**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA FEBRUARY 15, 2021**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, February 15, 2021in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Lloyd E. Griffin, III, Chairman

Charles H. Jordan, Vice-Chairman

Cecil Perry

Sean Lavin

Barry Overman

William “Bill” Sterritt

Jonathan Meads

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Sparty Hammett, County Manager

R. Michael Cox, County Attorney

Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Lloyd Griffin. Commissioner Sean Lavin gave the invocation and Commissioner Bill Sterritt led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Griffin welcomed those in attendance.

**1. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:**

Chairman Griffin asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Vice-Chairman Jordan requested the agenda be amended to add the following items: 1) Food Bank update; 2) Approval of budget amendment; 3) Approval of PARTF grant application and appraisals for Northern Park; 4) Approval to list Kitty Hawk properties for sale; and 5) Recommendation by Appointments Committee.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Cecil Perry to amend the agenda to add Item# 1 to Public Comments, Items# 2-4 to the Consent Agenda, and Item# 5 to Old Business. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. COMMENTS BY ALBEMARLE FOOD BANK EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR LIZ REASONER:**

Chairman Griffin recognized Liz Reasoner, Executive Director, of the Albemarle Food Bank to provide an update on operations at the facility. Ms. Reasoner thanked the Board for their support of the Food Bank of the Albemarle and the time they give volunteering. She noted that the last ten months has been a whirlwind. There has been a significant decline in volunteer service because of COVID and the fact that most of their volunteers are retirees and high risk. Their volunteer activities were reduced to about 2,000 man hours in this past year; going from 14,000 man hours previously. Their need for staffing has increased, so they have hired additional staff in order to continue to do the work that they are doing. They have also appealed to the Governor for disaster declaration in order to bring the National Guard in to help them out. Since September, they have eleven National Guardsmen stationed with them each and every day helping them in the warehouse and on their distribution deployments throughout the fifteen counties, as well as anything else asked of them.

Ms. Reasoner said their goal this year was to grow incrementally by 11%, which was a stretch goal. Their distribution has grown by 57% in the last ten months because of the COVID impact. She said they are continuing to provide the USDA commodities that are coming through the federal nutrition programs. Thankfully, those programs have been made available, but it puts a strain on their operation. She said the City and the County have allowed them to utilize South Park to park their trucks. They have been using Big Daddy’s back parking lot for their truck overflow, because they have had to rent additional trucks and trailers. They just finished the construction on a large refrigeration and freezer space, which will increase their capacity from twenty pallets of refrigeration and twenty pallets of freezer to 100+ in each area.

Ms. Reasoner said they are struggling to find candidates to fill open positions. They have four job opportunities available. She noted that they offer competitive benefits.

Ms. Reasoner stated that the Food Bank of the Albemarle is very fortunate that they received the MacKenzie Scott Award in the amount of $3 million. They were one of 42 food banks selected out of 200 nationwide.

Ms. Reasoner gave kudos to the Pasquotank County Sheriff’s Office and the Elizabeth City Policy Department. She said they come out and volunteer often. She said she would also like to thank the local health department for recognizing the Food Bank’s employees as essential workers for vaccines. She noted that her team has not taken a break other than when they have had close contact with COVID exposure. They have served in the trenches with everybody else. For her staff to be given priority to have the vaccine meant a lot to them and their board of directors.

The Board thanked Ms. Reasoner for the work she and her staff provide to our community.

**3. RECOMMENDATION FROM THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE:**

Commissioner Overman, Chairman of the Appointments Committee, reported that the Appointments Committee met this afternoon and has made the following recommendation:

Animal Control Board – Nominate Melissa Russell to fill vacancy.

Commissioner Overman noted that the appointment will need to lie over for two weeks to allow time for additional applications.

Motion was made Barry Overman, seconded by Cecil Perry to accept the nomination of the Appointments Committee to nominate Melissa Russell to the Animal Control Board, with the appointment lying over two weeks to allow for additional applications. The motion carried unanimously.

**4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Board considered the following consent agenda:

*a. Approval of Minutes of February 1, 2021 Commissioner Meeting*

*b. Approval Tax Releases and Refunds*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following tax releases, tax refunds, and solid waste fee releases:

Tax Releases

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | County | City |
| 1. | Willard G. & Ann Simpson |  | 175.13 |
| 2. | John A. & Catherine Hutchinson | 1,788.72 |  |
| 3. | Ronnie Lee & Tina Lynn Ange | 1,186.50 |  |

Tax Refund

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | County | City |
| 1. | John Charles Rutherford | 132.36 | 112.59 |

Solid Waste Fee Releases

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Parcel ID # | Reason for Release |
| 1. | Diana & John Michael Banks | P141-19A | Vacant |
| 2. | Mary John & Robert Glasper | 55-A-43 | Vacant |
| 3. | Harry & Alice Selby Kellogg | 56-F-2 | Vacant |
| 4. | Ornie & Irene McPherson Heirs | 57-A-46 & 47 | Vacant |
| 5. | Cecil & Lillie C. Perry | 26-H-18 | Vacant |
| 6. | Lillie C. & Cecil Perry | 24-B-9 | Vacant |

*c. Approval of Budget Amendments*

The Finance Committee has recommended that the Board approve the following budget amendments:

Non-Departmental

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decrease | 010.4195.5999.01 | COVID-19 | 47,950.00 |
| Increase | 010.4195.5699.00 | COVID Grants | 47,950.00 |

Animal Control

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decrease | 010.4195.5999.01 | COVID-19 | 12,230.00 |
| Increase | 010.4380.5126.00 | Salaries-Part-time | 11,360.00 |
| Increase | 010.4380.5181.00 | FICA | 870.00 |

Sheriff

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decrease | 010.4310.5261.00 | Departmental Supplies | 31,408.00 |
| Decrease | 010.4310.5500.00 | Capital Outlay | 26,600.00 |
| Increase | 010.4310.5600.00 | Grant Funds | 58,008.00 |

Finance

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Decrease | 010.6900.5991.00 | Contingency | 7,250.00 |
| Increase | 010.4130.5352.01 | Maintenance-Office Equipment | 7,250.00 |

*d. Certification of 2020-21 DPI Facility Needs Survey*

The Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Board of Education presented its 2020-21 DPI Facility Needs Survey to the Finance Committee on February 1, 2021. The Facility Needs Survey list all improvements and additional facilities needed to accommodate projected enrollments through the 2020-21 school year, and improvement to existing facilities. It is required that the Board of Commissioners certify that it received and reviewed a copy of the survey prior to submission to the State Board of Education. It does not necessarily constitute endorsement of or commitment to fund the Facility Needs Study.

*e. Approval of ECPPS Request to Reallocate Funds*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of a request from ECPPS to reallocate $255,851 of their Fiscal Year 2020-21 Capital Funds towards the Door Access Control Project.

NHS Boiler Upgrade – Funds remaining - $34,836

CHS Water Heater – Funds Remaining - $62,660

NHS HVAC Project funds that will not be used this year - $158,355

*f. Water & Sewer Master Plan – Administrative Changes*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval to change the name of the Water Department to the Pasquotank County Utilities Department, as well as change their current titles – Water Superintendent and Assistant Water Superintendent to Utilities Director and Assistant Utilities Director.

*g. Water & Sewer Master Plan – Maintenance Technician Job Classification*

The Finance Committee has recommended creating a Job Classification called Maintenance Technician as a promotional opportunity for employees. The pay range would be $31,540 -$44,163, and the additional cost would be $3,500 annually. This action would not create an additional position, and the cost would be covered in the department’s existing budget.

*h. Water & Master Plan – Well Management Plans*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval to complete Well Field Management Plans for the Weeksville and Reverse Osmosis well fields. The plans will help insure that our existing well fields produce at an optimal level in the future. The budget for the Well Field Management Plans would be $50,000 using existing funds within the Water Department’s budget.

i*. Water & Sewer Master Plan – Water Fee Study*

The Finance Committee has recommended issuing a Request for Proposal to retain a consultant to conduct a Water Fee Study of our current water rates, as well as our commercial customer fees. The budget for the Water Fee Study would be $50,000 using existing funds within the Water Department’s budget. The study will determine the adequacy of the existing water rates, and provide the framework and cost justification for any needed future adjustments.

*j. Water & Sewer Master Plan – 3D Modeling Study*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval to conduct a 3D Modeling Study. 3D Modeling information is needed to find future well sites for the Reverse Osmosis Plant. The budget for the 3D Modeling Study would be $75,000 using existing funds within the Water Department’s Budget.

*k. Purchase of Debt Management Software for Finance Office*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval to purchase Debt Book Software for the Finance Office at an initial cost of $7,250 for set-up, with an annual cost of $5,000 thereafter.

*l. Approval to Add Jackson Stancil to the Lobbyist Contract*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the County Manager giving written consent to add Jackson Stancil to the McClees Consulting lobbyist contract to provide services for the remainder of the current contract.

*m. Approval of PARTF Grant Application for Northern Park*

Jon Hawley, Grants Administrator with the City of Elizabeth City, is in the process of writing the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant application for the Northern Park. In previous discussions with the Board, staff had recommended using the County’s pending acquisition of the Tractor Pull property as a match to obtain funding for park development. Based on research and discussions regarding the PARTF grant process, requesting matching funds for land acquisition will offer the best opportunity for funding.

Using this approach, the County would request a match of half of the $576,000 purchase price of the Tractor Pull property - $288,000 (three acres of the approximately 51 acres would be set aside for a potential Northern Public Safety substation and could not be included in the grant request). After retaining a consultant to do a site master plan, we would then pursue park development funds in a subsequent PARTF grant cycle. The Finance Committee has recommended approval to target land acquisition from PARTF in the 2021 grant cycle, and to obtain two property appraisals as required by PARTF.

*n. Approval to List Kitty Hawk Properties for Sale*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval to list 5133 Putter Lane, Kitty Hawk NC (.46 acre open lot) for $250,000; and 5200 N Croatan Highway, Kitty Hawk NC (6 acres with a 31,831 SF building) for $7,500,000 “For Sale by Owner” and listing County Attorney, Mike Cox, as the point of contact.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Sean Lavin to recuse Commissioner Cecil Perry from considering Item# 7b (tax releases and refunds) due to a conflict of interest. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Commissioner Lavin to approve Item# 7b. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Cecil Perry to approve the Consent Agenda (excluding Item# 7b) as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**5. COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT:**

County Manager Hammett reminded the Board that the Retreat is scheduled for Friday, February 26th beginning at 8:00 AM at the BLET Training Room at College of the Albemarle.

**6. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Sterritt participated in two Dangerous Dog Hearings, both of which were dismissed because the plaintiffs did not show up for the hearings. He provided an overview of the two cases. He thanked Attorney Cox for helping lead the hearings. He said he and Attorney Cox will be meeting in the near future to bring him up-to-date on the current animal control ordinances and amendments that may be needed in the future.

Commissioner Sterritt participated in the SPCA Board meeting via Zoom. He noted that it was his first ever meeting via Zoom. He thanked IT Director, Busz Brown for helping him set it up and showing him how the program works. He reminded everyone that SPCA stands for the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. There were a number of presentations, including financial and fundraising. He said the SPCA raises a lot of their own money, but they will be asking the Board for a few dollars during the budget process. They held an event called the “No Ball Event” which he said is a virtual fundraiser that rose over $14,000. At the meeting, he received a report on shelter income, rabies clinics, and costs for veterinarian medications ($20,000 per year) and spay and neuter fees ($14,000 per year).

Commissioner Lavin attended a meeting regarding Newland traffic concerns. He feels that there are enough concerns to warrant the Board looking into what they can do to help. He thanked the individuals from the Department of Transportation for attending tonight’s meeting to hear the concerns. He thinks we get down a slippery slope when we start talking about incorporating too much, such as undergrown utilities and signage. Maybe that is a discussion they need to have, but not necessarily as part of this one.

Commissioner Lavin attended a Parks & Recreation meeting last week, which was the first meeting with the new Parks & Recreation Director. With COVID, the Board did not meet at all last year. They have a lot of work to do, but he is encouraged about the direction they are heading.

Commissioner Lavin stated that the Workforce Development Board is in desperate need for business and industry representatives on the board from surrounding counties. He said if anyone knows of anyone who is interested in volunteering, to please reach out to him or Chairman Griffin.

Commissioner Meads stated that the EMS Board meeting was rescheduled.

Commissioner Overman attended a Tourism Development Authority orientation meeting with Corrina Ferguson and their Board Chair to bring him up-to-date on current activities. He explained that the Public Safety Committee is comprised of every fire chief, the sheriff’s department, the police department, emergency management, EMS, fire department coordinator, and many other public safety agencies. They meet monthly, so if anything comes up such as the traffic concerns in Newland, it can be brought before that committee as well.

Commissioner Perry said that College of the Albemarle was recently recognized as being one of the best community colleges in North Carolina. He said the Albemarle Regional Health Department is a leader when it comes to COVID vaccines. He has talked with the Health Director, Battle Betts about how clinics can be done for individuals who do not have transportation. He said they have figured out a way to bring clinics to those individuals.

Commissioner Perry stated he recently received three letters regarding hunting with dogs. He said this needs to be addressed at Special Projects in the near future, so that the Sheriff’s Department can address these concerns. He noted that February is Black History Month. He feels it is worth mentioning that the 46th Quarter Master General is an African American from Pasquotank County by the name of Hawthorn Proctor.

Vice-Chairman Jordan noted that Trillium is studying how they coordinate and communicate with local public safety officials. He stated that Keith Hamm, Community Liaison for Integrated Family Services will provide a presentation on Mobile Crisis Services at the Board’s March 1st meeting. He commended the Health Department for their excellent work with getting the vaccines out to the public.

Chairman Griffin said he was at the airport last week when a COVID clinic was being held. There were some traffic issues, but they were worked out. He noted that 30% of our adult population has now been vaccinated.

Chairman Griffin said Commissioner Lavin was elected Chairman of the Northeastern Workforce Development Board on Wednesday night, and has agreed to serve out the remainder of the vacated seat.  Commissioner Lavin currently represents Pasquotank County as one of the Business and Industry representative.

Chairman Griffin stated that his meetings with the Airport Authority, Albemarle Commission, and EDC start this week. He asked the Board if any of them watched NC Impact this week. It was a session about four statewide educators who came together and looked at what the next level of education is going to be. He said “Certificates” are going to be very important in the future.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Sean Lavin to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:55 PM.

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CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO THE BOARD