

*Scotland County Board of Commissioners regular meeting  
January 7, 2019, A.B. Gibson Center, 322 South Main Street, Laurinburg, NC*

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Commissioners in attendance: Chair Whit Gibson, Vice Chair Carol McCall, Commissioners John Alford, Bob Davis, Betty Blue Gholston, and Tim Ivey. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, Attorney Ed Johnston, and Assistant to the County Manager Travis Allen.

Not in attendance: Commissioner Clarence McPhatter.

Chair Davis opened the meeting at 7:00 p.m. Commissioner Alford gave the invocation.

The pledge of allegiance was recited.

Chair Davis asked for a motion to approve the agenda as presented.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson and duly seconded by Vice Chair McCall to approve the agenda as presented. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

Chair Davis commented that the Board has before it a consent agenda and asked for a motion to approve the consent agenda as presented.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson and duly seconded by Commissioner Ivy to approve the consent agenda as presented. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

Chair Davis commented that no one signed up to speak at the public forum and would ask if there is anyone in attendance wishing to speak. No one came forward.

**Award Presentation**

Mr. Matt Gunnet, the membership services coordinator for the NCACC, came before the Board to present the LGCFU Innovation Award to the Scotland County DSS. Mr. Gunnet commented that there are 10 awards split in to 4 categories. Mr. Gunnet described qualifications for the awards and then asked DSS Director April Snead to provide a few words on the program DSS implemented.

Ms. Snead commented that a few years ago DSS began to look at their training model and determined that their current model was not consistent in training employees to provide equal service across the board. Ms. Snead stated that she and a team of employees began to look at ways of improving their model so that the department could begin to provide more consistent and efficient services to the general public.

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Mr. Gunnet commented that on behalf of the NCAAC he is proud to present the 2018 Innovation award to Scotland County DSS and a check for \$1,000.

**Sheriff's Office Presentation**

Sheriff Kersey did not attend to speak.

Chief Lloyd Goins commented that he is before the board on behalf of Sheriff Kersey to ask that the commissioners place animal control under the Sheriff's office. Chief Goins commented that in 2018 of 173 animal control calls the Sheriff's Office responded to 158 calls out of 173. Chief Goins stated this would allow the Sheriff's Office to have two officers, one on A & B rotation, and the other on C&D rotation, to be working the animal control calls. Chief Goins commented that these two animal control officer would be sworn officers who when not responding to animal control calls would assist in calls as a regular sworn officer would. Chief Goins recited various sections of the Scotland County animal control ordinance for the Board and provided various examples of instances where the Sheriff's Office has responded and even had damage dealt to the Sheriff's Office patrol cars as a result of livestock that had escaped its holding area. Chief Goins asked if the Board had any questions.

Commissioner Gibson asked why the Sheriff's Office has had to respond to such a large number of calls and not the animal control. Chief Goins commented that he can only answer what has come through the Sheriff's Office 911 and cannot say what animal control has or has not responded to. Commissioner Gibson asked would this require the current animal control officers to become sworn law enforcement officers. Chief Goins responded that he knows one animal control officer was previously a sworn law enforcement officer and could challenge having to retake BLET, but the other officer would have to go through the BLET class to become a sworn law enforcement officer.

Chair Davis commented that the statement that animal control has only responded to calls about dogs and cats when the County animal control officers just took in 12 horses over a year ago.

Commissioner Alford commented that he would recommend that the Board consider giving the Sheriff's Office their request because there is a current waste of resources happening and the animal control issue is only going to grow more.

Chair Davis stated that he would recommend that the Sheriff's Office get together and come up with a mutual agreement between the Health Department and the Sheriff's Office.

Commissioner Ivy commented that he sees this issue coming down to a taking funding from the Health Department and moving it to the Sheriff's Department which would be a net zero effect. Commissioner Ivy commented that he is with Commissioner Alford and believes something needs to be done about it, but he doesn't want to just jump off the ledge so to speak tonight without some sort of discussion taking place.

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Commissioner Gholston commented that she can see both sides of this issue with the need for animal control all week but forcing the current animal control officers to become sworn officers could be a problem.

An extensive discussion ensued between the Board, Chief Goins, Health Director Kristen Patterson, and animal control officer Mark Brown.

Chair Davis commented that he isn't going to continue this discussion tonight about the Health Department versus the Sheriff's Office. Chair Davis stated that the Sheriff's Office and Health Department need to set down and work out a plan.

Vice Chair McCall asked Chief Goins if he can find out if there are any other counties in North Carolina that have the Sheriff's Office controlling the animal control.

Chief Goins commented that he would like to go on the record stating that in the ordinance the wordage read all animals, which includes amphibians, reptiles, birds, etc. Chief Goins stated that wording says nothing about just domesticated animals.

Chair Davis stated this issue needs to be closed for now allow the Sheriff's Office and Health Department to sit down as Vice Chair McCall stated. Chair Davis thanked everyone for their time.

**Resolution for required Tax Certificate**

Mr. Patterson stated that this resolution would require a tax certificate to be furnished before a deed could be recorded by the Register of Deeds. Mr. Patterson states that a local act was passed last year adding Scotland County to the legislation requiring this.

Commissioner Gibson asked the County Attorney if he has any further information regarding this resolution. Attorney Johnston commented that he would like to refer to Register of Deeds Page Pratt as this directly affects his office.

Mr. Pratt stated that from his understanding all Registers who have similar resolutions are all in favor of it, but he did find out earlier in the day that Richmond had this in place and then voted to remove it.

Attorney Johnston commented that he is very curious as to why Richmond County had this in place and then moved away from it. Mr. Pratt stated that he can find out for the Board and come back to them in February with an answer.

Chair Davis stated that what he is hearing is the Board wants to table this until the February meeting. Chair Davis stated that this resolution will be tabled until the February Board meeting allowing Mr. Pratt to gather more details on the resolution and why Richmond County decided to remove it.

**Resolution Providing for Electronic Listing of Personal Property for Property Tax Purposes**

Mr. Patterson stated that this resolution allows the tax department to electronically post personal property for the purpose of property taxes.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson and duly seconded by Vice Chair McCall to approve the resolution. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

**Tax Appeal Hearing**

Tax Administrator Mary Helen Norton commented that J3 Realty Company is filing this appeal because they were under the impression their attorney had already filed and did not find out until October.

Commissioner Ivy commented his only issue with this appeal is no one is in attendance from J3 to speak. Commissioner Ivy stated if he had a property tax appeal he would show up to speak and take it serious so he doesn't believe this company is serious in their appeal.

Commissioner Gibson agreed with Commissioner Ivy in the thinking that J3 does not care about this appeal and therefore should not be approved.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson and duly seconded by Commissioner Ivy to deny the appeal. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

**Fire District Map**

Emergency Management Director Roylin Hammond commented that he is before the Board on behalf of the Fire Commission to present the new fire districts maps that includes the two substations for approval. Mr. Hammond provided the Board with a map visual to show the Board which fire departments would be responsible for which areas and what their ISO ratings will be.

Members of the various fire departments were present voicing concerns over the map not being brought back to the fire commission showing which response districts would be lost. Their concern is the fire chiefs have not been presented this map yet.

Mr. Patterson stated that the intention of this project three years ago was to get residents a reduction on the insurance costs and provide them with fire coverage.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner Ivy to approve the new fire districts map as presented. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

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**Finance Update**

Finance Officer Beth Hobbs stated that as of December 31, 2018 the County budgeted \$41,872,340 and the County has spent \$16,253,991 thus far. Ms. Hobbs stated that the County currently has revenues over expenditures in the amount of \$2,254,291. Ms. Hobbs asked for any questions from the Board to which no one offered any comment.

**Clerk to the Board Resignation**

The Board took turns thanking current Clerk to the Board Travis Allen for his time serving the County and everything that he has done for the County during his employment.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson and duly seconded by Vice Chair McCall to appoint the County Manager Kevin Patterson as the Interim Clerk to the Board. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

**Elementary School Water & Sewer Bids**

Mr. Patterson stated that the next item is the bids received for the water and sewer lines for the new school. Mr. Patterson stated that the lowest bid was \$675,889 by Step Construction, LLC.

Commissioner Ivy stated that he did some background research on all three bids and found some interesting history on the lowest bidder and their history as a company that would likely change the Board's mind on awarding Step Construction with the bid. Commissioner Ivy went in to detail on some of his findings regarding Step Construction.

Attorney Johnston commented that the Board does have the authority to not award the lowest bid the contract and based on what he is hearing from Commissioner Ivy the Board would have ground to not award the contract to Step Construction.

**Motion was made by commissioner Alford and duly seconded by Commissioner Gholston to table this matter until the County Manager can go back to the engineer and allow the County Attorney to look at the information provided by Commissioner Ivy. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

**Meeting with Senator McInnis**

Mr. Patterson stated that this is a reschedule of the meeting that was supposed to take place with Senator McInnis and Representative Pierce in December and has been rescheduled for Friday, January 11, at 3:00 p.m. at the SBIC. Mr. Patterson stated this is just a formal invitation for the Board to attend and bring to some legislative goals for McInnis and Pierce to take back to Raleigh.

**Appointments**

**Motion was made by Vice Chair McCall and duly seconded by Commissioner Ivy to appoint the list of members presented to the Board for the JCPC. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

Vice Chair McCall stated that the statute also requires that a Commissioner be appointed to the JCPC.

**Motion was made by Vice Chair McCall and duly seconded by Commissioner Gibson to appoint Commissioner Ivy as the Board representative for the JCPC. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

*Commissioner Alford was excused at 8:41 p.m.*

Vice Chair McCall stated that there is also an appointment needed for the DSS Board and she would put her name in as the appointment for that position.

**Motion was made by Commissioner Ivy and duly seconded by Commissioner Gibson to appoint Vice Chair McCall to the DSS Board. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

**Update from the County Manager**

Mr. Patterson stated the joint meeting with the City has been set for January 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the SBIC.

Mr. Patterson stated that he will be reaching out in the next week or two to the Board to look at dates for the February retreat as well as items which the Board would like to address during this retreat.

**Comments**

Chair Davis stated that there was an article in the paper about Commissioners Gholston grandson being in New York now.

Mr. Hammond posed to the Board a question regarding the communications tower. Mr. Hammond stated that an environmental impact study has to be done and wanted to know where the County was in the approval process of the tower. Mr. Patterson stated the environmental study has been approved and the lease with Verizon is pending approval from Verizon so from the aspect of getting the environmental study completed the County can move forward with getting that process started. Emergency Communications Director Mike Edge commented that the lease had been approved by Verizon.

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**Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson and duly seconded by Vice Chair McCall to recess until January 29<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the SBIC. Vote: Motion unanimously approved.**

Meeting adjourned at 8:53 p.m.

Kevin Patterson  
Interim Clerk to the Board

Bob Davis  
Chair