

March 1, 2010  
Board of Commissioners Meeting

The Duplin County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, March 1, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. in the Commissioners Room, County Administration Building (224 Seminary Street), Kenansville, North Carolina.

Present: Chairman Cary Turner, Commissioners David Fussell, Frances Parks, Harold Raynor and Zettie Williams.

Absent: Commissioner Reginald Wells

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

Absent: Ms. Teresa Lanier, Finance Officer

Commissioner David Fussell gave the invocation.

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

Duplin County Fund Balance

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to approve the Consent Agenda which included the following: February 15, 2010 minutes, Water District D and E minutes, Budget Amendments #156 - #163; Tax & Solid Waste Releases #7334 - #7356; Health Department Bad Debt Write Off Period ending January 31, 2007 - \$3,709.88 [general services] and \$245.20 [dental]; Contract with Whitewood Associates, Budget Forecast, Closed Session 143-318.11 (a)(3) legal matters and a Closed Session 143-318.11 (a)(6) personnel matters.

Mr. Aldridge presented Administrative Budget Amendments #H276 – #H298 to be made part of the minutes.

Public Comments:

Mr. Earl Brinkley, Eastern Board of Directors, Eastern Region, Kinston, North Carolina appeared before the board to present his resignation from Board of Directors of North Carolina's Eastern Economic Region after completing four pleasurable years working with the county. (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Jose Del Angel, Rose Hill, appeared before the board to speak about providing the youth in Duplin County recreational centers and programs. He suggested different activities that would influence the youth in a positive direction (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Devega Whitley appeared before the board to complain about how he was not treated fairly by the store attendant at the Scotchman in Rose Hill.

Mr. Bruce Pearsall appeared before the board to discuss land use appeal; however, Mr. Gary Rose asked him to appear at the next board meeting on March 15, 2010.

Ms. Jerri Parker, NCDOT Maintenance Engineer, appeared before the board to discuss any road issues in Duplin County.

Commissioner Parks addressed a sign on Hwy 117; road #2530 is still in the ditch. Ms. Parker is aware of this and stated that DOT is working on it.

Commissioner Fussell addressed the drainage getting worse on Hwy 11 adjacent to exit 384. Ms. Parker has investigated and sent a study to Raleigh for DOT to come here and look at it.

Commissioner Turner addressed signs down on the Charlie Southerland Road. Ms. Parker will report this to DOT.

Commissioner Williams addressed that Hwy 24 intersection needs warning signs. This concern was addressed a month ago but no feedback from DOT has been received. Commissioner Fussell asked Ms. Parker to expedite with a letter to DOT.

Mr. Wynn Batten addressed that Hwy 117 needs repaving. Ms. Parker commented that Hwy 117 will not be repaved but only have joints removed and replaced with asphalt.

Mr. Oliver Vestal requested that Ms. Parker look at D S Williamson Road between the bypass and NC 50. It is in bad condition and dangerous due to feed and hog truck traffic being so heavy there. He also stressed that Hwy 117 needs to be paved from Faison to Wallace.

Ms. Jessie Ladson addressed the corner of Bowden Road between Hwy 50 and Hwy 117 is in bad condition due to big trucks and that superficial patching is only a short term fix and it really needs repaving.

Mr. Jimmy Sauls addressed Murphy Brown and railroad intersection (Carroll's Road). Ms. Parker met with Mr. David Hinnant, Railroad Division with DOT, last week about that crossing and he will coordinate with CSX, which will allow DOT to perform the work.

Ms. Parker suggested the commissioners write a letter to DOT and petition for Hwy 117 to be repaved.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fussell, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, for the commissioners to write a letter to DOT requesting Hwy 117 to be repaved.

Mr. Clayton Herring, Chief of Rose Hill Fire Department, and Mr. Brian Pearce, EMS Director, appeared before the board to discuss the ¼ cent sales tax. Also present were representatives from fire departments of Faison, Beulaville, Wallace, Sarecta, Oak Wolfe, Albertson, Calypso, Potters Hill, Greenevers, Warsaw and Lyman. Mr. Herring explained that the ¼ cent sales tax is needed due to increase in expenses. It was the consensus of all the fire departments that the only fair way to distribute the ¼ cent sales tax is equally among all departments.

Commissioner Fussell asked what the money would be used for. Mr. Brian Pearce addressed that this money would be used for fire department gear, trucks, equipment, gas and insurance.

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to endorse and follow the directions of the fire chiefs to equally distribute the ¼ cent sales tax.

Ms. Wendy Sivori, County Attorney, left the meeting.

Mr. Jim Williams, President of Chinquapin Recreation, appeared before the board to give a review on the February 18, 2010 meeting held at the site of the ball field. The commissioners, some citizens, Mr. Ken Kennedy and Mr. Williams met to investigate the land and determine how it can be best used. Mr. Kennedy proposed that a fence be installed and to allow him 10 feet right-of way. It was the consensus between Mr. Williams, Mr. Kennedy and the board of commissioners for Duplin County to lease the land to Chinquapin Recreation subject to a sublease to Mr. Ken Kennedy (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Fussell, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to resend the previous motion to declare the property as surplus and to lease the land to Chinquapin Recreation, as long as it is in operation, subject to a sublease with Mr. Kennedy. If the opportunity to have a long term lease exists, the lease will be restructured subject to the provisions of the statutes.

Ms. Donna Brown, Utilities Director, appeared before the board requesting to write off the bad debt from customers for 2000-2003 and authorize the Water Department to raise the water deposit fee from \$50 to \$100 on a ¾" tap (See handout in minutes.)

Ms. Wendy Sivori, County Attorney, returned back to meeting.

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to write off the 2000-2003 water bad debts and authorize changing the deposit fee from \$50 to \$100 for new customers from this day forward, March 1, 2010.

Dr. Lawrence Rouse, President of James Sprunt Community College, appeared before the board to give an update on James Sprunt. By power point presentation, Dr. Rouse demonstrated how education is promoting economic development in Duplin County. Dr. Rouse mentioned the success of the community college in obtaining grant money for retrofitting the business technical center. Dr. Rouse contacted Ms. Nancy Azzole from Craven County concerning the grant writer position for Duplin County. After meeting with Ms. Azzole, a contract was developed between Azzole Consulting, James Sprunt Community College and Duplin County (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to approve the contract for Ms. Azzole with Azzole Consulting to become a grant writer for Duplin County and have the county manager and finance officer to sign same.

Mr. Eric West appeared before the board on behalf of the Volunteer Agriculture District Board (VAD) requesting Duplin County to consider entering into a contract with Agricultural and Community Development Services (ACDS) to develop a Farmland Protection Plan. The VAD initiated a grant application with North Carolina Agriculture Development. In 2009 Duplin County received notification they were awarded this grant to produce the Duplin County Farmland Protection Plan. Requests for proposals have been sent out and a contract has been prepared to award the lowest bidder (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to enter into a contract with Agriculture and Community Development Services and authorize the chairman, clerk and finance officer to sign same.

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, to go into Closed Session pursuant to 143-318.11 (a) (3) for legal matters.

The board returned to regular session.

Mr. Blake Wallace, Sheriff, appeared before the board to discuss gang violence in Duplin County. Gang violence across the county is a serious problem and recruitment into gangs starts as young as elementary school. The Duplin County Sheriff Department has formed a gang coalition with East Pointe Mental Health, Sampson County Sheriff Department, Duplin County Schools and Sampson County Schools to work on a plan to be more proactive to eliminate gang issues. Sheriff Wallace requested active participation from the county board.

Motion was made by Commissioner Fussell, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, for each commissioner to recruit from their district six people to form

teams to participate in ways to help the county in the gang violence problem. The board of commissioners will submit names for appointment on April 5, 2010.

Ms. Angela Miller, Deputy Finance Officer, appeared before the board to report another financial audit of the VenuWork's books. Her audit found no willful discrepancies, but did reveal many unintentional posting errors that have now been corrected as shown on the attached financial statements. Compounded by the losses associated with the cancelled Willie Nelson concert, the final financial reports confirm that VenuWorks lacks sufficient funds to pay outstanding liabilities and payroll expenses for the remainder of the fiscal year. The estimated contribution of \$70,000-\$80,000 will be needed to fund the operation of the Events Center through June 30, 2010 (See handout in minutes.)

Mr. Mike Aldridge, County Manager, recommended that VenuWorks needs money to pay expenses that are due now. Mr. Steven Williamson, VenuWorks Advisory Member, recommended that \$30,000 is needed to accommodate expenses in order for the center to operate through the end of March (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Parker, seconded by Commissioner Williams, to appropriate \$30,000 from contingency to VenuWorks operations account to accommodate Event Center expenses through March 31, 2010, thus approving budget amendment #164. Commissioner Parks, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Raynor and Commissioner Williams voted for; and Commissioner Fussell voted against. Motion carried.

Mr. Doug Kuhnel, Senior Vice President of VenuWorks, submitted a letter dated February 25, 2010 stating VenuWorks is withdrawing the five-year management proposal they prepared for the Duplin County Events Center (See handout in minutes.)

Ms. Wendy Sivori, County Attorney, left the meeting.

As a follow up from the previous board meeting, Mr. Aldridge appeared before the board to authorize the establishment of employment with Ms. Sabra Duncan as the senior programmer for the county at a salary of \$80,000 plus benefits (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Turner, for Mr. Aldridge to discuss with Ms. Duncan a lower salary than \$80,000. Commissioner Parks, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Raynor and Commissioner Williams voted for and Commissioner Fussell voted against. Motion carried.

Mr. Aldridge requested to fill a Carpenter position and a Tax Assistant II position. The positions need to be advertised outside the county, due to no one being qualified within the county.

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Parks, for managers to advertise and recruit for these two positions outside the county. Commissioner

Parks, Commissioner Turner, Commissioner Raynor, Commissioner Williams voted for; and Commissioner Fussell voted against. Motion carried.

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Parks, carried unanimously, to accept Mr. Earl Brinkley resignation and appoint Mr. Win Batten to serve this position.

Motion was made by Commissioner Williams, seconded by Commissioner Raynor, carried unanimously, for the board to send a letter of appreciation to Mr. Earl Brinkley for his services.

Mr. Aldridge appeared on behalf of Farm Bureau lobbying Congress for continued funding of the B-Map program. They are asking counties in the 7<sup>th</sup> Congressional District to write letters to urge continued funding of the B-Map program. (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, authorizing the chairman to sign a letter addressed to Mike McIntyre for continued funding of the B-Map program.

Mr. Aldridge presented before the board a contract that Ms. Wendy Sivori, County Attorney, prepared for Mr. Dick White's hospital transaction management and requested authorization for the chairman to sign (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, to approve the contract and authorize the chairman to sign.

Mr. Aldridge appeared before the board with a letter from the Aging Department requesting signature from the chairman congratulating Ms. Mandie Kenan of Beulaville on her 107<sup>th</sup> birthday (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, for the chairman to sign.

Mr. Aldridge presented the budget forecast for the commissioner's review (See handout in minutes.)

The joint committees between the hospital and commissioners met and there was some uncertainty about a portion of the hospital property. The hospital requested to have a title search on the property and would like this done before the requests for proposals become active (See handout in minutes.)

Motion was made by Commissioner Parks, seconded by Commissioner Williams, carried unanimously, for Mr. Aldridge to instruct Wendy Sivori, County Attorney, to do a title search on the hospital property and let Commissioner Turner know when it is complete.



Motion was made by Commissioner Raynor, seconded by Commissioner Fussell, carried unanimously, to adjourn to meet on March 15, 2010 at 9:00 a.m. at the Commissioners Room in the County Administrative Building.

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Clerk



