MINUTES – JUNE 3, 2019

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at the Caswell County Historic Courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, June 3, 2019. Members present: Rick McVey, Chairman, Jeremiah Jefferies, Vice Chairman, Sterling Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Steve Oestreicher and David Owen. Absent: William E. Carter. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager, and Brian Ferrell, County Attorney. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board, 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 the guests in the audience recited the Pledge of Allegiance.

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Commissioner Hall asked to remove Item #8 from the Agenda.

Commissioner Owen asked to add an item to the Agenda a quick discussion on Wednesday, June 5, 2019 Budget meeting.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked to add a Closed Session for a Personnel Committee Report to the Agenda.

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

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

The following items were included on the Consent Agenda:

A. Approval of Minutes of May 15, 2019 Special Meeting

 B. Approval of Minutes of May 20, 2019 Regular Meeting

PUBLIC HEARING –FY 2019-2020 BUDGET

Commissioner Hall moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to go into public hearing to receive comments on the FY 2019-2020 Budget. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Robert Schroeder came before the Board and stated that he had spoken with Commissioner Oestreicher on the tax opportunity at Hyco Lake and Commissioner Oestreicher suggested that he come before the Board and explain his ideas

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman this is the public hearing for the budget I think he wants to be heard during public comments maybe.”

Chairman McVey asked if anyone in the public would like to speak on the FY 2019-2020 budget.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to close the public hearing on the FY 2019-2020 Budget. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman McVey opened the floor to Public Comments.

Mr. Robert Schroeder stated that he had spoken with Commissioner Oestreicher on the tax opportunity at Hyco Lake and Commissioner Oestreicher suggested that he come before the Board and explain his ideas. He stated that this whole tax opportunity started with a conversation with Thomas Bernard and he suggested that I express the idea that I have. Mr. Schroeder stated that he has property on Hyco Lake and it was bought 13 years ago and at that time there was water there for the grandchildren to swim and play in. He added that Hurricane Matthew came through in October of 2016 and filled up a big portion of the tributaries at Hyco Lake as well as North Hyco Creek which is in Caswell County and then in April of 2017 there was a huge rain storm that added more silt to the lake and now a lot of property owners in this area cannot get their boats out anymore. Mr. Shroeder’s idea was to get Duke Energy to allow the residents to clean up that mud and silt and allow the residents to use the lake again but Duke stated that they are not allowing any cleaning up of the lake. He stated that Duke calls it dredging but the residents call it the excavation of the silt. Mr. Schroeder stated that this will help tax administration in many ways because a lot of people in Caswell County do not have lake property anymore so they are not paying the taxes that they would normally have to pay for lake property. He added that if these areas could be cleaned up the tax values would go back up but Duke needs to allow for the removal of the silt. Mr. Schroeder asked Leslie Pomaville why no dredging was allowed at Hyco Lake and she could not give an answer. He added that the residents would be paying for the cleaning up of the lake and not Duke Energy.

Commissioner Jefferies asked if Mr. Schroeder had gone before the Person-Caswell Lake Authority. Mr. Schroeder responded that he has gone before the Lake Authority several times but the Authority states that it is Duke’s lake. He added that the Authority is excited about it because it would be a revenue opportunity for them as well. Mr. Schroeder asked the Board and anyone present if they know anyone at Duke to talk to them about this opportunity.

Commissioner Owen asked Mr. Schroeder if he knew how many lots have lost lake frontage. Mr. Schroeder responded that he did not know but he does have a map that shows the information. He talked to Randy King who sent out an email about doing this and 35 people responded and 10 were in Caswell County. Commissioner Owen asked Mr. Schroeder to pass along any information that would be helpful to the Board.

Mr. Schroeder stated that there is a safety issue as well. He showed a picture of a silt bar in front of his property and last year a person was in a bass tournament and hit the silt bar and cut his forehead and ended up going to the hospital so the silt is a liability issue. Mr. Schroeder gave a recommendation of a company that can do this work and it will not destroy the 420 line.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that Mr. Schroeder had mentioned to him that he had studies done on the silt as far as any hazardous components. Mr. Schroeder responded that he has been working with Eric Morris with the North Carolina Division of Environmental Quality and he sent Mr. Schroeder a number of studies. One study is from the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research and it talks about the harm that sediment and silt has on the fish so this is an environmental reason to clean up the lake. Commissioner Oestreicher asked Mr. Schroeder if he has gone before the Person County Board of Commissioners. Mr. Schroeder responded no that he has not gone before them as a Board but he has spoken to several of them but he does plan to go before them. Commissioner Oestreicher asked Mr. Schroeder if he would leave his contact information with the clerk. Mr. Schroeder responded that he would.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman, on Mr. Schroeder’s remarks maybe it would be good to have both Boards meet maybe with some key individuals that know about the details that he shared including Mr. Schroeder and maybe a joint letter or resolution from both county boards would have an effect.” Commissioner Jefferies responded that both boards used to meet. Chairman McVey stated that this would be fine with him.

Commissioner Hall stated that in the interest of getting as much information as possible he suggested that the three boards meet, the Lake Authority and the two county boards. Commissioner S. Carter responded “Sure.” Chairman McVey asked for a proposed date. Commissioner Hall proposed that staff, the county manager or clerk, contact the boards to see when would be a convenient time to meet and get two or three dates and then get back with this Board and get something scheduled. Chairman McVey asked Mr. Miller if he had this information. Mr. Miller responded that he did.

Chairman McVey asked if anyone else would like to speak during Public Comments. With no other public comments Chairman McVey closed Public Comments.

RECOGNITIONS

There were no recognitions.

BUDGET MEETING INFORMATION

Commissioner Owen stated that he added this to the agenda so the Board could get some direction on how to proceed because there are some decisions to be made. He added that he would like to have some idea on how the Board is going to proceed with the budget so he could get prepared. Commissioner Owen stated that there are a couple of departments that have not been talked about. He also wanted to talk about the Commissioners travel allowance as well as the Economic Director’s budget went up $19,000 and the county manager is going to find out what that increase is because the Board only agreed to the salary. Commissioner Owen stated that he wanted to know how the Board plans to proceed on Wednesday night.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “We definitely need an updated spreadsheet. I am assuming y’all are still working on that to present to us. That way we can visualize it a little better and of course have it split up like it was in the previous spreadsheets where we can see personnel versus capital or what have you. That would be my only thing I would need to see.”

Chairman McVey stated that he thought the Board would start on Wednesday by taking the budget and breaking it down department by department. Commissioner Owen responded that this would be good with him.

Chairman McVey stated that the next budget meeting will be Wednesday, June 5th at 5:00 p.m.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked how much updated information would the Board get. He asked if the budget book would be redone. Mr. Miller responded that the budget book would not be redone but the Board will receive an updated capital list, an updated employee list as well as a few informational pieces but the budget will not be updated until the Board makes those decisions. Commissioner Oestreicher asked if the summary pages could be updated and use the same summary page numbers so they can be inserted in the budget books. Mr. Miller responded that this could be done.

COUNTY MANAGER’S UPDATES

Report of Concern

Mr. Miller stated that the County received a report of concern on the Casville Convenience Center Site. He stated that he took pictures at the site and gave the Board a copy of those pictures. Mr. Miller stated that staff went out the same day the report of concern was received and there was furniture piled up in the back corner and there remnants of furniture in the compactor which is likely the reason why the compactor stopped working on Saturday. He added that none of this had to do with the concern that was received; the concern was about the site not being open. Mr. Miller stated that he noticed that the report of concern was sent at around 9:30 p.m. and all the convenience center sites are open 7:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. He added that he had the Solid Waste Director to follow up with the owner to see when the center closed that night and it was at 7:00 p.m.

Teramore Development

Mr. Miller informed the Board that he had talked to Teramore Development and they have transferred the ownership of the house to Preservation North Carolina and Preservation has either taken or allowed the removal of interior walls, molding, and siding out of the house which only leaves the foundation, roof and exterior walls. He added that demolition is scheduled for Wednesday or Thursday of this week.

Farmer Lake

Mr. Miller informed the Board that Farmer Lake received a direct hit from a tornado on Friday, May 31st. He gave the Board several pictures of the damage that was caused by this storm. Mr. Miller stated that the county has insurance on the fishing pier, the rails, and picnic shelter but there is a $1,000 deductible. He added that the NCACC Risk Pool will be in the County today to inspect the damage and NCACC has notified Sedgwick.

Commissioner Oestreicher reiterated that there was an employee out there during the storm but no one was hurt during the storm. Mr. Miller responded that there was an employee in the entry house and saw the funnel cloud coming and took cover until the storm passed. Commissioner Oestreicher asked if the removal of the debris would be covered by insurance. Mr. Miller responded that he could not say but he is hopeful that insurance will cover it.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

 A. 112th NCACC Annual Conference – August 22 – 24, 2019 – Guilford County, NC

Commissioner Hall stated that he had the opportunity to attend the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Board of Directors meeting this past weekend and one of the things that was done was to review the budget for next year that will be presented to the delegation at the Annual Conference. He added that included in the budget was an expansion of the Manager’s Fellows Program and starting next year the Association will sponsor at least 10 recent MPA graduates to work in counties as manager trainees and he hoped that the Board would consider requesting one of these 10 individuals. Commissioner Hall stated that another item that was discussed was the Medicaid Trust Fund in North Carolina. He added that Caswell is in the Cardinal MCO and Cardinal has over $200 million in its Medicaid Trust Fund and these funds are restricted and cannot be spent right now and there are a lot of mental health issues and this needs to be discussed further. Commissioner Hall stated that about 2 years ago the Albert Coates Building in Raleigh was destroyed by fire and this building was owned by the Association and the League of Municipalities. He added that the Association has also purchased space in the Forum Center in Raleigh which was also destroyed by the fire. Commissioner Hall stated that this past weekend staff started moving back into the Forum Center but there will need to be decisions made on how the develop the Forum Center and this may come up at the Annual Conference. He added that the Albert Coates building may be demolished and redeveloped in some way.

Commissioner Hall stated that the NCACC Annual Conference will be at the Grandover this year and there will not be enough rooms to accommodate the conference. He added the rooms were sold out the first day this was announced and there will not be a vendor room.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Do we have the go ahead to register for that? How many on this Board, I was curious were planning to go that because I think I would like to go this year. I just did not know where we stood on registration and budget; I know we have to discuss that item.” Commissioner Owen responded that this would be a new budget item but he was planning to go on Friday and Saturday. Commissioner S. Carter continued “But we currently don’t have travel money correct?” Commissioner Owen responded that this was correct. Commissioner S. Carter asked “So would we have to do an amendment or where are we standing on that?” Commissioner Hall responded that the Board would have to look at the budget for next year since the conference is in August.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Oestreicher moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to go into Closed Session to consider the compensation, terms of appointment and performance of an individual public officer (NGS 143-318.11(a)(6)) and. The motion carried unanimously.

REGULAR SESSION

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

Commissioner S. Carter recorded the remainder of the meeting.

DISCUSSION ON BUDGET MEETING

Commissioner Owen entertained a discussion about what the Board was expecting from the budget meeting Wednesday and asked how the Board would like to proceed.

Commissioner Hall stated that he expected an overview and commented that staffing would be difficult and wasn’t sure if the need would be resolved right away in relation to other budget commitments, a tax increase and the available fund balance.

Commissioner Owen stated that money is still owed on the library.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he wanted raises for employees and commented that the tax payers hold up the county and to keep that in mind. He stated there were still employees that make less than $25,000 a year and he would not support a budget this year unless there was support for county employees.

Commissioner Hall stated that the present dilemma was staffing and recruiting and felt strongly about the need for a position in Information Technology. He continued that it would not be a top notch person and that this all goes back to fund balance. He commented that hires need to be paid at the going rate or else a qualified person would not be obtained. He also mentioned the point of growing our own employees and the need to support teachers, nurses and social workers for the school system in order to get quality individuals.

Commissioner Owen commented that he inquired about an additional pay study from the Finance Department and that it would require around $1,500,000 to get employees up to the median salaries.

Chairman McVey stated that the Board needed to do something about the software packages for the Tax and Finance Departments. He agreed that there was a great need for an additional position in Information Technology and that the county would not get out of its present bind without supporting that department. He suggested that the discussion continue Wednesday evening at the budget meeting, to which the Board agreed.

ADJOURNMENT

At 10:08 a.m. Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Paula P. Seamster Rick McVey

Clerk to the Board Chairman

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