

Surry County Board of Commissioners  
Meeting of April 19, 2021

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m., April 19, 2021. The meeting was held in the Board Room, Historic Courthouse, Dobson, N.C., virtually via Zoom and YouTube.

Board members present in-person for the meeting were Chairman Mark Marion, Vice-Chairman Bill Goins, Commissioner Larry Johnson, Commissioner Van Tucker and Commissioner Eddie Harris.

Others present in-person for the meeting, at various times, were:  
 Ron Niland, Mount Airy Mayor Pro Tempore  
 Jon Cawley, Mount Airy Commissioner  
 Chris Knopf, County Manager  
 Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager  
 Rhonda Nixon, Finance Officer  
 Jessica Montgomery, Public Works Director  
 Mark Willis, Substance Abuse Recovery Director  
 Martha Brintle, MIS Director  
 Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager  
 Shawna Poindexter, Elkin Public Library Board of Trustees  
 Martha Smith, Elkin Public Library Branch Manager

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Chairman Marion called the meeting to order. Commissioner Harris delivered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Chairman Marion requested the Board review and approve the agenda. Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda.

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Chairman Marion requested the Board consider the minutes of the April 5, 2021 meeting minutes as presented. Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

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Chairman Marion requested the Board consider the consent agenda. Upon motion of Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Requests from the County Manager:

- Approve the following from the Tax Department:
  1. Total releases for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$7,502.56.
  2. Total refunds for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$7,278.12.
  3. Total NCVTS tag and tax refunds for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$2,174.50.
  4. Total real and personal property discoveries for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$13,979.27.
  5. Total motor vehicle discoveries for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$28.32.
  6. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC additions for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$57,856.69.
  7. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC refunds for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$1,673.25.
  8. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC releases for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$5,293.46.
  9. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC collections for the month ending 3/31/2021 in the amount of \$38,311.35.

- Approve the Ingleside Lot 22 and Cedar Lake Trail Subdivision requests.
- Approve the following Law Enforcement Center and Jail Reimbursement Resolution:

**REIMBURSEMENT RESOLUTION  
SURRY COUNTY DETENTION CENTER**

**WHEREAS**, the County of Surry, North Carolina (the "County") intends to issue in the future certain tax-exempt obligations in an aggregate principal amount not to exceed \$40,000,000 (the "Obligations") to finance the Law Enforcement Center and Jail Facility project (Project); and

**WHEREAS**, the County has made and needs to make certain additional expenditures relating to the Project, including without limitation the site work, engineering and design services, mobilization costs and other related work and services, prior to the date of issuance of the Obligations, but desires to preserve the ability of the County to reimburse itself for all such expenditures from the proceeds of the Obligations when they are issued by the County; and

**WHEREAS**, the County desires in this Resolution to declare its official intent in accordance with Income Tax Regulation Section 1.150-2 to reimburse itself for all such expenditures from the proceeds of the Obligations.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the County hereby declares its official intent to reimburse itself from the proceeds of the Obligations, when issued, for all expenditures made by the County with respect to the Project and which were made on or subsequent to the occurring date 60 days prior to the date of adoption of this Resolution.

**ADOPTED** this the 19th day of April, 2021 by the Surry County Board of Commissioners.

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Commissioner Tucker presented special recognition certificates to Orry Benson, Patrick Creed, Tanner Hamilton, Griffin Hall, Patrick Marion, Brett Smith, Evan Smith, Preston Smith, Zach Smith, Alex Tilley and Jon Tucker. The team of 11 men regularly collects litter on the roadways of the Shoals and Pilot Mountain areas.

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Chairman Marion declared the meeting to be an open forum and invited members of the audience to address the Board on any matters of civic concern.

Martha Smith, Elkin Public Library Branch Manager, discussed income tax filing services that the library offers.

Shawna Poindexter, Elkin Public Library Board of Trustees, provided information about additional services the library offers, including the Overdrive app, NC Live, WiFi services and arts and crafts and storytelling programs.

Jon Cawley, Mount Airy Commissioner, thanked the Board for contributing funding to a downtown Mount Airy infrastructure project.

Brett Smith thanked the Board for passing a recent resolution focused on the First Amendment right to free speech.

Commissioner Harris thanked the Board and staff for their kindness following the death of his mother.

There being no further comments, Chairman Marion closed the open forum.

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County Manager Chris Knopf revisited a request from YVEDDI regarding a sub-lease request for Jones Resource Center. A local non-profit, Equality in Action, made the sub-lease request. Since YVEDDI leases the

Jones Resource Center from the County, they must receive approval from the Board of County Commissioners on sub-leases.

Commissioner Harris, who serves on the YVEDDI Board, spoke with their Executive Director Kathy Payne and did not receive much information about Equality in Action. He read some statements made by Equality in Action and said they have some local board members. Commissioner Harris said he would not disparage Equality in Action but does not think they are a good fit for the Jones Resource Center. The Center should be used only by 501c(3) organizations, as has been the County's practice, not 501c(6) organizations, as is the case here.

Commissioner Johnson said he supports the sub-lease request. He made positive comments about the organization's computer lab and mentoring programs.

Commissioner Tucker said he opposes the request.

Commissioner Goins requested to table the request.

Chairman Marion said the item would be tabled.

Mark Willis, Substance Abuse Recovery Director, asked the Board for permission to apply for the National Rural Transit Assistance Program Community Rides Grant, overseen by the Federal Transit Administration. The Substance Abuse Recovery Department would partner with the Yadkin Valley Economic Development District, Inc. (YVEDDI) and the Strategic Initiatives Coordinator in the Workforce Development Office of the Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) to qualify for the funding.

Mr. Willis said the grant is specifically offered to rural communities. He detailed line items that the grant would cover.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to provide permission to apply for the National Rural Transit Assistance Program Community Rides Grant.

Mr. Knopf revisited a previous Board discussion to return grant funds from the Center for Tech and Civic Life and the USC Schwarzenegger Institute. Funds to be returned total \$37,852.50 from the Center for Tech and Civic Life and \$63,030 from the USC Schwarzenegger Institute. Mr. Knopf said Finance has not booked these funds nor has a budget amendment been presented to the Board.

Commissioner Harris, Commissioner Tucker and Commissioner Goins said they support the return of the grants.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to return grant funds totaling \$37,852.50 from the Center for Tech and Civic Life and \$63,030 from the USC Schwarzenegger Institute.

Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager, presented a request for the reappointment of Commissioner Harris to the YVEDDI Board.

Upon motion of Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Chairman Marion, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Commissioner Harris to the YVEDDI Board.

In General County Business, Commissioner Harris voiced his displeasure with the Board acting April 5 on the new jail electric provider. He said the jail electric provider should be the best rate

providing company. Commissioner Harris said that Duke Energy's rates are approved by the State Utilities Commission and Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation's rates are not. He said that Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation's rates are the most expensive for co-ops in the state, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Commissioner Harris reviewed his research on rates from Duke Energy and Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation.

Commissioner Harris and Chairman Marion disagreed on the rates that were discussed, and Commissioner Harris said that the seven-year teaser rate from Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation will cost more in the long run.

Commissioner Harris took issue with the Board discussing the topic during closed session on April 5. He said he spoke with a UNC School of Government staff member, who said the topic should not have been discussed in closed session.

Upon motion of Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board's vote to rescind the April 5 jail electric provider decision, and conduct an independent third party analysis, failed 2-3 (Yays: Commissioners Harris and Tucker and Nays: Commissioners Johnson, Marion and Goins).

Chairman Marion read a letter from County Attorney Ed Woltz that supported the closed session discussion, referencing the N.C. General Statutes.

Chairman Marion provided his interpretation of rate information and asked Jessica Montgomery, Public Works Director, whose rates were cheaper. She said Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation's rates were cheaper for the first seven years based on their submittal rates.

Commissioner Harris and Commissioner Tucker said Surry-Yadkin Electric Membership Corporation's rates were cheaper for the first seven years, but after that time, historical data shows that Duke Energy will be cheaper in the long run.

Commissioner Goins thanked volunteers in Surry County who are picking up litter.

Commissioner Harris thanked the Board for their decorum during a difficult discussion.

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Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:20 p.m.

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Nathan Walls  
Clerk to the Board