the county on those various issues so I thank all of y’all.”

FREE FLU SHOTS

Mr. Miller informed the Board that the Health Department is set up in the back room to administer flu shots to the Board and to anyone else that would like to get the flu shot. He asked the Board to take a recess for this. Chairman McVey responded that the Board is going to wait on a recess at this point so that some of the action items can be taken care of first.

ACTION ITEMS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman McVey asked to make an amendment to the agenda to add Appointments to Boards and Committees after #8 Approval of Consent Agenda.

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Oestreicher stated “I have two very minor changes. On page 45 line 6 the word ‘resented’ should be ‘presented’. On page 46, first full paragraph the word ‘spent’ should be ‘sent’.

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

The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:

A. Approval of Minutes of January 16, 2020 Special Meeting

B. Approval of Minutes of January 21, 2020 Regular Meeting

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Chairman McVey stated that there is a Commissioner that cannot get it worked out to fulfill the obligation to a board. He added that this position had been traded once for the Farmer Lake Board and he asked the Board to re-appoint him in back on the Farmer Lake Board. Chairman McVey stated that Commissioner S. Carter needed to step back from this board due to his job duties.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Can I elaborate on that just a bit, my work schedule sometimes is strenuous to the point where I am called in for emergency circumstances, I do caregiving for individuals so the last two meetings, I’m sorry the last meeting of the Farmer Lake Board that is the reason for not being there and for it predominately being on weekday evenings that would facilitate me to have to change.”

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner W. Carter to make the changes as discussed. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman McVey stated that he would be going back on the Farmer Lake Board.

USDA LETTER OF CONDITIONS – BYHS CONSTRUCTION AND

RENOVATION PROJECT AMENDED

Mr. Tobais Fullwood stated that there were a few slight revisions to the Letter of Condition dated January 21, 2020. He added that there were a few slight revisions to the project budget and some contradictory language with the USDA’s language and the lottery award which is detailed in the amended that is being presented. Mr. Fullwood asked the Board if it had any questions. He asked the Board for a motion to accept the amendments to the Letter of Conditions.

Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Hall to accept the USDA Letter of Conditions as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

Loan Resolutions

Mr. Ferrell informed the Chairman that there was one piece of the loan package that was deferred until this meeting and this was the several loan resolutions. He added that he and bond counsel has looked over these resolutions and these need approval as well. Mr. Ferrell stated that there are 3 resolutions with three difference dollar amounts.

Commissioner Hall moved, seconded by Commissioner S. Carter to approve the loan resolutions. The motion carried unanimously.

RESOLUTION DECLARING SUPPORT FOR PROTECTION

OF SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS

Chairman McVey asked Mr. Miller to read the resolution.

Mr. Miller read the resolution.

**RESOLUTION DECLARING SUPPORT FOR**

**PROTECTION OF SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS**

**Whereas,** it is recognized that the Constitution of the United States of America is the supreme law of our nation; and

**Whereas**, the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution states, “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed;” and

**Whereas,** the Supreme Court of the United States has, through multiple rulings, upheld an individual’s right to keep and bear arms when federal, state, and local laws have sought to restrict this right; and

**Whereas,** the supremacy of the Constitution over other law was well established in 1803 by the Supreme Court of the United States in its decision in *Marbury v. Madison*; and,

**Whereas,** according to the Declaration of Independence, we are afforded the God given rights of liberty and personal security which are the basis of the greatness of the miracle of America; and,

**Whereas,** it is acknowledged that the right of individuals to keep and bear arms is under attack in the United States of America by elected officials from many levels of Government; and,

**Whereas,** the members of the Caswell County Board of Commissioners have taken an oath to defend and uphold the Constitutions of the United States and of North Carolina; and

**Whereas,** the Caswell County Board of Commissioners wishes to express its deep commitment to protecting all Constitutional rights of Caswell County citizens and stands opposed to any law, regulation or other act that would unconstitutionally infringe on the citizens’ Second Amendment rights; and

**Whereas,** the Caswell County Board of Commissioners further wishes to express that it will use every power and authority of the county to protect the Second Amendment Rights of Caswell County citizens; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Caswell County Board of Commissioners declares that Caswell County government will use all powers and authority to defend and protect the rights of all of our citizens.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Caswell County Board of Commissioners implores the North Carolina Legislature and the United States Congress to use all of their powers and authority to protect our citizens’ freedom under the Constitution and specifically the Second Amendment.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner W. Carter to approve the resolution declaring support for protection of Second Amendment rights.

Commissioner Hall stated “Mr. Chairman there is no doubt in my mind that all of the articles in this resolution are in fact true. We recognize that the constitution is the supreme law or covenants for this country however I believe that the constitution is a living document evidenced by the 13th, 14th and 19th amendments. That means that as the country evolves the thinking of the citizens and its leadership evolve. The 13th amendment freed slaves in this country. The 14th amendment guaranteed us equal rights; us being everybody and the 19th amendment gave women the right to vote in this country so there has been an evolution. I think that this resolution and others like it is more designed to send a message that it’s okay for some citizens to use semi-automatic and automatic weapons with impunity as it relates to school kids being gunned down, high school kids being gunned down and innocent citizens being gunned down. With that thought in mind I cannot support the resolution. Thank you.”

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman, I’m not opposed to the resolution but I do have an amendment to it, not that it fundamentally changes anything that it says, it does not change the object or the purpose. It ties in some language I think more appropriately and there are some ways that in fact it enhances the language and if the Board would allow me to read my amendment or you can call it alternate version of the resolution, I would like to do so.” Chairman McVey responded “Alright read your alternate version.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “And then I am happy to answer questions on how it may be different from the Board and then we can walk through it if we need to.

WHEREAS, the Constitution of the United States is the supreme law of our nation: and

WHEREAS, the Second Amendment to the United State Constitution states “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed; and

WHEREAS, the Supreme Court of the United States has, through multiple rulings, upheld an individual’s right to keep and bear arms; and

WHEREAS, the supremacy of the Constitution was well established in 1803 by the Supreme Court of the United States in its decision in *Marbury vs. Madison*; and

WHEREAS, the Declaration of Independence affords us the God given rights to life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, the right of life inclusive of personal security; and

WHEREAS, despite the comings and goings of politics over the generations and in future generations to come, the right of the people to keep and bear arms should forever be safeguarded; and

WHEREAS, Caswell County has since the ratification of the Constitution of the United States, upheld these rights and throughout the history of our nation, state, and county, given many sons and daughters to protect our freedoms; and

WHEREAS, we, as members of the Board of Commissioners, have taken an oath to support, maintain and defend the Constitutions of the United States and North Carolina; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that we, the Caswell County Board of County Commissioners reaffirm our oaths of office to support, maintain and defend the Constitutions of our State and Nation and therefore oppose any law, regulation or other act that would unconstitutionally infringe upon the citizens of Caswell County’s right to keep and bear arms; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Caswell County Board of Commissioners declares that Caswell County will use all its powers and authority to protect all rights of our citizens, and we implore the North Carolina General Assembly and the Congress of the United States to use all its powers and authority to protect the rights of the same.

So essentially it ties language together. There’s some slight word choice changes in several of the different clauses and then I added one that included the fact that Caswell County has supported this throughout the years and that through different wars and conflicts Caswell County has offered many veterans and many that took the ultimate sacrifice to defend all of our rights including this right so I would respectfully submit this as an alternative to the resolution but to make the point again, it does not change the purpose or the object of the resolution and I appreciate Mr. Dickerson and those that are here that presented this to our attention.”

Chairman McVey asked if there was any more discussion.

Commissioner Owen called for a vote on his motion as it stands.

Upon a vote of the motion on the original version, the motion carried by a vote of five to two with Commissioners S. Carter and Hall voting no.

Chairman McVey stated that the version that Mr. Miller presented passed on the Second Amendment Rights.

**RESOLUTION DECLARING SUPPORT FOR**

**PROTECTION OF SECOND AMENDMENT RIGHTS**

**Whereas,** it is recognized that the Constitution of the United States of America is the supreme law of our nation; and

**Whereas**, the Second Amendment to the United States Constitution states, “A well-regulated Militia, being necessary to the security of a free State, the right of the people to keep and bear arms, shall not be infringed;” and

**Whereas,** the Supreme Court of the United States has, through multiple rulings, upheld an individual’s right to keep and bear arms when federal, state, and local laws have sought to restrict this right; and

**Whereas,** the supremacy of the Constitution over other law was well established in 1803 by the Supreme Court of the United States in its decision in *Marbury v. Madison*; and,

**Whereas,** according to the Declaration of Independence, we are afforded the God given rights of liberty and personal security which are the basis of the greatness of the miracle of America; and,

**Whereas,** it is acknowledged that the right of individuals to keep and bear arms is under attack in the United States of America by elected officials from many levels of Government; and,

**Whereas,** the members of the Caswell County Board of Commissioners have taken an oath to defend and uphold the Constitutions of the United States and of North Carolina; and

**Whereas,** the Caswell County Board of Commissioners wishes to express its deep commitment to protecting all Constitutional rights of Caswell County citizens and stands opposed to any law, regulation or other act that would unconstitutionally infringe on the citizens’ Second Amendment rights; and

**Whereas,** the Caswell County Board of Commissioners further wishes to express that it will use every power and authority of the county to protect the Second Amendment Rights of Caswell County citizens; and

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Caswell County Board of Commissioners declares that Caswell County government will use all powers and authority to defend and protect the rights of all of our citizens.

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED** that the Caswell County Board of Commissioners implores the North Carolina Legislature and the United States Congress to use all of their powers and authority to protect our citizens’ freedom under the Constitution and specifically the Second Amendment.

Adopted this the 3rd day of February, 2020.

S/Rick McVey \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ S/David J. Owen\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rick McVey, Chairman David J. Owen, Vice Chairman

S/Sterling Carter\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ S/William E. Carter\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Sterling Carter, Commissioner William E. Carter, Commissioner

\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ S/Jeremiah Jefferies\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Nathaniel Hall, Commissioner Jeremiah Jefferies, Commissioner

 S/Steve Oestreicher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Steve Oestreicher, Commissioner

Attest:

S/Paula P. Seamster \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

RESOLUTION HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF

JAMES YANCEY BLACKWELL, JR.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Do y’all want this resolution read again? I know we read it at the last meeting and it was on this agenda for approval so I will kind of leave that up to yawl’s discretion.” Commissioner Owen responded that it was read once for public record so he was good.

Commissioner S. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to approve the resolution honoring the life and service of James Yancey Blackwell, Jr. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Thank y’all very much for that.”

**A RESOLUTION**

**HONORING THE LIFE AND SERVICE OF**

**JAMES YANCEY BLACKWELL, Jr.**

**WHEREAS,** James Yancey Blackwell, Jr. was born on May 7th, 1928 in Caswell County to the late James Yancey Blackwell, Sr. and Alice Taylor Blackwell, and passed away on January 4th, 2020, and

**WHEREAS,** James was the devoted husband of Nettie Dameron Blackwell of 63 years, and the loving father of Susan Blackwell Crawford, James Russell Blackwell and John Reid Blackwell; and

**WHEREAS,** James attended Caswell County Schools, Lee McRae College and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and

**WHEREAS,** James was a proud and hardworking farmer and faithfully served his country in the United States Army; and

**WHEREAS,** James was an active citizen as a member of the VFW, American Legion and Ruritan Club as well as providing faithful service on the Board of Directors of Annie Penn Hospital, the Caswell County Medical Center Board and the Board of Directors of Wachovia Bank, First South Bank and American National Bank; and

**WHEREAS,** James faithfully served the citizens and children of Caswell County on the Caswell County Board of Commissioners from 1962 to 1970, serving as Vice Chairman for four years and as a member of the Caswell County Board of Education from 1974 to 1992 serving as Chairman; and

**WHEREAS,** James, through his passionate and selfless service as County Commissioner and as a member of the Caswell County Board of Education, willingly gave of his time, resources, guidance, wisdom, and knowledge, helping lead Caswell County through a great era of progress and serving countless generations;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED,** that wethe Caswell County Board of County Commissioners do hereby honor the life and service of James Yancey Blackwell, Jr. and as representatives of the citizens of Caswell County, offer our affectionate support and sincere condolences to the Blackwell Family at this time.

Adopted on the 3rd day of February, 2020.

S/ Rick McVey \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ S/David Owen \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Rick McVey, Chairman David Owen, Vice-Chairman

 S/Jeremiah Jefferies\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ S/Nathaniel Hall \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Jeremiah Jefferies Nathaniel Hall

 S/William Carter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ S/Sterling Carter \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 William Carter Sterling Carter

S/Steve Oestreicher\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 Steve Oestreicher

TIMBER AGREEMENT

Mr. Miller informed the Board that this is the second half of the timber bid that the Board approved at its last meeting. He added that he made a couple revisions to the contract and one of those was the contract initially called for 24 months for the buyer to clear the land and it has been changed to 6 months and a reference to a timber deed was removed. Mr. Miller asked the Board for approval of the contract for timber services.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner S. Carter to approve the timber agreement. The motion carried unanimously.

CASWELL COUNTY CEMETERIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Commissioner Owen stated that it was brought to the Board’s attention by Commissioner Hall that the appointments to the Caswell County Cemeteries Board of Trustees were not advertised. He added that he takes it for granted that if these are in the Board’s packets that they have been advertised so the Board’s normal procedure was not followed for advertising for vacancies on a board or committee. Commissioner Owen stated that he could not find a policy that states that these boards and committees vacancies are advertised but he knew that the Board did have this as a standard practice. He added that when a mistake is made the Board can correct it and he just wanted to bring it up before the Board so it can make comments on this and also to see if the Board wants to make a motion to rescind this membership.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman and fellow Commissioners I can’t disagree procedurally with Commissioner Owen on that point. I did ask earlier I think to you Mr. Chairman about did we have a policy on that and I was going to ask the clerk just to affirm or deny the fact or whatever do we have that advertising provision mentioned in the application? I was thinking that it was on there but I may be wrong, on the citizen application.” The clerk was not sure if this was on the application because the Board recently changed the application. Commissioner S. Carter continued “But we do not have a policy for advertising these positions?” The clerk responded not but that it was customary. Mr. Miller added that it is standard practice. Commissioner S. Carter stated “Sure, you know, but devil’s advocate to that, you know, we talked about this back in December the decision to create the board of trustees was approved and I think it was basically a gap of time, about a month, before we then received the names that submitted applications and then we voted to approve so in lieu of a policy as a devil’s advocate point I would say carry on but I cannot disagree on Commissioner Owen and his saying because I agree that we should pursue a more comprehensive policy regarding all subordinate boards and committees so regardless of the decision today or whatever the wishes of the Board are I will respect that and communicate this to the board of trustees members and I am sure they will have no problem with it and understand and of course still be interested as far as I am aware to reapply and carry on basically a month or two from now so those are my comments.”

Commissioner Hall stated that several years ago the Board voted to advertise vacancies on all boards and committees. He added that it may not have been incorporated into the general policies and procedures but he did know it was discussed by the Board to advertise the vacancies. Commissioner Hall stated that the reason it came up was there were members appointed to boards and they were not aware that they were being appointed and one member of a board stated that after being appointed to a board the board never met and this was the reason why the Board decided to advertise the vacancies on the boards and committees. He added that somewhere in the Board’s minutes there is mention of this as well as a vote that took place to advertise all boards and committees. Commissioner Owen responded that he may not have gone back far enough. He added that based on the fact that Commissioner Hall stated that there was a vote and that it is the normal procedure to advertise so that all citizens have an opportunity to participate in boards and committees he was going to make a motion to rescind the membership of the Caswell County Cemeteries Board of Trustees until the vacancies have been properly advertised.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher moved to rescind the members of the Caswell County Cemeteries Board of Trustees until the vacancies have been properly advertised.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Just a couple housekeeping questions Mr. Chairman, are we dissolving the board versus rescinding just the membership?” Commissioner Owen responded “Membership.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “Membership of the board. I’m included in that membership so I just want you to keep in mind when this all comes back again; I know we separately voted for me to serve on it as a commissioner so just keep in mind we will have to do that separately as well.” Chairman McVey responded “Right.”

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

The clerk stated that she would get this board advertised.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman just a quick question, how long do we normally advertise these for?” The clerk responded that the boards and committee are advertised for one month. Commissioner S. Carter continued “One month.”

FYE 2019 TAX PROPERTY VALUATION/TAX LEVY

Commissioner Hall stated that the first meeting of January the Board heard a report from the County’s certified public accountant (CPA) and one of the items discussed was a chart on property tax valuations for several years. He added that the difference between 2018 and 2019 was around $57 million which is significant since the county has not had a reval. Commissioner Hall stated that he put this on the agenda and proposed that the Board ask the tax director to come before the Board to explain which year is correct and which year is wrong because the Board needs to know. He added that if the county does not know what happened then he is not sure if the county is properly levying the taxes.

Commissioner Owen asked the county manager if the Board received an email from the auditor on some of this. Chairman McVey responded that the Board did get an email from the auditor. Mr. Miller responded yes the Board did get an email. Chairman McVey stated that this has already been looked into and he asked Mr. Miller to answer Commissioner Hall’s question.

Mr. Miller stated that that the year that is listed on the report as 2018 which was the higher of the two years was the first year that the county instituted the fire service district countywide. He added that the audit reflect the general fund numbers, Fund 100, but there is also a Fund 200 which incorporates the county’s rural fire service district which is different from the countywide fire service district. Mr. Miller stated that in 2018 the valuation for the Casville rural fire service district was included in the regular valuation so the Casville response district was accounted for twice. He stated that after speaking with auditors he sat down with the tax director and the finance director and reviewed the numbers and they were fairly confident that it was the overlay of the valuations of the Casville rural fire response district.

Commissioner Hall asked if what Mr. Miller is saying then the 2018 year is overstated. Mr. Miller responded that this is correct. Commissioner Hall asked why the auditor did not restate the 2018 year. Mr. Miller responded that he could not answer that. Commissioner Hall asked if the 2018 statement should be restated because it was a significant error. Mr. Miller responded that he believe the 2018 statement should be restated. Commissioner Hall asked if the county was going to ask the CPA to restate the financial statement for 2018. Chairman McVey responded that the Board can. Commissioner Owen responded that given the magnitude the Board should ask for this. Commissioner Hall stated that it still concerned him that the Board had to ask the CPA what happened in this situation because he thinks they should have caught this and informed the Board that the 2018 financial statement was wrong and should be restated and that they would restate them. He added that these statements have been submitted to the Local Government Commission which means to him a resubmittal.

Chairman McVey asked what was the Board’s pleasure.

Commissioner Owen stated that he thought the CPA should be asked to redo the 2018 financial statement to correct the discrepancy.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “In regard to the point that Mr. Hall made, the LGC what do we need to do on that?” Mr. Ferrell responded that if the Board will recall how the levy was achieved during the 2018 tax year that was some discussion about how this levy was handled so he thought the discrepancy is well noted and should probably be addressed in the financial statements. He added that this levy was a countywide levy that turned into a district levy so his recommendation it to ask the accountants to review that levy and to make the necessary notations or revisions into the financial statements as necessary.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher to have the accountant to review the appraised values on the properties in relationship to the levy for the fire service district taxes and to make whatever revisions or notations in the county’s financial statements that are necessary to accurately reflect the real true appraised value of the properties that are outlined. The motion carried unanimously.

CEMETERIES BOARD OF TRUSTEES BYLAWS

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman in relation to Item 13. Item 15 is no longer necessary at this time.” Chairman McVey responded “Alright, we will strike that one.”

RADON

Mr. Donnie Powell, Environmental Health Director, came before the Board to give it some background information about Radon. He gave the Board three maps and the first two are the same but one has the names of the counties.





Mr. Powell stated that Caswell County is listed as a level 2 which means that it is a moderate risk for radon and that the EPA predicts that the levels of radon in Caswell is between 2 and 4 pCl/L and anything above level 4 is considered dangerous. He added that any amount of radon is not good but anything above 4 is the EPA’s action level. Mr. Powell stated that radon is the leading environmental cause of lung cancer in the United States and it is second behind smoking for lung cancer all together. He added that radon is a colorless, odorless, tasteless, and chemically inert radioactive gas which is formed by the natural decay of uranium. Mr. Powell stated that the only way to find out if it is in someone’s house is to test for it. He stated that one of the reasons why Caswell County has a high potential for radon is because there is a belt of rock called the Milton Belt that runs mostly across Rockingham County and across the northwest portion of Caswell County and then into a tip of Person County.

Mr. Powell stated that the third map he gave the Board is gamma ray measures that show the radon potential and the bright areas are the high risk areas.



Mr. Powell stated that radon gets into homes through the disturbance of the ground such as homes with basements and added that the more the ground is disturbed the more risk of radon escaping. He added that anything that has contact with the ground has the potential to have radon contamination inside. Mr. Powell stated that Caswell County does not have a lot of data on radon. He stated that last year 60 test kits were distributed but the results for radon testing are from the previous year. Mr. Powell stated that he has seen elevated levels of radon in the Providence area.

Commissioner Owen stated that looking at the map it looks like the northwest corner and the top of Caswell has a high risk and that as the Health Department this might be an area that needs to be concentrated on. Mr. Powell responded that at the county level radon is not regulated or tested but it is done through the radiology branch with the State. He stated that the option that citizens have is to go to the website, ncradon.org, there are links to buy the test kits for between $10 and $15. Mr. Powell stated that the test kit is place in the house for 3 days and then it is mailed in, tested and the results are mailed back. Commissioner Owen stated that the Health Department may want to discuss getting information out to the residents in this area that are at high risk. Mr. Powell responded that this discussion began a little bit at the last Health Board meeting. He added that he is planning to sit down with the Health Director and probably Bryan Miller to discuss some other issues with radon on how to move forward.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman just a quick question, does radon escape into the air once it has been disturbed in a sense?” Mr. Powell responded that it does. Commissioner S. Carter continued “It does. Okay, on these charts I just want to make sure that everybody’s attention is on the word predicted and potential meaning obviously we could die and that is concerning because this is one of the leading causes of cancer and Caswell has very high rates there compared to some other areas so I do think and agree with Commissioner Owen that it should be a priority for the Board of Health. I don’t think we would hesitate that it is an important issue. It disturbs me with potential ground disturbing heavy industrial projects that may be coming into this county, you know, large excavation projects with radon escaping into the air that should definitely be in the back of our minds and, you know, I asked you personally earlier and my thought was I wanted to know if there was any grants or whatnot available to this county to get kits since they do cost a little bit. I did search briefly to see how much they cost on one of those links with the State and it looks like they are $15 for a home test kit but I do think it is something that we should possibly direct staff to look into as well if there is any resources available in that regard and exhort our citizens to test their home, we can’t force them to do it obviously but for the sake of data recovery, you know, for us to move forward and understand what we are dealing with I think is very important, these tests.” Mr. Powell responded that Rockingham County is one of the counties that has the highest potential of radon in the state and their Environmental Health sells these test kits out of the office but the only drawback to this is there is a shelf life to the test kits. He added that he would be happy to look into doing whatever is needed for the citizens of Caswell County. Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman, just a question in regard to your office and the health department, if we provided that service, in your opinion, do you think people knowing that would take that service…do you think you would take phone calls and say hey I would like for you to come and test radon in my yard?” Mr. Powell responded that he would like to say that people would but he reminded the Board about the issue with copper piping in houses and the Board passed a resolution making a six month window where people could get free testing and he did not think a single person took advantage of that. He added that he would hope that people would do the testing but historically people have not done this. Mr. Powell stated that maybe if a press release push was done more people may be willing to test for radon.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that all water systems have to test for radon.

Commissioner Hall asked if the areas in Providence that are mostly impacted could be isolated. Mr. Powell responded that the only thing that could be done is to look at the area on the gamma map because there is not enough data to go on. Commissioner Hall suggested that the Board in collaboration with the Board of Health take action to do additional testing in these areas. He added that since this is one of the leading causes of lung cancer the county should take some kind of responsibility especially if the high probability areas could be isolated.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Just another point for the group’s perusal the gamma ray map and with the connection to adverse health effects that corresponds very closely with the comprehensive health report we received in regards to where concentrations of diseases are at and it is almost identical so and as far as data goes there’s some support there too. Just stress to the people as far as how important it is.”

Chairman McVey asked Commissioner Hall if he would meet with the Health Board and then bring it back to the Board what has been discussed. Commissioner Hall responded that he would be glad to do that.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked Mr. Powell what the remedy was if someone finds radon in their home. Mr. Powell responded that there is mediation that can be done to the home. He gave an example of Dr. Moore, the previous health director, had elevated levels of radon in his home and when he was selling his house and he put in a ventilation system in which cost about $1500. Mr. Powell stated that there are really good methods of getting radon out of the houses.

CITIZEN ADVISORY BOARD POLICY DISCUSSION

Commissioner Owen stated that the next item on the agenda discusses board policies and procedures and he thought it might be better to schedule a work session to discuss these two items but it would be up to the Board.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he thought it is a good idea.

Commissioner Hall stated that it would work for him as well.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Just a comment, I agree that we should pursue this and I think a work session would be very effective and it has a big impact on how county government and those that provide this function.”

Chairman McVey asked if the Board would like to set a date for this work session. Commissioner S. Carter responded “Pick a date.”

The Board came to a consensus to meet on Monday, February 10th at 6:00 p.m.

Chairman McVey asked the clerk to find out the availability of the 911 meeting room.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if this meeting would need to be advertised. The clerk responded yes.

POTENTIAL UNIFIED DEVEOPMENT ORDINANCE (UDO) AMENDMENT

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Commissioners and Mr. Chairman, you know, we heard some comments in Public Comments earlier today from the citizens of Anderson and this echoes back to one of the public hearings that we had as well as concerns that were brought to DEQ’s attention back in November about how close some of these potential heavy industrial or polluting industries or whatever you choose to call them may be to a residence and then this was expanded upon yesterday at the Anderson community meeting in regards to watersheds and possible other structures, schools, a church, or whatever and I asked our county planner about the process for instituting some possible setbacks in regards to distance restrictions from a home to an industry like that and he stated that there were many different routes you could take with that. He said the citizens can request an amendment to the UDO, this Board can issue an amendment, and the planning board of course can initiate an amendment like they have done in the past. The UDO has been amended, I think, around ten times since its inception and I do think on this particularly looking at some possible options for setbacks for homes, residences, streams, creeks, etc. should be pursued by this Board for the health, safety, and well-being of our citizens not only in that community but maybe even in a possible future instance somewhere else. I think it’s this Board’s prerogative to make sure that our citizens are protected and as we have discussed even with radon, you know, health is a priority of this Board and we want to make sure that everyone is taken care of properly so I am happy to at a future date suggest some language in regards to the UDO. I know it will take some research in which I did look somewhat into Alamance County’s Heavy Industrial Ordinance that they have and they have a tiered system on setbacks regarding different levels and extremities of industries and then in relation to where it is a stream or a school or a highway or what have you, they have a schedule there and they came up with that essentially. I asked DEQ if there were any limitations as to what we can do on this and the answer was no. Our UDO ordinance is preferable where we would need to put it. We could amend our code of ordinances but according to the county planner it’s best to put an amendment like this in the UDO so that future county planners down the road can enforce it and understand it if it is in there to begin with, the code is already a large, comprehensive document so that’s one point. In relation to the Anderson community meeting that occurred yesterday, Mr. Oestreicher and I were both present there and it was brought to our attention that maybe the Board should pursue something similar to what Alamance did with the heavy industrial ordinance which is where they included this type of setback, this would regulate industries that exist or are to exist and of course in relation to this big, larger picture here zoning of course would take care of future industries. We do have two that could potentially be here and a heavy industrial ordinance would apply to regulations with those industries so they asked us very respectfully after a long discussion that we should pursue possibly both options here so I am bringing that to the Board’s attention. I know we got a lot going on but it may be worthwhile to ask staff to look at the potential of a heavy industrial ordinance and then like I said with the UDO amendment I am happy to do some more research and bring a suggestion to the Board at a future meeting.”

Commissioner Owen stated that as far as the UDO being amended it thinks it should come from the Planning Board and the County Planner. He added that there are 9 members on this board and he stated that he would like to see a recommendation from the Planning Board on an amendment.

Chairman McVey stated that his question was going to be if the Planning Board had looked into this.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “The Planning Board has had similar comments at their meetings from those same citizens not the effect of the UDO amendment but I am sure they will be on top of it and go to their next meeting and suggest it but I just want to keep in mind and make sure the Board understands we can initiate an amendment, the planning board can initiate an amendment, and the citizens can apply for an amendment and the shortest route here is for us to initiate, send it to the planning board, they have 45 days to review it, they send a recommendation back to us, we accept, deny, whatever at that point and then we have the final vote on the UDO so for the sake of time that’s why I am suggesting that this Board potentially initiate that and then of course the planning board will deliberate, they have like I said 45 days to review it and to make suggestions or changes to it and allow public comments. A public hearing is also required during this time so we will have significant input from both the planning board and the citizens on this but I don’t disagree, the planning board could initiate it.”

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he thinks it needed to come from the planning board first.

Commissioner Owen stated that the Board can direct the planning board to look into this. Commissioner S. Carter responded “Yes.” Commissioner Owen stated that the Board could ask the planning board to move as expediently as they can.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Before, I guess, we decide on that in regard to the other point is that something that y’all are interested in possibly looking into, the heavy industrial ordinance? This was just brought to Commissioner Oestreicher and I’s attention at the community meeting as a way of handling an industry that may indeed stay in the county.”

Chairman McVey stated that the moratorium that the Board passed is a legal document that gives the Board one year to make these decisions and to make sure that the Board is making the right decisions so the moratorium is standing at this point and covers these facts for one year. Mr. Miller responded that the county does have the moratorium in place for a year and it says that the county is going to look into zoning and the heavy industrial ordinance is another option but this type of ordinance could be incorporated in a zoning ordinance if the Board decided to adopt zoning. He recommended that the Board decide on zoning or not and then consider the heavy industrial ordinance.

Mr. Ferrell stated that Alamance County is like Caswell in the fact that it does not have countywide zoning but it has adopted a series of ordinances like the heavy industrial ordinance that regulates those uses. He added that the county manager is right in the fact that zoning is one way to regulate industries and a heavy industrial ordinance is another way but he did agree that the moratorium gives the Board time to explore what works best for Caswell County.

Mr. Miller stated that he did think that Commissioner Carter is correct that if the Board considers a heavy industrial ordinance it would need to be included in the UDO. He added that he thinks that Alamance currently has something like 60 individual ordinances that regulate land use which has to be very cumbersome for its planning department when doing through to review for any industry that comes into the county so he thought the UDO would be the best place for an ordinance of this nature.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman I agree with several points stated. I would respectfully disagree with in relation to the moratorium there is the question of vested rights. I’ll be more direct, I’m concerned with the two industries that we think are potentially going to stay here, I am not talking about future plants which is what zoning would apply to, we have asked that question a zillion times. My question to the county attorney earlier was with an ordinance like this, would be able to regulate the industries that are soon to come or potentially soon to come the answer was semi yes.” Mr. Ferrell responded that he thinks it would depend on the nature of the regulations that would be imposed. He added that if the effect of the ordinance was to prohibit and industry with a vested right from coming into the county his answer would be no he did not think it would apply. Mr. Ferrell stated that if there were aspects of the ordinance that would not conflict with the overall placement of the industry but maybe with setbacks or hours of operation this would be possible. Commissioner S. Carter continued “Just to be clear, this is not to prohibit an industry, this is to regulate it in regards to for example setbacks from a residence or a stream and, you know, part of the moratorium also included that we would look at our county ordinances, you know, and we if we found something lacking or something wrong we would suggest possible changes.” Mr. Ferrell responded that this is the whole point of the exercise that the Board is going through to evaluate the regulations that the county has, evaluate the regulations the county wants, and to figure out how to implement the regulations that the county is interested in adopting. Commissioner S. Carter stated “I am just suggesting that we look into it.”

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he would echo what the county attorney said and looking into this is consistent with what the Board said it would do in the moratorium. He added that the moratorium is not dedicated to just zoning or any other single item but it is consistent with methods to protect health, the environment, the well-being, and the rights of the county’s citizens. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he is very supportive when it comes to looking into this especially if some of the issues can be addressed that the citizens have about setbacks and the potential for exposure to various items. He added that if the planning board is where this needs to originate it is fine with him but he suggested giving the planning board the example of the Alamance Heavy Industrial Ordinance to consider and incorporate what is appropriate for Caswell County. Commissioner W. Carter agreed with Commissioner Oestreicher.

Commissioner S. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher to direct the Planning Board to look into possible UDO amendments on setbacks and to consider a potential heavy industrial ordinance within the timeline of the county’s moratorium requirements. The motion carried unanimously.

FLU SEASON

Commissioner S. Carter stated “I am grateful that we had this correspondence today that we had the Health Department here giving out the flu shot. A lot of buzz is going around about this other virus that is spreading in the United States but through all of that I was reflecting on how rampant the flu was in the country especially here in North Carolina we are experiencing a second wave of the flu and it made me think about this room for example for county province the staff that we have handling the cleaning and maintenance and I just thought to make the possible suggestion that we be more diligent in cleaning or lysoling or whatever you refer to it as, door knobs, bathroom facilities, having hand sanitizer in a meeting like this, you know, there is a lot of interactions here on the floor and you never know what may be spreading around and I just feel like to protect not only our citizens but our employees in their work places that we direct county departments through the county manager to be more diligent in cleaning entrances and things of that nature so my comments are brief and to that effect.”

Chairman McVey asked if there were any more comments.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Is that something we can pursue?”

Commissioner Owen stated that without specifics about what Commissioner S. Carter is talking about requiring this will increase what staff should do so he could not agree.

Mr. Miller stated that if this is talking about lysoling every door knob, every fixture in the bathroom with Lysol on a daily basis the maintenance department will need additional personnel.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman I am not suggesting that maintenance do it. I am just suggesting to our employees to be diligent in their work place and everybody’s got a station and a place where they are and it does not take much to wipe down a door knob, you know there is hospitals and other businesses that do this kind of thing and I feel like this is a very important issue to address.”

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he was sure that the employees wash their hands and take the preventive measures that they can. Commissioner S. Carter responded “In a flu season that may not be enough, that is what I am saying.” Commissioner W. Carter stated that he is sure the employees are doing all they can. Commissioner W. Carter responded “I do not agree with that whatsoever. There is no hand sanitizer in this room and how many hands have I shaken, probably 20 and I don’t know where everyone has been and that is not me being paranoid I am just stressing the point. Simple measure like that we as individuals can take in county government are not very complicated. Other work places require this thing; it’s a matter of a couple of seconds.”

Commissioner Owen asked Commissioner S. Carter to try not to take his comment wrong and stated that if this was his concern he would have bought a bottle of hand sanitizer and had it in the meeting today. He stated that the Board should not make the staff do more than they need to and he understood what Commissioner S. Carter is saying but he thought that staff was well aware of spreading of any type of sickness and he did not want to require something that is common sense. Commissioner Owen stated that he did not mind saying to the employees to please be diligent about keeping the areas clean but he is not going to tell them to buy Lysol and wipe down their areas. Mr. Miller responded that there has been 2 cases of the flu in this building and these things were done just out of precaution. He added that he knew that some departments are taking these precautions but he did not know if every department was.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “This is a friendly, cautious suggestion; I am not suggesting that you reprimand somebody that didn’t take these steps.”

Commissioner Hall stated that if 2 staff people have come down with the flu he thought the staff should be protected as much as possible. He added that he knew that these items cost money but there should be money somewhere in the budget to purchase 4 or 5 jugs of hand sanitizer to help protect the staff of Caswell County and he thinks that is what Commissioner S. Carter is saying. Commissioner Hall stated that people are dying in North Carolina from the flu and $50 or $75 might make a difference.

Mr. Miller stated that he would be happy to put hand sanitizer where it is needed. Commissioner S. Carter responded “Just a suggestion. Just as a reminder, that is it.”

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he thought hand sanitizer was a great idea and he thinks the county manager can find it in the budget to pay for this and encouraged the county manager to do so. Commissioner S. Carter responded “I sincerely appreciate y’all considering it, I really do.”

COUNTY MANAGER’S UPDATES

Tourism Development Authority

Mr. Miller announced that the Tourism Development Authority will meet on February 11, 2020 at 1:00 p.m. in the Historic Courthouse. This will be the first meeting since the Board appointed the 5 member board.

Zoning Community Meeting

Mr. Miller stated that the first zoning community meeting is scheduled for February 6, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. at the Prospect Hill Fire Department. He added that the meeting locations have not been determined for the other community meetings yet. Mr. Miller stated that none of the zoning special work sessions has been scheduled either but one was proposed for April 16th and one for July 16th and if the Board wants to keep those dates this can be done.

Commissioner Owen asked if the Board had any comments on the work sessions. Commissioner S. Carter responded “That way we would know how to work around any potential budget meetings at that time. We will know if we have this meeting already planned. Commissioner Owen stated that the special work session will be April 16th.

COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he was able to attend one of Mr. Miller’s sessions on GARE (Government Alliance for Race and Equity) and he was delighted to see a high level of attendance as well as a high quality program presented. He commended the county manager for bringing this program into the county. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he requested an information newsletter from the Piedmont Triad Regional Council which tells some information about Caswell County. He stated that the clerk did an excellent job on getting the Board copies. Commissioner Oestreicher passed out the copies to each commissioner. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he has been attending quite a few community meetings on the proposed new industries and he was proud to say that the county has some really good community leadership that is working on these and the attendance has been very good and he expressed his appreciation on behalf of the Board.

Commissioner Owen stated that the turn lane at 86 Convenient Mart on Highway 86N is scheduled to start in April as well as the passing lanes on the northern part of Highway 86 will start in April as well.

Commissioner Jefferies asked the county manager if he had received any information from NC DOT about High Street Baptist Church. Mr. Miller responded that the last conversation he had with DOT he asked that NC DOT reevaluate their initial decision and to move this decision up to the director. He added that this request went out to Dawn McPherson about 6 to 8 weeks ago and Ms. McPherson stated that it would take about 3 to 4 months to review the request, to look at the data and to make a determination.

Commissioner Hall reminded everyone about the 2020 Census and the importance of it. He added that several thousand students were missed on the last census and Caswell County lost a lot of money due to this and he asked to remind everyone how important it is to fill these census forms out.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “I just wanted to agree with Commissioner Oestreicher’ s comments, I was blown away and I think the word is civility and decency of the community of Anderson and how they conducted an informational meeting and the leaders of that advocacy group are to be commended. In regard to Commissioner Jefferies’ point on High Street Baptist Church, I had the displeasure of coming through there I think two nights ago I was going to Yanceyville and there was a car flying around that curve over the yellow line and I just thought about that something really needs to be done about that whether it is some flashing lights or something. They don’t get it about how sharp that curve is there so I agreed with him that that needs to be looked at and like the manager said reevaluated. In regard to the point of one issue that I have brought up several times before in regards to the historic preservation commission I was going to ask the Board would it prefer that someone from Raleigh whose going to come and present and this was mentioned a couple of months ago would y’all prefer that to happen in a regular meeting or would you like it to be a separate meeting because they asked me that and I said I would check. Do you want that during a commissioners meeting or during a work session where someone can more thoroughly walk us through that?” Chairman McVey responded “Let’s do a regular meeting.”

Commissioner Owen asked “Didn’t we already have someone come?” Commissioner S. Carter responded “She did a very brief explanation of it and at that time I know we had stressed to her that we would like to take more time for something a little bit more comprehensive and I can’t remember if she came during a day meeting or night meeting but I know that there were some people that we wanted to be a part of that meeting to attend that we hadn’t reached out to or whatever. I am assuming we would obviously want a night meeting since it is more attended but I am going to try to reach out to the various groups or parties that are interested in that subject to make that they are here so that they can get the same information.”

Commissioner Oestreicher asked to get a timeline for this meeting and he hoped that this would be something under 30 minutes or 20 minutes at the most. Commissioner S. Carter responded “The presentation. It might be very similar to what she did before but throughout that process that is something we agreed to pursue. I can tell you there will be a need for a facilitator and a work session to walk through it but something a little bit more detailed that we heard the first time. I know you were here but you were not on the Board at the time so I will get in touch with them. Maybe we can look at March at this point, is that sufficient time?” Commissioner Oestreicher stated yes. Commissioner S. Carter responded “Okay.

Commissioner Owen stated that Commissioner Jefferies reminded him about one more thing. He stated that DOT is also doing a study on 86 started at Purley Church Road for about a mile north to see the traffic flow because they have received some emails and complaints about several things. Commissioner Owen stated that this study will take about 6 to 8 weeks to complete. He also asked DOT to do a study on the Park Springs and Highway 86 intersection since Dollar General will be opening soon. Commissioner S. Carter asked “Is that northbound from Purley, north of that?” Commissioner Owen responded yes.

Chairman McVey asked if he and Commissioner Oestreicher could have a meeting with the county manager and county attorney right after the meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

 A. Caswell County Board of Commissioners, Town of Yanceyville and Town of Milton

 Joint Meeting – Thursday, February 13, 2020 at 6:00 p.m. – 911 Center.

 B. 113th NCACC Annual Conference – August 13 – 15, 2020

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to go into closed session to preserve attorney/client privilege (NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)). The motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR SESSION

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner W. Carter to go back into regular session.

ADJOURNMENT

At 12.20 p.m. Commissioner W. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Paula P. Seamster Rick McVey

Clerk to the Board Chairman

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