

POLK COUNTY
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING
April 4, 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 Holbert called the meeting to order.
2. Invocation – Commissioner Bradley gave the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – EMS Director Michael Crater led the pledge.
4. Appointment of New Commissioner – Commissioner Gage moved to appoint Ted Owens to the Board of Commissioners, as recommended by the Republican Executive Committee, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously. Sheila Whitmire, Register of Deeds, swore Commissioner Owens into office.
5. Election of Chair – Commissioner Holbert resigned his position as Chair. Commissioner Bradley moved to appoint Commissioner Gage as the Chair, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried 4-1 (Gasperson opposed). Commissioner Gasperson stated his preference for Commissioner Bradley to serve as Chair.
6. Election of Vice-Chair – Commissioner Bradley moved to appoint Commissioner Holbert as Vice-Chair, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried 4-1 (Gasperson opposed). Commissioner Gasperson stated his preference for Commissioner Bradley to serve as Vice-Chair.

Commissioner Owens read the following statement, and asked that it be included in the minutes verbatim:

“In normal circumstances it is a joy for me to serve my fellow man in this manner. However, under this tragic circumstance it is a sad time for me. Tom was not only a Commissioner I served with, but he was one of my best and most respected friends. I want everyone to understand that I’m not replacing Commissioner Pack, nor am I taking his place. I’m just blessed to be honored to finish his term.

“As a Commissioner and a person, Tom gave us Commissioners examples and set standards we should all strive to obtain. He was dedicated and worked hard to do what was right for the citizens of this county. He made his decisions based on facts and not political gain. He mastered the county budget like no one else. He took the time to look at the budget each year line item by line item. He had the

ability to spot items that needed adjusting either up or down, always with the goal of easing the burden on the taxpayer.

“Commissioner Tom Pack was a sharp and intelligent leader. Under his leadership much was accomplished to improve the lives of the people of Polk County and their future. I believe one of those accomplishments was the county’s water system. A gentleman at church Sunday said to me ‘when the water line is completed to the county line, in case of an emergency we will be able to connect to another source.’ I reminded him that not only there, but all sides of the county could be connected to another source. Fellow Commissioners, Tom Pack’s influence will be felt every time this BOC meets.”

7. Approval of Agenda – Vice-Chair Holbert moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously.
8. Consent Agenda
 - A) Approval of the March 21, 2016, regular meeting minutes.
 - B) Economic & Tourism Development Commission (ETDC) Appointees’ Length of Term Assignments – To designate initial lengths of terms for appointees to the new ETDC.
Commissioner Bradley moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously.
9. Citizen Comments – There were none.
10. Spicer’s Cove & Big Hungry Fire Service Response Time – Bobby Arledge, Emergency Management Director, gave an update on efforts to collaborate with agencies in other counties to enhance response times to areas of the county difficult to access by our volunteer fire services. Mr. Arledge and the Chiefs of the Mill Spring and Saluda Volunteer Fire Departments had a meeting with the Dana, Blue Ridge, and Edneyville Volunteer Fire Department Chiefs and the Hendersonville Fire Marshall. As a result of this meeting, Henderson County has agreed to provide fire protection to the Spicer’s Cove and Big Hungry communities. A portion of Polk County taxes collected in these areas will be earmarked for the corresponding Hendersonville County fire department. Mr. Arledge said he hopes to present the finalized agreement to the Board for approval in the next sixty days.
11. Polk County Community Child Fatality Prevention & Protection Team 2015 Annual Report – Michael Crater and Anna Nelon, Polk County Community Child Fatality Prevention & Protection Team Co-Chairs, presented the report. A discussion on the topic of grant funding opportunities ensued, and it was the consensus of the Board to instruct County Manager Pittman to contact the Rutherford County Manager regarding the possibility of sharing the services and cost of the grant writer currently employed by Rutherford County.

Chair Gage called for a ten minute recess at this time.

12. 2015/2016 Polk County Audit Contract Proposals Update – County Manager Pittman reported Dixon Hughes Goodman (DHG) agreed to reduce their audit contract proposal by \$7,500, which resulted in a \$6,400 difference between the DHG and Gould Killian proposal. Vice-Chair Holbert said a \$6,400 savings, and the opportunity to have a fresh audit firm, make the Gould Killian proposal attractive. Vice-Chair Holbert moved to approve the proposal by Gould Killian, seconded by Commissioner Owens. Commissioners Gasperson and Bradley said they would prefer DHG continue as the audit firm because they are familiar with the county, are very in-depth and thorough, and have done a good job the past four years. With a motion and a second on the floor, the motion carried 3-2 (Bradley and Gasperson opposed). It was the consensus of the Board that County Manager Pittman and Chair Gage meet with Gould Killian prior to the audit to give them direction.

13. Potential Property for the Proposed New Jail/Sheriff's Department Facility – Commissioner Gasperson asked that this item be placed on the agenda to discuss directing the County Manager to send a letter to the Mayor, Town Council, and the Town Manager of Columbus asking for their input, concerns, and considerations regarding the location of a new Jail/Sheriff's Department Facility in the municipal limits of Columbus. Commissioner Gasperson said he is not opposed to a new detention center, but he is concerned about: A) Long-term financial impact on the taxpayers. B) Location of the facility. C) Method of financing the project. D) Potential need for a tax increase to pay for the facility. Commissioner Gasperson said he would like to see a bond referendum placed on the ballot in order to give the citizens the power to decide if the funds for the project should be raised through the sale of bonds.

Commissioner Gasperson said the new Jail/Sheriff's Department Facility will likely be located in Columbus and he wants the county to work collaboratively with the Mayor, Town Council, and Town Manager of Columbus on the location. Discussion ensued, and it was the consensus of the Board to send a letter to the Mayor, Town Council, and the Town Manager of Columbus asking for their input, concerns, and considerations regarding the location of a new Jail/Sheriff's Department Facility in the municipal limits of Columbus.

14. Budget Amendment – Finance Director Sandra Hughes presented the budget amendment. Vice-Chair Holbert moved to approve BA #55, EMS, \$15,772, to transfer funds remaining in the EMS budget to cover a part-time salary budget shortfall, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Manager's Report – County Manager Pittman informed the Board the Consolidated Human Services Agency Board met on March 24, 2016, and will meet again on April 21st to work on bylaws for the organization.

16. Isothermal Planning & Development Commission (IPDC) Board of Directors Vacancy – Vice-Chair Holbert moved to appoint Commissioner Owens to the IPDC Board of Directors for the duration of his tenure as a Commissioner, seconded by Commissioner Bradley and the motion carried unanimously.

17. Volunteer Board for Vote – Neal Barton was appointed to the Planning Board as an at-large member by unanimous vote. (NOTE: The original vacancy was for a Tryon Township resident. Refer to Section 2F of the Planning Board Ordinance for further membership information.) Michael Stone was appointed to the Planning Board at-large vacancy by a 3-2 vote (Bradley and Gasperson opposed). (NOTE: The original vacancy was for a Coopers Gap Township member. Refer to Section 2F of the Planning Board Ordinance for further membership information.) Craig Hilton was not appointed to the Planning Board by a 2-3 vote (Gage, Holbert and Owens opposed).
18. Volunteer Boards for Review – Two applications for three Columbus Fire District Tax Commission vacancies were reviewed. Three applications for three Library Board of Trustees vacancies. Three applications for three Saluda Fire District Tax Commission vacancies were reviewed.
19. Commissioner Comments – The Commissioners thanked everyone for coming out. Commissioner Owens commended the Columbus Town Council for making a donation of \$200 to the American Cancer Society in memory of Tom Pack, and congratulated Polk County 911 Communications Department employee Marty McGuinn for his recent induction into Sigma Alpha Pi, the National Society of Leadership and Success. Vice-Chair Holbert announced White Oak Carpets, Tom Pack’s former employer, will create a fund for those wishing to make a financial contribution to the education of Mr. Pack’s two children.
20. Closed Session – Chair Gage moved to go into closed session for the purpose of acquisition of property, G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5), seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
21. Return to Open Session – Commissioner Owens moved to return to open session, seconded by Vice-Chair Holbert and the motion carried unanimously.
22. Adjournment – Vice-Chair Holbert moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD
OF COMMISSIONERS

Beth Fehrmann
Clerk to the Board

Michael V. Gage
Chair