

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
June 15, 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, and Clerk to the Board High. Media and citizens participated remotely.

1. Call to Order - Chairman Yoder.

2. Invocation - Chairman Yoder.

3. Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Beiler.

4. Approval of Agenda

Manager Pittman requested adding item 11. Budget Amendments that need approval for the FY 2019/20 budget.

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

5. Consent Agenda

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

A. June 1, 2020 budget work session, and regular meeting minutes.

B. Tax refund requests for June 2020 in the amount of \$861.39.

C. Sheriff Department Monthly Activity Report for May 2020.

D. Declare Surplus computers and miscellaneous office equipment from IT department (complete list in packet).

6. Citizen Comment(s) - Citizens may submit their comments to the Clerk to the Board by email - ahigh@polknc.org, or phone - 828-894-3301 ext. 221, by 5:00 pm June 15, 2020 to be read during the meeting.

There were three citizen comments read. Two citizen comments were read by Chairman Yoder one concerning noise pollution, and speeding in Tryon, and one regarding the scope of management and oversight by Sheriff in the 911 Communication Center. Commissioner Beiler read the third letter from the Appearance Commission supporting a Kudzu Eradication Advisory Board.

7. Recognizing Benny Smith for twenty years of volunteer service on the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors - Vice-Chairman Melton.

Vice-Chairman Melton recognized Mr. Smith for his service, and read the following:

Benny Smith, a dedicated citizen to Polk County, we thank you for your many valuable contributions over the past years to this community, especially your volunteer service for twenty years as a member of the Harmon Field Board of Supervisors from 2000 – 2020. Your loyal and dedicated service to Harmon Field in Tryon, North Carolina has helped to create the treasure it is today, and has ensured that it will be enjoyed by residents and visitors in our community for many generations to come. We thank you for your many accomplishments over the years, and for your many years serving Polk County.

8. Kudzu Information - John Vining.

John Vining came before the Commissioners to explore the possibility of creating a Kudzu Eradication Board in Polk County. He presented a draft of how the board could be structured and function. The Commissioners discussed the idea, and Mr. Vining shared suggestions on how he saw the board working. He said to start, he suggested the 11 board members create a map that indicated where kudzu was growing across the county. Then the committee could focus on the smaller more manageable areas, and help citizens learn to try to control kudzu. He said, then the County could purchase a commercial sprayer unit for citizens who have larger kudzu areas to borrow for short term use on their property. Commissioner Moore asked the cost of a commercial sprayer, and Mr. Vining said currently it would be approximately \$5,500. Mr. Vining said another idea the Kudzu Eradication Board may explore would be the use of goats, (however they must be used three years consecutively) which he personally has had success with in the past, as well as other organic options, such as digging up the crowns.

Mr. Vining said the whole idea behind the Kudzu Eradication Board, if created, is to focus on educating citizens on all the options available, and helping them decide which is the best one for them to use on their property. The Commissioners thanked Mr. Vining for sharing the information, and for coming to the meeting.

Chairman Yoder ask Mr. Vining, as a historian on the Polk County Courthouse, if he would state the purpose of the small elevated concrete slab on the Courthouse lawn. Mr. Vining said it is his understanding, it is an abandon well, with a concrete cap, and has no historic value.

9. Human Resource Policies for Review - Manager Pittman.

Manager Pittman presented the Commissioners with the draft amended Human Resource Policy, which was last updated in 2016. He said a spreadsheet is included documenting any change, that is not just housekeeping, and the policy was reviewed by himself, Attorney Berg, HR Director Wagner, Finance Director Hughes, and Clerk High. Commission Moore asked where the changes came from. Manager Pittman explained some were based on Federal or State regulations changes that needed to be made to remain current, and some where just areas we've encountered where either the policy needed to be more clear on a matter, or possible didn't address an issue at all. Policies, and documents are living documents, and by that very nature are expected to be changed over time. Attorney Berg said now the document is in your hands, you should take care, and review it thoroughly. Commissioner Gasperson asked how soon the Board would be asked to vote on the amended policy. Manager Pittman recommended scheduling a work session prior to the next Commissioner meeting on July 20th to discuss the changes to the policy. Vice-Chairman Melton said this has been something he has wanted to discuss for along time, and he looks forward to reviewing the policy thoroughly. He will even try to get together with each Commissioner one at a time to review the policy before the work session as preparation.

The Commissioners agreed to hold a work session as suggested to discuss the HR policy changes at 5:00 pm before the next regular meeting on July 20, 2020.

10. Memorandum of Understanding Communication Oversight Agreement

Attorney Berg gave a brief history of the management of the 911 Communication Center stating previously, it was under the Sheriff, and currently, it is under the County's management. She explained the agreement being presented, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes, would allow the Sheriff to oversee the day to day operations, while remaining a County department following the County Human Resource policy, and when employment decisions are necessary, whether new hires or terminations, both the County Manager and the Sheriff must be in agreement before any changes will be made.

Attorney Berg asked when the effective date of the agreement should begin. The Board determined the agreement will go into effect on July 1, 2020 at 12:01 am through June 30, 2021 at 11:59 pm, and the advisory committee for this agreement will be formed by August 1, 2020.

Vice-Chairman Melton moved to approve the Memorandum of Understanding Communication Oversight Agreement., seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Budget Amendments that need approval for the FY 2019/20 budget - Sandra Hughes, Finance Director.

Sandra Hughes, Finance Director presented the budget amendment to transfer the COVID-19 appropriation that was approved March 16, 2020. Vice-Chairman Melton moved to the budget amendment to transfer \$50,000 from Manager's Discretion to its own COVID Grant line, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Volunteer Board Application(s)

- A. Applications for Vote: Appearance Commission - Ernestine Kan; Harmon Field Board of Supervisors - (4 yr. term) Warren Watson; Home and Community Care Block Grant -Ted Owens.

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

13. Commissioner Comment(s)

Vice-Chairman Melton said you cannot legislate hate, it comes from the heart, and he looks forward to working with all Polk County citizens.

Commissioner Beiler said he's proud to be on this Board, and appreciates everyone working together. Additionally, he thanked Mr. Vining for coming to the meeting, and giving the kudzu presentation.

Commissioner Gasperson said he attended two unity events in Polk County, and they demonstrated what an incredible community we live in. He then spoke about a conversation he had with a Charter representative who said there is possibly more interest in extending their footprint in Polk County than in the past. He feels the more broadband players we have in Polk County the better we'll be.

Commissioner Moore echoed the previous comments, and said we do live in a great place, and he also appreciates everyone.

Chairman Yoder said each Commissioner works hard for their goals, and he wasn't able to attend the community events due to moving his son out of the state, but he knew the other Commissioners and the County Manager were there to represent County. He stated he did call several African America leaders in our County to let them know I support them. He thanked Mr. Vining for clearing up the misunderstanding about the concrete slab on the Courthouse lawn, and said one of his goals would be to use it as a location where a symbol of unity could be placed to show what Polk County truly represents.

14. Adjournment

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

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

Ange High
Clerk to the Board

Myron Yoder
Chairman