

December 7, 2009

The Duplin County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, December 7, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Room, County Administration Building (224 Seminary Street), Kenansville, North Carolina.

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

Absent: Ms. Teresa Lanier, County Finance Officer

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

Mr. Jeremy Perkins of Wallace gave the invocation.

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

Affidavits of Publication

Animal Control – November 2009  
Building Inspections – November 2009  
Cabin Lake – November 2009  
Communications – November 2009  
Finance – October 2009  
Garage – October 2009  
Health Department – October 2009  
Services for the Aged – October 2009  
Solid Waste & Recycling – October 2009

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Wells, carried unanimously, to approve the Consent Agenda which included the following: Minutes – November 16, 2009 and November 19, 2009; Budget Amendments # 112 - # 116; Tax and Solid Waste Releases # 6957 - # 7008; Health Department Bad Debt Write Off for the period ending 11/06/06 - \$ 5,279.66 [general] and \$659.62 [dental]; to add a discussion on moving the Water Department; a General Fund Balance Report; a report on the Jason Alden and the Oak Ridge Boys concerts held at the Duplin County Events Center; a discussion on filling the Administrative Officer vacancy at the Manager's Office; and to delete Mr. Russell Johnson's presentation from the agenda.

Mr. Aldridge presented Administrative Budget Amendments # E159 - # F182 and Motor Vehicle Releases for November 2009 - \$ 6,325.31 to be made part of the minutes.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fussell, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, to elect Commissioner Turner to continue to serve as the chairman of the board of commissioners. Commissioners Fussell, Turner, and Raynor voted for; Commissioners Parks, Wells, and Williams voted against. A tie vote results in no action being taken.

Motion was made by Commissioner Turner, seconded by Commissioner Fussell, to elect Commissioner Parks as Vice-Chairman. Commissioners Fussell, Parks, Raynor, and Turner voted for; Commissioner Wells and Williams voted against.

Public Comments:

Mr. Franklin Fussell of Kenansville thanked everyone who attended the Civil War sword factory fundraising banquet recently held at the Duplin Winery. Mr. Fussell spoke about the ambulance belonging to the former Magnolia Rescue Squad and

an individual claiming ownership of the ambulance and defibrillators. He stated that the ambulance and its equipment belong to the citizens that held fundraisers to pay for it. Mr. Fussell stated that the first responders with the Magnolia Fire Department requested the defibrillators from the individual claiming ownership but their request was denied .

Mr. Gary Ange of Wallace urged commissioners to utilize volunteer help in the strategic planning process.

Mr. Chris Anderson of Calypso questioned the process for the selection of companies eligible for the industrial bonds available as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009.

Mr. Rick Summerlin of Kenansville urged the commissioners to not demolish the old Chinquapin school. He presented a \$10,000 check to the chairman to purchase the old school.

Chairman Turner declined acceptance of the check and explained that sufficient notice was given to anyone wanting to purchase the old Chinquapin School property for development. He stated that he doesn't want to see historic structures torn down, but for the safety of the public and the potential for a lawsuit against the county if someone gets injured, the property need to be demolished.

Ms. Jerri Parker, NCDOT Maintenance Engineer, appeared before the board to give an update on various roads. She stated that \$21.3 million in contracts have been awarded for NCDOT road improvements. Barnhill Contracting has been awarded the contract for the following projects in Duplin County: NC 111 Hwy from Hwy 41 to Jackson Store Road – road will be widened and resurfaced; US 117 Connector will be resurfaced; and repair work on US 117 from Faison to Teachey. Ms. Parker stated that the work will begin January 4, 2010 and should be completed by November 12, 2010.

Other roads discussed: Charlie Southerland Road near Maysville School Road and White Oak Bridge Road near Hwy 403 in Mount Olive – gang graffiti on signs; Front Street Railroad Crossing in Warsaw – needs repair; Front Street in Warsaw – railroad tracks need repair.

Ms. Parker stated that maintenance on the railroad tracks in Warsaw is scheduled for repair by CSX Railroad on December 9, 2009.

Mr. Randall Albertson of Mount Olive appeared on behalf of the Warsaw Veteran's Museum to express gratitude for the county's recent contribution of \$30,000 to help with building repairs. He presented an appreciation letter from the president of the museum, Mr. Gene Thompson, to the board. (See handout in minutes.)

The board presented a retirement plaque to Ms. Wilda Kay Lanier, Deputy Tax Collector with the Tax Office [October 13, 1986 – December 18, 2009].

Mr. John W. McAden, Jr. of Wilson, NC gave a presentation on the high-quality weapons manufactured at the Civil War Sword factory in Kenansville. He is the co-author of the book, *Louis Froelich: Arms-Maker to the Confederacy*. Mr. McAden presented a check from the proceeds of the fundraiser held at the Duplin Winery for the Kenansville Sword Factory site to Mr. Franklin Fussell.

Ms. Jo Ann Hartley, Finance Officer with the Duplin County Board of Education, along with Ms. Dawn Craft, Director of Technology and Media with the Duplin County BOE, gave a presentation on the technology needs of the school system. Ms. Hartley requested permission to transfer \$727,000 from the BOE Capital Reserve account to Technology Capital in order to fund the needed improvements. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, to allow the Duplin County Board of Education to transfer \$727,529 from the Capital Reserve account to the Technology Capital account to be used for technology upgrades as presented, thereby approving BA # 117. Commissioners Parks, Raynor, Wells, and Williams voted for; Commissioner Fussell and Turner voted against.

Commissioner Turner requested a letter from the Duplin County Board of Education detailing how the funds will be spent.

Mr. Mark Eatman, Engineer with the NCDOT Planning Branch, appeared before the board to give a presentation on the Beulaville Comprehensive Transportation Plan. He stated that he has been working with the Town of Beulaville and the Eastern Carolina Rural Planning Organization in the development of the Beulaville CTP. The study was recently completed and identified traffic capacity problems in Beulaville. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Alex Rickard with the Eastern Carolina Rural Planning Organization presented a revised RPO Memorandum of Understanding. He stated that the amendments are to assist RPOs in meeting their quorum requirements by declaring a members' seat vacant if that member misses two consecutive meetings. The seat is reactivated when the member attends the next meeting. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to approve the revised Eastern Carolina Rural Planning Organization Memorandum of Understanding and authorize the chairman to sign same.

Mr. Jack Zoesch of Wallace appeared before the board to give a presentation on strategic planning in Duplin County. He offered his assistance in updating the Duplin County Strategic Plan. (See handout in minutes.)

It was the consensus of the board to have the county manager allot time to discuss strategic planning when the workshop is held to discuss the Evergreen Solutions audit report on the county.

Commissioner Fussell discussed the economy in Duplin County and news articles regarding the recent bankruptcy of four local hog producing companies – Coharie Farms, Bunting Swine, Coastal Plains Pork, and Perfect Pig. (See handout in minutes.)

Ms. Heather Beard, Economic Development Director, appeared before the board to discuss Expansion Solutions magazine's selection of Duplin County as a recipient of their "Top Five Excellence" award. Duplin County placed first in the Logisitcs Category. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to go into Closed Session pursuant to N.C.G.S. 143-318.11(a)(4) for economic development matters.

The board returned to Regular Session.

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to approve the distribution of the allocation for the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act 2009 bond funding as 60 percent for "Project Rose" and 40 percent for "Project Cypress". In the event that one of the two projects is not eligible for the bond funding, their respective allocation would go to the other project.

Ms. Priscilla Bryant, Income Maintenance Administrator; and Ms. Nanette Smith, Social Work Program Manager, appeared before the board to request permission to fill four vacancies at Social Services: 2 Income Maintenance Caseworkers, a Human Resource Placement Specialist, and a Child Protective Services Social Worker. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Wells to allow the Duplin County Department of Social Services to advertise and hire two positions of highest priority to be determined by social services management and discussed with the county manager. Commissioners Raynor, Turner, Wells, and Williams voted for; Commissioner Fussell and Parks voted against.

Commissioner Parks stated that she wanted the record to show that her “no” vote was because she felt that social services needed four positions rather than just two.

Ms. Wendy Sivori presented a draft version of the county’s proposed purchasing policy. The purpose of the revised policy is to make an effort to purchase locally when possible. (See handout in minutes.)

Commissioner Wells stated that minority businesses should be included in the proposed purchasing policy.

Ms. Sivori stated that she would include this information and bring back the revised policy for board approval at a future meeting.

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

Mr. Pearce presented 20 letters of support from the fire chiefs of the local volunteer fire departments for the proposed ¼ cent sales tax referendum to benefit the fire departments. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Pearce requested permission to purchase to “piggyback” with Richmond County, Virginia on their bid to purchase an ambulance. He stated that funds for the purchase would come from EMS collections revenue. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to authorize the Emergency Services Director to “piggyback” on the Richmond County, Virginia bid of the purchase of an ambulance in the amount of \$ 105,968; thereby approving BA # 118.

Mr. Pearce discussed establishing a volunteer search and rescue team in Duplin County. He stated that the proposed 25-member team would be comprised of volunteers from local fire departments, EMS units, emergency management, and law enforcement. Mr. Pearce stated that there would be some minimal cost involved in providing liability coverage and drug test screening services to the volunteers.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, to approve the establishment of the Duplin County Search and Rescue Team. Commissioners Fussell, Parks, Raynor, Turner, and Wells voted for; Commissioner Williams voted against.

Mr. Pearce, along with Chinquapin Fire Chief Mike Casey, appeared before the board to discuss the fire department’s desire to burn the old Chinquapin School for training. Mr. Casey stated that this is a mutual request from the fire department and the demolition contractor as this will save time and money in the amount of debris to be hauled to the landfill. He stated that training will only be conducted in areas of the school deemed safe.

Motion was made by Commissioner Raynor, seconded by Commissioner Fussell, carried unanimously, to allow the Chinquapin Fire Department to burn the old Chinquapin School for fire training.

Mr. Mike Aldridge discussed the vacant Administrative Officer position in the County Manager’s office. He stated that he would like to transfer Ms. Paige Marshburn, Water Assistant with the Duplin County Water Department to fill the vacancy.

Mr. Aldridge discussed moving the Duplin County Water Department into a soon-to-be vacant building equipped with a drive-thru window located on the corner of Main & Stokes Street. The building currently houses the D.L Scott Insurance Agency. Mr. Aldridge explained that Mr. Scott has chosen not to renew the lease. Mr. Aldridge stated that the building would be ideal to house the Water Department because of the handicap accessibility and the convenience of the drive-thru window. He requested permission to negotiate a lease.

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Wells, to allow the county manager to negotiate a lease to bring back before the board for final approval on the building to house the Water Department. Commissioners Parks, Raynor, Turner, Wells, and Williams voted for; Commissioner Fussell voted against.

Mr. Aldridge stated that the board has been invited to the 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Eastern Carolina Gang Conference that will be hosted by Duplin County on January 19<sup>th</sup> from 8:30 a.m. until 3:30 p.m. at the Duplin County Events Center. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Aldridge stated that Ms. Daphany Hill, Executive Director of Eastern Carolina Human Services Agency, is requesting the reappointment of Ms. Rebecca Judge to their board of directors.

Motion was made by Commissioner Wells, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to reappoint Ms. Rebecca Judge to the Eastern Carolina Human Services Agency, Inc. Board of Directors for a one-year appointment effective January 1, 2010.

Mr. Aldridge presented a draft contract between the county and Mr. Ferrell Thigpen to provide building inspecting services beyond his retirement date of December 31, 2009. Mr. Aldridge stated that Mr. Thigpen has agreed to continue to work until a new Chief Building Inspector can be hired and has agreed to be compensated under contract or other suitable payment arrangements still being negotiated. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Aldridge presented a contract for computer programming services between the county and Kirk Software, Inc. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to approve the contract with Kirk Software, Inc. and authorize the Finance Officer to sign same.

Mr. Aldridge stated that Mr. Gary Rose, Tax Administrator, would like to promote Ms. Barbara Gail Summerlin from Tax Assistant III to the vacant Deputy Tax Collector position effective January 1, 2010. The vacancy is due to the retirement of Ms. Kay Lanier. Mr. Aldridge explained that Mr. Rose would like to replace the former Tax Assistant III job description with a new position of Business/Personal Property Appraiser Assistant. The new position would remain at a Grade 63 just as the Tax Assistant III position was. The person hired into the new position would train with Ms. Marie Dixon who is nearing retirement.

It was the consensus of the board for the county manager to fill the vacancy within the county before advertising publicly.

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, to abolish the old Tax Assistant III position and create a new Business/Personal Property Appraiser Assistant at a Grade 63 and advertise the vacancy. Commissioners Parks, Turner, Raynor, Wells, and Williams voted for; Commissioner Fussell voted against.

Mr. Aldridge updated the board on the improvements being made by Embarq telephone to provide high-speed internet access to Duplin County. He stated that a representative with Embarq has confirmed that the company has received a grant that will make high-speed internet service available to 3,550 residents bringing the total high-speed internet coverage for Duplin County to 80 percent. Improvements are expected to be installed by the end of December 2009.

The board discussed rescheduling the next commissioners' meeting from December 21, 2009 at 6:30 p.m. to December 21, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. due to the Christmas holiday.

It was the consensus of the board to move the meeting to 9:00 a.m. on December 21, 2009 and to hold the January 19, 2010 meeting at 6:30 p.m. at the Fountaintown Fire Department.

The board adjourned to meet again on Monday, December 21, 2009 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners' Meeting Room (224 Seminary Street), Kenansville, North Carolina.

---

Clerk