MINUTES – APRIL 15, 2019

The Caswell County Board of Commissioners met in regular session at the Caswell County Historic Courthouse in Yanceyville, North Carolina at 6:30 p.m. on Monday, April 15, 2019. Members present: Rick McVey, Chairman, Jeremiah Jefferies, Vice Chairman, Sterling Carter, William E. Carter, Nathaniel Hall, Steve Oestreicher and David Owen. Also present: Bryan Miller, County Manager, Brian Ferrell, County Attorney and Luke Burris representing The Caswell Messenger. Paula P. Seamster, Clerk to the Board, recorded the minutes.

MOMENT OF SILENT PRAYER

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

APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment to the Consent Agenda, at our last meeting, April 1st, we reconvened out of Closed Session, I was the Commissioner that took the minutes of the reconvene meeting and I those to submit to our clerk so if we could include these as an amendment to the Consent Agenda.”

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

The following item was included on the Consent Agenda:

A. Approval of Minutes of April 1, 2019 Regular Meeting

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Vice Chairman Jefferies opened the floor to Public Comments.

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

“Good evening Mr. Vice Chairman and your fellow Board members. My name is John Claggett and I reside at 108 Jaye Lane, Providence, NC. I’m requesting that my public comments be recorded verbatim. I’m here this evening to ask this Board publicly why the public can’t get public information from this county in a timely manner. As you all know or should know if you checked your email dated April 10th the request concerns PCC Transportation for students. There was information requested in January. Some of this information was answered and some vaguely answered in February. The vaguely answered questions were due to not enough data to provide those answers. There weren’t any transportation utilization studies done, thus zero accurate information provided to this Board at the time you voted. The estimated figures presented to this Board for this program were greatly inflated. Mr. Vice Chairman how many students are utilizing this PCC advertised “free” service. How has this PCC advertised “free” service affected the Caswell CATS enterprise fund? Remember, this Board voted unanimously last September for a student buy-in, while county staff emphasized how any amount would be prohibitive to the students. Mr. Vice Chairman again what is the average daily number of students utilizing this service and what impact has the student buy-in had on the Caswell CATS enterprise fund? Why would the county not know or track that type of information? The Courier-Times reported that “all three bus routes are being provided daily to and from Person and Caswell County at no cost”. PCC’s website states “Piedmont Community College (PCC) and Caswell County Area Transportation System (CATS) have partnered to provide three (3) bus routes from Caswell County to Person County on weekdays at no cost to students!” On the CATS webpage the question is asked if there’s a fee to ride the CATS vans. The answer is “If you are eligible for services through any agency there is no cost but if you are not eligible under one of these programs you can still ride with CATS for a reasonable fee.” Was the student buy-in not considered a reasonable fee? According to the minutes of September 4, 2018 this Board unanimously thought it was. Another question is what services does CATS offer? Included in the answer is “We are not able to provide one on one service. We must have several passengers interested in a new service before we can offer it.” So it appears gentlemen that what you voted for last September was never implemented accurately. Maybe this is why public information requested is so vaguely provided, if at all. So, as a Senior Citizen Disabled Combat Veteran, can I ride to a medical appointment for free daily? We all know the answer to that. Mr. Vice Chairman, I would suggest that you and your fellow Board members dust off your copy of the Caswell County Fraud, Waste, and Abuse Policy and re-familiarize yourselves with it. I would also suggest that you periodically investigate if your Board direction to County staff is being accurately carried out. Thank you.”

Ms. Felicia Richmond came before the Board and gave the following statement:

“Hi my name is Ms. Felicia Richmond, the farm that I am tending in Caswell County is Sellars Farms, 6859 Burton Chapel Road, the question that I have is in your Clerk’s office my grandfather who is Taz Williamson, Taz Williamson was left 200 acres of land and the owner of the plantation was Royal George Williamson. The book of the will that left that land is missing after we were doing studies on it, I would like to know how can we get that back and what is Caswell County Planning on doing about that and that they know that it has happened and that it is down written since that was my grandfather and I am the oldest grandchild. I would like some reparation in some kind of way to know how the Daniel’s get on this property and how did he get it between my grandmother and he was the attorney, what happened with that and I would like for this Board to find that Clerk’s book and we can see what happens from Caswell County.” Vice Chairman asked Ms. Richmond to get with the county manager on this.

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

RECOGNITIONS

Commissioner Owen recognized the entire County’s Telecommunicators and 911 Staff because this week is Telecommunicators Week. He added that we appreciate what they do; they are on the front lines of a call and many times are giving help to those victims of whatever the situation may be so he wanted to take a minute to recognize this group.

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW

Commissioner Hall moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to recess the meeting of the Caswell County Board of Commissioners in order for the Board to sit as the Board of Equalization and Review. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Mr. Chairman I believe we need to be sworn in before we proceed with this. We need to be sworn in as the Board of E & R before proceeding.”

Mr. Ferrell stated “This is one of the unique times that you have a dual role as Commissioners, you will also sit as the Board of Equalization and Review and the clerk is prepared with your oath as members of the Board of Equalization and Review this evening as you get started.”

Ms. Paula Seamster, Clerk to the Board, administered the following Oaths of Office to the Caswell County Board of Equalization and Review.

OATH OF

BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW

Ido 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 a member of the Caswell County Board of Equalization and Review, and that I will not allow my actions as a member of the Board of Equalization and Review to be influenced by personal or political friendships or obligations, so help me God.

S/Rick McVey \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ S/Jeremiah Jefferies \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Rick McVey, Chairman** **Jeremiah Jefferies, Vice-Chairman**

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

**Sterling Carter William E. Carter**

S/Nathaniel Hall **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_** S/Steve Oestreicher **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**Nathaniel Hall Steve Oestreicher**

S/David J. Owen **\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_**

**David J. Owen**

Subscribed and sworn to

before me this 15th day

of April, 2019.

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

Paula P. Seamster

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

Title

Mr. Thomas Bernard, Tax Director, was also sworn in by the Clerk to the Board.

Mr. Bernard stated “Good evening Mr. Chairman and Commissioners, I have just one item that I have on the agenda. Dr. Strange just came before the meeting and we were sitting here talking, he’s got a piece of property, Tap Map 31 Parcel 121 9.74 acres that he would like to contest the value. I told him we would look at it. He’s telling me it doesn’t perk. We will look at it and render a decision at the next meeting or a recommendation. If that’s okay Dr. Strange.”

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman could we ask what the gentlemen’s first name is?” Mr. Bernard responded “Dr. Carlton Strange.” Commissioner S. Carter continued “Carlton.” Mr. Bernard responded “Yes sir.”

Mr. Bernard stated “That is the only one I have sir.”

Vice Chairman Jefferies asked “Does the public have any questions for Mr. Bernard?”

Mr. Bernard stated “I talked with Dr. Strange and we are going to go and look at the property and he says it is over next to the quarry and everything, with a lot of rock and won’t perk, maybe have to get Environmental Health in to look at it to see if it won’t perk and we will go from there.”

Vice Chairman Jefferies asked “Okay, nobody else signed in?” Mr. Bernard responded “No, sir.” Vice Chairman Jefferies continued “Okay, I need a motion to recess.”

Mr. Ferrell stated “Mr. Chairman you have two meetings for the Board of Equalization and Review this year. Of course, tonight is your first meeting and you’ve got one more meeting which will be your first meeting in May and taxpayers that would like to appeal the valuation of their personal or real property under their ownership or control have until the date of your adjournment which is your first meeting in May, May 6th to file an appeal just like you have heard tonight. You can appear in person to file an appeal or you can file a written appeal and the last day for that this year will be May 6th at this Board’s meeting at 9:30 in the morning in this room and of course as long as any taxpayer has a timely appeal just like we have one on the agenda now the Board can decide that after its adjournment date but you can’t accept new appeals after that date.”

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner S. Carter to recess the Board of Equalization and Review until Monday, May 6, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. The motion carried unanimously.

PUBLIC HEARING

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner S. Carter that the Board enter into a public hearing to receive comments on the addition of Kennel Regulations to the existing Animal Welfare and Control Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

Ms. Ann King of 6452 NC Highway 119, Mebane came before the Board and stated that she would like to address a few of the additions to the proposed ordinance. She added that it is her understand that this ordinance is wanted to be put into place to prevent puppy mills coming to Caswell County but she has not met anyone that can give her the definition of a puppy mill. Ms. King stated that the Humane Society of the United States defines a puppy mill as dog breeding operations that put profit above the welfare of dogs. She added that the dogs spend 24 hours a day, seven days a week in small cages with little to no human contact or the outside world. Ms. King stated that in the existing ordinance in Section 3 it already requires adequate food, shelter and water. Ms. King stated that if there was a puppy mill in Caswell she could not understand why they would not already be in direct violation of the current ordinance. She added that there is a section on a high volume retailer which is defined as any person who sells, resells, or transfers of ownership of xx or more of dogs or cats within a calendar year including sells, resells or transfers of ownership to pet stores, breeders, kennels, dealers etc. Ms. King stated that the USDA Animal Welfare Act considers a pet retailer as anyone is selling pets sight unseen to buyers at retail must to licensed however if the buyers view the animals in person prior to purchase this person may qualify for an exemption. She added that she works as a vet tech in Burlington and they see more animal abuse from private owners than they do breeders. Ms. King stated that she feels like the additions to the ordinance are not targeting puppy mills but is targeting breeders, hunting kennels, and any who has x amount of dogs. She added that she would like to see this document revised and to follow more of the standards of the USDA as well as neighboring states. Ms. King stated that there is an addition of a high volume private kennel which maintains xx number of dogs. She added that if the Board assumes that a certain numbers refers to a retailer than a kennel can have more dogs than a retailer. Ms. King stated that she does not think the number defines what a true commercial breeder is. She added that not every breeder or dog person is a bad person but not every one of them is good and should the Board passed these additions into the ordinance she asked who the Board thought would sign up first and she responded that it would be a majority of the people in the audience. Ms. King stated that a puppy mill owner will not sign up and if they don’t sign up the county will not have anything to go against them but the county already has an ordinance that states they are in violation of the current ordinance. She added that if the county has someone that will enforce the ordinance that is already in the books a puppy mill can be prevented because they are not getting adequate food and water. Ms. King stated that most dogs are breed for the betterment of the breed of the person’s choice. She added that her breed of choice is a rough collie and a smooth collie and she has dogs that have become certified service dogs to help those with disabilities. Ms. King stated that she feels like whoever is behind the additions to the ordinance is nothing but pure anti-breeder, pure anti-kennel.

Mr. Eric Chandler of 110 Ray A. Chandler Road stated that he is a hunter and he raises beagles for himself. He added that he feels like the additions to the ordinance are trying to force him to pay taxes on dogs and he does not think he should have to pay this because he is doing something that he loves to do. Mr. Chandler stated that there are people making money off of their puppies but he is not making money off of his puppies because he keeps them for himself for his enjoyment, for his son’s enjoyment, for his brother’s enjoyment and for his daddy’s enjoyment. He added that if the Board wants to push something that does not need to be pushed he will fight the Board on this. Mr. Chandler stated that the ordinance needs to be left as is and the county needs to go after the puppy mills because that is who needs to be gone after.

Mr. Mark Brann of Leasburg stated that he has lived in this county for 56 years and has raised beagles all his life. He asked the Board members to really think these additions through because he is a hunter and not a dog breeder, he does breed his own dogs and from time to time his numbers are up because he is moving dogs in and out due to the age of the dogs and puppies are raised to take those dogs’ place. Ms. Brann asked the Board to take this into consideration when the additions are being considered.

Mr. Reginald Coleman of Casville stated that he wanted to thank the Board for allowing him this opportunity to speak and he did not want to piggyback on what has already been said and he agreed with what has been said but he thinks there should be a cap put on this so it will not affect the hunters and he thinks the cap should be at least 30 dogs because no hunter has over 30 dogs.

Dr. Mitch Foster of 1841 Bethesda Church Road stated that he is a veterinarian in the county and he came to speak on behalf of the ordinance that is before the Board. He added that he was here a month ago to present the additions to the Board and at that time there were several commissioners that had concerns about the numbers that were presented were too high and wanted to lower the numbers. He reminded the Board of the puppy mill scare in January of 2018 and here was a lot of outrage throughout the county and there was a lot of concern by the commissioners that something needed to be done. Dr. Foster stated that the Board is the compass of the county and it decides the direction that the county will go in and based upon these decisions it impacts the county’s image. He added that the Board is also the captain of the ship and as captain it will have to make hard decisions but the right decision has to be made and it cannot allow the thoughts and influences of a few people disrupt where the county needs to go. Dr. Foster urged the Board to strongly consider the additions to the ordinance. He added that the APS suggests that the number for a retail breed should be set at 12 and the same number for a private kennel. Dr. Foster stated that these additions give the animal control officer and investigators the authority to inspect whereas the previous ordinance did not do that and there was no means to punish these people. He added that if a breeder fails to register then other fines fall in place. Dr. Foster stated that he understands that there are some concerns about the $50 registration fee but most people who have these kennels spend more money on an individual dog. He urged the Board to strongly consider the additions to the ordinance.

Vice Chairman Jefferies stated that that was all who signed up to speak and he asked if anyone else would like to speak.

Ms. Ann King came back before the Board and stated that in reference to what Dr. Foster was speaking about in Pelham about the puppy mill was determined not to be a puppy mill based upon the animal control officers and investigators and this was in the newspaper. She added that there is another section in the revised statement about how each and every dog in the kennel should be provided a toy and she did not think this was a good idea because the dog will be at the veterinary clinic with an obstruction from chewing up the toy. Ms. King stated that Dr. Foster has a point but she does not necessarily agree with this point because the county does have a leg to stand on with the current ordinance. She asked if the kennel is not registered how the county will find out about this kennel.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman may I ask the lady where the toy reference is?” Ms. King showed the section to Commissioner Carter.

Mr. Gary Chandler from Yanceyville stated that he is 62 years old and he does a lot of rabbit hunting. He stated that he did not know what a kennel or puppy mill is but if a person keeps their dogs on a concrete pad with a top over it, water, food and rabies shots every year it did not see the reason to knock all the hunters down for a mistake in Pelham on the puppy mill. Mr. Chandler stated that the county has the rules and regulations now that will shut the puppy mills down. He felt like the Board is taking all of this out on the hunters and he has been in Caswell all his life and he did not want to go through any of this. Mr. Chandler stated that he knew all the hunters that are present today and they take care of their dogs and you can go and inspection their lots and nothing will be found. He thinks this is getting out of hand. Mr. Chandler stated that he has grandkids that like to hunt and he does not want to see this mess that up and he asked the Board to allow animal control to do their job.

Ms. Jo Sicz of the County Home Road stated that the woman that had the puppy mill last year is advertising puppies again on her Facebook page.

Mr. Sammy Cobb of 215 WP Cobb Road, Yanceyville, stated that the hunters would like to have the number 30 put into the ordinance for the amount of dogs. He asked the hunters that agreed with the number 30 if they would stand up. (The majority of the room stood up.)

(At 7:05 p.m. Chairman McVey entered the meeting.)

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Hall to end the public hearing on the addition of kennel regulations to the existing Animal Welfare and Control Ordinance. The motion carried unanimously.

Vice Chairman asked the county manager to talk about the numbers that should be listed in the ordinance.

Mr. Miller stated that the Board has heard both sides of this issue today and the Board has heard the hunters to say that they would like to see the number of 30 dogs for the high volume kennel but he was not sure on a number for the high volume retailer which would determine how many dog could be sold by an individual every year because this has not been discussed. He added that this is a key to the ordinance as far as how many animals to determine who is regulated and who is not.

Vice Chairman Jefferies asked if this item could be put off until the next meeting. Mr. Miller responded that this is up to the Board but it would be fine to do that.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he has heard the number 30 and any number above that would be considered a high volume kennel but he wanted to know what the recommended number would be for a retailer selling animals. Mr. Miller responded that APS recommends 12 but in his discussion with other hunters they would like to see that number a little higher. He added that there is no good, hard, fast number. Mr. Miller stated that the Board would have to determine if the number set will do any good if the number is set too high but at the same time if you don’t it will over regulate the people in the county who have been using their hunting animals for years so there needs to be a delicate balance. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that one dogs could easily have 9 puppies so 12 seems low to him. Mr. Miller responded that he thinks the number proposed now is 20.

Commissioner Owen stated that in his research Virginia, West Virginia and Tennessee the average number is 20. He stated that he agrees with many that spoke tonight but he did not want to see the county hinder the ownership of dogs and selling dogs. Commissioner Owen stated that the county needs to be very careful when setting this number to prohibit people from having recreational breeds.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked the dog owners present if they would agree that 20 is a good number for resell. There was no response. Mr. Gary Chandler responded that hunters are not in the business of selling dogs. He added that they are not breeders but they do trade amongst themselves and they did not want to be put in the position of setting this number.

Mr. Mark Brann stated that if he is a hunter and if 2 of his dogs have 8 puppies he would be over that limit. Chairman McVey asked what would be a good number. Mr. Brann stated that he did not want to see any number because every hunter could have 15 to 20 dogs and not all of these dogs will work out. He added that these changes are happening because of one incident.

Ms. Ann King stated that a high volume retailer could have up to 9 litters a year. She added that each dog is different on how many puppies it could have. She added that more research needs to be done before putting a number on the high volume retailer. Ms. King stated that one person that did wrong should change everything for the ones that do everything right.

Dr. Mitch Foster stated that the purpose of the ordinance is not to restrict how many dogs you have but you need to be registered the kennel and it is the same thing for the high volume retailers. He added that with this ordinance animal control will be able to inspect the property to make sure everything is humane. Ms. King responded that this right if they are registered. Dr. Foster stated that if the individual does not registered and are caught they can be fined.

Commissioner Owen suggested tabling this issue so more research can be done. He stated that he understands some of the things being said and he did not want to punish the people who are doing everything right. Commissioner Owen stated that it is already in the ordinance that we can fine people if things are wrong.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies to table this issue until the Board wants to take action.

Commissioner Hall stated that the Board did not really have anything to table because no one has proposed any action because it is just a public hearing. He did suggest that within the next couple of meeting the Board will need to take action.

Mr. Ferrell stated that a motion to table is a legal motion. He added that it is on the agenda for a public hearing but you do have to take any action.

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

RECESS

The Board took a brief recess.

PUBLIC HEARING – ADOPTION OF THE CASWELL COUNTY CODE OF ORDINANCES

Commissioner Jefferies moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen that the Board enter into a public hearing to receive comments on the adoption of the Caswell County Code of Ordinances. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman McVey asked if anyone would like to speak during the public hearing.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher to end the public hearing on the adoption of the Caswell County Code of Ordinances. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ferrell stated that unlike the last public hearing this public hearing precedes what he hopes the Board will consider taking a vote on tonight which is the adoption of the ordinance enacting the Caswell County Code. He added that this has been a multi-year project headed by the county manager and he added that he participated in this as well to update all of the existing county ordinances for current legal compliance in conjunction with Municode who conducted the review and introduced the codification outline that is presented.

Mr. Miller reiterated what the county attorney said. He added that this process was a true team effort with Mr. Ferrell working on it quite a bit, he spent quite a bit of time on it, and Ms. Seamster has spent quite a bit of time on it as well as the Emergency Services Director, the previous Solid Waste Director and a lot of people weighed on the process of codification. Mr. Miller thanked all the department heads that participating in this process especially Brian Ferrell and Paula Seamster because it has been a big undertaking.

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner S. Carter to adopt the Caswell County Code of Ordinances. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Ferrell stated that since this received a unanimously vote there is no need for a second reading so this Code of Ordinance is now in force in Caswell County.

AN ORDINANCE ADOPTING AND ENACTING A NEW CODE FOR CASWELL COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA; PROVIDING FOR THE REPEAL OF CERTAIN ORDINANCES NOT INCLUDED THEREIN; PROVIDING A PENALTY FOR THE VIOLATION THEREOF; PROVIDING FOR THE MANNER OF AMENDING SUCH CODE; AND PROVIDING WHEN SUCH CODE AND THIS ORDINANCE SHALL BECOME EFFECTIVE.

BE IT ORDAINED BY THE CASWELL COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS:

Section 1. The Code entitled "Code of Caswell County, North Carolina," published by Municipal Code Corporation, consisting of chapters 1 through 32, each inclusive, is adopted.

Section 2. All ordinances of a general and permanent nature enacted on or before August 6, 2018, and not included in the Code or recognized and continued in force by reference therein, are repealed.

Section 3. The repeal provided for in section 2 hereof shall not be construed to revive any ordinance or part thereof that has been repealed by a subsequent ordinance that is repealed by this ordinance.

Section 4. Unless another penalty is expressly provided, every person convicted of a violation of any provision of the Code or any ordinance, rule or regulation adopted or issued in pursuance thereof shall be punished by a fine of not more than $500.00, and shall also be subject to a civil penalty not to exceed $50.00 per day per violation to be recovered by the county in a civil action in the nature of debt if the offender does not pay the penalty within a prescribed period of time after he has been cited for violation of the ordinance. Any person violating an ordinance regulating the operation or parking of vehicles shall be responsible for an infraction and shall be required to pay a penalty of not more than fifty dollars ($50.00). Each act of violation and each day upon which any such violation shall continue or occur shall constitute a separate offense. The penalty provided by this section, unless another penalty is expressly provided, shall apply to the amendment of any Code section, whether or not such penalty is reenacted in the amendatory ordinance. In addition to the penalty prescribed above, the \* may pursue other remedies such as abatement of nuisances, injunctive relief and revocation of licenses or permits.

Section 5. Additions or amendments to the Code when passed in such form as to indicate the intention of the Board of Commissioners to make the same a part of the Code shall be deemed to be incorporated in the Code, so that reference to the Code includes the additions and amendments.

Section 6. Ordinances adopted after August 6, 2018 that amend or refer to ordinances that have been codified in the Code shall be construed as if they amend or refer to like provisions of the Code.

Section 7. This ordinance shall become effective April 15, 2019.

Passed and adopted by the Caswell County Board of County Commissioners this 15th day of April, 2019.

S/Rick McVey\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Rick McVey,

Chairman, Board of Commissioners

Attested:

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

Paula P. Seamster

Clerk to the Board

FY 2019-2020 BUDGET PRESENTATION

Mr. Miller stated that the Board is required to hold a public hearing on the Budget and he suggested holding that public hearing on June 3rd. He also proposed that the adoption of the budget be no later than June 17th. Mr. Miller informed the Board about the highlights of the budget. He stated that the total recommended General Fund budget is $21,343,654 which represents a .93% increase from FY 2019. Mr. Miller stated that ad valorem tax revenue represents approximately 49% of the General Fund revenue and the county is projecting a .03% increase compared to last year’s budgeted ad valorem revenues. He stated that the total taxable property in the county is estimated at $1,830,951,513 which is comprised of real and personal values of $1,730,532,158 and Utilities of $100,419,355. Mr. Miller stated that 1 penny on the tax rate generates approximately $147,840 and the collection rate that these figures are based on is 98.4%. He stated that the county is expecting $4,310,748 in sales tax revenue of which $2,173,808 is unrestricted and $2,136,940 is restricted. Mr. Miller stated that other key changes in the revenue is the budget includes $682,370 of fund balance which will leave a projected fund balance of 25.31% and an unrestricted fund balance of 15.24%. He added that with construction projects such as the Bartlett Yancey High School the Caswell County Building Inspections Department is projecting a $90,000 increase in revenues. Mr. Miller then moved on to expenditures and informed the Board that several new positions have been requested but none of them have been included in the FY 2019-2020 budget but these positions will be discussed over the next couple of weeks. He added that the Department of Social Services has an increase of $146,082 due to the mandates by the State. Mr. Miller stated that the Health Department will have a $99,118 decrease due to an increased Medicaid Cost Allocation. He stated that the Sheriff Department requested patrol cars and that is included in the budget. Mr. Miller stated that there is no COLA or salary adjustment included in the budget but this will be talked about during the budget workshops. He stated that the county will have an 11.1% increase or $208,955 contingent upon the Caswell County Board of Commissioners for health insurance. Mr. Miller stated that the Board of Education has requested an increase of 18% or $555,000 but is not included in the recommended budget. He added that Piedmont Community College has requested an increase of 24.9% or $151,932 but is not included in the recommended budget. Mr. Miller concluded by saying that he believes the outlook for FY 2019-2020 is bright with growth and many new exciting projects occurring but it is still imperative to continue to identify and create ways of doing business and providing services to the citizens.

Commissioner Owen asked when the county manager projects to have an increase in taxes for the high school project. Mr. Miller responded probably within one year.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman, just a quick question, for the vehicles how many vehicles is that for the Sheriff Department?” Mr. Miller responded that the Sheriff Department requested 12 vehicles. Commissioner S. Carter continued “And those are included in the budget?” Mr. Miller responded that they are included in the budget.

Commissioner W. Carter asked what the 18% increase for the Board of Education is for. Mr. Miller responded that there was an additional $100,000 in operational expenses and $455,000 in capital. Commissioner W. Carter stated that he had heard that the teachers would be receiving a 9% raise from the State.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if the $300,000 for teacher supplement was included or not included in the budget. Mr. Miller responded that it is not included in the budget.

Commissioner W. Carter asked if EMS requested an ambulance. Mr. Miller responded that EMS did request ambulances but they are not included in the budget.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman I know that in the budget message it said the final calculation of fund balance based on end of year expenditures, etc. what is our current roughly calculated fund balance, the number and not the percentage?” Mr. Miller responded that after March’s calculation the county is projecting at year’s end at 27%. Commissioner S. Carter continued “And I am asking for the dollar amount of that.” Mr. Miller asked Gwen if he had the dollar amount. Ms. Gwen Vaughn stated that it is projected at $7.7 million at the end of June 30th which is 27%. Commissioner S. Carter stated “Thank you.”

HEALTH INSURANCE

Mr. Miller stated that at the last Commissioners meeting the Board had a presentation from Gallagher which was about NCHIP self-insured pool and it is back before the Board for approval. He added that this will be an 11.1% increase in insurance premiums. Mr. Miller stated the current broker offered a 24% increase in insurance premiums.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “With the NCHIP does the plan change?” Mr. Miller responded that the plan would not change. Commissioner S. Carter continued “And a follow up of a general question Mr. Chairman and maybe Ms. Satterfield can help answer this better, are our employees generally satisfied with what they currently have? Are there any features at this point in time we may need to consider?” Ms. Satterfield responded that the employees seem to be satisfied with the 2 options with 65% of the employees on the base plan and 35% on the enhanced plan.

Commissioner Owen stated that he did not want to be a 24% increase and if the county can get the same plan with an 11% increase it is a no brainer.

Commissioner W. Carter asked if other insurance companies were checked into. Mr. Miller responded yes.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Mr. Chairman I would like to ask the manager, have you been in communications with any of the other local government who are currently in that program and received feedback from them?” Mr. Miller responded that he has not directly spoken to those local governments. He added that the county had to be accepted into that pool and the other local governments are expecting a lot less than the 11.1% increase.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if the county was going to pass the increase on to the employees. Mr. Miller responded that this would be discussed during the budget meetings. Commissioner W. Carter stated that he did not think this increase should be passed on to the employees because the county is losing employees left and right.

Commissioner S. Carter moved, seconded by Commissioner Owen to direct the county manager to pursue NCHIP. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Miller stated that for the record that this will mean that the county will be changing brokers from Mark III to Gallagher.

APPROVAL OF AUDIT CONTRACT FOR

THOMPSON, PRICE, SCOTT, ADAMS & CO., PA.

Mr. Miller stated that the county approves an audit contractor about every four years. He added that the Board has the audit contract from the current auditor Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co. Mr. Miller stated that this group has been the auditor for Caswell County for the last 3 years and there is no increase in the contract. He added that he would like to see included in the contract that the full audit be presented to the full Board before being submitted to the Local Government Commission.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked if other auditors were looked at. Mr. Miller responded that the last auditor dropped the county and we sent out an RFP out to the market and there is only a very small group that still does this for small government entities. He added that he would be happy to send a proposal out to receive bids if that is what the Board would like. Commissioner Oestreicher asked who does the audits for Rockingham County and Stokes County. Mr. Miller responded that he was not sure who did their audits. Commissioner Oestreicher stated that his experience with audits is familiarity breeds undesirable results. He added that he would be interested in at least hearing from other auditors. Mr. Miller responded that this could be done if that is a directive from the Board it can be put out for an RFP.

Chairman McVey asked if a motion was required on this. Mr. Miller responded that a consensus or a motion would be good.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “No problem.” Commissioner Oestreicher stated that he would like to see at least 2 or 3 other auditors.

Ms. Vaughn stated that it is almost May and the auditors usually start their work in May. Commissioner Oestreicher responded that he would rather do it right than in a hurry and he requested to see other auditors for this. Mr. Miller responded that this can be done if it is the pleasure of the Board. He stated that this would be put out for a RFP.

COUNTY MANAGER’S UPDATES

Library Grand Re-Opening

Mr. Miller stated that May 1st at 10:00 is the Grand Opening of the Gunn Memorial Public Library. He added that this has been a community project from the BY Football team unloading 2 pods of books to Carl Stauber and Staff from the Danville Regional Foundation putting together tables. Mr. Miller stated that the Friends of the Library helped to set up books and Karen Oestreicher and Sandra Aldridge is organizing the History Room as well as Kim Eaton and Kin Watlington prepared the flower beds for planting. He stated that there have been a lot of folks involved in this other than just the Library Staff but he wanted to add that the Library Staff has done a tremendous amount of work.

Co-Working Space

Mr. Miller stated that the county has plans for the co-working space and have been sent out for bid and the bid opening will be May 9th.

MOU with the Board of Education

Mr. Miller informed the Board that the county does have a signed MOU with the Board of Education. He added that he has a meeting with Dr. Carter tomorrow to go over the next steps.

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

1. District Meeting – April 25, 2019 @ 5:00 p.m. – Chatham County
2. Caswell County Blood Drive – Tuesday, May 1, 2019 @ 10:00 – 2:00 p.m.

At the Senior Center

C. Joint Meeting w/Caswell County Board of Commissioners, Town of Yanceyville

and Town of Milton – Thursday, May 9, 2019 @ 6:00 p.m. at the E-911 Center.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that the Board discussed previously that the Board was going to conduct performance reviews with the Board’s employees as well as doing an objective setting with each employee and suggested setting this schedule at the next meeting.

The clerk informed the Board that she had emailed the Board the arrangements for Mr. Wilson Gwynn.

Commissioner S. Carter stated “Are we going to set our budget workshop first day or are we going to wait on that or…I know it will probably take time to review this but I was just curious since I will be out of town next week and if the Board was planning to set any dates for that yet?” Chairman McVey asked the Board if they would like to set any dates yet or if they want to take time to review the budget and then come back and set some dates.

Commissioner W. Carter asked Commissioner S. Carter when he was getting married. Commissioner S. Carter responded “I am leaving this Wednesday and will not be returning until Tuesday night of next week.” Commissioner W. Carter wished Commissioner S. Carter well.

Commissioner W. Carter stated that he did not mean to sound harsh earlier but Caswell County is losing a lot of employees.

Commissioner Jefferies stated that he would be out of town from April 23rd through April 28th.

Mr. Ferrell informed the Board that a Resolution by Consent Order of the matter of Caswell County vs. Terrell has been resolved. He added that at the Commissioner’s place this evening is a letter from Attorney Daniel informing him that there has been a donation of a portrait of a former judge and long-time attorney here in Caswell County. Mr. Ferrell stated that the portrait was presented to the Clerk of Court and the Bar President Ron Bradsher in acknowledgement of Judge Blackwell’s long service to Caswell County. He added that Attorney Daniel asked him if he was aware of a County policy on displaying or the acceptance of portraits of this type. Mr. Ferrell stated that he had conversations with the clerk and the manager about a policy pertaining to the accepting or display of portraits and there is no such policy. He added that Mr. Daniel asked that the county create a policy on this matter. Mr. Ferrell stated that the manager may have a recommendation on how to proceed on this matter. Commissioner Hall responded that with the absence of a policy he suggested that the Board take action on this item. Mr. Ferrell stated that this makes good sense. He added that the Bar is interested in what is displayed in the Courthouse.

Commissioner Oestreicher asked the county manager to talk about the meeting on April 24th at the Pelham Community Center. Mr. Miller stated that PCC hired a consultant to go into the community to talk about the needs and how to best implement the plan for the Agricultural Education Center. He added that the consultants have a plan and they are interested in hearing feedback on this plan to see if they got it right.

Commissioner S. Carter asked “Along that note, are we interested in pursuing a county meeting for this site for that same purpose?” Mr. Miller responded that this could be done.

Commissioner Oestreicher stated that there was a good zoning meeting in Prospect Hill and added that the county manager and planner did a great job. Commissioner S. Carter asked “What was the general feedback?” Commissioner Oestreicher responded that they wanted to know how soon zoning could be put in Caswell County.

CLOSED SESSION

Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Jefferies 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.

ADJOURNMENT

At 8:55 p.m. Commissioner Owen moved, seconded by Commissioner Oestreicher to adjourn. The motion carried unanimously.

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Paula P. Seamster Rick McVey

Clerk to the Board Chairman

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