

## **MINUTES – OCTOBER 19, 2020**

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, October 19, 2020. The meeting was held electronically using Zoom Webinar software. Members present: Rick McVey, Chairman, David J. Owen, Vice Chairman, William E. Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Jeremiah Jefferies, Steve Oestreicher, and N. Kent Williamson. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager, and Brian Ferrell, County Attorney. Ashley Kirby Powell, Administrative Assistant, recorded the minutes.

## **MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER**

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

## **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

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

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Commissioners,

As we enter into discussions about the Monument erected by the Caswell Chapter of the Daughters of the Confederacy, we must be deliberate and open about the discussion and the outcomes and expected outcomes that result from discussions surrounding the monument.

We all have seen the outcomes when these types of situations are not carried out in a transparent manner. We have seen one confederate flag taken down by local government and more than ten take its place. We have seen riots and looting, we have seen police enforcement, and we have seen peaceful demonstrations both for and against removing these types of monuments.

Having said this, I would make a recommendation to the Board that the County engage in a facilitated discussion about the monument and the possibility of removing it as well as concurrently engaging an Economic Development firm to assess the highest and best use to attract economic development to downtown Yanceyville.

By doing so, we would get answers to many questions and remain as transparent as possible about the intentions of the Board, the expectations from the community, and the overall planning process that could take place if the Board decides to engage in these activities.

This decision effects many people in this community and either decision will illicit a response from those affected. We need to make sure everything about this process is transparent. We have received many public comments on this subject but I don't necessarily believe that fully encompasses the discussions that should be entered into surrounding this subject.

Engaging the public, having a facilitated discussion, and formulating a plan for moving forward are all key elements that could result in a positive outcome in this situation that allows the residents of the county to understand the decision made by the board even if they don't agree with the decision.

I hope you will take my recommendation and at least consider the possibility of engaging in a facilitated discussion and formulating a plan for moving forward through this process.

Thank You, Alvin Foster

Thank you for including the discussion of the Confederate monument on the agenda! This little missive is to let you know how one citizen, a great granddaughter of a confederate veteran, feels about relocating the monument. As I've grown to understand the horrors of slavery and the ripple effects people continue to experience, I realize this monument never deserved its esteemed position in the center of the county, center of the county seat, high on a pedestal in the center of a dedicated square, as if memorializing the county's (i.e. ALL of its citizens) proudest and defining moment. It simply is NOT that, and never was. I believe it should be relocated, NOT FORGOTTEN, to a less prominent location (perhaps behind the history museum or the arboretum, but that's another discussion!) and its complete and true historical context explained. Thank you for your service as county commissioners.

Sincerely,  
Rebecca Page  
Yanceyville, NC

### **RECOGNITIONS**

Chairman McVey sent his condolences to the Jefferies family in their loss of a family member.

Vice Chairman Owen recognized and honored all breast cancer survivors and the families that have been affected by breast cancer.

### **AGENDA**

Commissioner Williamson made a motion to approve the October 19, 2020 agenda, seconded by Vice Chairman Owen. The motion carried unanimously.

### **CONSENT AGENDA**

Vice Chairman Owen made a motion to approve the October 19, 2020 consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Williamson. The motion carried unanimously.

### **FIRE DEPARTMENT AGREEMENT**

Mr. Miller gave a brief overview, that this agreement is to facilitate relationships and mutual understanding between Caswell County Local Government and the Volunteer Fire Departments that serve Caswell County. The committee appointed to oversee such an agreement has drafted the following agreement: All Volunteer Fire Departments that serve the businesses, residents, and county government facilities of Caswell County have approved this agreement.

Commissioner Oestreicher made a suggestion of rewording accurate to good faith in item number five. Mr. Massengil replied; That change will be made. Commissioner Oestreicher made a motion to approve the agreement with the modification of rewording accurate to good faith for item number five, seconded by Commissioner Carter. The motion carried unanimously.

### **EMERGENCY OPERATIONS PLAN**

Mr. Miller stated that Caswell County has rewritten the Emergency Operations Plan outlining response, authority, and responsibility to emergency situations. Access and edit ability of this plan will make the plan more accessible to those that have authoritative or response roles as well as being able to update the plan when necessary to make it less difficult and without the unnecessary cost and outside consultation. The Emergency Operations Plan consists of seventy-nine (79) individual files that together constitute the plan as a whole.

Commissioner Hall commented that he did not receive the whole document. Mr. Miller replied that he would resend that information. Commissioner Hall stated that under towns and municipalities it appeared to him that Caswell should be replaced with Milton or Yanceyville. Mr. Miller noted the changes.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that pandemic was not listed under events, but it was listed within the document and questioned should it not be listed under events. Mr. Lynch noted the changes; Also, this is a living document. The Health Department has an S&S Plan which is an addition to the Emergency Operations Plan which covers pandemics. Commissioner Oestreicher stated; It is a hard document to search. Mr. Miller stated; It was drafted by function. With the last Emergency Operations Plan you had to search and find what each individual's roles were and you could not make any changes to the document. This, overall, will be a better document for the county and he understands the Boards concerns. Commissioner Oestreicher agreed that if you know what you're looking for it is easy to find, but suggested an index. Mr. Miller replied that they could add an index.

Commissioner Williamson made a motion to approve the Emergency Operations Plan, seconded by Vice Chairman Owen. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Hall stated that he would like to see the agreement that we have with the Caswell County Schools, the Town of Yanceyville, and the Town of Milton along with other organizations. Mr. Lynch replied that every Fire Department will receive a copy of what their responsibility is and sign off that they received a copy. Commissioner Hall replied that he understood, but his concerns were: What are the roles of the Town of Yanceyville and the School System. Mr. Miller replied that those documents will be brought back to the Board at a later date. Commissioner Williamson stated that with this being a living document, all of the suggestions can be included as we go forward. Commissioner Hall stated; If we reference an agreement, you should be able to see it. Mr. Miller replied; Those agreements will have to be approved by the Board, outside of the Emergency Operations Plan, to move forward with signing those agreements and crafting them, We need the Emergency Operations Plan in place in order to have those discussions.

### **EMS PERSONNEL AND EQUIPMENT**

Mr. Miller stated; These items were originally discussed during the FY2020-2021 budget discussions in June of 2020. The Board requested that we revisit these items in October after sales tax and property tax revenues were more apparent. The Board discussed these items in a special meeting that occurred on October 12, 2020 and asked additional information be gathered by EMS personnel and presented during the October 19<sup>th</sup> regularly scheduled meeting of the Caswell County Board of County Commissioners. Mr. Lynch stated that effective through the end of September 2020, the number of calls handled by outside agencies (since February) was 35, instances that all trucks were busy (since February) was 159 times, mutual aid was received from other counties 304 times, and mutual aid was given to other counties by Caswell 126 times. There has been a 22% increase in call volume over the last 5 years. In 2016, there were 3,134 calls and in 2020 we have received roughly

4,000 calls so far. With the addition for the four new positions on a peak load truck, this would reduce the amount of times we need services from other counties. Then Mr. Lynch presented the Board with the salary for the four new positions, which included benefits, longevity, and retirement: EMT \$42,458 per year, Paramedic \$54,552 per year, the total cost for the four positions will be \$190,060. According to our billing company, we are \$100,000 over budget. Mr. Miller stated that looking at the numbers in increased call volume, this is a needed service. Most of the expenses will be covered in increased revenue and additional calls that they will be able to run.

Chairman McVey stated that last night there was a call placed wto 911 where a citizen was choking and all of Caswell's trucks were out on calls and mutual aid was called but they were 15 minutes out. Thank goodness the Fire Department was trained to handle this situation because someone can choke to death within 10-15 minutes. Mr. Miller stated: This points out that this is a much needed addition to our EMS service. Vice Chairman questioned Mr. Miller that we have been told that the Health Department will be getting \$197,000 back. Mr. Miller replied correct. Vice Chairman Owen stated his concerns about the number of times that outside agencies were used when there were no trucks available. Mr. Lynch stated that there is an increased amount of times when all trucks are out on calls and they call for mutual aid and all their trucks are busy and we are without coverage. Commissioner Carter questioned how many EMS units are available daily. Mr. Lynch replied; Three, and they have two spare trucks.

Vice Chairman Owen stated his concerns on where the funds would be coming from for these four positions, were these funds coming from the estimated collections and is the other amount coming out of the fund balance. Commissioner Carter stated that there is \$197,000 that the Health Department is receiving back and then suggested taking half from Health Department and half coming from project revenues. Commissioner Jefferies stated that after this year, where are we going to receive those funds; Are we going to have to increase taxes. The Board needs to think about the School Project. Are we going to continue adding this on the tax payers of Caswell County. Yes, EMS is very important to this county, but we also need to think about the funds. Vice Chairman Owen agreed, then stated if he knew for sure that they would have to raise taxes, he would not consider this at this time. Then he questioned Mr. Miller on where the money from the Health Department was coming from. Mr. Miller replied; From State, Federal revenue and Medicare Cost Settlements. This \$197,000 in county appropriations will not be needed this year by the Health Department, but this does not mean that they will not need it next year. Vice Chairman Owen stated that there is already money in the budget that we are not going to be using and we also have the projection of over \$100,00 in revenue from EMS. Chairman McVey commented that he understands the money situation and hates to spend the money, but he'd also hate to see the county loose a citizen because we are waiting 10-15 minutes for an ambulance to come from another county. Commissioner Hall stated that this will require a tax increase next year or the year after. Chairman McVey commented that it is the Boards job to protect the citizens of Caswell County.

Commissioner Carter made a motion to approve the four EMS positions that were requested, by using the \$100,000 in projected revenue and \$97,000 from the Health Department funds, seconded by Vice Chairman Owen. The motion carried 5 to 2 with Commissioner Hall and Commissioner Jefferies voting no.

**RESOLUTION FOR SPECIAL ASSESSMENT FOR IMPROVEMENTS FOR SHADOW  
RIDGE ROAD IN PROVIDENCE, NC**

Mr. Ferrell stated that if the Board recalled, in September, the Board held a Public Hearing on a resolution for special assessment to bring Shadow Ridge Road to state standards and allocate the cost. The local share of the project cost for the road improvement project would be allocated to owners based on a calculation of the product, based on square footage. During the Public Hearing, you heard public comments that it should be an equal amount for each lot. Commissioner Carter questioned the date of the Public Hearing, if it was on November 16. Mr. Ferrell replied correct. Commissioner Oestreicher questioned the amount of the project. Mr. Ferrell replied \$10,000. Commissioner Oestreicher stated; So that's roughly \$130 per lot over five years. Mr. Ferrell replied correct, but that did not include interest.

Vice Chairman Owen made a motion to accept the amended resolution concerning improvements to Shadow Ridge Road, seconded by Commissioner Carter. The motion carried unanimously.

### **CREDIT CARD PROCESSING FOR BUILDING INSPECTIONS**

Mr. Miller stated; This agenda item is for approval of online credit card processing of transactions for the Building Inspections Department though their current software provider IWorks. Building Inspections does not currently accept credit card transactions. Many developers have indicated their desire to make online payments for Building Inspections permits and have also indicated they would rather pay the processing fee of \$2.00 (minimum) or 3.5% of the total transaction fee. The dollar value at which the change would be made from a \$2.00 minimum to a fee of 3.5% of the total transaction is calculated to be \$58.00.

Commissioner Oestreicher made a motion to approve the credit card processing contract for Building Inspections, seconded by Commissioner Williamson. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller stated; This is pending Mr. Ferrell's approval.

### **COLA INCREASES**

Mr. Miller stated that the Commissioners discussed, at the special meeting on October 12<sup>th</sup>, 2020, the possibility of granting a Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA) to Caswell County Employees. Staff was asked to include this as an agenda item on the next agenda for discussion and action by the Board of Commissioners. The Health Department is reverting \$197,697 of the \$199,068 needed to implement the 2% increase. The difference of \$1,371 will be absorbed by the county through lapsed salaries in multiple departments. This would mean no additional appropriations would be needed to implement the 2% increase for the FY2020-2021 budget.

Commissioner Williamson commented that the Board left the meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> with the understanding that we had come up with ways we were going to fund the four EMS positions and when we came in today the County Manager informed the Board of funds that we have available. He suggested stepping back and remembering what they did at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting and what we suggested. The only thing requested was more information from EMS on what the total cost would be for the four positions. Then the County Manager presented the Board with \$197,000 that would not be used by the Health Department that could be used for the motion that Commissioner Carter made to give the County Employees a 2% raise. Chairman McVey stated that we just used part of those funds for EMS. Commissioner Carter replied; Correct, but at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, Mr. Miller stated that we were close to a million dollars over in revenue. We also appropriated \$26,000 for salary adjustments and we discussed giving all of the County Employees a 2% increase. We lose

employees to other counties because we cannot pay them enough and based off the information that Mrs. Vaughn presented the Board, he thinks that the budget would be able to handle giving a 2% increase. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he thought, at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, they discussed that expenditures were about \$120,000 lower. Mr. Miller stated that expenditures are lower this year, due to the fact that a lot of our departments have been closed or only available by appointment only and these expenditures will be used next year. These funds are not something we can count on moving into the future. Commissioner Carter stated that from what he recalled at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting, revenues were over close to a million dollars; Is that correct or not. Mr. Miller replied that he did not recall making that statement, but he would go back and look into it. Commissioner Williamson stated to Mr. Miller that he was saying that at our October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting did not mean anything and the vote that we gave to have EMS's four positions and that we had found money at that time does not mean anything. Then today we learn that \$197,000 was not going to be spent and we could give our employees an increase. That is what he understands. Mr. Miller replied; That was his intent. As you saw in your agenda packet, the \$197,000 was to be used to fund the remainder of this year's portion of the 2% COLA. Vice Chairman Owen commented; It is great that we can give our employees raises, so we won't lose them to other counties, but that will always happen to a certain degree. In 2017 we involved the UNCSOG in a Salary Plan Study and spent over \$25,000 to complete that study. What that study brought back was a plan where we looked at all the salaries across the state; They came up with a guide for minimum, midpoint, and max salaries. In 2017-2018, we appropriated to get all employees up to the minimum and that was done to the best to his knowledge. The minimum does not come close to the average pay and we are still losing employees to other counties. Some employees got a 2.25% increase and the average pay for employees roughly was \$2,100. The next logical thing is, if we are going to look at doing something for our employees, look at getting them to the average salary. That would take more money than we have available. We have some employees that are making 60% of the average salary in the state, and some are making 80, 90 to 100% over average salary. Giving a 2% raise helps our employees, but it does not stop them from leaving going to other counties. In 2019-2020, we gave all county employees a 2.25% increase and we need to keep that in mind. Commissioner Carter stated that all county employees did not receive that 2.25% increase. Vice Chairman Owen replied; Correct. We value our employees and they did not lay off or furlough any employees due to COVID-19 like other counties did, and we allowed them to work from home. Commissioner Carter stated; It was not fair to the employees after approving the four increases at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting. Chairman McVey questioned how many employees are below the average. Mr. Miller replied; Roughly 95%. Vice Chairman Owen stated that the Adult Child Protected Services workers did not meet the definition requirements to receive hazard pay and we need to consider these employees as well. Commissioner Carter questioned how much money was taken out of the fund balance last year. Mr. Miller replied; 1.8 million was appropriated from the general fund balance and none was used during the fiscal year. Commissioner Carter stated; According to Mrs. Vaughn's figures presented, the county should be able to give a 2% increase. Commissioner Jefferies agreed with Commissioner Carter. Chairman McVey questioned Mr. Miller that the 2% increase will cause a tax increase next year. Mr. Miller replied that he was not saying that until we are through this year and know what our revenues have been until we are able to access what next year looks like through the budget process.

Commissioner Carter made a motion to approve a 2% COLA for county employees, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies. The motion carried 5 to 2 with Commissioner Hall and Vice Chairman Owen voting no.

**RECESS**

The Board took a brief recess.

### **HEAVY INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT ORDINANCE COMMITTEE DRAFT 2**

Mr. Miller stated; As directed, a committee was formed and we have had several meetings (5) to date. The Committee is comprised of six members, as suggested by the Board. Members include:

Commissioner David Owen

Community Member Scott Oakley

Community Member Bryon Shoffner

Community Member Kim Steffan

Staff Matthew Hoagland

Staff Bryan Miller

The committee would like to thank the Board of Commissioners for their thoughtful and insightful input into the draft document. After two additional meetings and thoughtful and deliberate conversation, the committee submits draft version (2) for the Board to review.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated; After reading the new proposal and all but three of his suggestions were ignored, he wants to attend the next HIDO committee meeting. Commissioner Williamson stated that his suggestion was ignored as well. Vice Chairman Owen stated that every Commissioners suggestions were not ignored they were discussed.

### **DISCUSSION ON MONUMENT ERECTED BY THE CASWELL COUNTY CHAPTER- DAUGHTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY (1921)**

Mr. Miller stated that recognizing current events and through the recognition of multiple public comments, emails, and telephone calls, the Caswell County Board of County Commissioners will enter into discussions pertaining to the monument erected by the Caswell County Chapter – Daughters of the Confederacy.

Vice Chairman Owen stated that the Board needed to come up with a plan and there are a couple of elements of the plan that are extremely important. Taking down a statue/monument does not fix the problem; The real issue is systemic racism. What solves the problem is when people with different opinions can come together and sit down at a table and discuss those issues and understand where that person comes from. We need to have community meetings and the plan must be in full disclosure; Then discuss the cost to relocate the monument/monuments from the square.

Commissioner Carter questioned; Are we looking at removing all of the monuments. Mr. Miller replied; Before making that determination, it is important that we enter in discussions with citizens and county leaders. Commissioner Carter agreed and suggested moving the monument to the Arboretum. Vice Chairman Owen suggested on having a monument park and moving the Dillard monument to Dillard Middle School. Commissioner Oestreicher requested for Mr. Miller to get an estimate on the cost of the relocation of the monuments. Commissioner Williamson stated that the Commissioners need to remember the Oath that they took and he understands about it being history, but at the same time, go with what our citizens are saying. He was not speaking from a race stand point, he was speaking for the citizens of Caswell County and the comments that he has heard and seen by those that have actually researched this problem. He also understands the plan, but at the same time, the plan should not make us make a decision, and he understand that citizens want this issue resolved right away. At the same time, he agrees with the plan, but at the same time, the decision we make on moving one statue should not mean that we remove them all. Chairman McVey

directed Mr. Miller to come up with a plan and form a group to go through with the plan that was discussed today.

### **COVID-19 UPDATE**

- Current case count 561
- Outbreak at the Dan River Work Farm 35 new cases
- 129 positive cases from the community this week
- Hot spots Pelham and Leasburg (linked to two private events)
- Positivity rate currently 11.9%

### **COUNTY MANAGERS UPDATES**

- UDO Amendment Public Hearing-November 2<sup>nd</sup>
- Revisit Library Book Budget

### **COMMISSIONERS COMMENTS**

Vice Chairman Owen suggested coming up with an application for non-profits to apply for COVID-19 relief funds.

### **ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS**

There were no upcoming events and announcements.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Commissioner Carter made a motion at 11:17 a.m. to go into closed session, seconded by Commissioner Williamson. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chairman Owen made a motion at 11:45 a.m. to go out of closed session, seconded by Commissioner Williamson. The motion carried unanimously.

### **PROJECT DAY**

Commissioner Oestreicher made a motion to proceed with the current Economic Development Project that was proposed with an up to \$75,000 grant paid over three years based on the approved Economic Development Incentives Policy, seconded by Vice Chairman Owen. The motion carried unanimously.

### **ADJOURNMENT**

Vice Chairman Owen made a motion to adjourn the October 19, 2020 meeting at 11:50 a.m., seconded by Commissioner Williamson. The motion carried unanimously.