

Surry County Board of Commissioners
Meeting of May 3, 2021

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m., May 3, 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:
Chris Knopf, County Manager
Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager
Ed Woltz, County Attorney
Jessica Montgomery, Public Works Director
Martha Brintle, MIS Director
Tony Davis, Soil & Water Conservation District Director
Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager
Tanya Jones, Surry Arts Council
Northwestern Regional Library Staff and Volunteers

Chairman Marion called the meeting to order. Commissioner Johnson 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 13, 2021 Budget Work Session minutes 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 minutes of the April 19, 2021 meeting 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 April 20, 2021 Budget Work Session minutes as presented. Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

Chairman Marion requested the Board consider the consent agenda.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve a National Day of Prayer Proclamation, which follows:

PROCLAMATION
By the SURRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
RECOGNIZING THE NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

WHEREAS, the National Day of Prayer has been a part of our nation's heritage since the first one was declared by the Continental Congress in 1775; and

WHEREAS, leaders in our nation have relied on the power of prayer throughout our history as a way of bringing citizens together to demonstrate all that we have in common; and

WHEREAS, leaders commonly and frequently urge citizens of faith to pray for our country and those who defend our freedoms at home and abroad; and

WHEREAS, prayer has given strength to people who are facing daily trials and tribulations and it serves to express love, gratitude and concern; and

WHEREAS, prayer is an important part of many citizens' daily lives, so it is incumbent upon our County's leaders to recognize the National Day of Prayer.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Surry County Board of Commissioners recognizes the National Day of Prayer, which will occur on May 6, 2021, and encourages all citizens who desire to participate in this special occasion.

Adopted this the 3rd day of May 2021

By the Surry County Board of Commissioners

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to approve workers' compensation settlement activity for quarter ending March 31, 2021, totaling \$81,398.02.

Chairman Marion presented special recognition certificates to Soil & Water Conservation District staff for their efforts in earning the state's ranking of second in a recent conservation funding study. Staff members included Director Tony Davis and District Technician Justin Bledsoe.

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.

Anna Nichols, Librarian at the Charles H. Stone Memorial Library, shared highlights about the library's activities from the last few months. She discussed the library's voter registration drives, poetry events, Yoga on the Lawn and employability skills labs.

Rana Southern, Librarian at the Mount Airy Public Library, discussed new programs she has implemented at the library, including technology programs and employability skills labs. She said she has added mobile hotspots for check-in and check-out.

Barbara Kirk, a volunteer with local libraries, said there are many good books, programs and staff members at libraries in Surry County.

Hattie Brintle, a Mount Airy Public Library Board of Trustees member, discussed how County funding was cut last year due to COVID-19. She said State funding could be cut this year and asked for County funding to be restored.

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

Tanya Jones, Surry Arts Council Director, presented a funding request for capital funding, which would go towards an arts center in Mount Airy. The arts center would have an exhibit on Chang and Eng Bunker, the conjoined Siamese twins, who lived in Surry County and were world famous.

The total amount requested was \$400,000. Commissioner Johnson wondered aloud if \$100,000 was agreed to be paid for one year, with decisions about new funding commitments to be made annually. Chris Knopf, County Manager, said staff will check the minutes to confirm the funding

amount. Ms. Jones said she is also requesting \$400,000 from the City of Mount Airy.

Ms. Jones went into detail about the Surry Arts Council's benefits to Surry County citizens, recent attendance at Blackmon Amphitheatre and Earle Theatre events, an expected increase in tourism and how the new arts center would preserve and create jobs.

The Board discussed with Ms. Jones the Bunker family reunion, which is attended by royalty and citizens of Thailand.

Ms. Jones asked the Board to call or email her if they have any questions.

Mr. Knopf presented a request to transfer the Sells Building property deed from Surry County back to Surry Community College.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to transfer the Sells Building property deed from Surry County back to Surry Community College.

Mr. Knopf presented a request from the Board of Health to reappoint Eddie Jordan.

Upon motion of Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Eddie Jordan to the Board of Health.

Mr. Knopf asked the Board if they agreed to cancel overflow in the Surry County Service Center for the next Board meeting, since the Board Room can now allow up to 100 people. The Board agreed.

Mr. Knopf informed the Board about the J.J. Jones High School being placed as a historic property on the National Register of Historic Places. He said a ceremony would be forthcoming.

In General County Business, Commissioner Johnson and Mr. Knopf discussed upcoming meetings in the budget process. Commissioner Johnson asked when do we expect to have a revenue neutral discussion? Mr. Knopf said he will speak with DEC Associates and report back at the next Board meeting. He said the Board will then have several opportunities to discuss the topic.

Commissioner Harris asked when an update would be provided on American Rescue Plan funding. Mr. Knopf said he is identifying projects that would qualify and building a menu of options. He said that the topic may require a special meeting. Mr. Knopf added that meetings should be scheduled with municipalities to avoid overlap spending. Discussion occurred about the funding that the school systems are receiving. Mr. Knopf said Surry County will receive half of American Rescue Plan funding this year and half next year, with the County having until 2024 to spend the funds.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:15 p.m.

Nathan Walls
Clerk to the Board