MINUTES – JANUARY 10, 2018

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in special session at the Caswell County 911 Center in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 9:00 a.m. on Wednesday, January 10, 2018. Members present: Nathaniel Hall, Chairman, Rick McVey, Vice-Chairman, Sterling Carter, William E. Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Jeremiah Jefferies, David Owen and Kenneth D. Travis. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager and Gwen Vaughn, Finance Director. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board recorded the minutes.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

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

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Owen asked for Personnel Needs to be put under the Budget portion. Chairman Hall responded that he tried to spread the items out to allow enough time for each item. He had asked the clerk to put times beside each item so that everything would be completed by 1:00. He added that there are a lot of items to be discussed and action would be taken in a regular meeting and he suggested that these actions take place over the next 5 months.

Commissioner Jefferies moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to approve the agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

BOARD RETREAT

Discussion of the Development of the Recommended FY 2018-2019 Budget

Chairman Hall stated that he would go around the room and let every commissioner comment on the items. It would start on one side for one item and then the next side for the next item and continue to rotate.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the main thing for him was to increase revenues and that expenditures remain the same. His other concern was that the county had not been able to fund anything for capital projects.

Commissioner Travis stated that his concern was how to balance the budget without a tax increase. He added that the Sheriff’s office did not get cars last years and knew they would want more this year. He added that he could not see another tax increase for the citizens. He did expect to see a balanced budget from the county manager.

Commissioner McVey stated that he had some of the same concerns as had been mentioned but he wanted to get the budget started soon.

Commissioner Owen stated that he agreed with what had been said and that it would be important to develop strategies to balance the budget. He added that the Sheriff’s office vehicles would cost between $150 and $160,000 and in Elections there would be a need for $200,000 for election equipment for the paper ballots. He also suggested employee participation in the health premiums.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that most citizens cannot afford another tax increase. He thinks and estimated budget using last year’s numbers would be good. He would like to see the budget completed by May.

Chairman Hall stated that his comments are consistent with what has been said. He asked the Commissioners for an action plan for the budget process.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that the county manager needed to come up with a plan and that the Board needed it by March.

Commissioner Owen agreed. He asked for projected deficit changes.

Commissioner Travis asked the county manager when the department heads would have their budgets in. Mr. Miller responded that this has been talked about in the last 3 or 4 department head meetings. The instructions to the department heads were for them to begin the budget process. He and Gwen would be taking a hard look at the revenues to see what is reasonable and that they should have something by March. Commissioner Travis stated the he did not want to see new items in the budget. Mr. Miller responded that he did ask the department heads to compile a list of capital needs. Commissioner Travis asked if this would be separate from the budget. Mr. Miller responded yes and that he had asked for the capital items to be emailed to him.

Chairman Hall stated that everyone needed to look at the bigger picture. The Board needed to see a revenue and expenditure budget and the overages as well as a summary on where the county expected to end up this year, what are the anticipated revenues for this year and what are the needs of the county and how much the county will spend. As far as the decision that capital needs can wait is not good. He added that waiting for things to happen before acting was not the best thing to do and if this means a tax increase so be it. Chairman Hall stated that the Board voted for some things last year and did not think about the impact it would have. The budget needs to start with the base. He added that a lot of money has been spent over the years at the sheriff’s department and thousands have been spent on cars when the county has heating systems that are failing. What the Board needs to look at is what are the needs in the county and how can these be done.

Commissioner Owen agreed that the Board needs to see where the county stands now with the budget. He added that the county’s unassigned fund balance is the county’s capital fund. Commissioner Owen stated that he did not want to increase taxes.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the Board needed to see a 6 month report on expenditures and revenues and where the county stood.

Ms. Vaughn stated that the county has not closed out December yet. She added that revenues are over expenditures. February the bond payment is due. The county has a nice fund balance now but may have to use some of it to finish out the remainder of the year. September through December are major revenues months as far as ad valorem taxes coming in. Right now revenues stand at 50% and expenditures at 47%.

Commissioner W. Carter asked where the county stood with fund balance. Ms. Vaughn responded that she was not sure.

Chairman Hall stated that county should have a good feel going forward for next year’s figures for the budget.

Commissioner W. Carter asked where the county stood on the ¼ cent sales tax. Mr. Miller responded that a referendum was needed for this. Commissioner W. Carter continued by saying that the Board needed to look at this because it would help with revenues.

Commissioner Owen stated that he received a report from Finance that stated that debt service would go down by approximately $100,000. Ms. Vaughn responded that she did not look at the detention center payment but she thought it would go down.

Chairman Hall asked for a summary to be prepared on the debt service and to have at the next meeting. He asked for this report to include where the county will end up this year and where it will start next year.

Commissioner Owen asked if the Board should share what they want in this report. Chairman Hall responded yes. Commissioner Owen asked for the Solid Waste fund balance. He then asked what would happened if the county used those funds. Mr. Miller responded that if the county used those funds it would be reported on the audit and the Local Government Commission would write the county a letter. Ms. Vaughn added that the county would be required to pay the funds back. Commissioner W. Carter asked when this law changed. Ms. Vaughn responded that borrowing from the Solid Waste fund should have never been done. Commissioner Owen asked if this could affect the county’s bond rating. Mr. Miller responded yes.

Commissioner Owen asked if the county had received any occupancy tax. Ms. Vaughn responded no. Mr. Miller added that the last communication from the business owners was that occupancy was low and that they were struggling to maintain. Chairman Hall stated that the occupancy tax was non-negotiable. He asked who was responsible for collecting the occupancy tax and if the occupancy tax was not paid what was the county’s options. He added that this was the law that that it needed to be followed. He asked that at the next meeting he needed to know who was responsible for collecting the occupancy tax, the names of the businesses, who has complied and who has not.

(At 9:22 a.m. Commissioner S. Carter entered the meeting).

Chairman Hall asked for other areas for county revenues.

Chairman Hall asked the Board about action items. He stated that the Board had requested for a summary on the budget and the ¼ cent sales tax.

Commissioner Owen stated that the ¼ cent sales tax needed to be put on an agenda quickly. Commissioner Travis responded that he did not think there was enough time for this now. Commissioner Owen stated that there was time but it needed to be put on the next agenda. Chairman Hall stated that this would be put on the next agenda and he wanted to know about the authority of the Board versus a referendum. Commissioner Owen stated that he would like to know what the ¼ cent sales tax would do for the county.

Commissioner Travis stated that the ¼ cent sales tax has been voted on before and it failed. Chairman Hall responded that it was 6 or 7 years ago but the Board members did not support the referendum. He added that some citizens do not pay their portion in the county and neither do the ones that are just passing through. The Board voted for the referendum but it did not support it in the community. Chairman Hall stated that there are 23,000 citizens in the county but the weight is put on the property owners.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that the majority of the people who use the services do not pay taxes and he wanted to know what could be done to have these people pay some of the taxes. Chairman Hall responded that the county only has the authority that the state gives them, which is the ¼ cent sales tax and occupancy tax, the options are limited.

Mr. Miller stated that the Board could consider a minimum housing standard where properties would have to be brought up to standard. Commissioner Owen responded that children and elderly are living in some of these homes. Mr. Miller reminded the Board about the incident where EMS responded to a call and an EMS worker fell through the floor.

Chairman Hall asked the Board if they wanted the minimum housing standard put on an agenda. He felt this needed to be looked at but it would force people out of their homes. The Board would need to appropriate money to DSS for this housing and it could get very complex. He added that this would bring in some increase taxes but he asked what the impact would be.

Commissioner Travis stated that if the Board was going to do this that it needed to address the dilapidated barns and buildings in the county. Commissioner Owen responded that minimum housing standard is a safety issue. He felt more research needed to be done on the minimum housing standard.

Chairman Hall asked again if this needed to be an agenda item. Commissioner Jefferies responded that if the Board was going to look at this that the budget for DSS needed to be adjusted.

Chairman Hall asked the clerk to remind him to look into what other counties were imposing fees or taxes on because he knew there was a list of those somewhere.

Commissioner S. Carter asked if it would be possible to charge a solid waste fee or maybe an EMS fee to cover these services, a fee versus a tax. Chairman Hall responded that he was confused by what Commissioner S. Carter was saying. Commissioner S. Carter stated having a fee for all citizens. Chairman Hall responded that the state does not give the county that authority.

Mr. Miller stated that there are service districts but it would apply to everyone like the fire service district. Commissioner Owen added that this would be a tax on everyone.

Commissioner McVey stated that the county could consider an impact fee. Chairman Hall responded that the courts have been knocking these down. Commissioner Owen stated that this is something to look at.

Chairman Hall stated that these items would be worked into agendas over the next 4 to 5 months. He asked that at the next meeting to have a summary of revenues and expenditures for the first six months, housing permits issues, trends or changes in revenues and to get the tax director on this. He wanted to see the big items such capital expenditures.

Commissioner Owen stated that another item the Board could look at is employee participation in the health insurance premiums and he suggested $10.00 for individuals and $20 for families.

Chairman Hall asked if there was a consensus to put the health insurance premiums on a future agenda. There was a consensus from the Board.

Commissioner S. Carter suggested a capital needs assessment for the next 10 years and 20 years. Chairman Hall asked the county manager to get this information.

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION

Commissioner S. Carter stated that the county manager was familiar with the steps to create a historic preservation commission. The county manager and Commissioner S. Carter went to a meeting regarding this matter. Commissioner S. Carter stated that half of the county’s motto was ‘preserving the past’ and that the courthouse was a jewel but the county does not have a historic preservation commission. This commission has to be created through an ordinance. Once established it could receive funds from the state and would go towards preserving old building in the county. He added that most surrounding counties and towns have this commission. He stated again that funding is available through the state if an ordinance was passed by the Board. The committee would have to have knowledge of historic preservation. Commissioner S. Carter stated that the ordinance could be as lax or as tight as the Board would see fit and that he would be happy to draft an ordinance. He did feel that this needed to be pursued and added again that funding is available to preserve historic buildings in the county. As it stands now there are no provisions to help save these buildings. He asked for directions from the Board. Commissioner S. Carter also suggested that he could have someone from the state office to come and make a presentation to the Board.

Commissioner Owen stated that he had a 106 page document that explains a historic preservation commission. He asked for the Board to allow the person to come and give the Board a presentation. He added that he was for preserving history. Commissioner Owen stated that if the property owner allowed this they would be allowed a 50% tax break on property tax.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that there was a sample ordinance on creating a historic preservation commission already but he added that it was a tedious process.

Commissioner Jefferies asked if the Town of Milton and the Town of Yanceyville would be included in this process. He thought the Board should discuss it with them before moving forward. Commissioner W. Carter added that this would be a good item for the joint meeting.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he agreed. The Town of Milton and the Town of Yanceyville would have an option to mirror the same thing as the county but it would need to be their own ordinance. The county’s ordinance would not apply for Milton or Yanceyville.

Chairman Hall asked the Board if they wanted more information on the historic preservation commission.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that the Board could get a feeling after the joint meeting with Yanceyville and Milton.

Chairman Hall stated to put the historic preservation commission on the next agenda for the Board’s thoughts. If the Board is in favor then the state office could be invited to come and give a presentation.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he had a couple of follow up items as well. There are a few projects that he would like to see completed. The first is the iron railing for the courtroom in the historic courthouse. He stated that they are in Guilford Mills but all of them were there and he would like to see them put back up. These were handcrafted in Caswell County and that it is the Board’s responsibility to preserve them. Commissioner S. Carter stated that the rails were not in bad share and he wanted the Board’s ideas on putting the railing back up. Chairman Hall responded that it was his understanding that some of the railing was missing. Commissioner S. Carter stated that all of the railing was there. Chairman Hall asked to have Maintenance measure them to see if they are all there. Commissioner S. Carter stated that putting the railing back would impede the meeting space and that he would not suggest putting them all back like they were. He also suggested putting a piece of the railing in the Richmond-Miles History Museum. Chairman Hall responded that it needed to be determined how much railing there is and in what shape and then the Board can take action.

SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he thought the Board should be more involved in the school system’s capital projects such as the high school. As far as the joint meetings he suggested a different style because now the boards sit across from one another, he suggested alternate seating. He also stated that the Board is not very interactive with the school board.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he thought the Board had a good relationship with the school board. He also added that when industries are looking at coming to a county they look at the school system to make their determination and they want to see good schools.

Commissioner Owen stated that he thought that the two boards’ relationship was much better than in the past. He thought the meetings have been productive. He would like to keep quarterly meetings. He added that there have been times that neither board knew what they were meeting about.

Commissioner Travis stated that in the past the Board had a hard time getting the school board to schedule a meeting. He added that the only thing they wanted to talk about was supplements.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the school board did have issues in the past but they were internal problems with staff. He was a little upset that they asked for more money for capital projects and then bought 4 new trucks. He did feel that the relationship between the two boards had improved for the better.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that the relationships should continue to get better.

Chairman Hall stated that there have been some stresses between the boards. He stated that the #1 concern should be the kids in the county and the failing schools and that the school board needed to admit that. The best grade this year was a C and the others were Ds and Fs. Chairman Hall stated that a student cannot graduate from high school with a D average. He added that the Board needed to be frank in these discussions with the school board. He also stated that supplements do not change these grades and the school board needs to admit they have problems. Chairman Hall stated that the School Board cannot admit they have problems. He felt that both boards needed to have a meeting. Chairman Hall informed the Board that he met with the school superintendent last week. He added that the schools are failing and that this is impacting the economic development of the county and that the quality of the schools needed to improve. He added that the school board members would not admit to this and that their only comment is that they are elected too. The school board needs to have a plan to improve the schools other than just requesting more supplements. Chairman Hall stated that he would try to be less aggressive and negative as far as the school board is concerned. His concern was about the students. He added that out of 200 students only about 4 or 5 may make it.

Commissioner Owen stated that he agreed with Chairman Hall. He added that the school system is getting supplements but Caswell could not compete with other counties. There is a need to focus more on grades and the Board needed to know what the school board is doing about this.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he wanted to say something positive about the high school. He graduated in 2012 and he was the class president and he added that the majority of the students in that class are succeeding. He added that there is a community discussion that the school is terrible. He applauded the school board’s effort on vocational trade side of education. He added that a lot of students go into the military. He added that it is not all about the supplement. He stated that 4 students that he graduated with are teaching at the high school now and they could have gone to other counties for more money but they did not. Commissioner S. Carter stated that people need to change the mentality that they have about the school. It is not a perfect school but the teachers have stuck it out there and have done a good job. The first step that needs to be done is to change the way people think about the school.

Chairman Hall stated that the yard stick that the state uses says Caswell has C and D schools and other counties have A and B schools. He asked if the students were really getting a quality education.

The clerk asked the Board if they wanted to have quarterly meetings with the school board.

Commissioner Travis stated that the Board is meeting with the school board twice a year now.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that the Board should meet with the school board quarterly.

Chairman Hall stated that looking at the renovations at the high school and other things the boards should meet quarterly but the boards need to figure out a way to meet so it would not be so many meetings. The board could meet at one of the Board’s meetings or one of the school board’s meetings but things do need to be discussed.

Commissioner Owen agreed that the boards needed to meet quarterly.

Commissioner McVey agreed that the boards needed to meet quarterly.

Chairman Hall asked the clerk to contact the school system to start scheduling quarterly meetings.

SOLID WASTE/RECYCLING

Commissioner W. Carter asked how much was in the Solid Waste fund.

Commissioner McVey asked the county manager when the solid waste contract came due. Mr. Miller responded the solid waste contract will come up June 2018 and it is a 2 or 3 year contract. Commissioner McVey stated that this would be the time to exercise the right to start recycling program. Mr. Miller responded that this could be put in the RFP to include recycling.

Commissioner Owen agreed to include recycling in the RFP because everything is going to the landfill. The county needs to find a hauler that recycles.

Commissioner S. Carter asked if the county had been lying to the public about recycling. Commissioner Owen responded that the county did not know where the recyclable were going. He added that the plastics are not being recycled. Commissioner S. Carter asked if the county owned the recycling bins. Mr. Miller responded yes.

Commissioner Travis stated that the recyclable are picked up and sorted.

Chairman Hall stated that if the county owns the bins then the county has the responsibility of where the recyclables go.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the thought that First Piedmont owned the recycling bins.

Mr. Miller stated that he could be wrong but he would check on who owns the bins.

Commissioner S. Carter asked where the recyclables go. Mr. Miller responded that the recyclables go to who is paying the most of them. Commissioner S. Carter continued by saying that this included everything but plastic.

Chairman Hall asked for a summary outline of how the county handles recyclables, does the county own the recycling bins, where do the recyclables go, does staff sort the recyclables, and who are the vendors.

Commissioner S. Carter asked if the new RFP would include plastics.

Commissioner Owen stated that all recyclables should be included. The main issue is the plastics. He added that the county employees pick up the bins and then they are just thrown away. With recyclable being included in the solid waste contract this will help with employee efficiency.

Chairman Hall asked if any of the Board members had any complaints about the convenience centers over the holiday. Commissioner Owen responded that the convenience center at 86 Convenient Mart had problems with the compactor. He added that the county manager talked to the solid waste director on this. Mr. Miller stated that a new compactor was ordered for the site.

Commissioner S. Carter mentioned the Adopt a Highway Program. He asked if there was anything preventing this program in the county and asked if the board could promote this program. Commissioner Travis responded that people who have signs up are not picking up the roads now. Commissioner S. Carter stated that he thought there would be more participation if it was promote. He suggested putting flyers in county offices.

Commissioner Owen stated that the county should make the public more aware of this program. He added that the state comes and provides the equipment. The Department of Transportation will provide vests and trash bags. When the trash is all picked up the person just calls DOT and they will pick up the bags. Anyone can do this.

Chairman Hall stated that most people know and understand that this program exists. He added that he has a problem with cleaning up after people. The county needs to move towards enforcement of littering. He suggested purchasing cameras to put out on high activity roads. Chairman Hall stated that there is no excuse for trash on the roads.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that something needed to be put in the solid waste ordinance. He picks up trash all the time. He stated that when people take their trash to the convenience centers they needed to tarp their trash so it does not blow out of the trucks. Commissioner Owen added that people pile their trash up so high that it falls off going down the road.

Commissioner S. Carter asked if there was a limit on the amount of bags. Mr. Miller responded yes that there is a limit of 10 bags per unload. Chairman Hall and Commissioner Travis both stated that they were unaware of this limit. Chairman Hall added that in his neighborhood one man picks up the trash from all the elderly and takes it to the convenience site. Most of these people don’t have trucks. Mr. Miller responded that the limit of bags was in the ordinance.

Commissioner Owen stated that it would be good to include the rule to tarp the trash when going to the convenience site.

Mr. Miller stated that it needed to be a licensed hauler to haul more than 10 bags at a time but anyone can take more than 10 bags to the Yanceyville Convenience Site.

Chairman Hall stated that during the spring his community has a community clean up and one person delivers it to the convenience site and it is more than 10 bags.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the Board needed a report on where Solid Waste stands.

TRUST, HONESTY, CHAIN OF COMMAND

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he put this item on the agenda. He thinks that the Board should work as a team and know everything. He added that he should know what the Board knows. He wants to know what other commissioners know. He added that commissioners should not embarrass other members on the Board. Commissioner Jefferies stated that this Board is the worse board he has served on. The commissioners need to be able to trust each other and to be honest with each other. He added that he is upfront with the commissioners and he would like the same. Commissioner Jefferies stated that the commissioners need to follow the chain of command and that all department heads expect for the county manager, clerk and tax director report to the county manager. He added that no one commissioner should go to a department head for anything, it should go through the county manager. He added that commissioners should not stay in the county manager’s office because he needs to do his job and he expected the county manager to do his job. Commissioner Jefferies stated that he paid over $7,000 in taxes this year and that was too much. The commissioners needed to work together and talk to each other and let all commissioners know what is going on. The commissioners are elected by the citizens and they should work together as a team. He also added that each commissioner only has 1 vote.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he wanted to mirror what Commissioner Jefferies said. He stated that he has been talking to department heads and if there is information that he needs he will go and get that information from the department heads.

Commissioner Owen stated that he agreed with Commissioner Jefferies. The commissioners needed to improve on getting along. Each commissioner has their own passion and he has been guilty of some of these things. He stated that he does believe in the chain of command. Commissioner Owen stated that he has visited several departments but it was just to check in. He added that Caswell is a county manager form of government.

Commissioner McVey stated that four people work directly for the Board and the other people do not work directly for the Board. He added that the county manager should run the county operations; it is not the Board’s job to do that. Commissioner McVey stated that if the county manager cannot run the county then the Board needs to make a decision.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he agreed that the county manager is in charge. He added that he did not go to the department heads for anything. He expects the county manager to keep him inform on what is going on it the departments. Commissioner W. Carter agreed with Commissioner Jefferies as far as the Board getting along and the commissioners did not need to choose sides, it is a democratic board. He agreed that trust and honesty amongst the Board members needed to improve and that the Board needed to work together.

Chairman Hall stated that there needed to be a mutual respect.

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

COUNTY ATTORNEY CONTRACT

Commissioner Jefferies stated that the county pays a lot of money to the county attorney. He added that the county attorney does a good job. Commissioner Jefferies suggested that the county attorney spend 2 to 3 hours at the courthouse before the meetings, this would cut down on some of the money that is being paid out.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he was satisfied with the county attorney. He liked the idea of the 2 to 3 hour time slot before meetings.

Commissioner Travis stated that the biggest part of the money come from the direction of the Board. The county attorney charges for every hour he works for the county. Commissioner Travis added that this is not the only job the county attorney has; he works a full time job.

Commissioner McVey stated that he and Commissioner Jefferies have talked about this and he likes the idea of the county attorney being in the county 2 to 3 hours before a meeting. He suggested that he can bring this computer and work when no one needs to talk to him. His dad did this when he was the county attorney.

Commissioner Owen agreed. He also stated that in the contract there is money set aside for meetings. Mr. Miller responded there was 16 hours. Commissioner Owen like the idea of having an hour or two to talk with the county attorney before a meeting but if the hours go over 16 hours the county will have to pay an additional fee.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he thinks this would be beneficial. Some issues can be resolved before the meeting. He recommended having one hour before the meeting and to do it once a month.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that the county attorney is already coming an hour before the meeting. Mr. Miller responded that it is about 15 to 30 minutes before the meeting.

Chairman Hall stated that he looked at the county attorney’s contract. He added that #1 the county pays him a retainer of $3,000 a month for 16 hours and that is not an issue. The issue he has is the time spent over the 16 hours. He stated that he is going to review the county attorney’s bills. He added that he thinks he will see where staff and department heads are calling the attorney at will. The county attorney has told Chairman Hall in the past that he does not work for him, that he works for the Board but he does not work for staff. Chairman Hall stated that there needed to be guidelines. The Board designated the county manager to contact the county attorney on behalf of the department heads and this must be a necessity because we are being charged $185 an hour. Chairman Hall stated that he would prepare a summary and give it to the Board on the county attorney’s invoices. He added that the Board needed to decide when the county manager contacts the county attorney.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he hoped the Board would not go back and stated that he put this on the agenda because he likes the work the county attorney does but he would like to see him in the county more if possible. Chairman Hall responded that it was a work session for the Board and that the Board needed to make decisions on policies and to make some kind of determinations and understand what circumstances the county pays the $185 an hour for the county attorney’s services.

Commissioner W. Carter stated the Board has already made the direction that everything goes through the county manager.

Chairman Hall asked if the Board made that a policy. Commissioner Travis responded yes. The Board directed that the county manager and the clerk are the only two that should contact the county attorney. Chairman Travis asked the county manager if any department heads had asked to speak to the county attorney. Mr. Miller responded yes. Commissioner Travis asked how often. Mr. Miller responded all the time. Commissioner Travis asked the county manager if he approved these requests. Mr. Miller responded that sometimes he does and sometimes he does not.

Chairman Hall stated that that Board needed to decide if there was a need to tighten up on the policy.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that it sounds like someone is not following the directions of the Board. Chairman Hall responded that this is not necessarily true. He added that only certain calls should be made to the county attorney. If someone has a problem they need to try to solve it without the direction of the county attorney and if it is a legal issue the Board will make a determination to call the county attorney or not.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that the Board needed to reassess this issue.

Chairman Hall stated that he would make a report to the Board on his findings of the county attorney’s invoices.

PLANNING MEETINGS

Commissioner S. Carter asked what this was regarding. Chairman Hall responded that some local governments use one of their meetings as a planning meeting where no action is taken. Commissioner S. Carter stated that this would cause the next meeting to be longer like they were in the past and he did not think this was the best decision to make but he wanted to hear from other Board members.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he put this on the agenda and that he thinks it would be good to have a meeting to discuss the items on the agenda before making a decision.

Commissioner Owen stated that he could see where this could be beneficial but he does have some concerns with the length of the meetings. There have been items that were presented to the Board without enough research and the Board voted too quickly on it in his opinion.

Commissioner McVey stated that the things that the Board needed to vote on could be discussed at the first meeting of the month and voted on at the second meeting of the month. Doing it this way would give the Board enough time to digest the information.

Commissioner Travis stated that he did not agree with having planning meetings. He thought it was better to leave the meetings as they are because some items can’t wait another 2 weeks for a decision to be made.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he did not like items being put on the agenda and a decision is requested without any research. Commissioner Travis responded that the Board gets the agenda on Tuesday and the meeting is the following Monday so the Board has plenty of time for research. Commissioner W. Carter stated that he was talking about items that were added to the agenda the night of the meeting.

Chairman Hall stated that there are other things the Board needs to consider. The Board meets 2 times a month and at times there are special meetings and sometimes things can be put off for 2 months. He also recognized that sometimes the Board does not have ample time to examine things. Chairman Hall asked the Board to go back to Item E. Trust, Honesty, Chain of Command, the commissioners need to speak up and say that we know this is important but ask the Board to not take any action. The staff may push the Board to vote on an item but the Board needs to have enough time to think about the items. He added that some things that come up at the last minute staff has known about it for a while and staff needs to be held accountable for this and not the Board.

Chairman Hall asked the Board if Planning Meetings was an agenda item. Commissioner Jefferies responded yes he would like to see Planning Meetings on an agenda. Chairman Hall stated okay it would be put on the agenda before May.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he did not have anything for this item.

Commissioner Travis stated that he did not have anything for this item.

Commissioner McVey stated that he is glad to see commissioners attending conferences.

Commissioner Owen stated that he felt the same way. He added that attending these conferences gives the county interactions with other counties.

Commissioner Jefferies thinks that every commissioner should attend conferences. He added that every commissioner use to go to Washington, DC to the NaCO conference but he stopped attending when a commissioner made a remark about the money being spent on these conferences.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he wanted to echo the comments made. He felt the Board needed to attend the conferences and the School of Government. While he was doing some research he saw where the commissioners attended the NaCo conference every year. He added that attended these conferences grows relationships. Commissioner S. Carter stated that the president of NaCo is from Caswell County but lives in Durham now. He added that he did not think the Board should restrain funds for attending these conferences.

WHITE SPACE

Chairman Hall asked the county manager to give a short on White Space.

Mr. Miller stated that the county received the equipment and the technician came out yesterday to survey the equipment.

Chairman Hall asked how long it would be before the White Space is up and running. Mr. Miller responded that he did not k now. He met with the technician for about 10 minutes while he was here. Chairman Hall then asked where it would be located. Mr. Miller responded that the water tower would be a great location. Chairman Hall asked if staff was involved in this process. Mr. Miller responded yes that Rhonda Griffin, the Librarian was involved. Chairman Hall asked if technical staff was involved. Mr. Miller responded no. Chairman Hall asked why not. Mr. Miller responded that it was not the time for technical staff to be involved. Chairman Hall stated that the technical staff should be been involved during the whole process for advice. Mr. Miller responded again that it was not time for that. Chairman Hall asked again why not. He continued by saying the equipment is here. Chairman Hall stated that IT and Maintenance should have been involved before now. Mr. Miller responded that and outside contractor specked the equipment and it was his opinion that it was best for him to look over the equipment first and to have time to look at the data. Once the contractor is satisfied it would be shown to IT. Chairman Hall stated that his point was that there are a lot of things involved in this and staff should have been included. He added that the county manager did not need to handle everything and that he needed to have a meeting and delegate roles. Chairman Hall added that in the end the outside contractor will be gone and staff will be unaware of what is going on.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he was able to go and look at the equipment. He inspected the equipment with Rhonda Griffin. Commissioner S. Carter stated that Caswell is the first in the US to receive this. There are no patents on this equipment yet. He agreed that IT and Maintenance should be involved especially the manuals. He is a little concerned about the antenna going on the water tower due to the size of the antenna. This equipment has not been tested before so therefore no one knew what kind of weather it can stand. He added that the boxes that are going out to the homes are durable and larger than he thought they would be. These boxes also have an antenna that has to be installed to receive a signal. Commissioner S. Carter stated that he was proud that Caswell was the first to test it. Carson Wireless is the company that is distributing this product. He thought that Maintenance should have some say so on where the antenna is placed and that IT and Maintenance should have access to the manuals. Commissioner S. Carter stated that he is very excited the equipment is here but he did maintain realistic expectations that this equipment may not work and that the county needed to be cautious and that everyone needed to be up to speed on this equipment.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he hoped it would get up and running soon.

Commissioner Owen stated that the Board knew when it invested the money that the county was taking a chance.

Commissioner McVey stated that IT and Maintenance needed to be more involved in this process.

Commissioner Travis stated that everyone needed to be involved.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he was glad the equipment was here but he thought there would be 4 antennas that would be in four different areas of the county.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he was amazed at the antenna’s size.

Chairman Hall asked if there was anything the Board needed to do on this project. He asked the county manager to report back to the Board when the project was started. He asked for the dates of installation, etc. and he hoped the manager would take the suggestion from the Board to get staff involved because if the equipment works the county will be bombarded. He added that this project was worth a shot with what had been invested in it.

Commissioner Owen stated that he had shared it with some of the subcommittees that he is on and a lot of county commissioners want to know how it goes. This project will change the face of internet business and how they relate to counties.

Chairman Hall stated that there may be laws put in place because of this equipment and they may say that Caswell County should not have done this.

PERSONNEL NEEDS

Commissioner Owen stated that he put this item on the agenda and that the Board had discussed some of these needs in the county already. If there is a need in Maintenance, Environmental Health, Inspections, etc. the departments need to strategize how the county would be able to obtain these positions.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that these positions needed to be discussed during the budget.

Commissioner Travis agreed that these positions needed to be discussed during budget time.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that when the departments come before the Board with these positions they need to look at the platform.

Commissioner S. Carter asked if the positions could be discussed. Commissioner Owen responded that he had hoped the Board would discuss them. Commissioner S. Carter stated that a code enforcement officer is needed.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that the building inspector came before the Board as well as others and the departments need to look at cross training employees already employed by the county because there is an employee that can work in building inspections. Commissioner S. Carter asked who this employee was. Commissioner Jefferies stated the employee works in Section 8 Housing.

Commissioner Owen stated that there is a need for maintenance personnel.

Commissioner McVey stated there was a request from environmental health. Commissioner S. Carter asked if the position in environmental health was the administrative position. Commissioner McVey stated yes.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that over the last few years departments have asked for more personnel and this needs to be done during the budget process and not after the budget.

Chairman Hall stated that there may be some legitimate personnel needs but some of the requests are management issues and some may be related to workloads. He has heard a lot of employees say that they were not going to do any more work unless they were paid more. If the employees are not capable of doing the work then they may need more training. The departments may need to look at technology; they may need technology to help with the job. Chairman Hall stated that when the Board is asked for new positions the Board needs to ask more questions. The Board needs to ask why they need more staff and other substantial information supporting this request.

Commissioner S. Carter asked if the Board could make a determination now. Chairman Hall responded that this would be his way of thinking. Commissioner S. Carter asked when the department heads made these requests. Mr. Miller responded that the department heads usually request additional positions at the beginning of the budget process. He knew that the health department, building inspections and maintenance would be requesting additional positions in their budget.

Commissioner Travis stated that all departments needed to be asked. Mr. Miller responded that this has been discussed.

Chairman Hall stated that the departments needed to know what they would be requesting. The Board can look at the needs and then look at the management. Is there a need for technology instead of personnel? If they need additional personnel they will need additional equipment. This could be combination of management, equipment and personnel.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that he would be in favor of hearing this information within the next month. Chairman Hall agreed and added in combination with capital need requests. The Board needs to look at the big picture. Commissioner S. Carter stated that in reading the minutes he saw where there were discussions about a deputy manager position. He knew other counties had this position. Commissioner W. Carter responded that the deputy manager’s position had been discussed but nothing was ever done.

Chairman Hall asked the county manager to get a list of personnel needs from the departments. He added that there are a lot of things that county government is responsible for and that the Board needed to keep an open mind.

LEGISLATIVE GOALS

Commissioner Owen stated that the NCACC will have legislative goals in 2019. He asked what the Board would like to see pushed as far as legislative goals. He suggested having a meeting with the County’s legislative representatives. Commissioner Owen stated that it bothers him that there is Wildlife land that the county gets nothing from. When the Wildlife buys this land it comes off the tax records as far as collecting taxes.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that Caswell has more Wildlife land than any other county.

Chairman Hall stated that he received a letter this week about the Legislative Goals meeting. Commissioner Owen responded that this meeting was a preliminary meeting. Chairman Hall stated that it was important for the Board to get their items in because it would have more traction if the NCACC is aware of these items. Commissioner Jefferies agreed.

Commissioner S. Carter agreed with Commissioner Owen. He stated that he grew up next to the Wildlife land and that Caswell County is not the only county that has game lands. He added that one of his goals is to go back through the minutes to see when the agreement took place between the county and the state regarding receiving income off the game lands. He thinks it took back in the 60s. Chairman Hall responded that he thought it went back further than that. Commissioner S. Carter asked if the NCACC had been involved in this discussion about receiving income from the Wildlife land. Chairman Hall responded that each county is invited to submit a list to the NCACC. He also suggested contacting other counties that have Wildlife game lands to form a coalition. Chairman Hall stated that a lot of these items would be cut out of the goals and with other counties on board it would help to keep this issue on the books. He added that the NCACC is not the only group lobbying legislature for things. He also suggested sending it to the school systems as well. Commissioner S. Carter asked if the Board wanted to draft a letter to send to these other counties and have each commissioner to sign it. Chairman Hall responded yes send a letter to ask the other counties to get on board with Caswell on the Wildlife land issue. He added that the federal government compensates for military bases. Commissioner S. Carter asked if armories were state or federal. Commissioner W. Carter responded that he thought they were federal.

Commissioner McVey stated that he contacted the House and Senate on the Wildlife game land agreement and neither of them got back to him with an appropriate answer. He was told by a former commissioner that there was an agreement and that the county should be receiving money on the sale of tobacco and timber.

Commissioner S. Carter asked when the Legislative Goals preliminary meeting was. Commissioner Owen responded in February. Commissioner S. Carter stated that he would do some research before the meeting in February.

Chairman Hall stated that lottery money needed to go back on the list for legislative goals because legislation is taking it. It probably should be at the top of the list. At the joint meeting with the School Board the two boards need to discuss their goals.

Commissioner S. Carter stated that Senator Woodard had called and reminded him about the deadline for local bills for this year. Chairman Hall responded that the Board had did this last year and it did not get any traction.

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT FEDERAL CREDIT UNION

The clerk introduced Ms. Jazmine Kilpatrick. Ms. Kilpatrick works for the Local Government Federal Credit Union and the lunch served today was paid for by the LGFCU.

Ms. Jazmine Kilpatrick stated that the LGFCU has a contract with the SECU because they do not have a facility. They offer scholarships for local government employees to attend classes at the UNC School of Government. They also partner with the NCACC. It cost only $25 to have a share deposit account at the LGFCU. She thanked the Board for what they do. Ms. Kilpatrick stated that she worked for Forsyth County and for the City of Winston Salem so she understands what county government is like. Ms. Kilpatrick added that she will be at the NCACC conference this year.

LUNCH

Commissioner Owen asked the blessing before lunch.

Lunch was served.

WRAP UP & CLOSE OUT

Commissioner S. Carter stated that in the past Commissioner Travis had mentioned getting a list of the present and former Caswell County Board of Commissioners for a plaque to be on display at the Historic Courthouse. Commissioner S. Carter did all the research back to 1868 on all the commissioners for Caswell County. This plaque will be ready to present at the Commissioners meeting on Tuesday, January 16th. This has been discussed with Chairman Hall, the county manager, and the clerk. Commissioner S. Carter highlighted Mr. Wilson Carey as the first elected African American commissioner as well as the first African American postmaster in Caswell County. He thought Mr. Carey was worthy of recognition and suggested pursuing a road marker. He asked for consent from the Board to move forward on this.

Commissioner Travis asked if he live in the Anderson community. Commissioner S. Carter responded that he could research this.

Chairman Hall suggested putting this on the next agenda for approval. He also suggested tying this into Heritage Day.

Commissioner Travis asked Commissioner S. Carter if he paid for the plaque. Commissioner S. Carter responded no, that the county would be paying for it.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that this retreat was the best one so far. There was a lot brought up during the retreat and he thought it was a really good retreat.

Chairman Hall asked if there were any further comments.

Ms. Jazmine Kilpatrick thanked the Board for allowing her to come and she hoped to be able to attend the next retreat. Chairman Hall responded that she was welcome to attend any of the Board’s meetings.

ADJOURNMENT

At 12:55 p.m. Chairman Hall adjourned the meeting.

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Paula P. Seamster Nathaniel Hall

Clerk to the Board Chairman

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