

POLK COUNTY  
PUBLIC HEARING  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING  
Monday, April 4, 2011, 7:00pm  
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice, Womack Building  
Columbus, NC  
MINUTES

1. Call to Order – Chair Gasperson called the meeting to order.
2. Invocation – Chair Gasperson gave the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Vice-Chair McDermott led the pledge.
4. Approval of Minutes – Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the March 21, 2011, BOC/EDC work session and March 21, 2011, regular BOC meeting minutes, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of Agenda – County Manager Whitson added Fourth of July Fireworks as agenda item #8a., and Preservation of Polk County Fund Balance Resolution as agenda item #14a. Vice-Chair McDermott added Rails to Trails as agenda item #15a. Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Public Hearing - To hear public comment on the County submitting a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) application to the NC Department of Commerce. Chair Gasperson called the meeting to order. Notice of the public hearing was advertised in the *Tryon Daily Bulletin* on March 24, 2011. The County is considering applying for approximately \$70,000 of CDBG funds in support of the NC Tomorrow Initiative. The funds would support a regional economic development strategy in coordination with a statewide plan. Isothermal Planning & Development Corporation Executive Director Jim Edwards gave a brief overview of the initiative and said the second public hearing would need to be scheduled later in the application process. There were no citizen comments. Commissioner Owens made a motion to close the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Pack and the motion carried unanimously.
7. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Application – Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve beginning the CDBG application process, seconded by Commissioner Pack and the motion carried unanimously.
8. Community Child Protection Team – County Manager Whitson informed the Board that he has spoken with District Attorney Hunt, and a meeting with the appropriate people regarding this issue will be scheduled in the near future. It was the consensus of the Board to hold the resolution in abeyance until after the meeting.

8a. Fourth of July Fireworks – Town of Columbus Councilwoman Ernie Kan told the Board that, to date, only a fraction of the \$9,350 needed for the Fourth of July fireworks display has been collected. Commissioner Owens made a motion to give the Town of Columbus \$4,000 for the Fourth of July fireworks display down payment, seconded by Commissioner Pack. Discussion ensued, and it came to light that County Manager Whitson had spoken to Columbus Town Manager Kanipe, and the total cost for the fireworks display was determined to be \$9,530. Commissioner Owens withdrew his motion for \$4,000.00. Commissioner Pack challenged each Commissioner to personally donate \$100 for the fireworks display, and they accepted the challenge. Ambrose Mills, Economic Development Commission Chair, pledged \$500 from the Economic Development Department budget; Andy Millard pledged \$500 from his business. Commissioner Owens made a motion to give the Town of Columbus up to \$9,000 for the Fourth of July fireworks display using funds from the Travel & Tourism Department budget, seconded by Commissioner Pack and the motion carried unanimously.

Citizen comments: Lisa Krolak, Fourth of July Committee member, reiterated the hometown theme of this year's Fourth of July celebration. Donald Kling encouraged the Board to support the Fourth of July celebration.

9. Polk County/Foothills Autism Parent Support Group – April is Autism Awareness Month, and Tracey Daniels gave a presentation on the local autism support group.
10. Tax Interest & Penalty Refund Request - John Bridgers, Tax Assessor, and Melissa Bowlin, Tax Collector, gave a presentation regarding Bruce Metcalf's tax bill. Commissioner Walker made a motion to forgive the \$446.46 in interest and penalties accrued on Mr. Metcalf's tax bill, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
11. Polk County Multi-Jurisdiction Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan – Cathy Ruth, County Planner and Polk County Emergency Services (PCES) member, gave an overview of the plan. Vice-Chair McDermott made a motion to approve the Polk County Multi-Jurisdiction Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
12. Polk County Emergency Planning Committee Annual Report – Penny Evans, PCES member, presented the annual report. A copy is on file with these minutes.
13. Polk County Emergency Planning Committee Appointment – Commissioner Walker made a motion to appoint Marche Pittman to the Polk County Emergency Planning Committee as the representative for Polk County MIS, seconded by Commissioner Owens and the motion carried unanimously.
14. Amendment to Bright's Creek Development Agreement – Cathy Ruth, County Planner, was present to answer questions. Commissioner Owens made a motion

to approve the amended Bright's Creek Development Agreement, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.

14a. Preservation of Polk County Fund Balance Resolution – This resolution expresses Polk County's opposition to any proposal recommending that the State of North Carolina solve its fiscal difficulties by shifting the State's fiscal burdens onto the Counties who have acted in a fiscally prudent manner. Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the resolution on the Preservation of Polk County Fund Balance, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Travel & Tourism Department – Ambrose Mills spoke in favor of the Economic Development Commission taking over Polk County Travel & Tourism. Andy Millard spoke in favor of the Chamber of Commerce taking over Polk County Travel & Tourism. Commissioners agreed that, regardless of the aegis under which Travel & Tourism ultimately falls, no County tax dollars will be spent on the department. It will operate entirely on occupancy tax funds. Commissioner Walker stated that it was the County that initially approached the Chamber of Commerce regarding Travel & Tourism, and she recommended narrowing the choices for the Travel & Tourism Department down to the Chamber of Commerce and the Economic Development Department. Mr. Millard indicated that, were the Chamber of Commerce to take over Travel & Tourism, the office would probably operate out of the Chamber's office in Lynn. It was the consensus of the Board to make a decision on this issue at the May 2, 2011, meeting.

Citizen comments: Katharine Smith spoke against the Chamber of Commerce taking over Travel & Tourism.

15a. Rails to Trails Resolution – Vice-Chair McDermott read a statement regarding the resolution, a copy of which is on file with these minutes. She emphasized that prudence has been exercised in reviewing the matter thoroughly, and expressed her disapproval at efforts by partisan detractors to politicize the issue. Vice-Chair McDermott made a motion to rescind the Rails to Trail resolution passed on December 6, 2010, seconded by Commissioner Pack. Commissioner Walker expressed her hope that the Rails to Trails initiative could be explored again in the future, but only with the full consent of property owners along the proposed trail. Commissioner Pack said the Board made a mistake by not knowing all the facts when the resolution was passed. He said he would be willing to look into the possibility of another Rails to Trails initiative in the future, but only if all the facts are established, and all adjacent property owners are amenable. Chair Gasperson said a Norfolk & Southern official told him the line in question is still active.

Citizen comments: Joyce Kimpton, Bruce Wilson, Pieter Terwilliger, Ellis Fincher, Melvin Marks, and Carroll Edney spoke in support of rescinding the Rails to Trails resolution. Andy Millard said he understands the Board rescinding the resolution, and he apologized to all those who were disquieted by this process. He also

stressed that the Rails to Trails Committee had no desire to push the initiative through over the objections of the property owners.

With a motion and a second on the floor, the motion carried unanimously. County Manager Whitson was instructed to contact anyone who had received the resolution in support of the Rails to Trails initiative and let them know the Board had rescinded their support.

16. Funding For Schools vs. Water Line Extension – Commissioner Owens confirmed with his fellow Commissioners and County Manager Whitson that the County will budget \$300,000 for the Polk County School System for fiscal year 2011/12. Commissioner Owens made a motion to commit these funds to the school system, seconded by Commissioner Pack and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Pack asked the Board to consider assisting the school system with well repair costs.
17. County Manager's Report – a) The quarterly Western Highlands Area Authority's Fiscal Monitoring Report for the 2011 Fiscal Year 2<sup>nd</sup> Quarter was presented. b) DSS Parking Lot Lighting – In order for the outdoor lighting to be LEED compliant and meet Duke Energy standards, pole A6 must be reduced by 20ft. and the lamp changed from a 400W to a 100W. The contracted monthly charge for all DSS parking lot lighting will be \$193.18 per month for ten years (total contract cost \$23,181.60). Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve the 10 year NC Service Agreement for Government Lighting with Duke Energy for a total cost of \$23,181.60, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Pack asked the County Manager to make sure Duke Energy runs wire to pole A6 that will accommodate a 400W lamp in the future in case such wattage is required. c) Radio Tower at DSS Site – Commissioner Owens made a motion to approve the erection of a communications radio tower at the DSS site, seconded by Commissioner Walker and the motion carried unanimously. d) Annual Employee Meeting, April 27, 2011, 4-5pm – Commissioner Walker made a motion to approve closing the County offices at 4:00pm on April 27, 2011, for the Annual Employee Meeting, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
18. Volunteer Boards for Vote – Karen Jones was appointed to the Appearance Commission by unanimous vote. Ollie Bobyack was appointed to the Council on Aging by unanimous vote. John Ruth and Olin Sansbury were appointed to the Recreation Advisory Board by a 3-2 vote (Owens and Pack opposed). Commissioners Owens and Pack voted to appoint Doris Holbert and Norman Morgan to the Recreation Advisory, but the nominations failed by a 2-3 vote (Gasperson, McDermott and Walker opposed). Roulettei Gildersleeve and Elaina Prevett were unanimously appointed to the Recycling Advisory Board.

19. Volunteer Boards for Review – The following board applications were reviewed: Council on Aging – 2 applications, 2 vacancies; Library Board of Trustees – 1 application, 2 vacancies; Recycling Board – 1 application, 1 vacancy.
20. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items – Ricky McFalls thanked the Board for rescinding the Rails to Trails resolution. Katharine Smith said she has a seventy-five year old brother with Asperger's Syndrome, a form of autism, and she asked people not to forget that individuals with this disorder do grow up.
21. Commissioner Comments – Vice-Chair McDermott thanked her fellow Commissioners for a good meeting. Commissioner Pack thanked everyone for coming, and said he hoped an error has been corrected by rescinding the Rails to Trails resolution. Commissioner Walker thanked everyone for coming. Commissioner Owens asked County Manager Whitson if the water line to the Ag Center extends to the ball fields, and he was told it does not. Commissioner Owens said he had hopes the ball fields could be watered in the future. Chair Gasperson thanked everyone for coming.
22. Adjournment – Commissioner Owens made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Vice-Chair McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST:

POLK COUNTY BOARD  
OF COMMISSIONERS

---

Beth Fehrman  
Clerk to the Board

---

Ray Gasperson  
Chair