MINUTES – AUGUST 17, 2020

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, August 17, 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. 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 attendance recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

The Clerk to the Board read the public comments received via email.

“My name is Earnestine Hamlett and I have lived in Caswell County my whole life, being a proud graduate of Bartlett Yancey Sr. High. I am writing as a Concerned Citizen of Caswell County to address the Board of Commissioners about the Confederate Statue on the Town Square in Yanceyville. I am greatly concerned about the strong language that was used in declaring a State of Emergency and resulting in a curfew that lasted thirteen days. The language included language such as "disaster, imminent threat, injury, or loss of life or loss of property, and public safety authorities will be unable to maintain public order, nor afford adequate protection for lives and property”. Therefore, at this time I am asking the Board to revisit the issue or vote to have the Confederate Monument removed or relocated. When the Confederate Statue becomes a public safety issue, it concerns the citizens for their safety and their welfare. So, it is my plea that God give this Board of Commissioners the will to do what is right for all of the citizens' safety. I hope that you will agree that the object of remembrance' placement at this time is a public safety issue and can or will cause a dangerous condition in the future as it has in the past.” The Clerk added that Ms. Earnestine Hamlett sent another email that was received on Sunday, August 16, 2020 with a petition that included 300 names.

“Reverend Bryon Shoffner. Please enter this in to Public Records. Caswell County Health Department, Director Eastwood. Re: 2.28.2020 Meeting with Representatives of Anderson Community, NCDAQ, Caswell County Health Department and NCDHHS. Director Eastwood,

You stated during the 2.28.2020 with the Anderson Community Group, NCDAQ, NCDHHS, and yourself that Caswell County has already done a Community Health Assessment of the "Anderson EJ community" listed in report provided to CCHD by NCDHHS known as " Literature Review of Asphalt, Concrete, And Quarry Facilities; NCDHHS Occupational and Environmental Epidemiology Branch July 17, 2020". 1. Can you please identify in this report attached entitled "Caswell County’s State of the County Health Report (SOTCH) 2017" where we can find the "Community Health Assessment" for the EJ community known as Anderson Community? The CDC defines "a community health assessment gives organizations comprehensive information about the community’s current health status, needs, and issues. In turn, this information can help with developing a community health improvement plan by justifying how and where resources should be allocated to best meet community needs." Please identify the Community Health Assessment for our EJ community that we were told we could find in this report in the 7.28.2020 meeting? 2. Can you provide us with the statistical data of serious health conditions within the Anderson Community in your 2018 health assessment?

3. Can you provide the percentage of citizens (or number of citizens) who participated in the Caswell County’s State of the County Health Report (SOTCH) 2017 from the Anderson community identified in the EJ report from NCDHHS? 4. Can you provide the percentages of households in our EJ community with serious illnesses? I could not find it in this report. 5. And how the amount of serious illnesses in our community compares with county averages? I was unable to find that in the report? Can you provide us with the top 6 illnesses within the EJ community known as Anderson Community? To see if it matches the Community Health Assessment that your department refuses to validate. 6. We would like an answer to why Prospect Hill community added to our Title 6 Health Request for a Community Health Assessment for a black community that 93% of their households had serious pre-existing illnesses that are substantially above the county averages. We have verified that Prospect Hill is a predominately white community and only has "ONE" health concern. And we verified that Prospect Hill community never requested a Community Health Assessment from CCHD? We are concerned this was a political tactic against an EJ community to "water down" their request. We have attached the original request. Please respond to why this occurred? 7. Is Caswell County Health Department going to provide a Community Health Assessment for this EJ community that has at least one and as many as four documented serious illnesses in 93% of the black homes? And documented 104 citizens with serious illnesses? 8. Is Caswell County Health Department going to provide a Literature Review and get Medical Weigh-in on the illnesses in this community and how the specific Toxic Chemicals from this proposed facility will impact the community's future health? As well as impact a black community in a black health crisis due to COVID-19? 9. Is refusing our EJ community health and safety from our County Health Department and County Government a Title 6 Violation? You stated in the 2.28.2020 that this report would provide our EJ community with a Community Health Assessment. I apologize, but I cannot find it.”

“Leslie Zimmerman, Leasburg. In January 2020 The Board of Commissioners committed to a process to educate county citizens about zoning. We are now at the last BOCC meeting in August. Most of the public in Caswell remains in the dark about zoning. While COVID cut short in-person meetings, nothing has taken their place. Where are articles in the newspaper? Where are the mailings? Where are the webinars? Where is information on the County website? You have offered no county wide education as to what zoning is, how it can protect property rights and property values. How it can benefit the economic growth of the county. You have managed to put a referendum on the Ballot asking the citizens to vote yes or no for county wide zoning. While you are not allowed to advocate, you are allowed to educate. Without an educated public, how can you trust the results of the election? When you run for office, don’t you talk to your constituents about the issues? Why aren’t you doing the same for the referendum? There are only 5 BOCC meetings remaining before the election. There are only 3 board meetings remaining before the election. If you do nothing, expect nothing. Please, do something.”

“Dr. Judy McCain Pounds. I am writing to support the removal of the Confederate monument from the town square in Yanceyville. As we know, the Jim Crow laws were put into place to marginalize and to maintain racial segregation after the Civil War ended. According to Kennedy (2017), no group was more instrumental in establishing these monuments than the United Daughters of Confederacy (UDC). Founded in 1890s, the UDC’s stated purpose was to commemorate confederate soldiers with monuments to glory their courage and bravery. Some say their work was more aligned with the systemic disenfranchised and oppression of the black race. The statue remains as a symbol of a philosophy having no applicable purpose in Caswell County. Today, taxpayer’s monies are being used to provide protection for this monument that some citizens find offensive. We are still fractured from a period that led to the division of our nation. Removing the Confederate monument from its prominent place, to a new location where its historical context could be explained, will be a great step to finally ending any discordant that remains in the role that our county played in the Civil War. It is an important step to a more just future. Knowledge once learned cannot be unlearned, but only corrected. I am asking our county commissioners to revisit their vote concerning the removal of the monument. We need to put Caswell County on the list with other proactive communities which have recently removed or relocated Confederate monuments. The actions of the commissioners today, could make great strides in building a sense of community for all residents.”

“Anita Foust. Good Morning Caswell County Commissioners, the Press, and fellow Citizens:

This public comment is from Anita Foust, Foust Wellness Farm located at 2501 Hughes Mill Road

Please find attached an article from Duke University that describes a possible link to the increase in suicides due to a chemical produced by asphalt plants, hydrogen sulfide. According to the survey done by the Blue Ridge Environmental Defense League (BREDL), Salisbury, NC had a larger than normal rate of suicides which could be possibly linked to the asphalt plant’s chemical production.

Please take this information into consideration while deciding the fate of the proposed asphalt cement plant Burlington North Highway 62 which is placed, as best as we can determine, as close as 250 feet from at least one home and 1,000 feet from other homes. Also, keep this in mind while you, staff members, as well as contractors, work on the environmental impact ordinance and other documents that have an impact on the environments air, water, and soil along with the health and lives of humans and animals. 11.  COVID-19 Update Citizen Comment. Good Morning Caswell County Commissioners, the Press, and fellow Citizens: This citizen’s comment on this agenda item is from Anita Foust, Foust Wellness Farm located at 2501 Hughes Mill Road. COVID-19 is not a hoax. Please see the attached Harvard University article that gives details that the tiniest increase in air pollution can cause a large increase in COVID-19. Please take that into consideration while you, staff members, as well as contractors work on the environmental impact ordinance and other documents that have an impact on the environments air, water, and soil along with the health and lives of humans and animals.”

“Mark Zimmerman. Good morning Commissioners. Did you see the article about the big push for November's casino referendum in Danville? When that passes in November, the whole region will be transformed. The economic growth generated by the spending on and at a casino will have a ripple effect in the surrounding areas. That includes Caswell County. It will start right away as speculators will get in early to take advantage of the coming change. How will you manage that growth? Right now, you cannot do anything because you have no tools in place to do so. Your regulations are weak. You don't even have the minimum of zoning protections for our way of life. You can only stand by and watch this county be changed by outsiders. The casino will add to the pressure Caswell is experiencing from the growth in the Triangle and Triad continues to accelerate. That growth can be good for us, or bad for us. It can bring opportunity or we can be taken advantage of. Will we be in control of our future? Will you help lead us?  Right now, we aren't and you can't.

Please take charge.  Thank you.”

Chairman McVey stated “Commissioners we have had a number of issues brought before this Board lately and a number of decisions have been made as a result. We still have very serious, immediate decisions to make regarding zoning, COVID-19, rock quarries, asphalt plants, and several other pressing issues. As we continue to receive multiple public comments, phone calls, and personal contacts about the monument on our town Square I believe we should engage in a real conversation about this matter. I don’t believe we really took the opportunity the first time to discuss the matter. Dialogue can only lead us to a more productive outcome for the betterment of our county. I’d like to ask our county manager, Mr. Miller, to have this placed as a discussion item on an upcoming agenda within the next 2 to 3 months if the Board agrees. Do we have a consensus on doing that?” The Board came to a consensus. Chairman McVey continued “So Mr. Miller if you will see if you can get this back on the agenda for discussion again please?” Mr. Miller responded “Yes sir, we will.”

RECOGNITIONS

Commissioner Hall stated “I want to recognize the Board of Commissioners and thank them for the contribution sent to the Lymphoma Association in recognition of the passing of my youngest sister Chandra Renee Hall. Again, I thank you and my family thanks you.”

MESSAGE TO THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS &

CITIZENS OF CASWELL COUNTY

The clerk read the following letter:

“I have a letter dated August 6, 2020. To the Citizens of Caswell County and to the Board of Commissioners: It has been the honor of a lifetime, and a great blessing, to serve you on the Board of Commissioners over the last three and a half years. Together, we have accomplished so much especially for future generations. I am grateful to our county employees and administrative staff for your support, patience, wisdom, and for your service to the Citizens of Caswell County. Your kindness has sustained me throughout this journey of public service. I have full faith in the people of Caswell County and firmly believe, having been strengthened over the last few years, that our best days are ahead of us, and there is nothing that good heads prompted by good hearts cannot accomplish, together. These are challenging times, yes but we shall overcome. Despite bringing my part in this journey together, to a close, I am at peace to know that I have offered you my all, and have been there as your voice and advocate during the good times and bad. My only wish is that I would have liked to serve you longer and continue to devote my all to the county of my forefathers and mothers, and the county that I have fallen in love with time and time again and call home. To everything there is a season- as our faith teaches. This includes, a time to step aside. Our home deserves the best and brightest minds, the pure and noblest hearts, and strong and healthy, to bring her to our full potential. So it is time that I pass the torch. I wish you all Godspeed in all your future endeavors. You have my love, my support, and my prayers- no matter what. Effectively immediately, I hereby resign my office of Caswell County Commissioner At-Large. I pray our Heavenly Father will continue to bestow his best of blessings and uncompromising grace upon our great country, our beautiful state and our home- our beloved, Caswell County. Your Humble Servant and Fellow Citizen, Andrew Sterling Carter.”

ACTION ITEMS

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter to approve the agenda. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, and Owen voted in favor.)

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Jefferies moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter to approve the consent agenda. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, and Owen voted in favor.)

The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:

1. Approval of July 29, 2020 Special Meeting Minutes
2. Approval of August 3, 2020 Regular Meeting Minutes
3. Capital Project Ordinance – FY 2019-2020 Public Library Expansion Project

Amendment – Closeout Ordinance

1. Approval of FY 2019-2020 Budget Amendment #9

DEMOCRATIC PARTY COMMISSIONER RECOMMENDATION

Chairman McVey stated “I received this letter from the Democratic Party, I’ll read it to you. The Caswell County Democratic Party Executive Committee held a special meeting 8/12/2020 at 4:00 pm with the purpose to fill the interim position of Caswell County At-Large Commissioner and secondly, to secure a candidate by nomination and election by the CCDP Executive Board to run for the at-large seat in the November 2020 election. The result of both votes was candidate Kent Williamson, past Commissioner and local businessman; therefore, the Board recommends Kent Williamson to fill the interim at-large position.”

Commissioner Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to accept the Democratic Party’s recommendation and appoint Mr. Kent Williamson to fill the seat of Mr. Andrew Sterling Carter. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, and Owen voted in favor.)

Chairman McVey stated “Welcome aboard Mr. Williamson.”

OATH OF OFFICE

Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board, administered the following Oath of Office for County Commissioner to Mr. Norris Kent Williamson.

NORTH CAROLINA

CASWELL COUNTY OATH OF

 **COMMISSIONER OF CASWELL COUNTY**

I, **NORRIS KENT WILLIAMSON**,do solemnly swear (or affirm) that I will support and maintain the Constitution and laws of the United States, and the Constitution and laws of North Carolina not inconsistent therewith, and I will faithfully discharge the duties of my office as Commissioner of Caswell County, so help me God.

 S/Norris Kent Williamson \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

 **William E. Carter**

Subscribed and sworn to

before me this 17th day

of August, 2020.

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

Osmond Smith

Clerk to the Board \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Title

The Commissioners welcomed Commissioner Williamson aboard.

Commissioner Williamson stated “Thank you to all you Commissioners. If I may make a comment Chairman McVey.” Chairman McVey responded “Yes sir.” Commissioner Williamson continued “As I fulfill this office I take great pride in helping Caswell County in any way that I can. I also, as I stated to the Democratic Party, thank the Board of Education and the Board of Commissioners for moving forward as when I left office as commissioner to rebuild Bartlett Yancey and to develop a degree at PCC in order to help our kids. I would just like to personally thank each and every one of you for moving forward in that and I look forward to working with the citizens and the boards to even create jobs and also to help make the degree at PCC a success. Thank you.”

COUNTY & MUNICIPALS CARES ACT SPENDING PLANS

Hazard Incentive Pay for County Employees

Mr. Miller stated that as part of the packet the Board has CARES Act Plan submissions from the County, Town of Yanceyville and the Town of Milton. He stated that the one major change to the County’s plan is there is an extra $110,000 that has been added to the salary line and this coincides with the request made by the Board to account for all public safety employees as well as incorporate DSS employees. Mr. Miller stated that there are still questions waiting to be answered by the State on who is eligible and who is not and when those questions are answered their hazard pay for those employees will be implemented if the spending plans are approved by the Board of Commissioners. $110,000 hazard pay includes the Sheriff’s office, both sworn deputies and detention center, 911 employees, as well as DSS for Adult Protective Services and Child Protective Services employees because these were the employees identified in Mandy Cohen’s letter stated that these individuals were first responders as it relates to COVID-19 and COVID-19 issues. He added that the County was required by the State to allocate 25% of the CARES Act funding to the municipalities within the county. Mr. Miller stated that the municipalities are required to submit spending plans as well and added that county staff has met with the town leaders in Yanceyville and Milton to discuss their spending plans and how the CARES Act money could be spent and this result to the spending plans being submit to their boards and subsequently approved by their boards.

Commissioner Carter stated that he had a question asked by someone at the fire department and that was if any of the fire departments had purchased any special turnout gear for COVID-19 were they eligible to be reimbursed for that gear. Mr. Miller responded that some of the gear purchased by fire departments are eligible expenses but there is only a very limited amount of money that is available so before any fire departments or any departments spends any money they need to speak with Jennifer Eastwood, Barry Lynch or him. He stated that the county has to keep a handle on what the monies are being spent on and how the monies are being allocated. Commissioner Carter stated that he would have the one that had this question to get in touch with Mr. Miller.

Commissioner Owen asked that he believed the first payment to the County from the CARES Act was $617,000 and he asked if the CARES Act money was less this time. Mr. Miller responded that it was slightly over $400,000 this time. He added that the total received from the CARES Act is $1,056,472. Commissioner Owen asked if the money that had been spent on the whole county he wanted to know if this money was taken into account when the county gave the municipalities the 25%. Mr. Miller responded no and added that the way it will work is the county will give the municipalities the 25% and then they will reimburse the county for their portion of the public awareness campaign, specific testing that was done within the boundaries of their jurisdiction, and this was discussed with the municipalities and they are more than will to reimburse the county out of their allocation. Commissioner Owen stated that in the spending plan there is a probability of business and non-profit grants and he wanted to know if the county had already set requirements for those grants as well as an application for those grants. Mr. Miller responded that the economic developer is aware that the county plans to do this and she is currently working on the criteria for being able to roll out a plan like this. Commissioner Owen stated thank you.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter to approve the County & Municipals CARES Act Spending Plans and the Hazard Incentive Pay for County Employees. After a roll call vote the motion carried unanimous. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, Owen, and Williamson voted in favor.)

APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Heritage and Cultural Preservation Committee

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Williamson to appoint Selena Thornton as the Chamber of Commerce representative to the Heritage and Cultural Preservation Committee. The motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, Owen, and Williamson voted in favor.)

COVID-19 UPDATE

Mr. Miller informed the Board that Caswell County has 201 confirmed cases of COIVD-19 and many of these cases fall outside of the quarantine period so those cases would be considered recovered by the new guidelines set forth by NC DHHS and the CDC. He stated that the CDC recommends that if an individual is 10 days passed the date of the first symptom and the individual shows no symptoms for 48 hours, no fever and without medication, that the individual should be considered out of the quarantine period. Mr. Miller stated that using this criterion the County has 12 to 15 active cases and added that he had not spoken with the health director about these numbers so she may have a different take on how the numbers actually look. He stated that the County does continue to see new active cases and he asked everyone to follow the 3Ws: wear a mask, wait 6 feet, wash hands especially in the fall during the flu season. Mr. Miller stated that the state as a whole is downward trending or plateauing but there is still a lot of work to be done. He stated that the Health Department completed a community testing in Leasburg this past week.

LEGISLATIVE GOALS

Commissioner Owen stated that it is that time of the year again where the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners is taking up legislative goals. He asked that if any of the Commissioners has a goal that they would like to see the County pursue if they would email the goal or goals to him. He added that he would compile the goals and then at the next meeting the Board can make a decision on which goals to send in. Commissioner Owen stated that he knew that Broadband would be an issue that would be sent in. He stated that the goals have to be submitted no later than the end of September. Commissioner Owen stated that if any of the commissioners needed any guidance on how to write the goals to go to the NCACC website and pull up Legislative Goals which shows last year and the previous years’ goals.

Commissioner Oestreicher thanked Commissioner Owen for spearheading and managing this and stated that he would get his recommendation to Commissioner Owen shortly.

BOARDS & COMMITTEES ORIENTATION BOOKLET

Commissioner Owen stated that when the Board approved the policy on Boards and Committee included in the policy was a section that dealt with mandatory orientation for new board members and current board members. He stated that he along with the county manager worked on a Committees & Board Orientation Booklet and the Board should be receiving a copy of the booklet in the mail and it will be included on the next agenda for review. Commissioner Owen stated that he thought the booklet was done very well and that it will help the new members as well as those who have served for years because it covers a wide array of things that pertain to being on a board or committee. He asked the Board if it had any questions, concerns or comments to email those to the county manager and to him as they will be working on finalizing the final draft. Commissioner Owen stated that he would like to get this booklet out to the board members as soon as possible. He added that the clerk and he had worked on a new application for the boards and committees and that will be included in the packet. Commissioner Owen stated that that he heard complaints about the application being too long so the application has been condensed as well as added demographic information to make sure there is a diverse membership on the boards and committees and a district map. He stated that some committees require certain districts so this has been added to the application. Commissioner Owen stated that if the Board had any questions, concerns or comments to email those to the clerk and to him. He added that he and the county manager also has in the works a list of all the county’s boards and committees that includes information about the board, what the board does, to get out to the public to let them see what the boards do and hopefully spark an interest to become a member of the boards or committees.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he put together a copy of the commissioners’ district and offered to send it to Commissioner Owen. Commissioner Owen responded that it was included in the application but if it is something different he asked Commissioner Oestreicher to share what he has.

COUNTY MANAGER’S UPDATES

Landfill Wells

Mr. Miller informed the Board about an occurrence that occurred at the landfill. He stated that a while back the Board had authorized spending a sum of money to drill or bore new monitoring wells at the landfill to deal with some higher than usual levels of debris. Mr. Miller stated that this process began and as the equipment was being moved in they noticed some debris on the ground that had been uncovered which ended up being asbestos. He stated that the County’s landfill is not regulations for asbestos and the State was involved during this process and they required the County to begin an immediate cleanup of the asbestos. Mr. Miller stated that the removal process took about 2 days and he estimated that the cleanup process will cost between $40,000 and $50,000. He stated that all the State guidelines were followed during the process and was able to use currently budgeted monies for the cleanup from the professional services line so he thought the situation was now under control. Mr. Miller stated that it looked like from the condition of the bags and from the age of the debris it looks like the bags were placed in the landfill in the 1990s. He stated that he would be happy to answer any questions the Board may have.

Commissioner Hall stated that even though the county manager believes this asbestos was put into the landfill in the 90s he wanted to know was the county was going to do to make sure this does not happen again. He added that he hoped that there were procedures in place when people bring trash in to be dumped to make sure illegal items are not left behind. Mr. Miller responded that this was a very good point and he thanked Commissioner Hall for bringing this to his attention. He stated that first and foremost the landfill is closed and the County does not bury things at the landfill site or what the County refers to as the landfill site. Mr. Miller stated that staff does monitor trash that is being dumped and then the trash is then put in dumpsters. He added that there is signage to direct residents on what is approved and what is not approved and the trash is removed by the County’s waste hauling services and taken to another location. Commissioner Hall stated thank you.

Broadband Meeting

Mr. Miller informed the Board that a meeting has been organized with State Senator Berger’s Office, State Representative Meyer’s Office, the Broadband Infrastructure Office, Hometown Strong, the Town of Yanceyville, Caswell County, School Superintendent, and PCC President to meet in Raleigh this week to discuss the ongoing GREAT grant submission by Open Broadband and how they intend to comply or not comply with their grant award. He added that also discussions will be about how the county desperately needs internet services and how the Broadband Office can help Caswell to get adequate broadband. Mr. Miller asked if there were any questions and if questions come up later they can contact him later in the week as well.

Commissioner Hall stated that the County’s broadband access is grossly inadequate and this had been found to be true due to the pandemic and while it is good to have these meetings but the county manager needs to tell these individuals that Caswell County needs internet and the county needs it now. He stated that there is no need for excuses, new regulations about grant applications and added that he is sitting in the courthouse now for this meeting because he does not have internet at home. Commissioner Hall stated that the kids need to be thought about when it comes to their education and not having internet is a big handicap and the County cannot sit quietly by waiting for somebody to give the County something, the County needs to start demanding action and the county needs to demand it so that it gets their attention. Chairman McVey responded that he plans to be in that meeting himself on Thursday. Commissioner Hall stated that Chairman McVey can say this. Chairman McVey responded that he would be sure to get the message conveyed. Commissioner Hall stated thank you.

 COMMISSIONER COMMENTS

Commissioner Owen welcomed Commissioner Williamson and stated that he looks forward to working with him and was glad to have him aboard. He stated that he wanted to mention again because of what Commissioner Hall said and stated that he knew that many families will struggle with doing online schooling so he wanted to see how the Library could be available at certain times by appointment or whatever for the students to have internet and any other way the County would be able to provide some hotspots to the students. Commissioner Owen stated that he knew this would be a problem and he himself is having to switch to another internet provider because as a grandparent he will be helping his grandchildren with their schoolwork. He added that a lot of the citizens do not have this option. Commissioner Owen asked staff to look into a plan on how the Library and the gym at the Rec. center can help the students to get online to do their work. Commissioner Owen stated that there are many vacancies in the County’s Boards and Committees and he listed those vacancies and he asked the citizens if they would like to get involved this would be a great opportunity to do so.

Commissioner Carter welcomed Commissioner Williamson. He stated that he agreed with Commissioner Hall and Commissioner Owen and added that the kids will be doing remote learning from home for at least 9 weeks and it is very important to have internet so it needs to pushed to make sure all the citizens in Caswell County have internet services.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that something has been bothering him since the last meeting. He stated that he heard Commissioner Owen stated that money had to be taken out of fund balance to move the convenience centers and he thought there was about $900,000 in the Solid Waste Fund Balance and he wanted to know how Solid Waste is broke. Mr. Miller responded that over the last few years during the budget the Board determined that it wanted to decrease the Solid Waste fee for at least 3 years in a row to offset tax increases that county residents incurred. He added that through this process the Solid Waste fund balance was used pretty much every year and by doing this the total Solid Waste fund balance was decreased to the point where the County needs to rest of the operating money from Solid Waste to fund this current year’s operations. Mr. Miller stated that this current year the Board voted to slightly increase Solid Waste fees so he hopes this will affect the Solid Waste fund balance.

Commissioner Oestreicher welcomed Commissioner Williamson and added that it is nice to have him on board. He stated that he appreciated Commissioner Williamson’s experience coming back to the Board. Commissioner Oestreicher thanked Commissioner Owen’s pursuit for the Boards & Committees Orientation Booklet, listing, and the request for public participation. He expressed his deep concern to Mr. Miller for the lack of broadband in the County and implored him to be assertive in pursuing anything to resolve this matter. He stated that there is a tremendous need for this and COVID-19 makes it worse. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he knew that one of the State Senate candidates has expressed the need for better rural broadband and the County needs to see if it can tap into this potential because it is a desperate situation not only for school children but also for business development in the County. He added that these days internet is as essential as water and sewer to bring businesses into the county.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

There were no new announcements or upcoming events.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Carter to go into closed session to preserve attorney/client privilege (NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3)). After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, Owen, and Williamson voted in favor.)

REGULAR SESSION

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to go back into regular session. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, Owen, and Williamson voted in favor.)

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:52 a.m. Commissioner Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to adjourn. After a roll call vote, the motion carried unanimously. (Commissioners Carter, Hall, Jefferies, McVey, Oestreicher, Owen, and Williamson voted in favor.)

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Paula P. Seamster Rick McVey

Clerk to the Board Chairman

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