

Surry County Board of Commissioners
Meeting of September 7, 2021

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m., September 7, 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 Eddie Harris and Commissioner Van Tucker.

Others present in-person for the meeting, at various times, were:
 Sheriff Steve Hiatt and Sheriff's Office Staff
 Chris Knopf, County Manager
 Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager
 Johnny Easter, Development Services Director
 Michella Huff, Elections Director
 Mark Willis, Substance Abuse Recovery Director
 Kristy Preston, DSS Director
 Daniel White, Parks & Recreation Director
 Jessica Montgomery, Public Works Director
 Martha Brintle, MIS Director
 Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager
 Parks & Recreation Staff
 Northern Regional Hospital Board
 Chris Lumsden, Northern Regional Hospital CEO
 Jay Temple, Mount Airy City Schools
 Former Board of Elections Members

Chairman Marion called the meeting to order. Commissioner Harris 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 September 7, 2021 agenda.

Chairman Marion requested the Board consider the minutes of the August 16, 2021 Board meeting as presented. Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

Chairman Marion requested the Board consider the consent agenda. Chris Knopf, County Manager, described each item. Upon motion of Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Requests from the County Manager:

- Approve an easement for Duke Energy to install electrical facilities at 219 Snow Street in Dobson to accommodate the new Detention/911 Center.
- Approve for the Surry Sunrise Rotary Club to use the 130 Rawley Avenue parking lot October 8-10, 2021 as a fundraiser during the Autumn Leaves Festival.
- Approve the following Proclamation recognizing Blue Star Memorial Day:

PROCLAMATION
 By the SURRY COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
 RECOGNIZING BLUE STAR MEMORIAL DAY

WHEREAS, throughout our nation's history, brave Americans have worn our country's uniform to defend our freedoms and uphold our values, often far from home and in the face of grave danger; and

WHEREAS, the Blue Star Memorial Marker was adopted by the National Garden Clubs, Inc. of America as a living tribute to the men and women of the Nation's Armed Forces; and

WHEREAS, Surry County Government is dedicated to promoting the history and accomplishments of American military men and women of all branches of America's military services, to secure for us priceless freedom, peace and security, and

WHEREAS, defending the ideals of our nation has required sacrifices of those from every generation; and

WHEREAS, the National Garden Clubs, the Garden Club of North Carolina and Modern Gardeners Garden Club of Mount Airy recognize this dedication and service to America and encourage the public's interest and involvement in honoring all those who have served this great Nation.

NOW, THEREFORE, on behalf of the Surry Board of County Commissioners, I, Chris Knopf, Surry County Manager, proclaim September 10, 2021 as Blue Star Memorial Day.

Adopted this the 7th day of September 2021
By the Surry County Board of Commissioners

Requests from the Assistant County Manager:

- Approve to pay the Workers' Compensation renewal fee with the N.C. Association of County Commissioners in the amount of \$159,361.

The Board provided special recognitions to the following people for the following efforts:

- Sean Cheek, Timothy Gates and Nicholas Fliter of Surry County Parks & Recreation for their landscaping, mowing and beautification efforts with County properties. Bradley Key and Taylor Goins could not attend to receive their certificates.
- Bill Hamlin and Don Isaacs, outgoing members of the Board of Elections, for their work on the board.

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.

Seeing that there were no speakers, Chairman Marion closed the open forum.

Chairman Marion recessed the Board meeting and convened a meeting of the Northern Hospital District of Surry County.

Mr. Knopf reviewed the Limited Obligation Bond resolution for the Northern Hospital District of Surry County, not to exceed \$20 million.

Chris Lumsden, Northern Regional Hospital CEO, discussed the hospital's campus master plan and plans for the hospital. He said that long-term, owning properties is more favorable and cheaper than leasing properties, which is the current practice, and that owning allows the hospital to consolidate services in buildings, creating service efficiencies.

Commissioner Tucker asked Mr. Knopf if Ed Woltz, County Attorney, and DEC Associates, Surry County's financial adviser, had reviewed the Northern Regional Hospital Limited Obligation Bond documents. Mr. Knopf said that Mr. Woltz has but DEC Associates has not. Mr. Knopf compared the hospital to the Airport Authority, stating that the hospital is a public authority. Commissioner Tucker and Mr. Lumsden discussed how the Local Government Commission is awaiting the hospital's LOB resolution and other documents following the meeting.

Commissioner Harris said that a few years ago Doug Carter, of DEC Associates, gave the hospital glowing reviews after viewing their finances. Commissioner Harris asked Mr. Lumsden if the hospital's finances are still healthy now, to which Mr. Lumsden responded with yes, the hospital has a healthy balance sheet and described the hospital's financials.

Commissioner Tucker commended Mr. Lumsden, hospital staff and the hospital board for their good work. Mr. Lumsden said that the hospital board voted unanimously to enter the proposed debt issuance, which could be as high as \$16.5 million. Mr. Lumsden also described how the hospital had hired a private firm, which they have used before, to look at the debt issuance feasibility, which is feasible, according to the firm.

After a series of questions from Commissioner Harris, and comments from Commissioner Goins, Mr. Lumsden said that the debt issuance would provide the community a newer, more modern, better functioning facility that will be cheaper to operate than the leases that are currently being paid by the hospital.

Commissioner Tucker asked Mr. Lumsden more questions.

Commissioner Johnson asked Mr. Lumsden if a general contractor had already been selected for the project, to which Mr. Lumsden said yes, I.L. Long Construction Co., Inc. of Winston-Salem has been chosen to construct the medical office building. Mr. Lumsden confirmed to Commissioner Johnson that the hospital would like to hire Surry County residents through sub-contractor jobs.

Mr. Lumsden explained that he sees the hospital as not only a healthcare provider, but an economic engine for the county and region that helps bring jobs and businesses to the community.

Commissioner Johnson commended the hospital board for hiring Mr. Lumsden.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Marion, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the Limited Obligation Bond resolution for the Northern Hospital District of Surry County, not to exceed \$20 million, with Commissioner Harris' request to Mr. Knopf to have DEC Associates review the Limited Obligation Bond documents for informational purposes to the Board.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn the Northern Hospital District of Surry County meeting.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to reconvene the Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Mr. Knopf presented a USDA lease amendment for the Surry County Service Center. Presently, the County has only been receiving \$75 a month from the Federal government on the lease for approximately 2,520 square

feet. The lease amendment, which would be retroactive to January 1, 2021 would net Surry County \$27,720 annually or \$2,310 monthly. The space will continue to house Rural Development, the Farm Services agency and some Federal Soil & Water staff.

Upon motion of Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the lease amendment for \$27,720 annually or \$2,310 monthly for the Surry County Service Center.

Mr. Knopf presented an ambulance franchise renewal request from Lifestar, which came to the Board for a second time since it must be approved twice, per NCGS 153A-46.

Upon motion of Commissioner Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the ambulance franchise renewal request from Lifestar.

Mr. Knopf presented a request to approve a state road maintenance system resolution for Oriole Way to be accepted by the State maintenance system of the N.C. Department of Transportation. Approval of the request would add Oriole Way to the State Secondary Road System.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the following state road maintenance system resolution for Oriole Way:

North Carolina Department of Transportation
Division of Highways
Request for Addition to State Maintained Secondary Road System
North Carolina

County: Surry County
Road Description: Oriole Way, off NC 268

WHEREAS, the attached petition has been filed with the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Surry requesting that the above described road, the location of which has been indicated in red on the attached map, be added to the Secondary Road System, and

WHEREAS, the Board of County Commissioners is of the opinion that the above described road should be added to the Secondary Road System, if the road meets minimum standards and criteria established by the Division of Highways of the Department of Transportation for the addition of roads to the System.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by the Board of County Commissioners of the County of Surry that the Division of Highways is hereby requested to review the above described road, and to take over the road for maintenance if it meets established standards and criteria.

CERTIFICATE

The foregoing resolution was duly adopted by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Surry at a meeting on the 7th day of September 2021.

Mr. Knopf presented a request from Mount Airy City Schools to acquire more funding for a property acquisition at 331 Culbert Street, Mount Airy, adjacent to Tharrington Primary School. He detailed the additional costs, according to Mount Airy City Schools, and their request to have landfill fees waived.

Mr. Knopf believed that \$118,164.95 was the additional funding amount being requested.

Jay Temple, from Mount Airy City Schools, answered questions from the Board.

Commissioner Tucker asked other commissioners if the funding request was included in the FY22 budget request from Mount Airy City Schools. Commissioner Johnson and Mr. Knopf said the request for additional funding was not included. That point, and the Board's displeasure, was discussed with Mr. Temple.

Mr. Temple provided photos of the property to the Board and discussed its issues, as well as issues that Tharrington Primary School has experienced.

The Board discussed their detailed thoughts on the additional funding request.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Johnson, the Board unanimously approved allocating an additional \$30,879 from the General Fund to Mount Airy City Schools to secure property at 331 Culbert Street, Mount Airy, adjacent to Tharrington Primary School. The funds will be combined with \$61,121.18, which the County provided the school system following approval at the November 4, 2019 Surry Board of County Commissioners meeting.

Chief Deputy Paul Barker, with the Surry County Sheriff's Office, presented a body camera request to the Board. He said that in today's world, body cameras are a necessity for law enforcement officers because of liability issues.

Chief Deputy Barker said the current body cameras in use are obsolete, saying the provider has stated that they no longer have parts to fix them.

WatchGuard Video has proposed a five-year contract at \$44,580 per year with a hardware refresh in the third year.

Chief Deputy Barker said the funding for the new body cameras is already budgeted.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the new body cameras from WatchGuard Video, on a five-year contract at \$44,580 per year, with funds already budgeted to the Sheriff's Office.

Jessica Montgomery, Public Works Director, presented bids for a roofing project, a window and joint restoration project and an alternate window project for the Government Center, where the Health & Nutrition Center, DSS and MIS are located.

Mr. Knopf recommended acting separately on each bid.

Commissioner Harris asked Ms. Montgomery what she makes of large variations in bid prices per brick. Ms. Montgomery said that some contractors bought materials in advance of the current construction material shortage, making the present time an odd climate for bids.

Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to accept the roofing project low bid of \$292,200 from GMG.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Chairman Marion, the Board voted unanimously to accept the window and joint restoration project

low bid of \$74,600 from EBS and the alternate window project low bid of \$8,670 from EBS.

Mr. Knopf presented a request from the Piedmont Authority for Regional Transportation (PART) to adopt a resolution authorizing the filing of applications for grant funding that would expand service on route 6, which provides service to Surry County.

Mr. Knopf said he is not sure if the efforts would cut into YVEDDI funding. Commissioner Goins asked if the request needs to be approved tonight and Mr. Knopf said no, the Board has more time to act.

Mr. Knopf said he would do more research on the request and report back to the Board at the Sept. 20 meeting.

Mr. Knopf informed the Board of the City of Mount Airy's interest in acquiring Graham Field, which is County surplus property. The property is located at 230 Jones School Road. Mr. Knopf reviewed options the Board can pursue.

Commissioner Harris discussed how the Jones Resource Center was surplus and YVEDDI's concern with maintenance costs, making the property too expensive for the organization to purchase.

Commissioner Tucker suggested offering the Jones Resource Center to the City of Mount Airy, but Mr. Knopf said they declined the building offer. Mr. Knopf read a list of maintenance costs for the Jones Resource Center. He said the building is a historic property and a buyer could qualify for historic tax credits.

Commissioner Harris suggested that maybe the City of Mount Airy could facilitate acquisition of the property by a non-profit or third-party organization.

Mr. Knopf told the Board the County must receive offers from the public on the surplus properties before the upset bidding process can begin. Commissioner Harris suggested posting "Available" signs in front of each surplus property for advertising. Commissioner Tucker and Commissioner Johnson said they liked that idea.

In General County Business, Chairman Marion praised EMS, fire departments and first responders who addressed an emergency incident involving hydrochloric acid over the weekend.

Chairman Marion invited the public to the Blue Star Memorial Marker event scheduled for Friday, Sept. 10 at 10 a.m. at the Historic Courthouse.

Commissioner Johnson polled the Board about re-scheduling the September Airport Authority meeting from September 23 to September 30. The Board reached consensus to re-schedule the meeting.

Upon motion of Commissioner Johnson, 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 Harris, the Board voted unanimously to reclassify a vacant Detention Officer position to an Interim Detention Lieutenant position, utilizing salary

funding from vacant positions. Funding the position will be re-visited when the new Detention Center is built.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to approve for the Assistant County Manager to work with the Social Services Director on revisions and implementation for the after-hours response plan.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to approve, but not release, May 17, 2021 closed session minutes.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to approve for the Assistant County Manager to work with the Health Director, in consultation with the Chairman of the Board, to develop and implement a COVID-19 staffing plan and to approve salary adjustments, as requested.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 9:36 p.m.

Nathan Walls
Clerk to the Board