**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA MARCH 1, 2021**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, March 1, 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

Shelley Cox, Planning Director

Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Lloyd Griffin. Commissioner Charles Jordan gave the invocation and Commissioner Cecil Perry 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. County Manager Sparty Hammett requested the agenda be amended to add the following item: 1) Consideration of offer for property located at 333 Winfall Boulevard.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Barry Overman to amend the agenda to add Item# 1 to New Business. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTION HONORING COMMISSIONER FRANKIE MEADS:**

Chairman Griffin recognized Ms. Alice Meads and her family to come forward to accept a resolution on behalf of her late husband Frankie Meads. Chairman Griffin read and presented the following resolution to Ms. Meads:

**RESOLUTION IN HONOR OF**

**COMMISSIONER FRANKIE MEADS**

**WHEREAS,** The Board of Commissioners of Pasquotank County and its citizens lost a dedicated public servant with the untimely death of Commissioner Frankie Meads on January 13, 2021; and

**WHEREAS,** Commissioner Meads unselfishly served as a Commissioner since December of 2012 and has shown the spirit of public service by representing the Board and citizens of the County on numerous local and regional advisory Boards; and

**WHEREAS,** Commissioner Meads worked diligently to improve the quality of life for his fellow citizens in numerous capacities while giving special attention to reducing debt; and

**WHEREAS,** Commissioner Meads served on the EMS Board, Solid Waste/Landfill Committee, Animal Control Board, Albemarle RC&D, SPCA Board, and the North Carolina Building Code Council; and

**WHEREAS,** Commissioner Meads’ contributions as a God serving, thoughtful, hard-working, and generous person extend far beyond his service as a Commissioner; and

**NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,** that the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners hereby honors Commissioner Frankie Meads for a life of outstanding service and extraordinary contributions to Pasquotank County; and

**FURTHER BE IT RESOLVED,** by the Pasquotank County Board of Commissionersthat it hereby expresses its gratitude to his family members for having shared so much of his life with and for the benefit of the people of Pasquotank County; and

**BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED,** that this Resolution, adopted this 1st day of March, 2021, shall be entered into the minutes of the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners and a copy presented to the family of Commissioner Frankie Meads.

Board members expressed their condolences to the family, and noted how much he will be missed on the Board and in the community.

Mr. Meads’ sister stated that Frankie raised seven wonderful, well-behaved children.

**3. MOBILE CRISIS SERVICES PRESENTATION:**

Mr. Keith Hamm, Community Liaison for Integrated Family Services said he is here to remind the Board of a service that is available and is being utilized by the citizens of Pasquotank County. Integrated Family Services offers a wide array of mental health services in 30 counties in eastern North Carolina. Mobile Crisis is available free of charge to the citizens of Pasquotank County 24/7. They respond, and have been for about ten years, to citizens who are experiencing mental health, substance abuse crisis, or individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Thanks to Trillium Health Resources, if individuals have Medicaid, private insurance, or no insurance there is still not a charge to those individuals.

Mobile Crisis goes out and meets people in the community where they are, whether it’s in their living room, McDonald’s parking lot, Walmart, or wherever they are in a crisis situation to try to help them not only be able to manage the current crisis that they are in, but also to link them with needed resources to remain out of crisis in the future. They are the only provider of mobile crisis services in 16 counties in northeastern North Carolina.

Mr. Hamm explained that one of the things that they do that separates them from others who do mobile crisis, is they have a policy that if law enforcement, magistrates, EMS, or Social Services request their presence at a scene, they will go even if they are unable to bill for the interaction. They strive to ease some of the burden off of law enforcement when they are responding to mental health situations. He said if someone is in a crisis they call 911, which means EMS or law enforcement is going to respond, and that is not always the most appropriate entity to respond. They work very well with the local law enforcement and EMS services to be able to respond and deescalate these crisis situations.

One of the benefits of mobile crisis services is before mobile crisis if an individual was in a mental health crisis situation, more times than not, when law enforcement or EMS responded, they were taken to the emergency room, which may not be the most appropriate place to go. Often, they would end up going to a behavioral health hospital, when they did not really need to go. If you don’t need to go to a behavioral health hospital and you end up there for seven to fourteen days, the individual will have more problems when they get out than they did before they went in, such as who has been paying the bills, who has been working their job, and who has been taking care of their children. Mobile Crisis diverts over 80% of the individuals they respond to from unnecessary trips to the emergency room and to behavioral health hospitals, which amounts to millions of dollars per year in savings. They divert a number of individuals from incarceration as well.

The Board asked questions, and thanked Mr. Hamm for his presentation and the service Mobile Crisis provides for our community.

**4. TRILLIUM ANNUAL REPORT PRESENTATION:**

Mr. Bland Baker, Northern Regional Director, presented Trillium Health Resources’ annual report for Pasquotank County. Mr. Baker thanked Commissioner Jordan for his service on the Trillium Advisory Board. He said Commissioner Jordan is very supportive and concerned about the citizens of Pasquotank County, and is doing a great job.

Trillium represents 26 counties. Their budget is based on 266,000 Medicaid eligible individuals across the 26 counties. They served over 58,000 individuals last year at a cost of $475,921,857. Trillium provides a network much like any other insurance company which includes over 500 providers.

Mr. Baker said one of the main things that Trillium has been concerned with this past year and will be even more concerned this year is Medicaid Transformation. Medicaid Transformation is a transition based on the General Assembly that says they want to move Medicaid from a fee for service to a managed care type of situation. There are two different types of Medicaid Plans that will be available for our Medicaid consumers and our indigent population. The first plan is the Standard Plan. A request for proposal was posted on the website for the division and five companies were selected. This is the first time that these insurance companies have ever managed Medicaid dollars. The five companies awarded included: Amerihealth Caritas NC Inc, Blue Cross Blue Shield of NC, UnitedHealthcare of NC Inc., WellCare of NC Inc., and Carolina Complete Health. The Standard Plan will manage mild to moderate Medicaid behavioral health recipients.

Mr. Baker said the timeline for the Standard Plans is: March 15th through May 14th – open enrollment, May 15th – Auto enrollment, and July 1st – Stand Plans begin to serve Medicaid individuals with low to moderate needs. If an individual does not enroll by May 15th, they will be auto enrolled and will not have a choice who manages their plan. He said it is very important for individuals are careful about how they enroll, because they need to make sure their current physicians participate with the insurance plan they choose.

The other option is the Tailored Plan. The Tailored Plan will manage the high risk services for individuals with mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse. The Department of Health and Human Services released the RFA on November 13th, 2020. Trillium had until February to submit their application. Only managed care organizations (MCO) were allowed to respond. The Department of Health and Human Services will award the contracts on June 11, 2021 to 5-7 MCO’s. The Tailored Plan will be effective July 1, 2022.

The MCO’s will manage the whole person’s behavioral and physical health. The individual will use one card to see their doctor, their psychiatrist, their behavioral health provider, and purchase their medicines. Everybody will know what is going on with the individual rather than them being served in silo. They will focus on the social determinants of Health, to include transportation, housing, food insecurities, employment and personal safety.

Mr. Baker stated that Trillium developed a website specifically for COVID-19 information. They allowed the health department to put a link on their website so they could get out as much information as possible regarding vaccinations. They paid a lot of increased rates to their providers so that they could pay overtime, purchase PPE, etc. They have waived all prior authorizations. COVID kits have been supplied to providers and consumers. Telehealth continues to be provided when needed.

Mr. Baker said they tried to work more collaboratively with DSS. They hired a liaison person with a lot of experience to be the go between when they have hard cases to manage. They have contracted with Intergraded Family Services to develop respite homes for DSS. Approximately 1,200 Naloxone kits were provided. Trillium is developing a pilot project and Pasquotank County has been selected as one of a few counties that it will be tried in. They contracted with Integrated Family Services. It will be a co-responder situation between law enforcement and DSS. If DSS has to go out on a call, there will be someone from Integrated that can ride with them if they anticipate any kind of issues that may happen. The program is working in other states, and they are going to try it in two or three counties in our area to see how it works. He said the Police Department, Sheriff’s Office and DSS are excited about it.

Last year, Pasquotank County served 1,800 consumers (Mental Health – 1,356, Substance Abuse – 318, and Intellectual/Development Disability – 210).

The Board thanked Mr. Baker for his presentation and his services.

**5. APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:**

The Board considered a recommendation made by the Appointments Committee at the last meeting to appoint Melissa Russell to the Animal Control Board. Her application for appointment was provided to members of the Board at the last meeting. There being no further nominations;

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Charles Jordan to approve the appointment of Melissa Russel to the Animal Control Board. The motion carried unanimously.

**6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Board considered the following consent agenda:

*a. Approval of Minutes of February 15, 2021 Commissioner Meeting*

*b. Approval Tax Releases and Refunds*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following solid waste fee releases and solid waste fee refund:

Solid Waste Fee Releases

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Parcel ID # | Reason for Release |
| 1. | Margaret Barham | P96-42 | Vacant |
| 2. | Gwendolyn Minor | 39-B-33 | Vacant |
| 3. | Willie Elnora Hoskins | P63-50 | Vacant |
| 4. | Terry Brent & Teleda Meads | P6-21A | Vacant |
| 5. | Hazel T. Godfrey | P8A-36 | Vacant |
| 6. | Allen Godfrey & Virginia G. Passmore | P8A-35 | Vacant |

Solid Waste Fee Refund

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | Parcel ID # | Reason for Refund |
| 1. | JE, OE & DW McPherson | 53-A-2,B,C1 | Vacant |

*c. Adoption of Proclamation Proclaiming March 2021 as the 19th Annual March for Meals Month*

Laura Rollingson, Administrative & Volunteer Coordinator of Area Agency on Aging & Senior Nutrition Program at Albemarle Commission has requested the Board Proclaim March 2021 as the 19th Annual March for Meals Month and adopt the following proclamation:

**A PROCLAMATION PROCLAIMING MARCH 2021 AS THE**

**19th ANNUAL MARCH FOR MEALS MONTH**

**WHEREAS**, on March 22, 1972, President Richard Nixon signed into law a measure that amended the Older Americans Act of 1965 and established a national nutrition program for seniors 60 years and older; and

**WHEREAS**, Meals on Wheels America established the March for Meals campaign in March 2002 to recognize the historic month, the importance of the Older Americans Act Nutrition Programs, both congregate and home-delivered, and raise awareness about the escalating problem of senior hunger in America; and

**WHEREAS**, the 2021 observance of March for Meals celebrates 19 years of providing an opportunity to support Meals on Wheels programs that deliver vital and critical services by donating, volunteering and raising awareness about senior hunger and isolation; and

**WHEREAS**, Meals on Wheels programs – both congregate and home-delivered, in Pasquotank County, North Carolina have served our communities admirably for more than 20 years; and

**WHEREAS**, volunteers for Meals on Wheels programs in Pasquotank County, North Carolina are the backbone of the program and they not only deliver nutritious meals to seniors and individuals with disabilities who are at significant risk of hunger and isolation, but also caring concern and attention to their welfare; and

**WHEREAS**, Meals on Wheels programs in Pasquotank County, North Carolina provide nutritious meals to seniors that help them maintain their health and independence, thereby preventing unnecessary falls, hospitalizations and/or premature institutionalization; and

**WHEREAS**, Meals on Wheels programs in Pasquotank County, North Carolina provide a powerful opportunity for social connection for millions of seniors to help combat the negative health effects and economic consequences of loneliness and isolation; and

**WHEREAS**, Meals on Wheels programs in Pasquotank County, North Carolina deserve recognition for the heroic contributions and essential services they have provided amid the COVID-19 pandemic and will continue to provide to local communities, our State and our Nation long after it is over.

**NOW**, **THEREFORE**, we, as the Board of Commissioners of Pasquotank County, North Carolina do hereby proclaim March 2021 as the 19th Annual March for Meals Month and urge every citizen to take this month to honor our Meals on Wheels programs, the seniors they serve and the volunteers who care for them. Our recognition of, and involvement in, the national 2021 March for Meals can enrich our entire community and help combat senior hunger and isolation in America.

Dated this 1st day of March, 2021.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Sean Lavin to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

**7. APPROVAL OF CREEKSIDE FARMS, PHASE 3 FINAL PLAT:**

Planning Director, Shelley Cox explained that the developer of Creekside Farms Subdivision, Main Street Development, LLC is requesting Final Plat approval for 16 residential lots in Phase III of Creekside Farms Subdivision. The location of the subdivision is west of the intersection of Creek Road and Lovers Lane in Providence Township. This is the final phase of the development for Creekside Farms that contains a total of 75 lots. The property is zoned R-15, Residential and lot sizes range from 43,000 square feet to 45,364 square feet.

Under the current school districting, students generated from this development would attend Northside Elementary, Elizabeth City Middle and Pasquotank County High School. This development is within Providence Volunteer Fire Department’s jurisdiction. Fire hydrants have been installed throughout the development. This area is served by the Pasquotank County Water System. Water lines have been installed in accordance with the Preliminary Plat. On-site septic systems will be utilized at this location. Albemarle Regional Health Services has conditionally approved the lots in Phase 3 for septic systems. The area requested for Preliminary Plat approval is located within Flood Zone X and shaded X (not within the 100 year floodplain) according to FEMA Map 3720890500L effective December 21, 2018. No Army Corps of Engineers Section 404 wetlands have been delineated at this location. A letter of credit to ensure completion of streets has been submitted in the amount of $78,438.

Ms. Cox said since the Final Plat for Creekside Farms, Phase 3 meets the requirements for compliance with the Pasquotank County Subdivision Ordinance, staff recommends approvalof this request.

Commissioner Jordan asked if drainage is studied in subdivisions such as this one. Ms. Cox explained that all new subdivisions are required to have a drainage study. She said drainage has also been looked at in this subdivision. She noted that this is the oldest subdivision the County has still lingering out there. Usually, developers have two years once a preliminary plat is approved to get a final plat in. However, this subdivision came in back when the market dropped and the state had approved some delays in development approvals. The state basically put a hold on all of our development approvals, and this one was caught up in that. She said they were really slow getting this development moving. They also requested from the Board of Commissioners and received four different additional time periods to get the preliminary plat in. She said the subdivision was not originally approved under the County’s Drainage Ordinance that has since been adopted however; our stormwater engineer did review this development back when the preliminary plat was approved. She said they do have drainage ditches installed throughout all the phases. She reviewed everything and made sure all of the elevations are where they should be in relation to the preliminary plat, and she is not as concerned about flooding in this development as some of the other we have seen.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Sean Lavin to approve Creekside Farms, Phase 3, Final Plat. The motion carried unanimously.

**8. MASK PROTOCOL FOR MEETINGS:**

County Manager Sparty Hammett stated that staff was unable to find any jurisdictions that had any specific written policies regarding masks in meetings. Jurisdictions have practices that they implemented, such as the City of Elizabeth City’s practice is that everyone wears a mask the entire period of time. In some cases, there may be a requirement to wear a mask except when the person is speaking. One of the exceptions in the Governor’s order is if someone is speaking in a meeting or providing a presentation you are not required to wear a mask. He said it is the Board’s prerogative whether or not they want to establish a practice.

Vice-Chairman Jordan said his opinion is that the meeting room is not very large, and to be as safe as we can and look out for each other, it would be helpful if masks were kept on except when an individual is speaking. He said from time to time individuals are asked to pull their mask off while speaking and he can certainly understand that. He stated that we have to be very careful because of the fact that we do not live with each other. He wants everyone to be safe, and he certainly does not want to carry anything home to his wife.

Commissioner Sterritt said he does not see anything unsafe about the way we are currently operating. He said as everyone has noticed, he has asked speakers to remove their mask, because if they don’t others can’t hear. He stated that we are far enough apart that we aren’t breathing on one another, and he doesn’t feel comfortable sitting here with a mask on the whole meeting. He asked who is it that wants to make a change. Many Boards members stated that it doesn’t matter. He said no one wants to make a change.

Commissioner Lavin said he agrees with Commissioner Sterritt. He doesn’t see anything unsafe about the way we are operating. He said, quite frankly with the numbers and trends in the state, and certainly in our health department district, he would actually be in favor of a motion lifting the Emergency Declaration. He thinks we are heading on the upswing and should be getting out of this pretty soon. He noted that another vaccine will be available shortly, which attacks the virus in a different way.

Commissioner Meads agreed with Commissioners Sterritt and Lavin. He said people are getting the virus when wearing the mask and not wearing the mask. If he comes up to someone, he is going to put his mask on out of being respectful and polite. He doesn’t see a problem with the distance. The numbers are obviously going down, and the Governor has less restrictions. Hopefully, all the restrictions will be dropped in the next month or so. He stated that he agrees with Commissioner Lavin that our County needs to drop the Emergency Declaration.

Chairman Griffin said according to the County Manager and the County Attorney there are some stipulations with grant reimbursements for sicknesses or illnesses that are attached to the declaration. If we are not in line with the Governor’s Order, we would probably be excluded from reimbursements. So, we need to be careful. He said that issue will be discussed at a later time, after staff has researched more.

Commissioner Overman said it’s not worth arguing about. He said his grandfather never wanted anyone to have their hat on at the table, so they all took it off out of respect for that one person. He sure doesn’t want to make any one person feel uncomfortable, and if it just takes wearing a mask to make everyone comfortable, then he is willing to do that. If that’s the worst thing he has to do is wear a mask, then he’s completely fine with it. He is good either way. He takes his off when he is socially distanced because he thinks that is the only thing factual that has come out of anything he has read. Whatever opinion you have, you can find something to back it up know matter what side you are on. He thinks being distanced is probably one of the things that is factual. It has shown that if you wash your hand and stay far enough from someone you are probably going to be okay. He said if he gets up and gets close to someone he puts his mask on. He does not want anyone to feel disrespected because of his opinion.

Commissioner Perry said he feels the same way. He doesn’t know what the consequences are for not doing it, but if it is something that is going to affect the organization, he sees it as being something that we should do. By the same token, he heard people talking about social distancing and putting their mask on if they are talking to someone, and he thinks that is very important. He noted that he is probably the oldest person in the courtroom, and death would probably come faster to him than other people. He would certainly wear a mask if he felt he was not vaccinated properly.

Chairman Griffin said he met with the hospital last week at their quarterly meeting. The hospital has not had any severe flu cases this year. One reason is probably because people are not in school, and therefor colds and flus are not being taken home. Another thing is all the social distancing and hand cleaning. Unfortunately, those that have had the COVID virus have not had a very good outcome. It is very sad to see. Our President has recently had an evening of prayer to memorialize those that have lost their lives from COVID.

Chairman Griffin said as he looks around the courtroom he sees a number of people with their masks off. He said if he walks up to someone, he respects their space and wears his mask. He said there is not a policy or procedure that we would need to follow. He believes it is what the Board feels comfortable with. He noted that staff worked hard to make sure that there was a 6’ separation. At this time, he said he does feel that there is any action that needs to be taken. He hopes that everyone continues to respect each other’s space.

**9. TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (TDA) COMPOSITION:**

County Manager Hammett explained that at the November 30, 2020 Joint City-County Meeting, the City Council conveyed concerns regarding the number of appointments that the City has on the TDA Board. The current allocation of appointments is as follows: One (1) County Commissioner, One (1) City Councilor, Two (2) from the hotel/motel industry – recommended by the hotel-motel industry and appointed by the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners, One (1) City appointment appointed by the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners on recommendation of the City of Elizabeth City, Three (3) County appointments, and One (1) from the hotel/motel industry based on a joint recommendation of the City of Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County.

Mr. Hammett said the City and County both had one appointment until the TDA was expanded from seven to nine members in August 2007. Both of the additional appointments that were added were allocated to the County, resulting in the County having three appointments and the City having one appointment. He contacted the County Manager at the time of the change to find out if there was any reasoning why both of the new appointments went to the County and he was told he could not remember what was discussed. He noted that there is a statute in place that establishes the TDA, but it does not address the allocation of members. In the sense of making sure we both have equal balance on this, he recommended shifting one of the County appointees to the City. He stated that the TDA Executive Director, Corrina Ruffieux is in attendance if the Board has any questions for her. Ms. Ruffieux stated that the TDA is the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Tourism Development Authority, so to share the appointments to the Board between the City and County seems equitable, and it also seems like a good move forward in continuing to build positive relationships.

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Barry Overman to change the composition of the TDA Board by shifting one of the County appointees to the City. The motion carried unanimously.

Mr. Hammett said staff will prepare a resolution to be placed on the March 15, 2021 agenda.

**10. RIVER CITY COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION – FEMA HOMELESSNESS PROGRAM:**

Mr. Hammett explained that he was contacted by the River City CDC to obtain the County’s support in obtaining FEMA funds for hotel rooms for the homeless in response to COVID-19. The funding would not require any County matching funds. If the Board approves supporting the program, we would have to have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with River City CDC. The State Division of Emergency Management will be providing the MOU this week. They did not have a MOU that met this particular circumstance. The one they had was for situations where the entity actually had a homeless shelter. The Board could approve the program subject to the review and approval of the MOU by the Emergency Management Coordinator, County Manager, and the County Attorney.

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Charles Jordan to approve the homeless program subject to the review and approval of the MOU by the Emergency Management Coordinator, County Manager, and County Attorney.

Commissioner Sterritt stated there are problems associated with this over the years. He would like to see the final MOU, with some wording in there about who is going to police this and who is going to be in charge, because over the years the Patel family was being paid for individuals staying at their hotels when the people were not actually staying there. He said people need to be accommodated and the issue needs to be addressed, but before he can vote yes for this, he would like to see what the memorandum is going to say.

Ms. Lenora Jarvis-Mackey said the memorandum of understanding is with FEMA and the CDC. The memorandum the County will be signing states that the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners endorses the program. After the County signs the memorandum, River City CDC has to sign a MOU to administer the program. She stated that the CDC will be accountable to the state because the CRC are the ones that will be signing the MOU to administer the program.

Commissioner Perry expressed that the reason he made the motion is because of Ms. Mackey’s accountability. He said there are a lot of things that have happened, but he knows that she has handled an awful lot of situations involving funds and he believes it will be properly handled through her, because her organization basically speaks for itself.

County Manager Hammett explained that this is basically a flow through for the County, but the key thing the memorandum will address is the rate per night for each room. River City CDC is requesting the Board move forward so they can get the funding started.

Commissioner Sterritt asked who is going to be in charge. Commissioner Overman explained that the River City CDC will be delivering the program, and the Board is voting to allow them to operate the program. Commissioner Sterritt said he wants it to happen, believe him, because it is an ongoing issue for the homeless. His only concern is if you are going to pay a motel to house someone, you need to make sure that is what is happening.

Commissioner Lavin asked if River City CDC has administered a program such as this previously. Ms. Mackey answered, yes they have.

Commissioner Meads asked who is responsible for damages if an individual being helped damages the property. Ms. Carolyn Anderson stated that they work closely with the owners/management of the hotels. They have a zero tolerance policy. If she finds out that someone has damaged anything, they are out of the program. She said this is all explained to them up front. Commissioner Meads asked what is done if there is drug use. Ms. Anderson said they do not do drug testing, but they also have a zero tolerance for drugs. If an individual is suspected, they are asked to leave the facility immediately, and they contact law enforcement if necessary. She explained that they are here to provide a service, and they do not want a few bad eggs to mess up everything for everybody.

The motion carried unanimously.

**11. OFFER TO PURCHASE WINFALL PROPERTY:**

County Manager Hammett stated that he received an e-mail from Alex Rich about thirty minutes before the meeting stating that we have another offer for the County’s property located at 333 Winfall Boulevard. It was originally listed for $159,000. We had an offer back in October, 2020 of $130,000 from a church. The Board agreed to accept the offer, but the church pulled away from the offer because they were going to have to purchase some additional land. February 1, 2021, we had another offer for $100,000 for the property. The County countered at $130,000, and they did not accept the offer. Now, we have the same church that originally put in the offer has put in an offer for $120,000. Their rationale is they are going to have to buy additional land.

Mr. Hammett said he would recommend countering at $130,000, and the Board giving him the authority to go down to $125,000.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Commissioner Sean Lavin to counter the $120,000 offer for 333 Winfall Boulevard at $130,000, and authorize the County Manager to go down to $125,000. The motion carried unanimously.

**12. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Sterritt participated in the Community Relations Commission meeting via Zoom. He said they are doing a great job and are discussing things in the community that need to be done. He said the CRC has asked if the County can give $500 of the CRC’s allotment to Elizabeth City State University for a project they have helping people in need. He read an insert from the CRC’s bylaws, which states that the treasurer shall be selected at a regular meeting in April to serve a two-year term beginning May 1st, which has already happened. The bylaws also state that the treasurer should be responsible for keeping the financial records of the commission and making such expenditures as authorized by the commission. He said according to the bylaws, the answer is yes they can give ECSU $500. Chairman Griffin asked if it is money they already have in their budget. Commissioner Sterritt answered yes.

Commissioner Sterritt said the CRC is thinking about doing a fund raising event. He said when reading the agenda today, it came to his mind that the 19th Annual March of Meals would be something that they could jump right on. The CRC is also working on a project which will recognize an individual in our community. He said he will share more details in the future.

Commissioner Lavin attended the Elizabeth City Chamber of Commerce Meeting. They are looking for ribbon cuttings and open houses to start back up. He also attended the Economic Development meeting. The Elizabeth City Downtown did not meet this month, but he said that board remains one of the most positive groups he is around in the month. He enjoys going to their meetings and hearing about all the different activities and projects that they have going on downtown, and continuing to hear about investments in downtown businesses, people coming in and buying and investing in the buildings downtown and opening up new spaces is exciting. He said the Workforce Development Board has some candidates to fill some of the openings he mentioned at the last meeting. He thanked the Board for helping to get the word out about the openings.

Commissioner Meads said he learned a lot at the recent Board Retreat. It was great to see where we were and where we are now with the County’s debt. He thanked the County Manager and County Finance Director, because without them he does not feel the County would be where it is now. He attended a Utilities Committee meeting recently and was brought up-to-date on the big projects going on.

Commissioner Overman thanked the Board for approving the changes to the composition of the Tourism Development Authority. He said it should help them have smoother meetings moving forward. He attended the DSS Board meeting this morning. They are looking forward to utilizing the Blount House, noting that it will be a huge asset for DSS with the cramped space that they have currently. He stated that he very much enjoyed the retreat. He thanked staff for their work in making it happen.

Commissioner Perry attended a virtual meeting of the JCPC. In addition, he attended the Health Board Meeting. They had a great discussion about their accomplishments. They are performing very well with the administration of vaccines. They have gone out into the community to serve those who are not able to attend the clinics held outside the city limits. As Chairman of the Special Projects Committee, he said he recently received two documents regarding an issue that is of great concern to our community. Every year they receive recommendations from citizens regarding hunting with dogs on their property without permission. Sometimes it can become quite troubling for some of our citizens. He hopes that the Special Projects Committee can address this issue and try to find some type of resolution to help our citizens.

Commissioner Perry said a lot of people in the County do not know how the County is structured for voting. He thanked Attorney Cox for providing members of the Board a packet of how we got where we are with our voting. He said this is very important, especially in the black community. Only one district in the County actually has more African Americans than Whites, and African Americans make up approximately 40% of the population in the County. He stated that the Board really needs to talk about providing the opportunity to more people of color to serve on the Board. He thinks it is something that we really need to talk about and get squared away, rather than having to go to Raleigh or having lawyers involved. With the climate we are in right now, he feels we are going to end up in some type of litigation.

Vice-Chairman Jordan attended his first official Economic Development meeting. The Jail Board met, and all is going well. Fortunately, there has not been a large outbreak of COVID at the jail. The Drainage Committee met. There is a lot of work to be done, but they are moving along well. He visited the Airport Authority meeting as well. He stated that several of the Board members attended the soft opening of the new movie theater, which was pretty spectacular. As the pandemic moves out, he is sure that citizens will really enjoy it. Today, via Zoom, he had the opportunity to see ECSU and COA have a collaborative partnership agreement. This agreement will give students who are graduating from COA the opportunity to flow right into ECSU in order to get their four-year degree. Some of the areas that they are looking at are Air Science, Social Work, Business Administration, Applied Technology, Economics, and Marketing. Meals on Wheels is having an event March 22-26. He said he has signed up, and encouraged others to do the same.

Chairman Griffin said he invited Vice-Chairman Jordan to attend the Airport Authority meeting so he can get a better understanding about the growth of the airport and the economic impact it has. The airport is moving along well. The last couple weeks the expansion area has been utilized as a vaccine clinic, which has been very positive. He noted that the County is close to 40-50% with 1st dose vaccines and close to 30% with 2nd dose vaccines. Last week, at the hospital meeting, they discussed how important the staff has been during this COVID crisis. In the last week or two, the number of cases has dropped dramatically.

Chairman Griffin stated that the Board Retreat was very positive. He said North Carolina was allotted $30m through the COVID Cares Act toward broadband. They are currently looking for providers. He reminded the Board of the upcoming Joint City/County meeting at the end of March.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Sean Lavin to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:55 PM.

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CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO THE BOARD