

POLK COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING  
November 21, 2016 – 7:00 P.M.  
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice  
Womack Building  
Columbus, NC  
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Gage, Vice-Chair Holbert, Commissioner Bradley, Commissioner Gasperson and Commissioner Owens. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, County Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board Fehrmann, media and citizens.

1. Call to Order – Chair Gage called the meeting to order.
2. Invocation – Commissioner Bradley gave the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner Gasperson led the pledge.
4. Approval of Agenda – Commissioner Owens asked that “Searcy Field Update” be added as Agenda Item #9.a.; Chair Gage asked that “Parking Location of Polk County Transportation Vans” be added as Agenda Item #13.a, and “Tax Office Building” be added as Agenda Item #7.a. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Chair Gage and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Consent Agenda
  - A) Approval of the November 7, 2016, public hearing and regular meeting minutes.
  - B) Tax Department Refund Request: Vehicle surrenders and property tax corrections - \$2,369.58  
Commissioner Bradley moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Citizen Comments – David Moore commended the Commissioners for their intention to recognize the late Commissioner Tom Pack.
7. Proclamation for Thomas E. “Tom” Pack – Prior to reading the proclamation, Commissioner Owens read the following statement and asked it be included verbatim in these minutes.

“To begin with, I have been asked when are we as a Board going to do something to Honor Commissioner Tom Pack. Board, our time is about up! I had the privilege to serve on the Board of Commissioners with Tom longer than any of you. When he was elected in 2004 he came on a Board that faced the possibility that the county would have to default on its loans unless some action was taken. Tom, with his financial background and expertise, led the Board to take steps to correct this, which also put the county back on a stable financial foundation. The County did so well that when he returned to the Board in 2010, he started pushing for a tax cut.

“Back in 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 when the county was in a severe drought, he supported a county- wide water system, and now we have the backbone of that system in the ground and is serving our citizens. If this present drought continues there are going to be many that are going to be glad it is. I’m not introducing this proclamation for Commissioner Tom Pack to glorify him, for he never wanted his name put on public buildings, but rather to show our respect for him and to honor him for his service and commitment. And, to also recognize his dedication to the citizens of Polk County.”

The Commissioners expressed their gratitude for having served on the Board with Commissioner Pack. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Proclamation Declaring December 3, 2016, Thomas E. “Tom” Pack Appreciation Day, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.

- 7.a Tax Office Building – Chair Gage presented a “Resolution Naming the Polk County Tax Department/North Carolina DMV License Plate Agency & Driver License Services Office Building the L. Keith Holbert Building”. Vice-Chair Holbert expressed appreciation for the recognition, but respectfully declined having a county office building named in his honor.
8. Law Enforcement Complex Groundbreaking Ceremony – Commissioner Owens announced the groundbreaking ceremony for the Law Enforcement Complex will be held on Saturday, December 3, 2016, at 11:30 A.M. at 222 Park St. in Columbus. David Guice, North Carolina Adult Correction & Juvenile Justice Commissioner, will be the guest speaker, and the public is welcome to attend.
9. Polk County School System State Ranking – Commissioner Owens requested this item be placed on the agenda. School Superintendent Aaron Greene informed the Board that the Polk County School System has been ranked the second highest performing school system in North Carolina for 2015-2016. Mr. Greene said the Polk County School District was the only one in the state to have all schools earn an “A” or “B” in performance ratings. Polk County School District’s success is the result of tremendous local government and community support, pre-kindergarten education, small class sizes, and the dedication of students, families, and school staff. Mr. Green noted the strong partnership between the Board of Commissioners and the School Board has been essential in meeting the needs of our students, and in the success of our schools.
- 9.a Searcy Field Update – Jerry Stensland, Recreation Director, gave a PowerPoint presentation, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. Mr. Stensland said Searcy Field has historically been an underutilized facility, but recent improvements have contributed to the creation of a multipurpose field for baseball, softball, and football use. The facility is scheduled to be in full use in the fall of 2017.
10. Resolution to Advance Polk County’s Revaluation Schedule from January 1, 2017, to January 1, 2021, and to Implement Subsequent Reappraisals Every Four Years – Melissa Bowlin, Tax Administrator, presented the resolution. The North Carolina Department of Revenue will be updating its revaluation standards by January 1,

- 2017, to recommend four year revaluation cycles. Four year revaluation cycles help avoid the extreme ups and downs often experienced in longer revaluation cycles, allow the Tax Department to budget more accurately during the revaluation year, and enable the schedule of values to follow the real estate market more closely. Commissioner Gasperson said if the county had been on a four year revaluation cycle, the county would likely not to have had to refund nearly \$300,000 to a number of Bright's Creek property owners. Vice-Chair Holbert moved to approve the Resolution to Advance Polk County's Revaluation Schedule from January 1, 2017, to January 1, 2021, and to Implement Subsequent Reappraisals Every Four Years, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.
11. Proposed Amendment to the Polk County Zoning Map, Rezoning of Multiple Use District; Certain Area as Equestrian Village District – Cathy Ruth, Planner, presented the public hearing request on the proposed amendment. Vice-Chair Holbert moved to schedule a public hearing on December 5, 2016, at 7:00 P.M. in the R. Jay Foster Hall of justice, Womack Building, to take public comment on a proposed amendment to the Polk County zoning map, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
  12. Personnel Policy Updates & Amendments – Patti Wagner, Human Resources Director, said the changes to the personnel policy are essentially adjustments for consistency, language clarifications, and federal law amendments. Ms. Wagner explained the compensatory time threshold for regular full-time county employees was increased from 180 hours for to 240 hours, which is consistent with Federal regulations. Any hours accrued above this limit must be paid out to an individual upon separation of county employment, an amount which can potentially be very costly to the county. Vice-Chair Holbert said excessive accrued compensatory time has been a problem for many years, and asked for Board consensus for the county to hire a consultant to research the issue and make recommendations for its resolution. County Manager Pittman said mechanisms have been put in place to closely monitor and regulate compensatory hours, and the situation is improving. Commissioner Gasperson recommended the county continue with its current efforts and consider hiring a consultant at a later date if the problem escalates. Chair Gage spoke in support of hiring a consultant to study the issue. It was the consensus of the Board to instruct County Manager Pittman to obtain a quote for a consultant to research the excessive accrued compensatory time issue. Commissioner Gasperson moved to approve the updated personnel policy, seconded by Chair Gage and the motion carried unanimously.
  13. Doughboy Flagpole Encroachment & Maintenance Agreement – County Attorney Berg informed the Board the agreement allows the county to utilize the Town of Columbus' property for the installation and maintenance of a flagpole, flagpole lighting, and a U.S. flag on the Doughboy Statue property located at the intersection of Mills St. and Courthouse St. in Columbus. Commissioner Gasperson moved to approve the Doughboy Flagpole Encroachment & Maintenance agreement between the county and the Town of Columbus, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously.

- 13.a Parking Location of Polk County Transportation Vans – Chair Gage said many people would like to see the county's transportation vans parked in a location other than around the historic courthouse and on Ward St. in downtown Columbus. Vice-Chair Holbert moved to instruct County Manager Pittman to work with Transportation Director Timberlake to work out the logistics of moving the transportation vans to the old school bus garage parking lot as soon as the county receives the closing documents on the property, seconded by Commissioner Owens. Following discussion it was the consensus of the Board to table the issue until the December 5, 2016, regular meeting.
14. Law Enforcement Complex Construction Bid Award – County Manager Pittman presented the construction bids received on the project, and well as the value engineering worksheet for Cooper Construction Company, Inc., the low bidder, in the amount of \$317,060. The Board carefully reviewed each value engineering line item, and made no changes to the recommendations. Commissioner Gasperson moved to award the Law Enforcement Complex construction contract in the amount of \$9,603,350 to Cooper Construction Company, Inc., seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously.
15. Project Budget Ordinance & Budget Amendments – Sandra Hughes, Finance Director, presented the information. A) Commissioner Bradley moved to approve Project Budget Ordinance, Law Enforcement Complex, \$13,500,000 – To adjust construction to bid amount +100k; reduce land for purchase by General Fund; and adjust all others to estimates based on latest projections with the balance increasing additional contingencies, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously. B) Chair Gage moved to approve BA #2, Governing Body, Appropriate Fund Balance, \$971,579 – To appropriate General Fund Balance for the purchase of land not assigned to the Law Enforcement Complex, and therefore not considered collateral for financing, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously. C) Commissioner Owens moved to approve BA #3, County-Wide Water, Contingency/Transfer Out, \$14,190 – To offset the difference between the grant from the Department of Environmental Quality and the actual cost of the water system regionalization study being conducted by Arcadis Consultants, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously. (NOTE: The \$14,190 is the county's 1/3 portion of the \$42,570 difference between the grant and the actual cost of the study.)
16. Manager's Report – A) The loan for the Law Enforcement Complex has been finalized, and the county has closed on the complex property. B) There has been no interest in the surplus houses on Park St., so the county will move forward with having the structures demolished and removed. C) Volunteer fire departments, local law enforcement agencies, and county employees were commended for their coordinated efforts to fight a brush fire which started on November 18, 2016, near the North Carolina Welcome Center on Interstate 26.
17. Commissioner Comments – Commissioner Bradley encouraged everyone to donate items for the volunteers fighting the fires around the Lake Lure area.

Commissioner Gasperson also encouraged everyone to support the firefighters. Commissioner Owens said the county could not survive without its many dedicated volunteers. Vice-Chair Holbert commended the county fire departments. Chair Gage thanked all emergency services personnel for their efforts.

18. Closed Session – Chair Gage moved to enter into closed session for the purpose of personnel, G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5), seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.

Return to Open Session – Commissioner Owens moved to return to open session, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.

19. Adjournment – Chair Gage moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD  
OF COMMISSIONERS

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Beth Fehrmann  
Clerk to the Board

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Michael V. Gage  
Chair