

Surry County Board of Commissioners
Meeting of May 17, 2021

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m., May 17, 2021. The meeting was held in the Board Room, Historic Courthouse, Dobson, N.C.

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:

Chris Knopf, County Manager
Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager
Rhonda Nixon, Finance Officer
Ed Woltz, County Attorney
Penny Harrison, Tax Administrator
Kristy Preston, DSS Director
Susan Campbell, DSS Attorney
David Speight, EMS Interim Director
Dale Harold, Emergency Management
Mark Willis, Substance Abuse Recovery Director
Jessica Montgomery, Public Works Director
George Crater, Airport Manager
Martha Brintle, MIS Director
Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager
EMS Employees

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

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

Chairman Marion requested the Board consider the minutes of the April 28, 2021 Budget Work Session minutes as presented. Upon motion of Chairman Marion, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

Chairman Marion requested the Board consider the minutes of the May 3, 2021 meeting as presented. Upon motion of Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

Chairman Marion requested the Board consider the consent agenda.

County Manager Chris Knopf explained the items on the consent agenda.

Commissioner Tucker asked Mr. Knopf the source of grant funding for the Board of Elections printer purchase request. Mr. Knopf replied that the source was a different grant other than two recent grant funds, which were returned to organizations affiliated with Mark Zuckerberg and Arnold Schwarzenegger.

Commissioner Johnson said that Rogers Realty has been doing a good job but requested a follow-up report on their surplus auctions at a future meeting.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, 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 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$809.07.
 2. Total refunds for the month ending 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$3,249.82.
 3. Total NCVTS tag and tax refunds for the month ending 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$2,091.51.
 4. Total real and personal property discoveries for the month ending 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$9,141.63.
 5. Total motor vehicle discoveries for the month ending 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$0.
 6. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC additions for the month ending 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$57,410.56.
 7. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC refunds for the month ending 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$350.08.
 8. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC releases for the month ending 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$663.90.
 9. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC collections for the month ending 4/30/2021 in the amount of \$16,069.15.
- Approve a request for Rogers Realty to expand surplus auction efforts to include all County surplus items, not just vehicles.
- Approve a request for the Health & Nutrition Center to purchase medical equipment for the Adult Primary Care Clinic, including two adjustable exam beds with lamps and seamless upholstery, analyzer ECG/EKG machine, butterfly ultrasound with iPad and a portable vital sign cart for a total cost of \$24,409.81.
- Approve a request for the Board of Elections to purchase a Ballot on Demand printer with \$4,575.25 of grant funding from the 2020 Help America Vote Act (HAVA). HAVA will reimburse Surry County with \$4,275.

Requests from the Assistant County Manager:

- Approve a request to waive a \$120 shelter fee at Fisher River Park for a local Boy Scout troop's Eagle Scout ceremony.

Requests from the Finance Officer:

- Approve the financial statement preparation (audit) contracts with Gould Killian CPA Group for Surry County, Mount Airy/Surry County Airport Authority and Flat Rock/Bannertown Water & Sewer District.

Chairman Marion presented special recognition certificates to EMS employees for their life saves. The employees receiving the certificates were Jose Butron, Kristy Hooker, Chandler Bodenhamer, Mark Wall and Denise Ward. EMS Interim Director David Speight shared words of thanks and recognition to the staff. Ms. Ward, who is now retired but a part-time staff member, discussed her great experiences while working with Surry County EMS.

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.

Cindy Brannock, librarian for Dobson Community Library, said the library is working on getting school children to come back to their facility following the COVID-19 pandemic. She said staff has been helping citizens with resumes as they enter or re-enter the workforce. Ms.

Brannock also discussed upcoming library programs in the Dobson Square Park.

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

DSS Director Kristy Preston presented a director's report, covering an upcoming UNC School of Government webinar that the Board of County Commissioners needs to attend, a Medicaid Recipient Eligibility Determination Audit and N.C. Child 2021 Data regarding well-being indicators for children and families.

Commissioner Harris asked Ms. Preston if Surry County is seeing any fallout related to the immigrant crisis at the border. Ms. Preston said not that she is aware of, but she will investigate it and report back.

Ms. Preston introduced new staff.

Substance Abuse Recovery Director Mark Willis presented a request to apply for, and accept if awarded, the Appalachian Regional Commission Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative grant. The grant would assist citizens, who have suffered from substance abuse disorder, re-entering the workforce. The initiative would be a joint venture with the Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) Workforce Development staff.

Mr. Willis said the grant requires an in-kind match, so the salary of the department's Data Analyst could be used to meet the requirement.

The Board and Mr. Willis discussed other counties in the area who are working to address substance abuse problems in their communities.

Mr. Willis said Wayne Farms would like to participate in the workforce re-entry program.

The Board discussed with Mr. Willis how the program will place employees with employers, the number of treatment providers in the county, the Substance Abuse Recovery Department's staff and potential future use of opioid settlement funding.

Commissioner Harris requested from Mr. Willis a summary at a future meeting showing a breakdown of Surry County expenditures and grants received for Substance Abuse Recovery Department efforts.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously for the Substance Abuse Recovery Director to apply for, and accept if awarded, the Appalachian Regional Commission Investments Supporting Partnerships in Recovery Ecosystems (INSPIRE) Initiative grant.

Mr. Knopf presented an easement request from Surry Communications for property located on Parcel# 593300317675, near the Siloam Recycling Center.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the easement request from Surry Communications for property located on Parcel# 593300317675, near the Siloam Recycling Center. With approval, County Attorney Ed Woltz was directed to draft an easement agreement.

Mr. Knopf presented a bid that was received for Surry County property located at 130 Rawley Avenue. He said staff has received a 5 percent bid deposit for a \$100,000 offer.

Mr. Woltz said the interested party wants to purchase the building and fix the flooded basement. Mr. Knopf said the Board would need to accept the offer and then the upset bid process would start.

Commissioner Tucker said any mold issues in the basement should be addressed by Surry County.

The Board discussed with Mr. Knopf and Mr. Woltz the property's overall appraisal of over \$400,000.

Commissioner Harris and Commissioner Tucker said they don't have enough information to decide tonight.

The Board reached a consensus to not accept the offer and asked Mr. Knopf and Public Works Director Jessica Montgomery to repair the basement.

Tax Administrator Penny Harrison presented revenue neutral tax rate calculations. She said that the 0.552 tax rate is revenue neutral. The Board discussed the calculations in detail with Ms. Harrison.

Commissioner Harris and Ms. Harrison discussed how staff sent municipalities scroll values so they can calculate their own rates.

Commissioner Johnson and Mr. Knopf discussed how revenue projections would be provided in the recommended budget prior to the June 7 meeting. Mr. Knopf said he would show what one penny is worth during his recommended budget presentation on June 7.

In General County Business, after discussion from Commissioner Harris and Board members, the Board directed the County Manager to require organizations receiving funding from Surry County in the FY21-22 budget to sign forms stating they will not use their Surry County funding to teach critical race theory or sensitivity training.

Commissioner Harris discussed his disdain with the Coca-Cola Corporation for their CEO's viewpoints and public statements about Georgia's Election Integrity Act of 2021. He went into detail about Coca-Cola's stance on the topic. Commissioner Harris said he wanted all Coca-Cola vending machines removed from Surry County facilities. Commissioner Goins said the Board carries Apple iPhones and that Apple has made similar political statements publicly. He said if you're going to penalize one company over an opposing viewpoint, then you need to penalize them all. Commissioner Goins said he doesn't want to negatively impact Coca-Cola employees in Surry County. Commissioner Johnson said he would abstain from voting because he had not decided on the issue. Chairman Marion said he would like to write Coca-Cola Corporation a letter, but not remove the vending machines.

Chairman Marion motioned to allow Commissioner Johnson to abstain from voting, but the motion failed for lack of a second.

Upon motion of Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted 3-2 (Yays: Harris, Tucker and Johnson) (Nays: Marion and Goins) to remove Coca-Cola vending machines from Surry County facilities. By electing not to vote, Commissioner Johnson was counted as a Yay because he was in attendance.

Chairman Marion discussed transporting his grandchild from Washington D.C. last weekend, his grandchild's success in college and starting his career.

Commissioner Harris said he has two grandchildren on the way.

Commissioner Johnson discussed his upcoming baseball road trip he was planning.

The Board congratulated Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager and Clerk to the Board, on his upcoming wedding.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to enter closed session.

The Board returned from closed session and resumed regular business.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to move employee #1895 to pay grade 65-15.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:26 p.m.

Nathan Walls
Clerk to the Board