

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

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MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE ROWAN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

February 1, 2021 – 3:00 PM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROOM

J. NEWTON COHEN, SR. ROWAN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

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Present: Jim Greene, Vice-Chairman
Mike Caskey, Member
Craig Pierce, Member
Judy Klusman, Member

Participating Remotely: Greg Edds, Chairman

County Manager Aaron Church, Clerk to the Board Carolyn Barger, County Attorney Jay Dees, Assistant County Manager/CIO Randy Cress and Finance Director James Howden were also present and/or participating remotely.

Vice-Chairman Greene convened the meeting at 3:00 p.m.

Chaplain Michael Taylor provided the Invocation.

Vice-Chairman Greene led the Pledge of Allegiance.

CONSIDER ADDITIONS TO THE AGENDA

There were no additions to the agenda.

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 passed unanimously.

CONSIDER APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to approve the minutes of the January 14, 2021 and January 19, 2021 Commission Meetings passed unanimously.

1. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Klusman moved approval of the Consent Agenda. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Pierce and passed unanimously.

The Consent Agenda consisted of the following:

- A. Sale of Ground Lease Hangar T20 from Black to Baird
- B. Woodleaf Community Park Change Order
- C. RTS Public Transportation Agency Safety Plan (PTASP)
- D. Special Olympics
- E. On-Airport Tree Clearing Project and BA
- F. Lease Extension and CPI increase Hangar #28
- G. Tax Refunds for Approval
- H. Graham's Piping Contract - HVAC Renovation
- I. RouteMatch Software Purchase
- J. Delegation of Authority to Sign Airport Leases
- K. Authorize Hazen to Advertise for Bids for the Construction of the Northeast Rowan County Water System Chemical Booster Station

2. PUBLIC COMMENT PERIOD

Vice-Chairman Greene opened the Public Comment Period to entertain comments from any citizens wishing to address the Board. The following individuals came forward:

- Jamie Javurek, a pilot for American Airlines and business partner for a flight school located at the Mid-Carolina Regional Airport (Airport), discussed a potential grant opportunity. Mr. Javurek expressed hope that his business could partner with the County and the school system for the grant, which he stated was due by March 22, 2021.

Commissioner Pierce asked Mr. Javurek to provide a presentation to the Board for the next agenda in order to provide the Commissioners with more information.

Vice-Chairman Greene requested the information be submitted through the appropriate channels and that it be provided to the Airport and Transit Director and County Manager before coming to the Board.

With no one else coming forward or having submitted written comments, Vice-Chairman Greene closed the Public Comment Period.

3. PUBLIC HEARING & SUMMARY PRESENTATION – EDC ‘PROJECT POPCORN’

Scott Shelton, Vice-President of the Economic Development Commission (EDC), presented the executive summary for Project Popcorn (Project). The Company behind the Project was a well-known manufacturer that had been in business for decades with products available throughout the United States.

The Project owners were evaluating locations to establish a production and distribution facility within the central and eastern region of the United States. If Rowan County was chosen, the company would create 1,200 new jobs over the next three (3) years. Approximately 1,100 of the new jobs would be in the operations/production categories. The remaining jobs would be comprised of supervisory and administrative positions.

The company planned to invest approximately \$127.5 million into the Project through the construction of a new facility and the installation of major equipment. The majority of the improvements would be completed by the end of 2021.

Mr. Shelton said the company would typically qualify for a Level 3 Grant under the County's Investment Grant Program. Due to the competitive nature of the Project and to strengthen the County's chances of securing the Project, the EDC proposed the Board consider extending the Investment Grant from five (5) to ten (10) years. During the first five (5) years, the company would receive a grant equal to 85% of the new taxes paid. During the final five (5) years, the company would only receive a grant equal to 50% of the new taxes paid.

The Rowan EDC also proposed the Board consider offering a \$500,000 equipment grant for the Project, which could only be used toward trade-specific equipment or fixtures, or, for tenant upfits. The grant would be structured as a loan, which would be forgiven if the company created and maintained 900 new jobs for a five-year period following the loan closing. Similar grants have been approved for other recent projects such as Project Wheel (New York Air Brake) and Project Kodiak (Chewy). Funding for the equipment grant would be provided through the County's economic development funds.

The Board was also asked to consider offering expedited local permitting at no charge to the company (the fee for the service was normally \$2,500). A draft of the proposed incentive agreement was included in the agenda packet.

With regards to other potential assistance, Mr. Shelton reported the EDC was working with the company to pursue a Job Development Investment Grant (JDIG) through the State. The JDIG program typically offered a performance-based, discretionary cash grant directly to new and expanding companies to help offset the cost of locating or expanding a facility in North Carolina. Mr. Shelton said the State had also been asked to consider applicable grant programs that could assist with any necessary infrastructure improvements to the company's potential site.

In addition, the EDC requested Duke Energy consider awarding the Project a cash grant from its Carolina Investment Fund Program.

Mr. Shelton discussed the fiscal impact and highlighted the projected revenue over a 10-year horizon that would result from the overall investment. It was anticipated that

Rowan County would stand to collect an estimated \$6,155,860, disburse grants totaling \$4,312,953 and retain an estimated \$1,842,907 of new revenue.

A brief question and answer period between the Board and Mr. Shelton followed the presentation.

Vice-Chairman Greene opened the public hearing to receive citizen input regarding Project Popcorn. With no one wishing to address the Board and no one having submitted written comments, Vice-Chairman Greene closed the public hearing.

Commissioner Pierce moved approval of the economic incentive request for Project Popcorn as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

4. BOARD OF EDUCATION SURPLUS PROPERTIES

Anthony Vann, Assistant Superintendent of Operations for Rowan-Salisbury School System (RSSS), presented a power point as he discussed a request from the Rowan Salisbury Board of Education (BOE). Mr. Vann reported the BOE had met on January 26, 2021 and declared Faith and Enochville school properties as surplus and in accordance with North Carolina General Statutes (NCGS), the BOE was offering the properties to the County prior to disposal.

Mr. Vann said the BOE had previously declared the property located at 305 S. Zion Street in Landis as surplus.

Further details for each site declared as surplus was as follows:

- Enochville Elementary, located at 925 Enochville Avenue in China Grove, NC consisted of approximately nine (9) acres, school building and associated structures constructed in 1941. (Effective at end of 2020-21 school year).
- Faith Elementary, 1000 School Street in Faith, NC consisted of approximately twelve (12) acres, school building and associated structures constructed in 1929. (Effective at end of 2020-21 school year).
- Landis site, located at 305 S. Zion Street, in Landis, NC consisted of approximately .92 acres, 21,250 square foot classroom structure constructed in 1941.

In conclusion, Mr. Vann asked the Commissioners to release the properties to the BOE so the school system could move forward if the County did not have a use for the properties.

Vice-Chairman Greene asked what the Landis site under consideration had been used for. Mr. Vann said the facility had served as a multi-purpose classroom building, which had not been used in five (5) or six (6) years due to declining enrollment. Mr. Vann said

young children were also having to cross the street to access the building, which created a safety issue. Since there was enough space in the main building, Mr. Vann said the BOE had decided to no longer use the multi-purpose classroom facility.

Commissioner Pierce asked where the children would go to school once the schools were closed. Mr. Vann said the BOE had approved a plan for the vast majority of the Enochville students to be transferred to Landis and the other group to Millbridge Elementary. The Faith Elementary students would be redistricted to Shive, Rockwell, Granite and Koontz Elementary Schools.

Commissioner Pierce asked if Landis school would be adequate to service the number of children being redistricted. Mr. Vann responded yes and that the plan brought the utilization rate up to a more reasonable range, even if all the students who were learning remotely returned.

Commissioner Pierce inquired as to the estimated number of students being redistricted to Landis. Mr. Vann said the redistricting plan for Landis was to accept 111 base students and the overall estimated total students at the school would be in the 500 range. Mr. Vann said he could pull the figures and provide the exact numbers to the Commissioners.

Commissioner Caskey questioned the capacity for Landis and Mr. Vann said 660. Mr. Vann stated the Principal at the school was confident the school could handle the additional students from the redistricting.

Commissioner Caskey said there was the possibility for a large housing project to be built in the southern portion of the County. Commissioner Caskey asked if the BOE was aware of the potential project. Mr. Vann said the BOE was familiar with the possibility but to his knowledge there had been no extensive conversation pertaining to the project.

Commissioner Caskey said he understood the housing project would more than likely be built and he asked what would happen and whether it would cause the BOE to redistrict again. Mr. Vann said there was always the possibility of having to redistrict again in a number of years. Mr. Vann said currently across the district there were approximately 5,000 empty seats.

Commissioner Caskey said the proposed housing project would only be a couple of miles from Enochville.

Commissioner Caskey referred to the Faith Elementary site and said he understood there was a substantial offer for the building. Mr. Vann said the BOE received an offer for the property but was not in a position to dispose of the property until the Commissioners determined the County did not want the property. Mr. Vann said the BOE would meet the following Monday and he would report on the outcome of the Commissioners decision for further direction.

Commissioner Caskey asked if the furniture would be sold with Faith Elementary. Mr. Vann responded the furniture would have to be negotiated with the possible buyer. Mr. Vann said RSSS typically removed the furniture from old structures to be distributed to other schools if needed. Mr. Vann said to his knowledge RSSS did not have a high demand for elementary school furniture at this time and the furniture could be negotiated with the purchaser.

Commissioner Caskey noted RSSS would have to pay someone to remove the seats and take them to storage. Commissioner Caskey said he had no interest in Faith Elementary but felt the school system should leave the seats since there were 5,000 seats open across the district and no demand for elementary seats. Mr. Vann agreed there were times when it became more feasible to leave the furniture.

Commissioner Caskey reiterated he had no interest in Faith Elementary but would like for the Commissioners to recommend they keep the furniture with the building to save the taxpayers some money. Mr. Vann said he felt sure the BOE would consider the recommendation if it was a cost savings to RSSS.

Commissioner Pierce said the Commissioners had not seen numbers for a redistricting plan and he agreed with Commissioner Caskey regarding the tremendous growth potential in the southern portion of the County/Enochville area. Commissioner Pierce said he hated to sell a 21,000 square foot building and have the BOE come back in a year asking to build another school.

Commissioner Pierce proposed the Commissioners vote on Faith Elementary; however, he felt the Commissioners should receive more information pertaining to growth projections for the areas of Enochville Elementary and the Zion Street location.

Vice-Chairman Greene said the Board would vote on the Faith Elementary property and table the other two (2) requests in order to receive more information from the BOE.

Commissioner Pierce moved to pull out Faith Elementary and declare the property as surplus and to table the other two (2) schools for further information.

In response to Commissioner Caskey, Commissioner Pierce amended motion to encourage leaving the furniture inside the Faith building along with the purchase price. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Caskey and passed unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Greene asked if RSSS would make a presentation to the Board for the plans of the school district for the southern Rowan area. Vice-Chairman Greene said the Commissioners would like more information regarding the capacity of the schools in question and the school system's ability to handle an increase in population if the proposed housing construction took place.

Mr. Vann said he would be glad to pull the information together and make a presentation to the Board at a future meeting.

5. ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH BI-WEEKLY UPDATE

Adrian Pruett, Environmental Health (EH) Supervisor, provided an update regarding inspections for EH.

In response to inquiries from Commissioner Klusman, Mr. Pruett discussed staffing levels and said EH had two (2) more positions to fill.

Mr. Pruett talked about an influx of forty-three (43) new applications (within two [2] weeks) and said EH would not be able to maintain the desired two-week inspection turnaround. Mr. Pruett said the applications were for inspections all over the County and not from just one (1) developer.

Commissioner Klusman said it was important to keep staff busy first; however, she did not want to lose the connection for the County's contractors to help with inspections.

Commissioner Pierce mentioned he had been taken aback when a contractor called him to say the County's inspectors were directing traffic for the COVID-19 vaccine clinics. Commissioner Pierce advised Mr. Pruett to contact the County Manager if inspectors were asked to direct traffic again. Commissioner Pierce questioned such duties as an improper use of manpower when there were volunteers that would help with the clinics.

Vice-Chairman said there was a civic club that had taken on the responsibility to volunteer with the clinic/COVID-19 events.

6. LITTER REPORT

Vice-Chairman Greene presented the report from Caleb Sinclair, Environmental Management Director. Vice-Chairman Greene said Rowan County Staff removed 10,260 pounds of roadside debris and litter during the two-week period beginning Monday, January 11, 2021 through Friday, January 21, 2021.

7. BUDGET AMENDMENT

Finance Director James Howden presented the following budget amendments for the Board's consideration:

- Rowan Public Library (RPL) received two (2) bank drafts in memory of Betty Dan Spencer. The Spencer Family requested all donations received in her memory be applied to her endowment with the RPL Foundation. The Library also received additional revenue for unrestricted gifts. The request was to move the revenues to the expense account. \$10,968

Commissioner Pierce moved approval of the budget amendment as presented. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Caskey and passed unanimously.

**8. CONSIDER APPROVAL OF BOARD APPOINTMENTS
CENTRALINA ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION**

Chairman Greg Edds fills the Public Service Sector seat on this Commission and his current term will expire February 28, 2021. Chairman Edds wishes to serve another term, which would expire February 28, 2024.

Commissioner Klusman moved to reappointment Greg Edds. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Caskey and passed unanimously.

TOWN OF FAITH PLANNING BOARD - ETJ

Cynthia Ehrman applied for reappointment and if approved, the term would expire January 31, 2023.

Commissioner Pierce moved, Commissioner Klusman seconded and the vote to reappointment Ms. Ehrman passed unanimously.

ROWAN-IREDELL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT FIRE COMMISSIONERS

Chris Hutchison and Johnny Dickerson applied for reappointment. The term would be for two (2) years expiring on February 28, 2023.

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

There is one remaining open seat and Jeanie Wooten Weaver applied. If approved, her term would also expire on February 28, 2023.

Commissioner Pierce moved to appoint Ms. Weaver followed by a second from Commissioner Caskey. The motion carried unanimously.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business to come before the Board, Commissioner Pierce moved to adjourn at 4:17 p.m. The motion was seconded by Commissioner Klusman and passed unanimously.

Respectfully Submitted,



Carolyn Barger, MMC, NCMCC
Clerk to the Board