

POLK COUNTY  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, November 21, 2011, at 3:00pm  
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice, Womack Building  
Columbus, NC  
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Gasperson, Vice-Chair McDermott, Commissioner Owens, Commissioner Pack and Commissioner Walker. Also in attendance were County Manager Whitson, County Attorney Egan, Clerk to the Board Fehrmann, staff, media and citizens.

1. Call to Order - Chair Gasperson called the meeting to order.
2. Invocation – Commissioner Walker gave the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner Pack led the pledge.
4. Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Owens moved to approve the November 7, 2011, regular BOC meeting minutes, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of Agenda – County Manager Whitson asked that Fuel Conservation Day be added as agenda item #15.h. Vice-Chair McDermott moved to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Recognition of Employee Certification – Recycling Coordinator Joyce Hicks, who recently received her composting certification through the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, was recognized by the Board. This certification was made possible by a grant from the Polk County Community Foundation.
7. Tax Collector Refund Request – Commissioner Owens moved to approve the October refund request, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
8. Sheriff's Department Mutual Assistance Policy – Commissioner Owens moved to approve the resolution adopting the Sheriff Department's Mutual Assistance Policy, seconded by Commissioner Pack and the motion carried unanimously.
9. 2010/2011 Audit Report – Chuck Killian of Gould Killian CPA Group presented the report, a copy of which is on file with these minutes. Commissioners agreed to discuss the possibility of creating an internal audit board/committee at the 2012 Board retreat. Commissioner Pack asked if the County would now have excessive

revenues over expenditures of approximately \$1.63 million if \$2 million in debt had not been retired, and Mr. Killian said it would.

Commissioner Owens said it is time to start thinking of next year's budget, and his top three priorities are employee raises, education, and building maintenance. Vice-Chair McDermott said she has already talked to the County Manager regarding employee raises, as well as the availability of funds for the schools, and she feels Mr. Whitson has done an excellent job of building maintenance. Commissioner Pack said the employees should have gotten a raise this year; Bill Miller does an excellent job with the schools and only comes to the County for funds when absolutely necessary; the County Manager has been supported financially by the current and previous Board in his building maintenance efforts.

Vice-Chair McDermott said that Commissioner Pack's comments regarding the audit seem to assume that paying off debt is a bad thing, and she sees it quite to the contrary – the less debt the County has the better. She would rather see the County have no debt and build up its reserves for future projects such as dam restoration and a water treatment plant, as well as possible additional expenditures for the schools. Commissioner Owens said no one is arguing about lowering debt; the point that is being made is that the County is getting the revenue in to be able to pay off debt. Commissioner Pack said his reason for questioning the audit was misconstrued and, in fact, he works for a company that has no debt service at all. Commissioner Pack said his purpose is to show that, while the County has paid off some debt, the debt was paid off on the backs of the County employees, and he does not agree with that.

Commissioner Walker said the Board will have a great deal to work on during their retreat in January. Chair Gasperson emphasized the need to earmark funding for future economic development.

10. Existing Waterline History – Locations, Costs & Funding – Chair Gasperson asked that this item be placed on the agenda. Dave Odom, County Engineer, gave the presentation and the information is on file with these minutes.
11. Hwy. 108 Waterline Design & Cost Estimate – Dave Odom gave the presentation, and the information is on file with these minutes. Vice-Chair McDermott moved to put the Hwy. 108 waterline out for bid, seconded by Commissioner Walker. Commissioner Owens recommended running the waterline  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  mile further south on Hwy. 9. Mr. Odom said this could be added as an addendum to the bid. Vice-Chair McDermott agreed to amend her motion to include  $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$  mile south on Hwy. 9. Commissioner Owens asked County Attorney Egan about the legality of specifying that only local contractors be used on this project. Mr. Egan said there is no statutory authority for local governments to have contracting preferences; the language does state, however, that the contract must be awarded to the lowest responsible bidder. With a motion and a second on the floor, the motion carried 4-1 (Pack opposed).

12. Hwy. 9 Waterline Design & Cost Estimate – Dave Odom gave the presentation, and the information is on file with these minutes. Commissioner Pack noted that underboring was omitted from the cost estimate. Mr. Odom apologized and said the cost to underbore is approximately \$100,000; the amount should be added to the estimate. Chair Gasperson recommended the Board discuss this waterline at length during the work session in January. Commissioner Walker emphasized the need for a thorough, in-depth work session regarding the overall long-term water plan for Polk County.
13. Volunteer Board Policy – Commissioner Owens, who asked that this item be placed on the agenda, moved to approve the Volunteer Board Policy, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously.
14. Budget Amendment & Grant Project Budget Ordinance – Commissioner Owens moved to approve BA #10, \$15,573 – To increase revenue and expense for additional money needed of \$5,573 for the conversion of microfilm to computer images, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Owens moved to approve the Grant Project Budget Ordinance, \$1,434,500 – Alexander's Ford Project, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
15. Manager's Report – a) County Manager Whitson presented the Western Highlands Network Resolution entitled "No County Liability or Operational Funding". b) County Manager Whitson presented the Western Highlands Network Fiscal Monitoring Report for 1<sup>st</sup> quarter FY 2012 ending Sept. 30, 2012. c) The Board concurred with the Recreation Advisory Board's recommendation that the Stearns Park Playground equipment be removed due to its dilapidated and unsafe condition. The playground equipment from the Meeting Place property may be relocated to Stearns Park. d) County Manager Whitson reported that there are currently 7 taps on the most recent waterline extension (Hwy. 9 to Peniel Rd.). e) Commissioner Pack moved to approve the Sheriff's Department Grade Change of the Governor's Highway Safety Program position from Grade 21 to Grade 23, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously. f) Commissioner Walker moved to eliminate the DSS Program Manager's position, and to move an Income Maintenance II position to an Income Maintenance III, resulting in a change from Grade 17 to Grade 19, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously. g) Vice-Chair McDermott moved to approve commissioning Richard C. Nelson for the Bryant H. Womack portrait in the amount of \$3,750, and to approve commissioning Richard Baker for the Howard Green portrait in the amount of \$2,200, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously. h) Commissioner Owens moved to approve closure of the Transportation Department on December 30, 2011, for a fuel conservation day, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously.

*A recess was called in order to hold a public hearing for the purpose of hearing public comment on an Ordinance Repealing & Replacing the Polk County Subdivision Ordinance; Establishing Standards for Major, Minor, Family & Two-Lot Subdivisions; Requiring Environmental Impact Statements & Traffic Impact Studies for Certain Major Subdivisions; Requiring Quasi-Judicial Approval for Certain Major Subdivisions; Revising Road Standards; Revising Minimum Lot Standards; Requiring Erosion & Sedimentation Control in Compliance with State Standards; and Permitting Cluster Subdivisions.*

16. Subdivision Ordinance – Vice-Chair McDermott made a motion to approve the subdivision ordinance as amended during the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously. (*NOTE: Please see the 11/21/11 public hearing minutes on file for the referenced amendments made to the subdivision ordinance.*)
17. Volunteer Boards for Vote – Aaron Greene was appointed to the ETDC as a regular member by unanimous vote; Bill Kerns was appointed to the ETDC as a regular member by a 4-1 vote (Walker opposed – voted him as an alternate member); Roberta Ratterree was appointed to the ETDC as an alternate member by a 4-1 vote (Walker opposed – voted her as a regular member). Jeanne Mills was appointed to the Library Board of Trustees as a regular member by unanimous vote. Michael Axelrod was appointed to the Planning Board as an alternate member by unanimous vote. Ronnie Pack was appointed to the Tryon Fire District Tax Commission by unanimous vote.
18. Volunteer Boards for Review – Applications for Animal Cruelty Investigators, Farmland Preservation, Home & Community Care Block Grant Committee, and Western Highlands Network were reviewed.
19. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items – Rickie McFalls expressed his disapproval of the Board's passing of the subdivision ordinance without first answering Mr. Keith Holbert's questions regarding the document.
20. Commissioner Comments – Commissioner Walker thanked all those who worked so hard on the subdivision ordinance. Commissioner Owens said he was under the impression that citizens could only comment on the subdivision ordinance at the beginning and end of the UDO meetings, and it would have been better if people could participate during the entire meeting. Commissioner Pack thanked everyone for coming out. Vice-Chair McDermott thanked everyone for coming out, and thanked all those who worked hard on the subdivision ordinance. Vice-Chair McDermott also said there was a great deal of public interest, participation, and attendance associated with the UDO meetings. Chair Gasperson thanked everyone for coming out.
21. Adjournment – Commissioner Walker moved to adjourn, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD  
OF COMMISSIONERS

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Beth Fehrmann  
Clerk to the Board

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Ray Gasperson  
Chair