

POLK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING
November 7, 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 Owens gave the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner Bradley led the pledge.
4. Approval of Agenda – Chair Gage asked that Agenda Item #7, Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance Amendment, be removed, and asked that “Putting Future Commissioners on County Health Care Plan” be added as Agenda Item #7. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Consent Agenda
Approval of the October 17, 2016, public hearing and regular meeting minutes. Commissioner Bradley moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Citizen Comments – There were none.
7. ~~Wireless Telecommunications Ordinance Amendment~~ – ~~Cathy Ruth, Planner, will present the request to schedule a public hearing on ????, at 7:00 P.M. in the R.J. Foster Hall of Justice, Womack Building, to take public comment on the amendment. Motion to approve. This item was removed from the agenda.~~
7. Commissioners' Eligibility for County Health Care Plan – Chair Gage said health care insurance is a huge, expensive issue and, in lieu of a long overdue Commissioners' salary increase and given the demanding time commitment required by those who serve, he recommended offering Commissioners access to county health care insurance as an incentive and encouragement for people of moderate means to run for office. Commissioner Gasperson said that while Commissioners do not serve their communities for the pay, it is common across the state for Commissioners to participate in county health insurance plans, and he is in favor of the recommendation. Commissioner Owens said he supported this optional benefit for Commissioners. Commissioner Bradley said he did not support the recommendation, and would rather see the money go to county employees. Vice-Chair Holbert said he did not have a problem with offering Commissioners health care insurance. Chair Gage moved for Commissioners to be given the

- option to participate in the county health care plan effective FY 2017/2018, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried 4-1 (Bradley opposed).
8. Kudzu Management Update – Scott Wellborn, Cooperative Extension Director, presented the information. Kudzu was introduced to the United States in the late 1800's from Asia to stop severe erosion and to provide livestock forage. Kudzu is a fast growing deciduous woody vine that may reach 35 to 100 feet in length, and can be managed by repeated mowing to the ground for two or more years, by digging up the root crowns, by utilizing goats to eat the plants, and by chemical treatments. Mr. Wellborn said many kudzu problem areas in the county are located within Duke Energy powerline and North Carolina Department of Transportation right-of-ways, and would need to be managed by those entities.
 9. Resolution Endorsing the Application for Comprehensive Bicycle & Pedestrian Planning Grant Funds by the Towns of Tryon and Columbus – Jerry Stensland, Recreation Director, presented the resolution to enable the towns of Tryon and Columbus to jointly apply for North Carolina Department of Transportation planning grant funds. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Resolution Endorsing the Application for Comprehensive Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Funds by the Towns of Tryon and Columbus, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.
 10. County Line Surveying Resolution – County Manager Pittman presented the resolution to allow the North Carolina Geodetic Survey to resurvey the adjoining boundaries between Polk and Rutherford counties at no cost to the counties. Chair Gage moved to approve the County Line Surveying Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
 11. Installation of a Flagpole at the Doughboy Statue in Columbus – Commissioner Owens asked that this item be placed on the agenda to consider the installation of a flagpole at the Doughboy statue in Columbus in honor of all past, present, and future veterans. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the flagpole project, further moved the cost of the flagpole project not exceed \$3,500, and further moved the flagpole project move forward with the proviso that the Town of Columbus and Duke Energy both approve the project, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert. Commissioner Gasperson said he is absolutely in favor of honoring veterans at all times, but he wants to make sure the community and the Appearance Committee support the project in order to preclude any negativity surrounding the initiative. Commissioner Gasperson also expressed concern about locating the flagpole on a Town of Columbus street, questioned whether height restrictions would apply relative to nearby power lines, and asked the project be tabled until the next meeting so more information can be gathered. Chair Gage said the county must show commitment and formally approve the project before approaching the Town of Columbus for support.

Commissioner Gasperson asked County Attorney Berg if there were any concerns regarding liability risks, and questioned who would be responsible for maintaining the flagpole in the future. Ms. Berg said since the flagpole will be located in the Town of Columbus' right-of-way, an encroachment and maintenance agreement

- would need to be drawn up between the county and the town to allow the flagpole to be located behind the Doughboy statue, and to specify who is responsible for maintaining the flagpole. Ms. Berg said she would work with the Town of Columbus and draft an agreement. Commissioner Gasperson asked to amend the original motion wherein the project to install a flagpole at the Doughboy statue in Columbus is tabled until the draft agreement comes before the Board for review, but the amendment failed for lack of a second. Vice-Chair Holbert and Commissioner Bradley both said the original motion specified the flagpole project will not proceed without the approval of the Town of Columbus and Duke Energy, and therefore they were satisfied with moving forward with the initiative. With the original motion and second on the floor, the motion carried 4-1 (Gasperson opposed). Commissioner Gasperson reiterated he is not opposed to the project itself as he is very supportive of veterans, however he does not believe all the details involved in the flagpole project have been properly considered.
12. Budget Amendments – Sandra Hughes, Finance Director, presented the budget amendments. Vice-Chair Holbert moved to approve BA #1, Governing Body, \$205,000 – To appropriate General Fund Balance to purchase the Polk County School Bus Garage, seconded by Commissioner Owens. Commissioner Gasperson stated he is not in favor of purchasing the school bus garage property, inquired about documentation regarding potential environmental issues with the property, confirmed with County Manager Pittman the county currently has no pressing need for the square footage the school bus garage provides, and expressed his concern the purchase could trigger some unnecessary growth in county government. Vice-Chair Holbert said the purchase of the school bus garage will allow Polk County Transportation vehicles to be parked somewhere other than in downtown Columbus. Commissioner Bradley said county funds would be better spent on something other than the school bus garage. Chair Gage and Commissioner Owens both said it will be good to get the transportation vehicles parked somewhere other than downtown Columbus. With a motion and a second on the floor, the motion carried 3-2 (Bradley and Gasperson opposed). Commissioner Owens moved to approve BA #2, Governing Body, \$3,500 – To increase Governing Body budget for the purchase and installation of a flagpole at the Doughboy statue in Columbus, seconded by Chair Gage. Commissioner Gasperson said he would not vote to approve the budget amendment because all the flagpole project details have not been properly considered. With a motion and a second on the floor, the motion carried 4-1 (Gasperson opposed).
13. Manager's Report – 1) The Local Government Commission (LGC) recently approved financing for the Law Enforcement Complex. The county will next complete the acquisition of property, and then close on the loan. 2) The Board was asked to review Personnel Policy Amendments in order to vote on the recommended changes at the next regular BOC meeting.
14. Volunteer Board for Vote – Vice Chair Holbert moved to reappoint Kathleen Kent and Charles Fousek to the Transportation Advisory Board, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Commissioner Comments – Commissioner Gasperson commended the Board of Elections Office for doing a superb job. Vice-Chair Holbert and Commissioner Bradley both thanked everyone for coming out and wished all the candidates good luck in the election. Commissioner Owens said it will be an economic boon for the county and the region when the Tryon International Equestrian Center hosts the 2018 World Equestrian Games. Chair Gage thanked everyone for coming out, wished the candidates good luck, and thanked his fellow Commissioners and county staff for their hard work.

16. Closed Session – Commissioner Owens moved to enter into closed session for the purpose of attorney-client privilege, G.S. 143-318.11(a)(3), seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously.

17. Return to Open Session – Commissioner Owens moved to return to open session, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Bradley moved to amend the agreement for the purchase and sale of land for the Law Enforcement Complex to provide for a portion of the purchase price to be placed in escrow to allow for the satisfactory completion of certain site works to be completed on the property to be purchased, seconded by Chair Gage and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Bradley moved to approve the county entering into an escrow agreement to provide for the deposit of the escrow funds consisting of \$585,000 to be held in the Feagan Law Firm trust account, further moved to grant County Manager Pittman signature authority on behalf of the county for the document, and further moved for such funds to be paid out upon satisfactory completion and payment of those Law Enforcement Complex site improvements aforementioned in the previous motion, seconded by Chair Gage and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Bradley moved to approve assignment of a utilities contract and a road preparation contract from the seller of the Law Enforcement Complex property to the county, and further moved to grant County Manager Pittman signature authority on behalf of the county for the document, seconded by Chair Gage and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Owens moved to redact, unseal, and release certain closed session minutes contained in Polk County Closed Session Minutes Batch No. 2016-1, seconded by Chair Gage and the motion carried unanimously.

18. Adjournment – Commissioner Owens moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS

Beth Fehrmann
Clerk to the Board

Michael V. Gage
Chair