

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting
December 2, 2019 - 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.

1. Call to Order -Chairman Melton.
2. Invocation - Commissioner Moore.
3. Pledge of Allegiance - Girl Scout Troop 1819.
4. Annual Election of Officers - Attorney Berg.

Chairman Melton expressed appreciation to each member of the Board, and thanked them for his time serving as Chairman.
Attorney Berg opened the floor for nominations.

- A. Election of Chairman - Commissioner Melton nominated Commissioner Yoder to serve as Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Yoder thanked the Board for their confidence in him to serve as Chairman.

- B. Election Vice-Chairman - Chairman Yoder nominated Commissioner Melton as Vice-Chairman, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

5. Approval of Agenda (New Chairman Presides).

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

6. Consent Agenda

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

- A. Annual Examination of Bonds §58-72-20 for Public Officials - Finance Officer, Register of Deeds, Sheriff, and Tax Collector. Bonds are available for review upon request.

- B. 2019 Child Fatality and Neglect Report.
- C. Board of Commissioners' Meeting & Invocation and Pledge of Allegiance Schedules for January - June 2020.
- D. Commissioner Board Appointments.
- E. Sales Tax School Capital Set-aside in the amount of \$95,356.

7. Citizen Comment(s)

One citizen spoke concerning the lack of internet service to residents within the county. One citizen spoke about the Fall Green River/Lake Adger litter sweep, and about concerns with the Lake Adger habitat enhancement project. Commissioner Beiler asked where the providers are refusing to transfer or provide internet service, and the citizen stated it is spread throughout the County. The areas she knows about are Hogback Mountain, Lake Lanier, and Mill Spring. Commissioner Gasperson said this is exactly what he was talking about at the last meeting referring to the digital divide. He said the Commissioners should take decisive action, and broadband internet services should be the focus for 2020. Commissioner Moore said he agrees, and knows lack of internet service is a major issue in the Coopers Gap area as well. Manager Pittman said PANGEA is coming to the next Board meeting to give a wireless internet service project update. Commissioner Gasperson asked for a broadband discussion to also be added to the next meeting agenda after the PANGEA update.

8. Girl Scout Troop 1819 Public Service Appreciation.

Girl Scout Troop 1819 presented the Commissioners and staff with treat bags to express their appreciation to local government leaders. Leader Jennifer Pittman explained the girls have been working on this service project all year by showing appreciation to different members of the community that serve the public.

9. Isothermal Community College (ICC) Update.

Walter Dalton, Isothermal Community College (ICC) President, gave an update on the college's progress and needs. He said as the services provided by ICC continue to grow and expand, they have become aware of the need for physical expansion at the Polk County Campus. He introduced Karen Marshall as the new Polk Center Coordinator. Thad Harrill, Vice President of Community, Workforce Development and Director of Alumni Affairs, and Dolly Horton, Vice President of Academic and Student Services, each spoke about the college's mission to improve life through learning, and new curriculum being offered. Stephen Matheny, Vice-President of Administrative Services, gave a

presentation, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. He said they updated their master plan in 2018/19, and it determined the Polk County facility needs to be expanded. Mr. Matheny said they will be focusing on classroom development, and the building's square footage will increase by 4,000 square feet, for a total square footage of 16,000. He asked the Commissioners to consider contributing \$10,000 to \$15,000 for the advanced planning cost which is typically 8% to 10% of the total projected cost. He said the funds would help cover the front end costs for conceptual drawings and cost estimates needed to pursue grants and other funding sources to complete the project.

Commissioner Gasperson moved to transfer funds (not to exceed \$15,000) from contingency to begin pre-construction planning for expansion at the Polk ICC campus, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Lake Adger Habitat Enhancement Project.

Scott Loftis, NC Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC), said he is coming to the Board since the County owns the lake water and the dam on the lake. He gave a presentation on an option for habitat enhancement on Lake Adger, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. Chairman Yoder said he did some research on the topic, and he saw complaints from other lakes, and called the water willow an invasive plant, which makes him consider if in a few years it will be like kudzu. Mr. Loftis said water willow is different from kudzu as it is native to the eastern US and is an aquatic plant species. Manager Pittman asked if water willow was the only option, and Mr. Loftis said it is the preferable biological option for shoreline stabilization, and the NCWRC feels it is the best, most economical choice, but they are open to investigate other options. Vice-Chairman Melton asked if NCWRC talked to the residents of Lake Adger or the homeowner's association regarding the project. Mr. Loftis said that coming to the meeting tonight was the first public forum outreach. Commissioner Gasperson said water willow cannot be considered the same as kudzu, but he feels having homeowners on board and involved in the discussion would be helpful. Vice-Chairman Melton asked if there were any Lake Adger residents in the audience and if any of them would like to speak. Jamie Davidson, Lake Adger resident, said manmade issues are causing more problems and she would like consideration given for a Lake Management Plan, no wake zones, no riparian zones, all of which could help with shoreline erosion. Mr. Loftis said he will go to the homeowner's association and present the pros and cons of all options.

The consensus of the Board of Commissioners was for Mr. Loftis to meet with the Lake Adger Home Owners Association and come back to another meeting with a recommendation.

11. Thermal Belt Habitat for Humanity Lease.

Manager Pittman presented the lease agreement and said the terms will only be for six months to determine if it's mutually beneficial.

Commissioner Gasperson moved to approve the lease agreement with

Thermal Belt Habitat for Humanity, seconded by Vice-Chairman Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Henderson County K-9 Agreement.

Attorney Berg presented the proposed purchase agreement. She said a former Polk County employee who was a K-9 handler for the Sheriff, went to work for Henderson County who is requesting to purchase his dog, a certain Dutch Shepherd canine (K-9), Rento, whose date of birth is 08/02/2014 and further identified by microchip number 528093490022112 for the amount of \$14,500 which is the cost of replacement.

Commissioner Moore moved to approve the K-9 agreement with Henderson County, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Volunteer Board Application(s)

- A. Applications for Vote - Carolyn Ashburn Appearance Commission; Rickie McFalls, Ronnie Smith, James Stott Columbus Fire Tax District; John Blanton, Bruce Collins, Paul Stacy Green Creek Fire Tax District.

Commissioner Gasperson moved to approve all volunteer board appointments as presented, seconded by Vice-Chairman Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

14. Commissioner Comment(s)

Commissioner Gasperson thanked everyone for coming to the meeting. He said he would like to thank his family for their support during his twelve years as a Polk County Commissioner, and hopes it continues as he signed up today to run again.

Commissioner Moore thanked everyone for coming, and said it was a good meeting. He then read the poem on the treat bag presented by the Girl Scouts - Survival Kit for Those Who Serve.

Vice-Chairman Melton told Chairman Yoder he did a good job running the meeting and knows he will be a great Chairman.

Commissioner Beiler said it was a pleasure working with Vice-Chairman Melton when he was Chairman, and he looks forward to another great year.

Chairman Yoder said he also signed up to run again, and he appreciates everyone coming to the meeting, working together, and he looks forward to serving the Board as Chairman.

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 Beiler moved to return to open session, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

16. Adjournment

Commissioner Gasperson moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

Ange High
Clerk to the Board

Myron Yoder
Chairman