



DEPARTMENT HEAD MEETING MINUTES

9:30 a.m. Thursday, January 2, 2025

Agriculture Drive, Kenansville NC

Department Heads in Attendance: Angel Venecia, Josh Raynor, Scotty Summerlin, Laura Jones, Melisa Brown, Frankie Herring, Jeffery Williams, David Houston, Craig Hatcher, Brandon McMahon, Amanda Pope, Robin Grotke, Semeka Perry, Chelsey Lanier, Anita Savage, Chris Vernon, Jordon Whaley, Matthew Barwick, Annie Murrell, Samantha Lane, Joe Newburn, Gary Rose, Carrie Sullivan.

Also Attended: Bryan Miller, Trisha Hoskins, Rachel Ezzel (Proxy), Vickie Baker (Proxy), Christa Parker (Proxy), Jaime Murray (Proxy).

Open Meeting

DEPARTMENT LEADER UPDATES

Upcoming Initiatives

BUDGET SEASON & TAX REVALUATION

- Budget season is approaching, and it is important to be mindful of the rising prices. Ensure that you request the necessary funds and align your budget accordingly.
- For successful budget advocacy, it is essential to include all required items in your departmental budget request, as management will have difficulty supporting unmet needs that were not requested upfront.

COMMISSIONERS RETREAT

- We have one month to prepare for the Commissioners' Retreat. It is crucial that we identify and communicate any major budget requests in advance, so management can adequately prepare for the presentation at the February retreat.

COMMISSIONERS MEETING SCHEDULE

- Starting in January 2025, the Board of Commissioners will transition to one meeting per month, scheduled for the first Monday of each month. However, there will be two meetings in May and June, primarily to address the budget.
- Department Heads will now have a full month to prepare, ensuring that all ARF (Agenda Request Forms) are submitted well in advance to Jaime, with copies sent to Carrie and Bryan.
- For substantial agenda items, please engage with management before the meeting to ensure a smooth presentation and clarity on what will be discussed.



- If you have items that need to be presented to the Board in January, please submit your information to Jaime by the end of today.

HEALTH DEPARTMENT AND DSS

- The consolidation of the Health Department and Department of Social Services (DSS) is underway, though we anticipate minimal operational changes.
- A new position of Human Services Director will be created, to whom both the Health and DSS Directors will report. This Director position will report directly to the County Manager.
- Both departments will be governed by the County Personnel Policy, replacing the state personnel policies previously applicable.
- This offers better financial oversight of all the workings and brings all employees at DSS and Health department under the counties personnel policy instead of State policy.
- To ensure employees were not losing any of the protections of the state policy, management reviewed the County Policy with the County Attorney to make sure that the policies maintain a substantially equivalent process for protections offered through state policy for the consolidation.
- We don't have the benefit of being substantially equivalent to the states personnel policy at this time.
- A job posting will be made for the Human Services Director position, which is temporarily filled by Jessica Helms, Deputy Finance Director.
- The ideal candidate will have experience in Local Government Finance, Human Resources, and a background in Social Services and Health Department operations.

EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION LUNCHEON FEEDBACK

- There was feedback requesting additional Bingo boards.
- Employees appreciated the variety of activities provided during the event.
- Strategic placement of speakers was noted, particularly in addressing sound quality issues.
- Overall, lots of good responses.

DEPARTMENT UPDATES

- The Health Department's recent food drive giveaway was a great success.
- The Governors Volunteer Service Award applications are open. Volunteer service must have been performed since January 2024, with a submission deadline of February 7th. Volunteer efforts can be from any service done within Duplin County. Flier is in the Newsletter.



- Tax season is upon us, and assistance will be available at Senior Services to help with tax form preparation, free of charge, from now until April. Flier is in the Newsletter.

Closed Meeting

**Respectfully Submitted by
Trisha Hoskins**