

February 19, 2007

The Duplin County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, February 19, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Room, County Administration Building (224 Seminary Street), Kenansville, North Carolina.

Present: Chairman David Fussell and Commissioners L. S. Guy, Harold L. Raynor, Cary Turner, Reginald Wells and Zettie Williams

Absent: None

Also Present: Mr. Mike Aldridge, County Manager; Ms. Julia Herring, Administrative Officer; Ms. Teresa Lanier, Finance Officer; and Ms. Wendy Sivori, County Attorney

Reverend Chris Currie from Calypso Presbyterian Church gave the invocation.

The following reports were received by the Board and are on file with the Clerk:

Affidavits of Publication
Animal Control – January 2007
Building Inspections – January 2007
Communications – January 2007
Emergency Management – January 2007
Finance Office – January 2007
Manager's Office – January 2007
Personnel – January 2007
Register of Deeds – January 2007
Services for the Aged – January 2007
Social Services – January 2007

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to approve the Consent Agenda which included the following: Minutes – February 5, 2007; Minutes – February 12, 2007; Budget Amendments #0146 - #0154; Solid Waste Releases #3791 - #3813; and Tax Releases #3814 - #3834; to add an invitation to the Duplin Expo; Grant Amendment No. 4 for Circle S Foods; Health Board appointments; Soil & Water job reclassification; Fire Prevention Ordinance; Solid Waste Site #14 Report; finance report; and a personnel report to be made part of the Minutes.

Mr. Mike Aldridge presented Administrative Budget Amendments # H001 - # H028 and Motor Vehicle Releases – January 2007 - \$9,940.89 to be made a part of the minutes.

Public Comments:

Mr. Jimmy Dixon of Calypso, discussed comments made by Commissioner Guy at the February 12, 2007 workshop regarding revenue that could be generated if Duplin EMS transported non-emergency. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Ken Jones, Executive Director of Eastpointe Mental Health, appeared before the board to give an update and discuss Eastpointe's three-year strategic plan. Mr. Bob Canupp, Chief Financial Officer with Eastpointe, was also present and gave a financial update.

Mr. Jim Harris, Co-chairman of the Community Facilities Committee, appeared before the board to give an update. (See handout in minutes.)

Ms. Delilah Gomes, Chairman of the Community Building Task Force, appeared before the board to give an update. (See handout in minutes.)

Commissioner Harold Raynor discussed reinstating the Cabin Lake Marketing Committee with each commissioner to name an appointee by the next board meeting.

Mr. Brian Pearce, EMS Director, appeared before the board to discuss several matters.

Mr. Pearce presented a list of positive comments received from the public regarding Duplin County EMS. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Pearce requested that two positions in his department that are similar in job description and duties be reclassified to make them equal on the pay scale. He asked that the Training Officer be reclassified from 72 3B (exempt) down to 70 5B (exempt), with no change in salary and the Operations Supervisor be reclassified from 67 2B (non-exempt) to a 70 2B (exempt) with a change in position title to Operations Officer. Mr. Pearce stated that these changes would result in a budget increase of \$522.80 which would be funded from the existing EMS budget.

Motion was made by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Fussell, carried unanimously, to approve the EMS job reclassifications to change Operations Officer from a salary grade 67 2B (non-exempt) to a 70 2B (exempt) and the Training Officer from a salary grade 72 3B (exempt) to a 70 5B (exempt).

Mr. Pearce gave an update on EMS billing and collections. He stated that about 43 percent of EMS calls are public service calls, such as standby for fire calls and ballgames; and, therefore are not able to be billed. Also, Medicaid and Medicare calls are not collectible in the full amount.

Mr. Pearce stated that the EMS department started using a new billing software program in April 2006 which should help in collections. He stated that there is outstanding debt under the former ambulance billing program dating back to 1999 that will be collected using debt set-off and garnishment; however, the outstanding Medicaid amount is uncollectible by law. Mr. Pearce requested that this amount be written off as "bad debt".

Motion was made by Commissioner Raynor, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to write off uncollectible Medicaid debt from the former EMS billing system in the amount of \$172,015.52.

Commissioner Wells asked if the EMS department currently charges for inter-governmental transports, such as when an inmate is transported from the jail to the hospital. Mr. Pearce replied that currently, EMS does bill for those types of transports.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, for Duplin EMS to discontinue charging for county inmate transfer from the jail to Duplin General Hospital.

Mr. Craig Forlines, Emergency Services Director, appeared before the board to discuss using the Emergency Management Performance Grant money for salary adjustments for employees in his department. Mr. Forlines stated that the grant was in the amount of \$19,213.12 and was awarded for reaching certain performance measures. (See handout in minutes.)

Chairman Fussell stated that this request would be deferred to the budget committee for review during the budget process.

Motion was made by Commissioner Raynor, seconded by Commissioner Wells, to not accept any further requests for salary reclassifications or adjustments until budget time.

Commissioner Guy offered an amendment to the main motion to not accept any further requests for salary reclassifications or adjustments until budget time unless the county manager, working with the department head, sees a critical need and for the county manager to be the point of contact with the board. Motion was seconded by Commissioner Fussell and carried unanimously.

Commissioner Fussell discussed the feasibility of reducing the Solid Waste Availability/Disposal Fee from \$90 to \$60.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fussell, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to instruct the Solid Waste Director to prepare a five-year solid waste enterprise estimate of costs and revenue based on the current \$90 fee and also a projection based on the proposed reduced fee of \$60 to present to the board on April 2, 2007.

Ms. Ila Davis, Health Department Director, appeared before the board to provide additional information on the advantages of fluoridating the county water system. Ms. Davis stated that each of the county's 13 well heads would need to be equipped to add fluoride at a total cost of approximately \$97,000 and that the Water Department would need to hire additional Grade B operators. (See handout in minutes.)

Commissioner Raynor stated that he had spoken with several commissioners from other counties that have fluoridated water systems, and they are trying to get rid of it.

Commissioner Turner discussed a bill that is to be introduced in the General Assembly that opposes adding fluoride to water systems. He discussed a study that states using fluoridated water to prepare infant formula could be harmful.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Guy, carried unanimously, to defer consideration of fluoridation of the county water system until budget time.

Commissioner Fussell stepped down as chairman due to a conflict of interest in order to present a resolution for the board's support of the restoration of the Samuel Bradshaw Mill Pond in located on Indian Creek east of Rose Hill. Commissioner Fussell owns land that adjoins the mill pond. Commissioner Fussell stated that the resolution would be presented as part of a packet to be submitted to the Army Corps of Engineers. (See handout in minutes.)

Commissioner Guy commented that other parties involved in the restoration should be presenting the project and that Commissioner Fussell should remove himself from any discussion with the board.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to defer action on this matter until others involved in the project could come before the board and present the information.

Mr. Randall Tyndall, County Planner, appeared before the board to give an update on the several Community Development Block Grants. Mr. Tyndall stated that the Division of Community Assistance requires that an annual report be provided to the Board of County Commissioners and that the chairman would need to sign the Annual Performance Reports prepared by McDavid Associates to be submitted to the Department of Commerce. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to authorize the chairman to sign the 2005 Annual Performance Grant Report on 05-C-1442.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to authorize the chairman to sign the 2005 Annual Performance Grant Report on 05-C-1425.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Guy, carried unanimously, to authorize the chairman to sign the 2006 Annual Performance Grant Report on 05-C-1524.

Commissioner Guy presented draft motions developed from the workshop held on February 12, 2007. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Fussell, carried unanimously, to direct the County Manager and staff to work with representatives from the Duplin County Board of Education to determine the average appropriations for the past three years (2005-2006; 2004-2005; and 2003-2004) in current expense in capital outlay and report back at the March 5, 2007 board meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to direct the County Manager and staff to work with representatives from James Sprunt Community College to determine the average appropriations for the past three years (2005-2006; 2004-2005; and 2003-2004) and report back at the March 5, 2007 board meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to request the Duplin County Board of Education meet with the Duplin County Board of Commissioners at least three times per year.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, for the County Manger to draft a resolution to send to Duplin County's legislative delegation to support and lead the fight to allow all counties the same services and fees that are allowed in select counties.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to request the County Manger to direct appropriate staff to prepare a plan to upgrade the county water connection process and develop a simple plan to encourage more water customers to sign on and connect. We should allow the Water Department the latitude to go forward. The plan might include, but not be limited to: (1.) individual water district advisory committees; (2.) Duplin County Water Department Advisory Committee; and (3.) some type of incentive program to sign on.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to direct the county manager to work with the sheriff and staff to determine the average appropriation for the past three years in these areas: (1.) Sheriff's budget [town substations, school resource officers, and mental health]; and (2.) Jail budget.

Commissioner Guy discussed several goals to be presented to the Legislative Delegation: (1.) House Bill #57 - Phase Out Medicaid County Share; (2.) One Cent Local Sales & Use Tax for Public School and Capital Outlay Purposes Bill; (3.) \$2 Billion Statewide School Bond Critical School Facility Needs Bill; and (4.) Opposition to Senate Bill #2 - Lottery School Capital Fund Formula.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to direct the county manager to send a resolution to Senator Charlie Albertson and Representative Russell Tucker in support of phasing out the county share of the non-federal share of Medicaid costs over a five-year period and to provide that the total county share during the phase-out period shall not exceed the county share paid by each county for the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Williams, to direct the county manager to prepare a resolution in support of a bill to authorize a one-cent sales and use tax with one-half cent for public school capital outlay purposes and one-half cent for county capital construction or debt reduction on capital indebtedness. Commissioners Raynor, Turner, and Wells voted for. Commissioner Fussell voted against.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to direct the county manager to prepare a resolution stating that Duplin County supports a bill introduced to authorize a state-wide \$2 billion school bond for critical school facility needs.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to direct the county manager to prepare a resolution to oppose Senate Bill #2 which would change the school capital construction formula in the state lottery act to provide for distribution of funds based on average daily membership.

Commissioner Fussell discussed various items previously addressed at the workshop held February 12, 2007 such as privatizing some county services, lowering the tax rate, and adding an at-large commissioner on the board.

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Wells, to adhere to the adopted agenda and to conclude the meeting before hearing any further testimonials. Commissioners Guy, Raynor, and Turner voted for. Commissioner Fussell voted against.

Mr. Mike Aldridge presented the summary of uncollectible debts as of February 4, 2004 in the amount of \$ 3,073.17 for the Health Department. Mr. Aldridge requested that this debt be approved as "bad debts" and written off. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to approve the Bad Debt Write-Offs as reported by the Health Department for the period ending February 4, 2004 in the amount of \$3,073.17.

Mr. Aldridge stated that an appointment and three reappointments were needed for the Board of Health. Mr. Aldridge recommended that Dr. Mott Blair be appointed to serve from February 2007 through February 2010. Mr. Aldridge also recommended that Mr. Jennings Outlaw and Mr. Ralph Hunter serve through December 2007 and Dr. A.J. Bullard serve through July 2007.

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to appoint Dr. Mott Blair; and to reappoint Mr. Jennings Outlaw, Mr. Ralph Hunter, and Dr. A.J. Bullard to the Duplin County Board of Health.

Mr. Aldridge discussed a letter from the North Carolina Department of Revenue regarding beer & wine excise taxes. Mr. Aldridge stated that in order to distribute the annual beer & wine excise taxes, the county's distribution data verification form would need the chairman's signature. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to authorize the chairman to sign the North Carolina Department of Revenue Distribution Data Verification Form.

Mr. Aldridge presented Change Orders #2 and #3 for the Case Farms Water & Sewer Construction Project. Mr. Aldridge stated that this will closeout the project. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to authorize the chairman to sign Change Orders #2 and #3 for the Case Farms Project.

Mr. Aldridge presented Amendment #4 for the Circle S Foods Grant. Mr. Aldridge stated that the amendment only changes the description of work, not the budget for the project.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to authorize the chairman to sign Amendment #4 for the Circle S Foods Grant.

Mr. Aldridge discussed the Duplin County Fire Prevention and Protection Ordinance. He stated that the revised ordinance was originally adopted at the February 21, 2005 board meeting but was never signed by the chairman and placed in the Duplin County Ordinance Book.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Guy, carried unanimously, to authorize the chairman to sign the Duplin County Fire Prevention and Protection Ordinance.

Mr. Aldridge discussed letters received from McDavid Associates regarding the Clean Water Management Trust Fund Grant Applications for the Rosemary Community Sanitary Sewer and the County-wide Sewer Project. In order to complete the application process by the March 1st deadline, the chairman would need to sign the application forms. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to authorize the chairman to sign the grant applications for the Rosemary Community Sanitary Sewer Project and the County-wide Sewer Project.

Mr. Aldridge discussed the Soil and Water Office Director vacancy left by the retirement of Mrs. Nona Tippett-Honeycutt. At the recommendations of the Soil & Water Board, Mr. Aldridge requested that the position be reclassified to a Grade 71 and be advertised for a three week period. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to reclassify and advertise the Soil and Water Office Director position.

Mr. Aldridge presented a letter from Dr. Wiley Doby outlining how the salary supplements were dispersed to school personnel from the \$1 million allocation. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Guy, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to adjourn to meet again on Monday, March 5, 2007 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioner's Room, County Administration Building (224 Seminary Street), Kenansville, North Carolina.

Clerk