

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS  
Regular Meeting July 8, 2019 7:00 PM  
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice - Womack Building Columbus, NC

MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Melton, Vice-Chairman Yoder, Commissioner Beiler, Commissioner Gasperson and Commissioner Johnson. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, Clerk to the Board High, media and citizens.

1. Call to Order - Chairman Melton.
2. Invocation - Commissioner Johnson.
3. Pledge of Allegiance - Vice-Chairman Yoder.
4. Approval of Agenda
  - A. Commissioner Gasperson requested suspending the rule to review volunteer board applications one week before voting and move the application of Bill Miller for the Isothermal Community College Board of Trustees to the applications for vote.

Commissioner Gasperson moved to approve the agenda as requested, seconded by Vice-Chairman Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Consent Agenda
  - A. Approve June 17, 2019 public hearing and regular meeting minutes.
  - B. Tax refund requests through June 30, 2019 in the amount of \$725.41.

Commissioner Beiler moved to approve consent agenda as written, seconded by Vice-Chairman Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Citizen Comments

Four citizens spoke regarding item #11 NC Hwy. 108 Scenic By-way project.  
One citizen spoke about a non-agenda item requesting the Commissioners to consider directional signage for businesses throughout the County. Manager Pittman explained that the County has been working on placing way-finding signs, but the project has been put on hold due to an interpretation of the law at the State level by NCDOT.

7. Health Department Update

Joshua Kennedy, Consolidated Health and Human Services Director stated Polk County has taken occupancy of the Health Department building as of July 1, 2019, and the necessary building renovations have begun. He thanked the county IT and Maintenance departments, as well as his staff, for helping with the transition.

He said the Environmental Health division began operating in June and have been very active. They are excited about the flow of clients and are confident they can expedite the services. Vice-Chairman Yoder asked how many well and septic permits were carried over from the previous health department, and Mr. Kennedy stated he is still waiting for the final report.

He further stated the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) program began seeing clients July 1, 2019 and increasing WIC to five days instead of two has been extremely helpful to the participants. The staff has begun outreach efforts to increase community connections, and they have already completed a grant application for one-time funding for equipment and future constructions efforts. He said the Public Health Nurse has been actively connecting clients with Blue Ridge Health and has hit the ground running setting up systems to receive and track communicable disease reports. He said Blue Ridge started their renovations today, July 8, and they expect to move in no later than August 6, 2019. He said Polk County and Blue Ridge Health will be issuing a joint press release soon. Commissioner Gasperson asked if the two members from Polk on the Rutherford Polk McDowell Health District Board had been asked to continue serving on the Polk County Consolidated Health and Human Services Board. Mr. Kennedy said he had reached out to Penny Padgett and she indicated she was interested but has yet to make with Rick Covil.

8. Board of Elections Equipment Purchase Agreement

Manager Pittman explained there is only one vendor approved by the State, which made us unable to receive other bids. The contract enclosed is from the approved vendor.

Commissioner Gasperson moved to approve the purchase of the new voting machines from Elections Systems & Software, seconded by Vice-Chairman Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Foothills Humane Society Contract

Manager Pittman said there have been no changes to contract between Polk County and the Foothills Humane Society (FHS) since it was presented to the Commissioners for review at the last meeting. He said FHS provides a service to the County by working with Animal Control.

Commissioner Gasperson moved to to approve the contract between FHS and Polk County, seconded by Commissioner Johnson and the motion carried unanimously.

10. NCDOT Road Addition Resolution for Wolverine Trail

Manager Pittman presented the resolution requesting the addition of Wolverine Trail to the State maintained secondary road system. He said there maybe some improvements necessary to receive approval. In last year's budget, the lights were moved to be acceptable for NCDOT, and this year there maybe some grading required to meet their standards.

Commissioner Gasperson moved to approve the resolution, seconded by Vice- Chairman Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

11. NC Hwy. 108 Scenic By-way Update

Manager Pittman said the County has received citizen donations to cover the estimated cost of the project. He said the consultant, approved to be retained at the February 4, 2019 Board of Commissioners' meeting, will begin phase 1, followed by phase 2 now that the funds have been received.

12. Transportation Authority Commission (TAC) Member Appointment

Manager Pittman said Commissioner Johnson's term on the Transportation Authority Commission (TAC) has expired, and the Commissioners need to appoint a member of the body to serve.

13. Tryon Daily Bulletin's Readers Choice Awards

Chairman Melton recognized Sheriff Tim Wright who received the officer of the year award, and Michael Crater, EMS Director who received the paramedic of the year award. from the Tryon Daily Bulletin voted on the be "The Best of the Best".

14. Volunteer Board Applications - Detailed applicant information may be reviewed in the Clerk to the Board's office upon request.

A. Applications for Vote -

Commissioner Gasperson moved to appoint Halcott Green to the Board of Adjustment, Kate Barkschat, Aaron Greene, and Amy Norville to the Economic & Tourism Development Commission, Bill Miller to the Isothermal Community College Board, and Billy Alm to the Recreation Advisory Board., seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

B. The Commissioners reviewed 2 applications for the Fire and Rescue Advisory Committee, and 2 applications for the Juvenile Crime Prevention Commission.

15. Commissioner Comment(s)

Vice-Chairman Yoder thanked everyone for coming out, he said he appreciated the Sheriff and Michael Crater for attending the meeting. He thanked the Scenic Byway citizens for their comments and participation, and Frank Lily for discussing the need for directional and way finding signs.

Commissioner Beiler thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and speaking on things they are passionate about. He expressed gratitude for the citizens that donated money to a project they believe in, and he said this is what makes Polk County the greatest county, and the #1 place to live in the nation. He encouraged everyone to focus on the 80% - 90% things that all citizens agree on instead of the 10%-20% that we don't.

Commissioner Johnson thanked everyone for coming out and putting their time and effort into the meeting. He thanked those who attended Coon Dog Day in Saluda on July 6, 2019. He said his Great Grandfather George Johnson helped start the festival 56 years ago as a fundraiser to restore the raccoon population in the area.

He said his family never imagined what it would grow into, and this year the festival that started with 150 people had 10,000 attendees from all over the country.

Commissioner Gasperson thanked all that were involved in the collaborative effort to clean up the debris left on Hwy. 9 when a mobile home burned down last fall. He said the family had no means to do the cleanup themselves, and the community pitched in to get it done. He said this year was his 12th consecutive year attending the Fourth of July celebration in downtown Columbus and Coon Dog Day in Saluda. He said he appreciates citizen participation in both events, and hopes that during this upcoming political season, everyone will recognize the difference between freedom of speech and hate speech.

Chairman Melton said in reference to hate speech, that is one of the reasons he will not be running for re-election. He said he experienced it during his last campaign, and he would encourage everyone to be respectful of each other's opinions, and not be mean.

16. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Yoder moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Johnson and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF  
COMMISSIONERS

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Ange High  
Clerk to the Board

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Tommy W. Melton  
Chairman