

Scotland County Board of Commissioners regular meeting February 4, 2019, AB Gibson Center, 322 S. Main St. Laurinburg, NC

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Commissioners in attendance: Chair Bob Davis, Vice-Chair Carol McCall, Commissioners Betty Blue Gholston, Whit Gibson, Tim Ivey, and Clarence McPhatter. Staff in attendance: County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Attorney Ed Johnston.

Commissioners not in attendance: Commissioner John Alford

Call to Order, Invocation, Pledge of Allegiance

Chairman Bob Davis called the regular meeting of the commissioners to order, delivered the invocation, and lead the pledge of allegiance.

Approval of the Agenda

Chairman Davis stated that item number 7 (Contract for water and sewer of new school) on the agenda needed to be moved to the end of the agenda and that the Board will go into closed session at that time to consult with the county attorney. With the change to the agenda, Chairman Davis asked for a motion to approve the agenda. **Motion was made by Vice-Chair McCall to approve the agenda with the change and the motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Gibson. Vote to approve agenda: Unanimous**

Public Forum

The Board first heard from Ms. Erica Quick and Ms. April McKoy with Hope for North Carolina. Ms. McKoy and Ms. Quick explained what they did with Hope for North Carolina, to help find resources and to help people deal with stress from the storm disaster. Ms. McKoy also spoke about folks in the rural areas of the county that are still displaced. Commissioner Gholston stated that the Board was aware of the condition of most of the house and if Hope 4 North Carolina can lend a hand to help these folks. Chairman Davis stated that the group can make an appointment with County Manager Kevin Patterson to get an update about what the County is doing for the displaced individuals. The Board next heard from Rogena Deese with the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC). Ms. Deese stated that her address for JCPC is 212 Biggs Street in the court counselor's office and that normally when she comes to speak before the County Commissioners she is asking for money. That is not the case today but she is asking for the Board to pass a resolution related to the "raise the age" law that is going into effect in December, 2019 to raise the age to be adjudicated as an adult from 16 to 18. According to Ms. Deese, some of the services that are being offered currently are being switched from the adult system to the juvenile system. Ms. Deese stated that all counties in the state are asked to pass a resolution to ask to receive more funds to deal with the switch in service providers. Commissioner McCall asked if all counties were asked for a similar resolution. Ms. Deese stated that all counties are asked to pass similar resolutions and some of them have indeed already been passed and signed. Commissioner Gibson asked if Ms. Deese had any idea what the cost might be for the increased cost. Ms. Deese stated that she did not have those numbers but if the Board will attend the Legislative Brunch on February 25th she will have those numbers. Commissioner Gibson stated he was sure there was going to be a tremendous increase in the cost of those

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youths when the age is raised to 18. Chairman Davis inquired about how much more money would be coming from the State to which Ms. Deese stated that there is no way to know right now. Upon hearing from Ms. Deese, **Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson to approve the resolution supporting the increase in juvenile funding. The motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Gholston.** Commissioner McCall asked how many individuals this would affect. Ms. Deese stated that she is not sure yet how many that will affect yet either. Chairman Davis inquired about the cost to the County to which Ms. Deese stated that there would be a cost to public education as well as other services but not sure an exact number right now. **Vote to approve resolution: Unanimous.**

Consent Agenda

The Board next considered the consent agenda. On the consent agenda for February was the approval of the January 7, 2019 regular minutes. Also on the consent agenda was three budget requests from the health department. The first request was new funding for maternal and child health mini grants in the amount of \$20,757. These one-time funds are to be used to positively impact the communities maternal and child health outcomes and build local health department capacity to address health equity and social determinants of health. The second request is a decrease in funding by \$402 due to the US Department of Health and Human Services reduction of budget period for awarded Title X funds. The third request is for new funding for and opioid action plan implementation initiative grant in the amount of \$27,363. This funding would be used to create opioid response training to reduce fatalities of individuals who use and misuse opioids. **Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson to approve the consent agenda. Motion was duly seconded by Vice-Chair McCall. Vote to approve consent agenda: Unanimous.**

Eastpointe presentation of annual report

The Board next heard from Eastpointe CEO Sarah Stroud to update what Eastpointe is doing in Scotland County. Ms. Stroud stated that Eastpointe has around 280 employees throughout the catchment area. Ms. Stroud reviewed the financial condition of Eastpointe with the Board. Ms. Stroud stated that Scotland County represents 5% of the covered lives and paid 6% of their total claims to Scotland County residents and the amount has increased in claims for Scotland County members. Also according to Ms. Stroud, Scotland County provides \$82,000 to Eastpointe. Ms. Stroud also stated that Eastpointe operates a call center that refers people to caregivers. According to Ms. Stroud, Eastpointe outperforms all other LME/MCE's in the state. Ms. Stroud reviewed providers in the Eastpointe network as well as outlined services that are provided and stated that they are transitioning to a whole person treatment. She also outlined events that Eastpointe participated in throughout the year. Ms. Stroud reviewed services that were provided during Hurricane Florence as well.

Ms. Stroud then gave the Board information on Medicaid Transformation. This is something that is occurring across all of North Carolina. It addresses physical and mental health of the individual. The first phase of this transformation will take place in November of this year and Eastpointe will be coming online next February. There is also going to be a transition to tailored plans as determined by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the General Assembly. Ms. Stroud asked the Board to share their support of Eastpointe going to the tailored plan with DHHS as well as our elected representatives to the General Assembly. Commissioner McCall asked Ms. Stroud to explain to the Board why it is so

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important for Eastpointe to be selected for the tailored plans. Ms. Stroud stated that if Eastpointe is not selected then the 10 counties in the catchment area could be split up into other areas.

Southeastern Community and Family Services-CSBG grant proposal

The Board next heard from County Manager Kevin Patterson concerning Southeastern Community and Family Services proposal. According to Mr. Patterson this is an annual item that Southeastern is required to solicit input from the Board if they are applying for another Community Service Block Grant (CSBG). Mr. Patterson stated that no specific Board action is required at this time.

Laurel Hill Fire Truck Repair

The Board next heard from Mac McDougal, Chairman of the Scotland County Fire Commission and Clyde Locklear, Laurel Hill Fire Chief. Mr. McDougal stated that the fire commission is in the short rows of the substation improvements. Mr. McDougal further stated that the fire commission voted to bring the bill for \$1,401.08 before the Board to ask for payment from the fire tax fund balance for repair of a Laurel Hill fire truck that was to be used to man the North substation. Chairman Davis stated that he had inquired if there was a mechanism to pay the bill out of fire tax money and was advised that there was no mechanism. Mr. Locklear informed the Board that the bill has already been paid and the department is just looking for a reimbursement. Commissioner McPhatter asked what the next step if the truck was not to pass pump test. Mr. Patterson stated that it doesn't have an impact on the fire rating. Mr. Patterson also informed the Board that there was no policy or procedures about repair of fire trucks which means that Board action is required. Commissioner McPhatter had a question about future fire departments doing the same thing with other fire trucks. Mr. Patterson stated that unless the Board develops a strategy to address this going forward his answer is always going to be "no". Commissioner Gibson stated that if the Board votes to approve this expenditure from the fire tax fund that other fire departments shouldn't feel they have "carte blanche" to spend whatever they want to make repairs to other trucks. Discussion followed about how money is spent./ Vice-Chair McCall stated that she would like to think that this is a situation that stands alone because of this unusual situation with getting the substation open and ready for the upcoming inspection.

Motion was made by Vice-Chair McCall to approve the request to reimburse for the repair of the Laurel Hill fire truck. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Ivey.

Commissioner McPhatter then inquired if the County could get the money back if the truck was sold. Mr. Locklear explained the situation about why money was spent on the truck in the first place. **Vote to approve the request: Unanimous.** Commissioner Gibson then inquired where the money would go if the truck was sold. Mr. Locklear stated that the money would go back to Laurel Hill Fire Department. Chairman Davis stated that he wanted to clarify what he said concerning the bill to Mr. Locklear. Chairman Davis further stated that he told Mr. Locklear to bring him a copy of the bill when the work was done and he would try to see about getting it paid for.

Resolution Supporting Local Control of School Calendar

The Board next heard from County Manager Kevin Patterson concerning a resolution seeking additional authority over the school calendar. Mr. Patterson informed the Board that this is something that most boards of education favor as well as a county commissioner association legislative goal. Vice-Chair McCall explained that North Carolina is one of only a few states

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that has a mandated start date and mandated end date. All 100 counties are requesting this flexibility. **Motion was made by Vice-Chair McCall to approve the resolution supporting local control of the school calendar. The motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Gholston. Vote to approve the resolution: Unanimous.**

Communication Tower-Verizon Lease

The Board next heard from County Manager Kevin Patterson concerning the draft lease with Verizon for replacement of communication tower. Along with this replacement the County is looking to extend the height of the tower to 399 feet from 350 feet. Verizon is willing to pay \$475,000 for a 25 year lease. In addition if the additional height is granted the County has been in discussion with the North Carolina Highway Patrol that they are interested in locating some of their equipment as well. The new tower would be within about 50 feet of the current location so no impact on County facilities. According to Mr. Patterson, Verizon would have a building there at the tower site. Commissioner Ivey inquired about the old tower. Mr. Patterson answered that the old tower would be removed by the same contractor. Upon hearing from Mr. Patterson, **motion was made to approve the lease with Verizon. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Ivey. Vote to approve the lease: Unanimous.**

NC DHHS Early Issuance of SNAP Benefit Notice

The Board next heard from County Manager Kevin Patterson about SNAP benefits (formerly food stamps). Because of the government shutdown the federal government preloaded benefits and recipients will not be receiving their benefits this week because they have been received in advance and won't receive their benefits again until March.

Animal Control Information

Mr. Patterson then moved to information that he gathered on animal control. Mr. Patterson stated that he tried to answer questions from last month and provide information to the Board. According to the 911 center there were over 1,200 calls dealing with animal control. Not all of these were County issues, 911 determined that 346 were County issues. Of these 181 went to the health department and 174 went to the sheriff's department. Health department also received an additional 2,114 calls into the health department for various animal control issues. Commissioner Ivey inquired about how other counties handle animal control. Mr. Patterson stated that about a third of counties have animal control under the sheriff's department, 40% have it under the health department, and the remainder has their own department. Vice-Chair McCall asked about if this option was still public in nature. Mr. Patterson stated that it was just another county department that reported to the county manager. There are parts of animal control, such as rabies that has to be based in the health department. Commissioner Ivey had a question about the numbers of calls. Vice-Chair McCall asked about the distinction between different types of calls. Chairman Davis asked what the pleasure of the Board was, whether to vote on this issue now or to have a more discussion at the retreat later in the month. Commissioner Gholston stated that the Board has all of the information now and knows how she is going to vote. Commissioner Ivey asked about the timing if a transition is decided by the Board. Mr. Patterson stated that he would recommend having a start date of July 1, 2019 if something different is decided to give time to update the animal control ordinance. **Motion was made by Commissioner Gholston to have two animal control officers remain under the auspices of the health department. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner**

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McPhatter. Vote 5-1 to approve that animal control remain in the health department with Commissioner Ivey voting nay. Vice-Chair McCall stated that since this was the second time this has been brought before the Board that she would like to have the health department and law enforcement report back to the Board in a year how this is going and report back to see if there are still complaints. Also, she would like to have the health department work with the humane society to improve satisfaction amongst the citizens in regards to animal control. This was agreed to by the Board.

Property Tax Certification

Mr. Patterson next moved to the property tax certification. He reminded the Board that this was something that came up and discussed last month to have tax certification of deeds before being recorded. Mr. Patterson stated that this was a legislative request in 2018 and was passed through the legislature and was tabled until February for consideration and to determine a start date. Commissioner Gibson asked the county attorney what if any drawbacks there might be by passing this resolution. Mr. Johnston stated that there might be some additional time and expense to the individuals preparing the deed. In addition, Mr. Johnston suggested pushing the start date out for a few months to give attorneys time to adjust to the new system. Register of Deeds, Page Pratt was asked if he had other concerns and he informed the Board that the only concerns he could see would be for estate planning and partial ownership transfers. He feels these are on the margins and not going to impact a lot of people. Mr. Pratt also stated that Richmond County did not have this policy in place but a different one that they abandoned. Commissioner McPhatter asked about what precipitated this resolution. According to Mr. Patterson, there was a person that purchased a piece of property last year without a title search and once it was legally his property, was served with a foreclosure notice. Commissioner Gholston stated that she did feel it was fair for a new owner to pay for someone else's taxes. Chairman Davis asked the pleasure of the Board. **Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson to approve the resolution to require tax certification of deeds prior to the Register of Deeds accepting and recording the deed and that this policy become effective on July 1, 2019. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner McPhatter. Vote to approve the resolution: Unanimous.**

February Work Session

The Board next heard from Mr. Patterson concerning the February work session. According to Mr. Patterson February 19th works the best for the most commissioners to attend. Mr. Patterson informed the Board that the work session will be at the Morgan Center, in the conference room near the county manager's office, beginning at 9:00 am and will run for most of the day. Discussion followed about items that needed to be included for the work session including storm impacts.

Clerk to the Board/Assistant to the County Manager Position

The Board next heard an update from County Manager Patterson related to the clerk to the board and assistant to the county manager position. Mr. Patterson stated that an offer has been extended and accepted by Jason Robinson. Mr. Patterson outlined the timetable that would occur for Mr. Robinson to be appointed deputy clerk and then the official clerk after the one year probationary time. At that time someone else would need to be named deputy or assistant clerk so that more than one person can officially do the job.

Appointments to Boards and Committees

Vice-Chair McCall informed the Board that there is a vacancy on the Aging Advisory Council and there has been an application received from Ms. Naomi Sapir. **Motion was made by Vice-Chair McCall to appoint Ms. Naomi Sapir to the Aging Advisory Council. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Ivey. Vote to appoint: Unanimous.**

County Manager Report

Mr. Patterson updated the Board concerning the flooding summit that was requested by Senator McInnis. At this summit there were 10 agencies represented including North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), the Army Corp of Engineers, United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NCRS). Mr. Patterson also updated the Board concerning the watershed program that the County may be eligible to receive. This program assists in erosion mitigation and is a 75/25 program where the Federal Government will provide 75% of the cost but the County or an individual or the State has to match that with 25%. If the owner is a private individual and they would like to improve their property more than what the county requires they can help in the cost as well. Discussion followed concerning which properties were identified. Also, Mr. Patterson stated that he has been working with the governor's budget office for additional grant opportunities. Also the County is looking at private properties that may be not structurally sound and uninhabitable as well as working with Representative Pierce for more manpower. Mr. Patterson also informed the Board about the state of the community event that is hosted by the Laurinburg/Scotland County Chamber of Commerce. According to Mr. Patterson this year it will be at Scotia Village and will be a different format. He stated that if the Board had particular concerns or questions to let him or Chris English at the Chamber know. Commissioner Gholston wanted to know if there was ever anything that the Board can do to improve the income of the citizens. Mr. Patterson stated that the Department of Commerce can have statisticians come in and discuss those numbers. Mr. Patterson also brought to the Board's attention a request that came in after the agenda packet was sent out by the Laurinburg Fire Department for a July 4th fireworks display. This is required to come before the Board for approval per North Carolina General Statute. **Motion was made by Commissioner Gibson to approve the request for a fireworks display. Motion was duly seconded by Vice-Chair McCall. Vote to approve: Unanimous.**

Commissioner Comments

Commissioner Gholston reminded everyone that February is Black History Month and there are several events in the County and as commissioners hopefully will be able to go to one or more of these.

Chairman Davis asked the Board to remember Commissioner Alford during this time with the loss of his wife.

Closed Session

Chairman Davis entertained a motion to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with the county attorney. **Motion was made to go into closed session by Commissioner Gibson. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Ivey. Vote to go into closed session: Unanimous.**

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Upon reentering open session the Board took no action. **Motion was made to recess the meeting until February 19th at 9:00 am by Vice-Chair McCall. Motion was duly seconded by Commissioner Ivey. Vote to recess: Unanimous.**

J. Jason Robinson
Deputy Clerk to the Board

Bob Davis
Chair

(county seal)