

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
October 5, 2020 - 7:00 PM
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice Womack Building Columbus, NC
Columbus, NC
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Yoder, Vice-Chairman Melton, Commissioner Beiler, Commissioner Gasperson, and Commissioner Moore. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board High, media and citizens. (Commissioner Gasperson left the meeting at 7:26 pm during agenda item 8.

1. Public Hearing

A. Call Public Hearing to Order - Chairman Yoder. The purpose of the public hearing was to take public comment on the FY 2022 NCDOT Section 5311 (ADTAP), 5310, 5339, 5307, and applicable State Funding Community Transportation Grants. The public hearing was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin. Grant information may be found under agenda item 12.

Joshua Kennedy, Health & Human Services Agency Director, and Katelyn Early, Transportation Manager presented the FY 2022 grant information and were available for questions.

B. Citizen Comments - There were none.

C. Commissioner Comments - There were none.

D. Vice-Chairman Melton moved to adjourn the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Call to Order - Chairman Yoder.

3. Invocation - Chairman Yoder

4. Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Beiler.

5. Approval of Agenda

A. Vice-Chairman Melton moved to approve agenda, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

6. Consent Agenda

A. Tax refund requests for September 2020 in the amount of \$203.34.

B. Resolution Supporting Road Designation as a North Carolina Scenic

Byway.

- C. Schedule public hearing for new proposed road names for Monday, October 19, 2020 at 7:00 pm in the R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice Womack Building Columbus, NC.

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

7. Citizen Comment(s)

There were no citizen comments.

8. Polk County Litter Clean Up.

Vice-Chairman Melton requested this item be placed on the agenda. Jamie Davidson gave a presentation concerning roadside and waterway litter initiatives over the past several years, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. She gave special recognition to the volunteers, non-profit organizations, North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT), and NC Wildlife Commission. Mrs. Davidson said this is an ongoing process, and would not be possible without the collaboration of the volunteers and organizations. The Commissioners thanked Mrs. Davidson for her many years of service, and for all the volunteers who have given countless hours for the betterment of the county. Commissioner Moore asked how many volunteer man hours per year did she think were spent cleaning up litter throughout the County? She said she was uncertain of an exact number of service hours, but there were approximately twenty volunteers who participated during each clean up event. She said they are always looking for new volunteers, and her contact information in her presentation.

9. Cover Your Load, Litter on Roadways.

Chairman Yoder requested this item be added to the agenda. Larry Walker Solid Waste Director thanked Mrs. Davidson for her presentation, and said he worked with Sheriff Wright to design the "Cover Your Load Sign" and get them installed along roadways to the Landfill. He said they are to encourage commercial drivers, as well as residential users, to keep covers over the contents inside their trucks or trailers until they reach the landfill. Mr. Walker said he is also working to confirm vendor contracts for roadside clean ups several times throughout the year on the major throughways in the county to help with other roadway litter. Commissioner Moore asked if they could put up more signs on Highway 9 going towards the landfill and other high traffic areas. Mr. Walker said more signs could be considered. Chairman Yoder asked Sheriff Wright about enforcement. The Sheriff said he had a plan to start a litter education program in 2020, and then begin issuing warnings before tickets. He explained COVID-19 delayed the start of the program. Mr. Walker thanked NCDOT for their adopt a highway program, and the Appearance Commission for all their hard work.

10. Guiding Reins Assisted Therapy Program.

Vice-Chairman Melton requested this item be added to the agenda. Diane Prewitt President and Founder of Guiding Reins shared a video showing veterans, and their families who had participated in the sixteen week program. She then gave a presentation explaining the program, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes.

Mrs. Prewitt said she received grant funding to help the veterans, donations and other funds are used to help the families. She thanked the Commissioners for allowing her to come to the meeting to share her program, and for helping her get the word to veterans and families in the area. Mrs. Prewitt discussed an ambassador program where veterans who complete Guiding Reins, come back and become volunteers, veterans helping veterans. She said she is working with Gina Cashion the Veterans Service Officer to make connections with Polk County veterans and their families, and has served nine veterans to date.

11. Carolina Community Broadband Alliance.

Mr. Ned Kiser, Program Director of Carolina Community Broadband Alliance, spoke to the Board regarding the Rural Broadband Feasibility Assessment (RBFA) in Polk and Rutherford Counties. The RBFA exists as a public/private partnership among Polk County, Rutherford County, and PANGAEA to stimulate, catalyze, and facilitate, and provide residential broadband internet service accessible to significantly more households throughout Polk and Rutherford Counties. Key affirmations from RBFA were that (1) low population density makes it highly unlikely that commercial internet service providers will invest in rural broadband infrastructure, (2) state and federal grant programs are largely based on the number of customers served, (3) any approach to new wired or fiber infrastructure to rural residences would be prohibitively expensive, and (4) the topography and dense foliage make deployment challenging. Mr. Kiser said fixed wireless technology will provide the most cost-effective option for reaching rural areas and the topography and dense foliage will favor smaller, more localized deployments – neighborhood by neighborhood. It was agreed to carry on the study by forming a new business unit of Pangaea which is Carolina Community Broadband Alliance (CCBA).

Ms. Amanda Shevette, Project Consultant, told the Board that CCBA exists to expand educational and economic opportunity by increasing access to affordable and fast internet in rural communities. Internet service providers are not able to provide the internet needed by households in the rural areas. These providers must locate where they are able to see the most profit. Solving this problem of broadband access will take involvement by the public sector, private companies, non-profits, and citizens. CCBA is making an appeal to residents to come together to develop creative solutions. Needs in a community must be identified, and CCBA will work with the community to find funding. Ms. Shevette encouraged everyone to take the available survey which helps identify where and at what speed broadband is available.

12. FY 2022 NCDOT Community Transportation Grants & Resolution – To consider approval of the three Section 5311 grants subsequent to the public hearing. Joshua Kennedy Health and Human Services Agency Director, and

Katelyn Early Transportation Manager.

Commissioner Moore moved to adopt the resolution and submit the FY 2022 grant application, seconded by Vice-Chairman Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

Absent: Gasperson

13. Volunteer Board Application(s)

A. Application for vote- Jewel Lynch, Home Community Care Block Grant..

Vice-Chairman Melton moved to approve the application as presented, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

Absent: Gasperson

14. Commissioner Comment(s)

The Commissioners thanked everyone for coming to the meeting and sharing their information. Chairman Yoder said Commissioner Gasperson had to leave the meeting early as he was not feeling well. All the Commissioners thanked the guest speakers for their presentations, and were impressed by the passion each expressed for their various topics. They agreed volunteers are a tremendous asset to the County.

15. Closed Session

A. Vice-Chairman Melton moved to go into closed session for the purpose of attorney client privilege seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Commissioner Moore moved to return to open session, seconded by Vice-Chairman Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

16. Adjournment

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

Absent: Gasperson

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

Ange High
Clerk to the Board

Myron Yoder
Chairman