**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA MARCH 7, 2022**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, March 7, 2022 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

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

Charles H. Jordan, Vice-Chairman

Cecil Perry

William “Bill” Sterritt

Sean Lavin

Jonathan Meads

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Barry Overman

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

R. Michael Cox, County Attorney

Sheri Small, Finance Director

Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Lloyd Griffin. Vice-Chairman Charles Jordan 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:**

Vice-Chairman Jordan requested that the agenda be amended to add the following items recommended by the Finance Committee to the Consent Agenda: 1) Approval of Request for Funding for Fenwick-Hollowell Wetland Trail; 2) Approval to Rent/Operate Meads Pool; 3) Approval to Endorse Dixieland Speedway Commerce Grant Application; 4) Approval of EMS Headquarters Space Rental; and 5) Approval to Establish an Assistant County Manager Position.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Cecil Perry to amend the agenda to add Items #1-5 to the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. COMMENTS BY MEGAN WALDROP:**

Chairman Griffin recognized Megan Waldrop, B-Shift Captain of Pasquotank Camden Emergency Medical Services, to address the Board. Ms. Waldrop stated that she is in attendance to support PCEMS. She praised the support and encouragement she has received from the administration and her fellow coworkers over the years. She stated that our EMS has some of the best providers and she would trust any and all of them to take care of her own family. She said she is proud of PCEMS and all that the agency represents.

**3. COMMENTS BY PAUL HARRIS:**

Chairman Griffin recognized Paul Harris to address the Board. Mr. Harris said one of the things he loves about working for EMS is that they are a family. He noted that EMS has received a lot of bad publicity lately, but they will not dwell on it, and asked the Board to continue to support them and push out the bad publicity.

Mr. Hammett said EMS has an incredibly difficult job. He said he supports PCEMS and PCEMS management. There is some negativity being spun in the community by one individual, but this is an incredible group of employees, and he fully supports them.

**4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Board considered the following consent agenda:

*a. Approval of Minutes of February 7, 2022 Commissioner Meeting*

*b. Approval of Northern (Newland) Park Restrictive Covenants*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the Northern (Newland) Park Restrictive Covenants, as required for the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant that the County received.

*c. Approval of Sale of County Owned Property on Spindrift Trail*

The Board had previously proposed to accept an offer of $2,900 from Ronald Ray White, Jr. for a .398-acre parcel of County owned property located at 00000 Spindrift Trail and to advertise for upset bids. The offer has been advertised and no additional bids were received during the 10-day upset bid period. The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the sale of the parcel for $2,900.

*d. Adoption of Proclamation Proclaiming March 2022 to be the 50th Anniversary of the National Senior Nutrition Program*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following proclamation proclaiming March 2022 to be the 50th Anniversary of the National Senior Nutrition Program:

**50th Anniversary of the National Senior Nutrition Program, 2022**

Pasquotank County – A Proclamation

**Whereas,** since 1972, the National Senior Nutrition Program has funded local agencies and organizations to serve home-delivered and congregate meals that help to ensure older adults have opportunities to stay healthy, independent, and connected; and

**Whereas,** more than 10 million older Americans face hunger and isolation each year; and

**Whereas,** local senior nutrition programs help older adults access healthy foods; nutrition screening, education, and counseling; social opportunities; and other supports that encourage well-being; and

**Whereas,** the Albemarle Commission Area Agency on Aging Senior Nutrition Program is an integral part of Pasquotank County – providing sustenance and so much more to our older community members, especially those most vulnerable to hunger, chronic health concerns, isolation; and

**Whereas,** the Albemarle Commission Area Agency on Aging Senior Nutrition Program is having a positive impact on our community and its senior population.

**Now, therefore,** Pasquotank County does hereby proclaim March 2022 to be the 50th anniversary of the National Senior Nutrition Program. We urge every resident to recognize older adults and the people who support them through nutrition services as essential contributors to the strength of our community.

Dated this 7th day of March, 2022

*e.*  *Approval of Letter of Support for Expansion of Northeast Academy of Aerospace and Advanced Technologies (NEAAAT) Facilities*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval to send a letter of support for expansion of Northeast Academy of Aerospace and Advanced Technologies (NEAAAT) Facilities.

*f. Approval of Request for Funding for Fenwick-Hollowell Wetland Trail from Occupancy Tax Funds*

The Finance Committee has recommended sending a letter of support to the Tourism Development Authority for the Fenwick-Hollowell Wetland Trail to receive $15,000 in Occupancy Tax Funds.

*g. Approval to Rent/Operate Meads Pool*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of Walter Copeland’s request to lease/operate Meads Pool for a sum of $1, and to provide $5,228.04 in financial assistance for the initial cleaning of the site and facility repairs. The initial term of the lease shall begin on March 15, 2022 and end on the 15th Day of September, 2022.

*h. Approval to Endorse Dixieland Speedway Commerce Grant Application*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of endorsing Dixieland Speedway’s Commerce Grant application.

*i. Approval of Lease for EMS Headquarters Space Rental*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval to lease office space from Northeastern Professional Associates, Inc. for EMS administrative operations at an annual cost of $18,000 ($1,500 per month).

*j. Approval to Establish an Assistant County Manager Position*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of establishing an Assistant County Manager position at Pay Grade 50, with a salary range of $80,541 to $114,815.

Motion was made by Sean Lavin, seconded by Cecil Perry to approve the Consent Agenda, as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**5. CONSIDERATION OF SETTLEMENT WITH LOWE’S HOME CENTER, INC:**

County Attorney Mike Cox explained that the County went through the revaluation process in 2014. In 2015, Lowe’s appealed its tax evaluation of $10,673,300 to the North Carolina Property Tax Commission, as it did with numerous stores across the state. Lowe’s original estimate of value was $5,370,469. The County and Lowe’s have now reached a settlement whereby Lowe’s waives its right to a refund for tax years 2015 through 2019, including interest. In return, the property will be assessed at $8,188,810 for tax years 2020, 2021, and the 2022 revaluation. For tax year 2020, Lowe’s will be owed an estimated refund of $35,404 and for tax year 2021, an estimated refund of $37,515.81. The total refund is estimated to be $72,919.81. After approval of the settlement agreement by the Property Tax Commission, a refund will be applied to Lowe’s. For 2022, there will be an adjusted tax bill reflecting a credit of $37,515.81.

Attorney Cox noted that staff recommends approval of the settlement agreement.

Motion was made by Jonathan Meads, seconded by Sean Lavin to approve the Settlement Agreement with Lowe’s Home Center, LLC as recommended. The motion carried unanimously.

**6. CONSIDERATION OF REVISION TO EDC BYLAWS:**

Chairman Griffin explained that the Economic Development Commission is requesting a revision to their bylaws to add one additional non-voting member. The new member shall be the Manager of the Elizabeth City Regional Airport. The City Council adopted this change on February 28th, 2022.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Sean Lavin to adopt a resolution revising the bylaws of the Economic Development Commission to add one additional non-voting member (Manager of Elizabeth City Regional Airport). The motion carried unanimously.

**7. COUNTY MANAGERS REPORT:**

County Manager Hammett stated that he wholeheartedly supports the leadership and the team at PCEMS. He said they have difficult and stressful jobs, and they are going through a lot of negativity right now that they should not have to.

**8. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Sterritt said he had to take a month off because of Covid. He has been tested and is now negative. He thanked Battle Betts for helping him get an appointment to receive an infusion. Once he tested negative, he attended Judge John Herbert Small’s funeral. He was disappointed that the Board did not have more representation. It was a real nice service, with standing room only. He stated that Judge Small has always been good to elected officials. In the future, he would like the Board to be more active in these types of events.

Commissioner Meads thanked the employees who came out tonight in support of EMS. He thanked them for their service, and said he, the Board, and the community have their backs. He said he’s sorry he missed the Coast Guard Marathon, but he was in Myrtle Beach at a gymnastics competition for River City Gymnastics. They finished 3rd place overall in team gymnastics, which is a huge deal. They do a lot of good work for the community, and have a lot of young people who participate.

Commissioner Lavin thanked the EMS employees for their countless hours, and said the Board appreciates them. He thanked Corrina Ruffieux, Debbie Malenfant, and all the folks who helped put on the Coast Guard Marathon. He noted that T-Com was very involved. It was a great event that generated a lot of business downtown and in the surrounding areas. He thanked the downtown businesses and residences that helped supported it.

Commissioner Lavin reported that Workforce Development is experiencing a shift in funding. They are reducing the resources and the number of fulltime employees in the region. There is an immediate impact to the facility in Dare County. They are shutting down their office if they cannot find a solution. He said he is thankful to COA for helping the Workforce Development Board find alternative office space. They are teaming up locally to engage with our state representatives to try to find alternatives to try and get some of the funding back and to keep providing their current services, which helps people prepare for better jobs in the area.

Vice-Chairman Jordan reported that the Appointments Committee met today and would like to make the following recommendations:

a) Central Communications Advisory Board – Nominate Bill Trueblood to fill a vacancy. Since this is a new appointment, it must lie over until the next meeting.

b) Parks and Recreation Board – Nominate Vernon B. Hinton, Jr. to fill a vacancy. Since this is a new appointment, it must lie over until the next meeting.

c) EIC Board – Reappoint Albert Butts to an additional term.

d) Highway 17 Association Board of Directors – Reappoint Lloyd Griffin, III to an additional term.

e) Home & Community Care Block Grant Advisory Board – Approve slate of appointees recommended by Aging Administrator at Albemarle Commission.

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Charles Jordan to approve the appointments to boards and committees as recommended by the Appointments Committee with the exception of the appointments to the Central Communications Advisory Board and Parks and Recreation Board which will lie over until the next meeting. The motion carried over unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Jordan reminded the EMS staff in attendance that they have the Board’s support and feel that they do a great job. He attended ribbon cuttings for the flag football league and Swell Reality. He attended the Joint Soil & Water meeting. He had the opportunity of participating in the kickoff of the Coast Guard Marathon, as well as presenting awards at the finish line. It was a great event. He said he does not currently have all the facts, but Trillium is concerned because the state is trying to decide if foster care (that is usually handled by Trillium) will be contracted out. Trillium is meeting with DSS this afternoon and hopes to have more information in the near future.

Commissioner Perry attended the Health Board meeting. Covid numbers seem to be trending downward. He is very happy to see such a diverse group of EMS employees in the audience tonight. He has served on the Board for a very long time and over the years he has voiced his opinion regarding a more diverse EMS. He is very glad to see it is happening. He said he will be running one more time for his seat on the Board.

Chairman Griffin echoed Commissioner Lavin’s remarks regarding Workforce Development. He said the consortium and their leadership are working on a resolution to the problem. Compressing 23 Workforce Development organizations into eight prosperity zones will cause a loss in service. He said Covid numbers are fluctuating. He’s happy to see Commissioner Sterritt feeling better. The Airport will have an electric charging station in the near future for airplanes. He said a resolution will be forthcoming regarding striped bass fishing. He thanked Vice-Chairman Jordan for participating in the Coast Guard Marathon. Additionally, he attended a ribbon cutting at Harbor Centre. He reminded the Board to turn in their evaluation forms for the County Manager and County Attorney.

There being nothing further to come before the Board;

Motion was made by Jonathan Meads, seconded by Cecil Perry to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:30 PM.

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CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO THE BOARD