

Greg Edds, Chairman  
Jim Greene, Vice- Chairman  
Mike Caskey  
Judy Klusman  
Craig Pierce



Aaron Church, County Manager  
Carolyn Barger, Clerk to the Board  
John W. Dees, II, County Attorney

## Rowan County Board of Commissioners

130 West Innes Street • Salisbury, NC 28144  
Telephone 704-216-8180 • Fax 704-216-8195

### MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS July 13, 2020 – 6:00 PM

**PLEASE NOTE: DUE TO THE CORONAVIRUS PANDEMIC  
THE MEETING WAS HELD BY REMOTE PARTICIPATION FOR THE BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS, STAFF AND THE PUBLIC**

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**Commissioners Participating:**

Greg Edds, Chairman  
Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman  
Mike Caskey, Member  
Judy Klusman, Member  
Craig Pierce, Member

County Manager Aaron Church, Clerk to the Board Carolyn Barger, County Attorney Jay Dees, Assistant County Manager/CIO Randy Cress and Assistant County Manager/Finance Director Leslie Heidrick were also participating.

Chairman Edds convened the meeting at 6:02 p.m.

Chaplain Michael Taylor provided the Invocation.

Chairman Edds led the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **CONSIDER ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA**

- Chairman Edds added an item to Request for Qualifications for Professional Architectural Services for On-Call Professional Services and Design of Chemical Booster Pump Station. Chairman Edds added the issue as agenda item #8a.
- Chairman Edds pulled Consent Agenda item G (RFQ for Services for Broadband Expansion). The issue was placed on the regular agenda as item #8b for discussion.

#### **CONSIDER DELETIONS FROM THE AGENDA**

There were no deletions from the agenda.

## **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE AGENDA**

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to approve the agenda as amended passed unanimously.

## **CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES**

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to approve the minutes of the June 15, 2020 and June 22, 2020 Commission Meetings passed unanimously.

### **1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA**

Commissioner Greene moved approval of the Consent Agenda (as amended). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Level II Funding for Rowan County Youth Services Bureau
- B. Request for Public Hearing for Project Sun
- C. Ratify ZTA 01-20
- D. Letter of Support for town of Spencer, NC Grant
- E. COVID-19 Relief Fund Contract
- F. Courthouse Liberty Street Ramp Project
- G. RFQ for Services for Broadband Expansion (placed on the regular agenda as item #8b for discussion)

### **2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD**

Chairman Edds opened the Public Comment Period to entertain comments from any citizens who had either called in or submitted an email request to address the Board via electronic means. With no one wishing to provide comments, Chairman Edds closed the Public Comment Period.

- Alvin Merritt, who resided off West Ridge Road, discussed transportation issues he faced. Chairman Edds asked Mr. Merritt to provide his phone number and assured Mr. Merritt someone would follow up with him the next day.

### **3. PUBLIC HEARING FOR URBANIZED AREA FORMULA GRANTS (5307)**

Airport and Transit Director Valerie Steele provided a power point as she outlined the Urbanized Area Formula Grant (5307) for Rowan Express. The application would provide Rowan Express operating and preventative maintenance funds.

Ms. Steele reported the current approved amount was estimated to cover 4-6 months of service and she also highlighted the changes in transit services since September 2019.

The Board was asked to approve an additional \$100,000 in local matching funds for a total local match of \$180,000. The federal obligation was \$300,000. Ms. Steele reviewed the funding breakdown was as follows:

- Operating expenses 50/50 (federal \$150,000 / local match \$150,000)
- Preventative maintenance 80/20 (federal \$150,000 / local match \$30,000)

Prior to opening the public hearing, Chairman Edds confirmed with County Attorney Jay Dees that approval of the grant application would be subject to state law (during COVID-19 Pandemic) and no further discussion or contact during the 24-hour period following the meeting.

Chairman Edds opened the public hearing to receive citizen input regarding the grant application. With no callers wishing to address the Board, and no one having submitted concerns via email, Chairman Edds closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Caskey seconded and the vote to approve the FY 21 Federal Urbanized Area Formula (5307) Grant passed unanimously (see note above regarding 24-hour period following the meeting).

#### **4. STATE OF THE COUNTY HEALTH REPORT**

Nina Oliver, Public Health Director, participated in the meeting to support Alyssa Harris, Community Education Manager, during the State of the County Health (SOTCH) Report for Rowan County. The SOTCH was submitted to the State Department of Public Health (DPH) on June 1, 2020 and was prepared during the years in between the Community Health Assessment (CHA). In accordance with accreditation requirements, the Rowan County Health Department SOTCH Report required formal approval by the Board of Health and a presentation or report to the Board of Commissioners.

Ms. Harris highlighted the Report, which served to:

- Heighten awareness about health issues relevant to Rowan County and North Carolina
- Bring attention to areas where policy development and enactment, environmental changes, partnering initiatives and resources would contribute to a healthier, stronger community
- Describe local efforts that impact community health problems and quality of life concerns
- Summarize recent progress toward impacting health priorities identified through the 2018 Rowan County Health Department Community Health Needs Assessment
- Identify common ground for joining together to solve community health problems

According to Ms. Harris' presentation, the forces driving change were:

- Population Growth
- Increasing Poverty Rates
- Housing Affordability
- Insufficient Economic Opportunities (unemployment and under-employment)
- Culture of Health Habits
- Healthy Environments

Ms. Harris referred to the insufficient economic opportunities mentioned above and thanked the Board for making great economic strides in bringing jobs to the County to improve the quality of life for its citizens.

With regards to demographics, Ms. Harris showed a slide that compared the County's demographics to the State's.

According to Ms. Harris, the County was moving in the right direction with population trends.

Moving forward, Ms. Harris said the County would be looking at the different metrics that played into where the County's health was ranked. These domains and indicators were: Social and Neighborhood, Economic and Housing and Transportation.

Ms. Harris showed a GIS map showing the Census tracts for the County concerning poverty thresholds. It was estimated 25% of the County's children were living in poverty.

Ms. Harris noted affordable housing was a vital condition and often reflected the largest single monthly expenditure for most families. Ms. Harris said it was considered a cost-burden if someone had to spend more than 30% on housing. For those being cost-burdened, the likelihood was increased for distress, alcohol use, etc.

Ms. Harris discussed the importance of access to food and a better way to get food to those in need. Ms. Harris mentioned the success of the new Farmer's Market in downtown Salisbury.

Using the power point, Ms. Harris showed a snapshot of the Rowan trend in health outcomes. It was noted that Rowan County's health ranking was 73rd overall in the State. Ms. Harris said every county in the US used the same data for comparisons.

The next graph in the presentation highlighted the rankings for the causes of death in Rowan County with the top two (2) being cancers and heart disease respectively.

Ms. Harris discussed the community priorities. The 2018 Community Health Priority Health issues were identified as substance use, healthy lifestyle behaviors and mental health. The short-term goals were to decrease obesity and the number of people who reported using tobacco in the last thirty (30) days. The long-term goals were to increase the safe use and disposal of over-the-counter and prescription medications, increase comprehensive care management for individuals coping with opioid-related health concerns, and decrease the spread of HIV and/or Hepatitis C.

Updates to the Action Plan and new initiatives and emerging issues were presented.

In response to an inquiry from Commissioner Klusman, Ms. Harris shared how childhood obesity had increased during COVID-19.

Commissioner Pierce inquired as to whether the Veterans Hospital was being included in the statistics that had been presented. Commissioner Pierce pointed out that other counties did not have a Veterans Hospital and people were coming to the Hospital from other areas because they were sick. Commissioner Pierce felt there should be a way to only include the people who were property owners/had lived, worked and been educated in the County to provide a truer picture. Ms. Harris said she was unsure how many people had moved to the County in order to be close to the Veterans Hospital for care. Ms. Harris noted those folks were part of the community and everyone wanted those folks to be healthy, as well.

Commissioner Pierce said the numbers were still skewed from others moving here for care at the Veterans Hospital and Commissioner Klusman agreed the numbers would be skewed with the Veterans Hospital being located in Rowan County.

Commissioner Pierce thanked the Commissioners for approving the money for the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) to build the new farmer's market.

Chairman Edds said every day the Commissioners were in meetings and seeing the inter-connections for all the data included in the Report. Chairman Edds noted there were economic, health, age issues, etc. and he questioned why younger people would be attracted to Rowan

County. Chairman Edds answered the question by saying the County provided opportunities through the education collaborative that had taken place with the schools, colleges, Economic Development Commission (EDC), and TDA to create a pipeline of quality workers to create higher paying jobs in order to attract younger, healthier people. Chairman Edds said it was frustrating for the Commissioners to have seen progress and yet the County had dropped back down in the rankings.

Ms. Harris shared appreciation for all the Commissioners were doing to align the work in the different areas. Ms. Harris said the statistics were a few years out and the County may not see the benefits yet.

Chairman Edds thanked Ms. Harris for the information.

#### **5. UPDATES ON THE CORONAVIRUS RELIEF FUND (CRF) AND DISCUSSION REGARDING CREATING A TEMPORARY GRANTS MANAGER/ACCOUNTANT FUNDED BY THE CRF**

County Manager Aaron Church provided the Board of Commissioners with an update on the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF). Mr. Church also discussed creation of a temporary Grants Manager/Accountant funding by the CRF.

Mr. Church reported the County's initial appropriation was \$2,561,818. The amount was increased by \$2,757,636 bringing the new total appropriation to \$5,319,454. The funds still had to be obligated by December 30, 2020.

The new rule stipulates 25% of the overall total (\$1,329,864) was for municipalities and the County's portion was \$3,989,590. Municipalities must submit a plan for expenditures to the County by August 4, 2020. The County was responsible for the funds the County received and ensuring that the guidance was followed.

Mr. Church reviewed the allocation for each Rowan County municipality. The municipalities were responsible for how they spent the funds. Mr. Church said he did not believe the County had to approve the municipal plans.

Next steps for the Board:

1. Approve the per capita distribution
2. Approve a new position
3. Manager will provide an update to Board of Commissioners on August 3, 2020

Mr. Church said the Board would need to approve a new plan as the initial plan had changed. Mr. Church asked the Board to also create a temporary position for someone with a strong accounting background to help the County with the grant expenditures, as well as help the municipalities manage their CRF.

Assistant County Manager/Finance Director Leslie Heidrick discussed the Finance Department's challenges in managing the County's current grants, along with the potential for another six (6) grants. Ms. Heidrick anticipated the temporary position would last anywhere from six (6) to twenty-four (24) months and could be either full or part-time. Ms. Heidrick said the County could consider someone on a contract basis. According to Ms. Heidrick, the County's Internal Auditor, Derrick Atkins, could be allowed to meet with the municipalities to review the report they must initially file and to talk them through the expenditures.

Mr. Church confirmed to Commissioner Pierce the new position would be paid from CRF.

Mr. Church said the CRF funds had to be spent by December 30, 2020. Mr. Church said there were eight (8) or nine (9) additional grants related to COVID-19 that were not part of the CRF. Ms. Heidrick added the expenditures could go through June 30, 2022.

Commissioner Caskey questioned the salary range. Ms. Heidrick responded the salary for an Accountant II went from approximately \$67,000 to \$97,000. Ms. Heidrick said the pay would be commensurate with their education and experience. Ms. Heidrick said a CPA was preferable if available since the work was equivalent to that of an auditor. Ms. Heidrick said Finance Staff would do the work if the temporary position was not filled but it would be challenging to determine how to shift duties.

Using an example for a salary of \$100,000, Commissioner Caskey asked if there were no other grants were available if the County would have to provide \$50,000 for the second half of the year. Ms. Heidrick said the individual hired would know if the grant funds were to cease, the individual would no longer have a position. Ms. Heidrick said she was suggesting that if there was no funding stream to pay the individual's salary, they would no longer have a job.

Commissioner Pierce commented that if there was no grant stream to pay the salary, the County did not need the position. Ms. Heidrick agreed with Commissioner Pierce and continued by restating the County had nine (9) other grants and was in the running for six (6) others. As the grants drop off, Ms. Heidrick said her staff would continue to handle/pick up the grants and the position would no longer be needed.

Chairman Edds reviewed the proposed distribution to the municipalities and asked Mr. Church if there was a different model to consider than what was suggested.

Mr. Church said the Board had the authority to distribute the required 25% to the municipalities however it chose.

Chairman Edds said he was uncertain if the recommended amounts would provide the upfits needed for some of the municipalities.

Commissioner Caskey suggested establishing a base number for each municipality and distribute the remainder based on the municipalities. Chairman Edds and Commissioner Pierce agreed with the suggestion.

Chairman Edds suggested providing each municipality with a minimum base of \$50,000 with the remainder to be divided by population.

Commissioner Pierce agreed that Chairman Edds suggestion was the most equitable way to divide the funds.

Based on the recommendation, Mr. Church provided a breakdown and said each municipality would receive a distribution of CRF as follows:

- Salisbury – \$499,867.88

- Kannapolis – \$179,322.69
- China Grove – \$105,829.68
- Spencer – \$92,386.79
- Landis – \$91,370.76
- Granite Quarry – \$90,641.30
- Rockwell – \$78,318
- East Spencer – \$69,695
- Cleveland – \$21,619
- Faith - \$61,811

Commissioner Greene asked for clarification as to whether the Commissioners would be personally responsible for the 25% distribution to the municipalities. Mr. Church said counties had no choice but to give the municipalities 25% of CRF and counties were not liable since the counties had no choice in providing the allocation.

Ms. Heidrick added the County was not responsible for the municipal expenditures; however, the municipalities had to submit their plans to the county because all CRF would flow through the County.

Mr. Church showed a screenshot of the revised and recommended funding for the municipalities.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Caskey seconded and the vote to approve the funding based on the last spreadsheet (screenshot provided by Mr. Church) passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pierce moved to approve a temporary COVID Grants Administrator at Grade 22 (minimum salary of \$57,695 and maximum of 92,313). The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman.

Ms. Heidrick said all county employees were covered under a blanket bond but they would be under the Finance Director’s bond, which would be a \$200,000 bond. Ms. Heidrick said staff could explore the matter and bring it back to the Board for a separate bond if the Board preferred.

Commissioner Greene asked that the information be brought back to the Board to see what it would cost.

Upon being put to a vote, the motion on the floor passed unanimously.

**6. SELECTION OF NC ASSOCIATION OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS VOTING DELEGATE**

Chairman Edds said the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) 113<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference was scheduled to be held by virtual platform on Thursday, August 6, 2020 at 11:00 a.m. Each county would be entitled to one (1) vote on items that came before the membership, including the election of the NCACC Second Vice President. In order to facilitate the voting process, the NCACC was asking each county to designate one voting delegate (and also may assign one alternate voting delegate) prior to Annual Conference using the attached Designation of Voting Delegate form.

Commissioner Edds moved approval of Commissioner Pierce as Rowan County’s voting delegate. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

## **7. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BOARD APPOINTMENTS**

### **AIRPORT ADVISORY BOARD**

There are two (2) vacancies on this Board. The first vacancy is for a member of the Business Community and the second vacant seat is for a Pilot. Both appointments will be for a three-year term that will expire on June 30, 2023.

Five (5) applications were received from the following:

- D. Kirk Beatty
- Mark Comer
- Brian Keith Fox
- Dr. Andrew James Smith
- Brad Walser

Chairman Edds shared that after reviewing the applications in the agenda packet that he was in support of Kirk Beatty and Mark Comer to fill the vacancies.

Commissioner Pierce nominated Kirk Beatty for the Pilot's seat and Mark Comer to fill the seat for a member of the Business Community. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

### **BOARD OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Commissioner Judy Klusman would like to be reappointed for a three-year term that will expire on June 30, 2023.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to reappoint Commissioner Klusman for her current term as a County Commissioner (which ends December 5, 2022) passed unanimously.

### **EAST GOLD HILL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

There will be two (2) vacancies on this board beginning August 1, 2020. Thomas Ray Choat and Ralph Eugene Earnhardt applied to fill the vacancies. The terms will be for two-years, expiring July 31, 2022.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Caskey seconded and the vote to appoint Mr. Choat and Mr. Earnhardt passed unanimously.

### **TOWN OF GRANITE QUARRY PLANNING BOARD**

The Granite Quarry Board of Aldermen voted to support the reappointment of Ron Jacobs as an ETJ member of the Granite Quarry Planning Board. The term would be for three (3) years, expiring July 31, 2023.

Commissioner Pierce moved the reappointment of Mr. Jacobs. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Caskey and passed unanimously.

### **HOME AND COMMUNITY CARE BLOCK GRANT ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

Peggy Price applied for reappointment as an At Large member. The term is for three (3) years and will expire June 30, 2023.

Commissioner Klusman moved, Commissioner Greene seconded and the vote to reappoint Ms. Price carried unanimously.

The Rules of Organization for this Committee state that funded providers shall serve while being funded. The new funding cycle started July 1, 2020 and the following providers need to be reappointed for a one-year term that will expire June 30, 2021:

- Donna Fayko, Department of Social Services
- Valerie Steele, Rowan Transit Services
- Nan Buehrer, Rufty-Holmes Senior Center
- Cindy Fink, Meals on Wheels

Commissioner Klusman moved to reappoint the providers as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pierce and passed unanimously.

### **JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL (JCPC)**

Don Bringle applied for reappointment to fill the Parks and Recreation seat. Mr. Bringle has served a total of 4 terms, making him ineligible for reappointment. Mr. Bringle is considered to be an invaluable member and the Board is asked to consider waiving the term limit again, approving Mr. Bringle for an additional 2-year term date beginning July 1, 2020 and ending June 30, 2022.

Commissioner Pierce moved to waive the term limits for Mr. Bringle as requested. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to reappoint Mr. Bringle for a 2-year term as stated above carried unanimously.

Andrew Deal applied to fill the remaining term for the vacant Chief of Police seat. If appointed the term would expire on June 30, 2021 at which time Chief Deal would be eligible for two (2) full terms.

Alisa Russell applied for reappointment as a member of the General Public. The term will be for two (2) years and expire June 30, 2022.

Commissioner Pierce moved the appointment of Andrew Deal and the reappointment of Alisa Russell. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and carried unanimously.

### **LOCKE VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE COMMISSIONERS**

Bill Hamrick applied for a two-year term that will expire 7-31-2022.

Commissioner Pierce moved the appointment of Mr. Hamrick followed by a second from Commissioner Caskey. The motion passed unanimously.

### **8. LITTER REPORT**

Chairman Edds reported that Rowan County Staff removed 9,840 pounds of roadside debris and litter during the two-week period of June 1, 2020 through June 12, 2020.

## **ADDITIONS**

### **8b. RFQ FOR PROFESSIONAL ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES FOR ON-CALL PROFESSIONAL SERVICES AND DESIGN OF CHEMICAL BOOSTER PUMP STATION**

After due advertisement, requests for statements of qualifications from qualified architectural firms for services related to the On-Call Professional Services and Design of Chemical Booster Pump Station project were received on June 17, 2020 by David Sifford, Purchasing Agent.

Qualifications packages were received from four (4) firms: Hazen & Sawyer, Black & Veatch, Davis Martin Power and McGill Associations. After review of the qualifications it was recommended the best fit for the Project was Hazen & Sawyer.

County Manager Aaron Church asked the Board to select Hazen & Sawyer for the Project.

Commissioner Pierce moved to approve Hazen & Sawyer for on-call services and design of chemical booster pump station. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

### **8b. RFQ for Services for Broadband Expansion**

Chairman Edds explained he had pulled this item from the Consent Agenda as he felt it was important to discuss. Chairman Edds said as the Governor and school systems were struggling whether to go back to school in the fall (due to the COVID-19 Pandemic), one of the issues was the ability to have broadband in unserved areas of the County.

Chairman Edds reported the State was still working with Tier 1 counties and Rowan County was a Tier 2 county. Chairman Edds said with the uncertainties of COVID-19 and the uncertainty of whether the kids would go back to school, the County was taking the initiative to push hard for rural broadband.

Chairman Edds opened the floor for a motion to approve that an Request for Qualifications (RFQ) be created for services for broadband expansion. Chairman Edds said the County had initially identified the Scotch-Irish community as an underserved area but there were others the County was going to go ahead and move towards.

Commissioner Klusman moved to approve the County Manager and Assistant County Manager/Finance Director drop an RFQ for services for broadband expansion.

Commissioner Pierce asked if the expenses would be reimbursable.

Chairman Edds said the County had been asking the same question and arguing that use of COVID funds should allowable as part of the response during the Pandemic due to homebound kids and workers who did not have good internet services.

Assistant County Manager/CIO Randy Cress said the RFQ included the \$50,000 that had been budgeted by the Board as the matching portion. Mr. Cress said he had talked with NC PRO and the State Broadband Infrastructure Office to get an assessment as to whether CRF funding could be used towards the broadband expansion. Mr. Cress mentioned the State had been awarded \$9 million to the Broadband Infrastructure Office, which had gone through NC PRO, and through the CARES Act for the Tier 1 grants. Mr. Cress said since the Tier 2 counties opportunity had not yet

come up, he had proposed for the County to be able to use the funds in the same manner. The County's needs were shovel-ready and the locations had been identified and matched all guidance. In closing, Mr. Cress said yes, with meeting of an additional milestone of having service available by the November 1<sup>st</sup> timeframe, there would be an additional \$200,000 that would not be using county funds and just CRF Funds.

Chairman Edds stated the one caveat was that the \$50,000 the Board approved in the budget would not change because the County could not use any of those dollars to supplant existing dollars. Chairman Edds expressed appreciation for Mr. Cress and the County's ability to now expand the initial \$50,000 out quite a bit as an enticement to the private sector and get the shovels in the ground by November 1, 2020.

Commissioner Klusman moved to approve the RFQ. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pierce and passed unanimously.

#### **9. CLOSED SESSION**

Chairman Edds moved the Board into Closed Session at 8:19 p.m. in accordance with North Carolina General Statute 143-318.11(a)(5) to discuss a potential lease at Mid-Carolina Regional Airport.

The Board returned to Open Session at 8:54 p.m. No action was taken.

#### **10. ADJOURNMENT**

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Pierce moved to adjourn at 8:55 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Caskey and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carolyn Barger, MMC, NCMCC  
Clerk to the Board