

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
September 21, 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.

1. Call to Order - Chairman Yoder.
2. Invocation - Commissioner Moore.
3. Pledge of Allegiance - Chairman Yoder.
4. Approval of Agenda

Vice-Chairman Melton requested removing item 9 Isothermal Community College (ICC) Student Lauren Street the 2020 recipient of the Governor Bob Scott Leadership Award due to a scheduling conflict. Manager Pittman said the Polk County School Board called an unexpected meeting tonight that is being held prior to this meeting. He suggested moving item 7 School Resource Officer Position to item 9 to allow Superintendent Greene's attendance. *(when the original agenda item 9 was removed and replaced with original agenda item 7 School Resource Officer Position, in the minutes it is now agenda item 8 not 9)*

Vice-Chairman Melton moved to amend agenda as suggested, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

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

5. Consent Agenda

- A. Schedule a public hearing to take public comments on the FY 2022 NCDOT Section 5311 (ADTAP), 5310, 5339, 5307, and applicable State Funding Community Transportation Grants for Monday, October 5, 2020 at 7:00 pm in the R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice, Womack Building.
- B. August 17, 2020 regular meeting minutes.
- C. Tax refund requests through September 15, 2020 in the amount of \$2,281.24.
- D. Release \$95,705 QZAB payment with lottery proceeds to be spent on school capital projects at Tryon Elementary. It was approved by the BOE

8/10/20.

- E. Declare Recreation Department vehicles as surplus to be sold electronically through Govdeals.

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

6. Citizen Comment(s)

Two citizens spoke against the location chosen for the Green Creek Volunteer Fire Rescue (GCVFR) Substation on Pea Ridge Road. One citizen spoke concerning the North Carolina Association of Education (NCAE) leadership and the K-12 curriculum they are encouraging teachers to use in classrooms across the State, and one citizen spoke on the handling of the virus COVID-19, and violations of the constitution using lockdowns and panic.

Commissioner Gasperson asked citizen, Jennie Smith, who spoke about the Green Creek substation location to return to the podium for further discussion. The Commissioners asked if the property has already been purchased. Manager Pittman stated he thought it had, but would need to confirm with the fire department. Attorney Berg looked at the Register of Deeds website, and found a deed recorded with the GCVFR as the grantee that met the legal description. Mrs. Smith said at the first community meeting they said they were considering the location, now there is a sign posted at the site saying future home of the GCVFR.

Commissioner Gasperson asked the Clerk to send the Green Creek Chief and Board of Directors the contact information and statements of the information both citizens shared at tonight's meeting. Chairman Yoder said the fire tax collected by the county for each fire department is a separate tax that goes directly to the fire department. The County only collects the tax, and acts as a pass through for the funds. Commissioner Gasperson asked Attorney Berg to explain the role of the Board of Commissioners as it relates to fire departments. She stated the Commissioners have no enforcement authority over fire departments. They are not county departments, rather individual not for profit corporate entities registered with the Secretary of State, and are able to do anything stated in their bylaws or charter, including purchase property and capital. The Commissioners did agree to encourage the GCVFR to have more community meetings to discuss the location of the new substation, as there was no dispute for the need of more fire protection within this section of Green Creek's fire district.

7. Resolution in Remembrance of September 11, 2001; Proclamation for Prisoners of War (POW) and Missing In Action (MIA) Recognition Day September 18, 2020; Military Suicide Awareness Month Resolution.

Vice-Chairman Melton welcomed all the veterans in attendance, and thanked

them for their service. He introduced Joyce B. Preston, VFW Post #9116 Auxiliary President, who thanked all veterans for their service. She shared some of the special days recognized during September to explain why this is an important month to veterans and their families.

VFW Post #9116 Commander Michael Collins read the Resolution in Remembrance of September 11, 2001.

Vice-Chairman Melton moved to to approve the Resolution in Remembrance of September 11, 2001, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

Gail Keller, VFW Post #9116 Auxiliary member read the Resolution for Military Suicide Awareness Month.

Vice-Chairman Melton moved to approve the resolution and declare September 2020 Military Suicide Awareness month, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.

Joyce B. Preston, VFW Post #9116 Auxiliary President read the Proclamation for Prisoners of War (POW) and Missing in Action (MIA) Recognition.

Vice-Chairman Melton moved to approve the proclamation declaring September 18, 2020 as Polk County POW/MIA Recognition Day, and the month of September 2020 as Polk County POW/MIA Month, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson, and the motion carried unanimously.

8. School Resource Officer Position - Aaron Greene, Superintendent and Sheriff Tim Wright.

Mr. Aaron Greene, Superintendent, and Sheriff Tim Wright came before the Board to discuss an increase in grant funding the school received in the amount of \$77,000.00. They said the funds will cover six months of the salary for a fifth School Resource Officer (SRO) set to begin January 2021, and will also cover the necessary vehicle/equipment needed for the position. Commissioner Moore moved to approve the budget amendment to increase the salary and benefits for a new SRO to begin January 2021 and to increase capital with additional grant funding based on five school resource officers, seconded by Vice-Chairman Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Vaya COVID-19 Response Report.

Angela L Garner Community Relations Regional Director VAYA Health spoke how they are responding to providers and members during COVID-19 with the main goal of providing stability. She gave a presentation, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. She thanked the Commissioners for the the opportunity to share, and thanked Polk County Schools and the Sheriff for being wonderful community partners.

10. State Mandated Sales Tax School Capital Budget Amendment.

Sandra Hughes, Finance Director explained now that the actual sales tax receipts are in, and we collected more sales tax than anticipated, we can "true up" the amount of sales tax set-aside for school capital to the actual increased

amount received. Commissioner Moore moved to approve the budget amendment for \$79,312 reducing fund balance and increasing School Capital Reserve, seconded by Vice-Chairman Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Budget Amendment Kudzu Eradication for Appearance Commission.

Manager Pittman said the County Maintenance Department has began working contractors, working on a kudzu control plan for County property at the landfill, and the Recreation Complex on Wolverine Trail. He said the Appearance Commission has submitted citizen comments urging the County to create a committee for kudzu eradication as suggested by John Vining at a earlier Commissioner meeting this year. He said timing is crucial, and is not feasible to create and establish a new committee this year. He proposed the Commissioners give the current Appearance Commission and additional \$8,500 to be used strictly for kudzu eradication. Manager Pittman said they could use the same methodology as they do with their Beautification Awards, with the stipulation being the funds must be used within this fiscal year, and the use must be for kudzu eradication. The sitting Appearance Commission will award and administer the matching community grants. Commissioner Gasperson moved to approve the budget amendment in the amount of \$8,500 for kudzu eradication, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Volunteer Board Application(s)

A. Applications for vote - Dr. Belynda Veser, Psychiatrist; Dr. John Kornmayer, Physician; Dr. Linda Greensfelder, Psychologist Health and Human Services Agency Board (HHSB).

13. Commissioner Comment(s)

Vice-Chairman Melton offered words of support and encouragement to all the law enforcement officers, and friends, and family of Henderson County Sheriff Deputy Ryan Hendrix who died in the line of duty on September 10th.. He said ten churches were vandalized below Greenville South Carolina, and he appreciates our sheriff and police departments.

Commissioner Gasperson recognized how fortunate we are to live in an area where all the surrounding communities support the police, and sheriff departments. He said no one here is talking about defunding anyone. He also said some political signs are going missing, and it is a class 3 misdemeanor to remove properly placed political signs. If a sign is placed on private property they should be returned to the political party.

Commissioner Moore said it was good to see people back out to meetings, and to hear from them, and he appreciates their demeanor.

Commissioner Beiler said there was a lot of information shared tonight, and it was great to have citizen comments in person again. He thanked the IT department for all they do to help everyone be able to participate in multiple formats, and thanked the Health Department for the level of professionalism in which they continue to handle themselves.

Chairman Yoder said he has had sign disappear as well, Attorney Berg read the General Statute about political sign placement and said you must obtain property owners permission.

Chairman Yoder said the Sheriff Deputy who lost his life was a young man, and as a Father of four young men we all need to be aware of what each other are going through, have a listening ear, HE said he appreciates having an open meeting, and all the hard work all the members of the local government are doing to keep the community safe.

14. Closed Session

A. Vice-Chairman Melton moved to go into closed session for the purposes of attorney client privilege seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously..

B. Motion to return to open session.

15. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Melton moved to 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