

February 16, 2009

The Duplin County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, February 16, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Community Meeting Room, Department of Social Services, (423 N. Main Street), Kenansville, North Carolina.

Present: Commissioners Harold Raynor, Frances Parks, Cary Turner, Reginald Wells, and Zettie Williams

Absent: Commissioner David Fussell and Ms. Wendy Sivori, County Attorney

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

Commissioner Wells gave the invocation.

The following reports were received by the board and are on file with the clerk:

Affidavits of Publication

Building Inspections – January 2009
Cabin Lake – January 2009
Communications – January 2009
Manager's Office – January 2009
Register of Deeds – January 2009
Services for the Aged – January 2009
Soil & Water Conservation – January 2009
Water – January 2009

Motion was made by Commissioner Raynor, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to approve the Consent Agenda which included the following: Minutes – February 2, 2009; Budget Amendments #0152 - #0157; Solid Waste Releases # 5981 - # 6000; Tax Releases # 5964 - # 5980.

Mr. Mike Aldridge presented Administrative Budget Amendments # G231 - # H256 and Motor Vehicle Releases – January 2009 - \$9,909.91 to be made part of the minutes.

Public Comments:

Mr. Jim Williams, Vice President of Chinquapin Parks and Recreation, urged the board to delay any action on selling the old Chinquapin School until his board members can meet to discuss the matter. He stated that sufficient parking would be needed for sporting events, not just access to the ballpark. Mr. Williams stated that his board would meet to discuss options on either purchasing the building or to request a large parking area.

Mr. Franklin Fussell of Kenansville stated that the federal economic stimulus plan should be adopted soon and urged commissioners to hire an economic director for Duplin County as soon as possible in order to take advantage of any federal funds that the county might receive. Mr. Fussell stated that Ms. Cynthia Potter should be offered the economic director position.

Mr. Frank Brown, Chairman of the Duplin County Animal Advisory Board, appeared before the board to give an annual update. He stated that the current animal shelter does not meet state regulations and can not be expanded; therefore, a new animal shelter should be built. Mr. Brown stated that private fundraising is needed to assist with the financing of the new facility and a trust fund has now been established in order for private donations to be made. Mr. Brown introduced Mr. Chris Alphin, Vice President of the Duplin-Onslow Hunters Association. Mr. Alphin presented a check in the amount of \$500 as the first donation towards the new facility. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, for each commissioner to donate \$100 in support of the new animal shelter.

Mr. Ken Jones, Executive Director of Eastpointe Mental Health, appeared before the board to give a financial update. Mr. Bob Canupp, Chief Financial Officer with Eastpointe, was also present. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Joe McKemey, PE with McDavid Associates, appeared before the board to discuss sewer infrastructure at the I-40 exits in Duplin County as requested by Commissioner Fussell at the January 20, 2009 meeting. He stated that water service is available at all interchanges but sewer is not available at the I-40 interchange at US117 (Exit 369) just south of the Carroll community and at the I-40 interchange at the Kenansville Bypass (Exit 373). Mr. McKemey requested an agreement in order to proceed with preliminary engineering services.

It was the consensus of the board to postpone action on this matter until the countywide sewer study that is already being developed by Mr. Rich Moore, PE with McDavid Associates is completed.

Mr. Steve Moore, Aging & Transportation Director, appeared before the board to request permission to advertise and hire a part-time Family Caregiver Aide position. He stated that the position is paid from state grant funds with no county funds required.

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to grant permission to advertise and hire a part-time Family Caregiver Aide position.

Mr. Moore gave an update on the legislative bill that would allow counties to levy a ¼ cent or ½ cent sales tax option as well as a \$7 license/registration fee. He stated that funds generated would be used for rural transportation systems.

Mr. Moore requested a public hearing to be held March 16, 2009 in order to receive citizen comments on the state CTP grant for FY 2010.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to schedule a public hearing to be held March 16, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. in order to receive citizen comments on the state CTP grant for FY 2010.

Mr. Brian Pearce, Emergency Services Director, appeared before the board to give a departmental update. Mr. Pearce also discussed options to reduce the number of EMS sites as requested by the board at a previous board meeting. He stated that the Warsaw and Wallace EMS sites have the heaviest call volumes; whereas, Pleasant Grove has the least calls but covers the largest area in the county. Mr. Pearce stated that if the board chooses to close any sites, the Kenansville and Rose Hill sites would have the least impact.

Commissioner Williams requested that Mr. Pearce complete a study detailing the various EMS site options and put the recommendations on paper to be presented to the board at the next board meeting.

Dr. Hervy Kornegay, Sr. was present and stated that the study has already been done a couple of years ago by a committee comprised of fire chiefs, rescue captains, and himself. He stated that the committee recommended eight sites because of how large the county is, but the board approved six sites. Dr. Kornegay stated that Commissioner Fussell wanted to add a site in Rose Hill and Commissioner Williams wanted to add a site in Kenansville.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to instruct Mr. Pearce to develop a cost-saving plan for the Emergency Medical System to provide comparable service to what is currently provided.

Mr. Tom Reaves, Information Technology Director, appeared before the board to request permission to advertise and hire an individual to fill a vacant position. He stated that he would like to restructure the IT Department and reclassify the vacant position to an Applications Programmer/System Analyst and reorganize other positions in his department. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to approve the Applications Programmer/System Analyst position but postpone the reclassification of the other IT positions to be discussed at budget time.

Ms. Cynthia Potter, Interim Economic Development Director; and Dr. Lawrence Rouse, President of James Sprunt Community College appeared before the board to discuss a lease agreement between Duplin County and James Sprunt Community College for the WestPark Business & Technology Center. She stated the college would be using the facility for workforce development, educational training, and as a business incubator. The lease will be for 15 years at \$1,000 per month (\$12,000/year) and will be effective March 1, 2009 through February 28, 2024.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to approve the lease agreement between Duplin County and James Sprunt Community College pending review and approval of the county attorney.

Dr. Rouse requested the board's permission to apply for a \$90,000 planning and design grant from the state. He stated that the funds would be used for plans to construct a new 18,000 square foot public safety building on the James Sprunt Community College campus.

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to allow James Sprunt Community College to apply for a \$90,000 planning grant from the state and authorize the county finance officer to sign any necessary documents.

Ms. Ila Davis, Health Department Director, appeared before the board to request a new position and to reclassify another position.

Ms. Davis requested permission to hire a pediatrician instead of filling the vacant Family Nurse Practitioner [Physician Extender] position. She stated that she has been trying to fill the vacant position for over a year. Ms. Davis stated that the health department has an opportunity to hire a pediatrician and feels this would be beneficial since there is a shortage of pediatricians in the county. In order to hire the pediatrician, the Physician Extender Position II vacancy would need to be changed to a Physician IIIA position.

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to change the vacant Physician Extender II position to a Physician IIIA in order to hire a pediatrician.

Ms. Davis requested permission to establish a substitute Physician Extender II position which would allow a Family Nurse Practitioner or Physician's Assistant to be hired when one of the Physician Extenders is out due to illness or personal reasons. She stated the health department has used a staffing agency for substitute positions before, but the staffing fee is expensive.

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Turner, carried unanimously, to establish a substitute Physician Extender II position.

The board recessed for lunch and an update at Duplin General Hospital.

Dr. Linda Recio of Evergreen Solutions, LLC appeared before the board to present the financial review of the Duplin County Board of Education. (See handout in minutes.)

Dr. Wiley Doby, Superintendent, was present and submitted a written reply and analysis of the audit report as prepared by Ms. Carolyn Olivarez, Finance Officer. He stated that Ms. Olivarez was absent due to medical reasons. (See handout in minutes.)

Commissioner Turner requested that a copy of the analysis be included with the audit report for anyone requesting a copy. Commissioner Wells suggested that a performance audit should be conducted by Evergreen Solutions on all county departments. Dr. Recio stated the approximate cost to audit all county departments would be \$120,000.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to conduct a performance audit on all Duplin County departments with funds to come from the general fund balance, thereby approving BA #0158.

Mr. Mike Aldridge discussed Dr. Jim Johnson's Competitive Assessment as presented on January 22, 2009. He recommended combining Dr. Johnson's recommendations with the 2007 Strategic Plan by establishing a "web team" comprised of county, board of education, town, and chamber of commerce representatives to correct inconsistent and outdated websites and links. Mr. Aldridge also recommended that once the new Economic Development Director is hired, the EDC will coordinate a meeting of business leaders to identify specific economic development and infrastructure strategies. (See handout in minutes.)

It was the consensus of the board for the county manager to proceed with these plans.

Mr. Aldridge presented the audit contract with Pittard, Perry, & Crone, Inc. in the amount of \$44,100 for fiscal year ending June 30, 2009. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to award the contract to audit accounts for fiscal year ending June 30, 2009 to Pittard, Perry, & Crone, Inc. in the amount of \$44,100 and authorize the chairman to sign same.

Mr. Aldridge presented a report on how to improve efficiency by possibly combining departments as requested by Commissioner Fussell at a previous meeting. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Aldridge presented a working draft of the capital needs for all county departments over the next three-year period. He explained that this is an effort to plan for anticipated capital expenses in advance of the usual operations budget process. Mr. Aldridge outlined the top priorities for FY 09-10 and advised the board to review and set priorities as well. (See handout in minutes.)

As requested at the February 2, 2009 board meeting, Mr. Aldridge reviewed a spreadsheet showing what expenses could possibly be cut from the current budget for each county department in an effort to save 5 percent. He stated some departments did not have any items that could be cut due to an already minimal budget. A total of \$155,115.99 was identified that could be reverted back to the general fund, which is 0.3 percent of the total county budget. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to revert the \$155,115.99 in savings from the various departmental budgets back to the general fund balance thereby approving BA #0159

Mr. Aldridge stated that Request for Proposals for the purchase the old Chinquapin School has been advertised on the county website. Proposals are due April 6, 2009. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Aldridge stated that he had received a letter from the North Carolina Department of Transportation approving the designation of the bridge on US117 at Calypso in honor of Dr. Hervy Kornegay, Sr. (See handout in minutes.)

Commissioner Turner requested a joint meeting with the board of commissioners, members of the NC Bar Association, the district attorney, and the sheriff, to discuss ways to alleviate the jail-overcrowding situation.

Commissioner Williams stated that she would like to hear an update from the director of the Duplin County Boys & Girls Club at the next meeting.

Commissioner Parks stated that she was impressed with a recent presentation on gang awareness presented by Officer Ben Parrish with the Duplin County Sheriff's Department. She requested a presentation be given to the board at the March 16, 2009 board meeting.

Mr. Aldridge stated that he had received a letter from Mr. Elmer Flake, Mayor of the Town of Faison, requesting that the disconnected well on Warren Road near Faison be donated to the town. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to transfer the ownership of the disconnected well on Warren Road to the Town of Faison.

The board adjourned to meet again on Monday, March 2, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room, County Administration Building (224 Seminary Street), Kenansville, North Carolina.

Clerk