

POLK COUNTY
June 7, 2010
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING
MINUTES
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice, Womack Building
Columbus, N.C.

PRESENT: Chairperson Walker, Vice-Chairperson Gasperson, Commissioners McDermott, Melton and Watson. Also in attendance were County Manager Whitson, Interim County Attorney Egan and Clerk to the Board Britton, media, staff and citizens.

1. Call to Order/Welcome – Chairperson Walker called the meeting to order.
2. Invocation – Vice-Chairperson Gasperson delivered the invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner Watson led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Award of Community Waste Reduction and Recycling Grant \$6,333. Chairperson Walker announced the grant for the Mobile Recycling Service from NCDENR, Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance for Polk County. This is the 2nd grant they have received. The following prepared statement was made by Chairperson Walker:

“One of the seven questions on the final report was: **Evaluation of success of the project (i.e., did the project meet its goals)**. The program has far exceeded our preliminary expectations, both in involvement and tonnage. The community arrives in a steady stream to our scheduled sites, its like “old home week”: they enjoy the fellowship of visiting with friends and neighbors while handing over their items to our friendly (very important) attendant - whom they have all come to like and respect. First quarter records reveal a 49% increase in paper tonnages and a 94% increase in commingled over the previous quarter's totals. (See Table #1) We have nearly accomplished the **annual** anticipated rates for school recycling as described in the grant (18,000 lbs of paper, 7200 lbs of commingled containers) in the **first four months** of the program!

As I worked on the report, I realized that although high numbers represent success, they also represent costs. Only extremely high revenues can bring down the per ton cost, and then we still have the environmental price of hauling and processing which require energy usage and yield emission release. We are presently running the program at a reduced per ton price over the previous year: 43% less on paper and 15% less on commingled. This is due to increases in both individual load capacity and market revenue increases.

One of the most important discoveries for me, in writing this report, has been the need to emphasize the other two "R's" of the program—

Reuse: As consumers we can “close the loop” and seek recycled content products and product packaging when we shop, looking for everyday items like recycled content paper for home printing or bigger ticket things like composite decking for home remodeling. Items may cost a little more initially but the prices will come down as the product sales increase, and if you double side your printing, your paper will go twice as far and composite decking will remain durable over time and will not require further products like stain and sealant. Purchasing recycled content products will build the existing recycling business economy and attract new business, both of which will need our “feedstock” and bring in higher revenues for our material.

Reduce: is the first of the three “R”s for a reason — if we never have it, we don't have to figure out where to put it. Travel mugs for coffee, personal water bottles for refilling, a simple, “No, I don't need a bag for this milk jug that has a handle” are all things that we can do to reduce the need for more and more and more receptacles for our stuff.

In conclusion, I am grateful to the Div. Of Pollution Prevention for this first grant and now the second. I thank the Commissioners for your support, the community for the awesome response, the press for great coverage and the Recycling Board for all of the good work.”

5. Approval of Minutes – Approval of the May 12, 2010, Public Hearing and May 17, 2010, Regular Board of Commissioners meeting minutes. Commissioner Melton made a motion to approve the May 12, 2010, Public Hearing minutes and the May 17, 2010, amended minutes, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Approval of Agenda – Commissioner Melton added (6a) to recognize the Recreation Department and Advisory Board. Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the agenda with the addition, seconded by Commissioner Melton and the motion carried unanimously.
 - 6a) Commissioner Melton introduced James Patterson of the Recreation Advisory Board, Patty Aldred, Director of the Recreation Department, and her staff, and congratulated them on the successful “Pool Party Open House” which was funded by the volunteer Recreation Advisory Board. 300 people attended and many pool passes and swimming lessons were sold. Mr. Patterson thanked Commissioner Melton for serving on the Recreation Advisory Board. He thanked Mr. Whitson for getting the roof, windows, and doors fixed at Stearns Gym. He also asked for consideration of additional soccer fields, and for the floor to be repaired at Stearns Gym. The lights for the gym are included in the budget.

7. July – December, 2010, Board of Commissioner Meeting Schedule – The Commissioners will check their calendars and vote on this schedule at the June 21, 2010, meeting.
8. Resolution Adopting Amendment to Polk County Personnel Policy To Change and Clarify Eligibility Criteria For Group Health And Hospitalization Insurance Coverage - Commissioner Melton made a motion to adopt the resolution, seconded by Vice-Chairman Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.
9. Resolution Requiring Fire Departments Who Seek a Tax Increase to Have Completed a Current Audit - There was much discussion over the resolution. The motion to support the resolution was withdrawn and tabled at this time.

Citizen Comments: 1) Robert Shepherd, Sunny View Fire Department, stated that it would be hard to pay for a \$5,000 audit and then request a fire tax increase.

Vice-Chairperson Gasperson appreciated meeting with the Sunny View board and fire chief. He had many questions for the fire chiefs. Fire Chief Tennant from Columbus agreed to work on these questions with the fire chiefs and discuss at a later meeting in August. The questions are concerning “Where Are We Headed”, and work with the Volunteer Fire Departments and Rescue Squad.

10. Sunny View Fire Department – Commissioner Watson requested this item be placed on the agenda. He read the following prepared statement.

“My Fellow Commissioners,

As you know, we had planned to have a public hearing on June 1, 2010, to address the needs of Sunny View Fire Department. Originally, the public hearing was based upon a request for additional tax funds to offset expenses to be incurred in an attempt to provide better water access for the Sunny View Fire Department, which would ultimately allow them to provide better fire protection for the citizens residing in the Sunny View Fire District. I was extremely interested in having a public hearing, because I am concerned about fire protection in the Sunny View area, especially since there is currently no public water source. Citizens and businesses in the Sunny View area must depend on wells for their water needs, and the fire department must haul water. Sunny View is one of the areas of the county with steep terrains and limited water access, which makes fire fighting even more difficult. In my opinion, we, as Commissioners, need to address the ongoing need for better fire protection services in Sunny View.

Unfortunately, the public hearing was cancelled due to the withdrawn request for additional funding in this budget year. I think that was a mistake. This is the second year in a row that the Sunny View Fire Department has requested

additional funding. Obviously, the Sunny View Fire Department Board is concerned about these additional needs and how to fund those needs.

I was disappointed to learn, recently, that the Fire Department Board didn't feel like they had the support of the Board of Commissioners to proceed with the request for additional funding. I cannot speak for the other Commissioners, but tonight, I would like to assure the citizens of Sunny View and the members of the Sunny View Fire Department that I support efforts by the Sunny View Fire Department to provide better fire protection for the citizens that they serve. However, I will also state that in order to provide additional funding, I think it is imperative for this Board of Commissioners to have a better grasp of the needs and costs involved and the expected results. At this time, we do not have that information, and that is one of the reasons we were not ready to fund the original request.

I understand from speaking with Chief McGuinn, that it will take some time to get the documentation needed to satisfy this Board. With that being said, I think it is imperative that we look at all possible scenarios to get better fire protection in Sunny View.

It is apparent to me that it could take decades before our County water system will potentially serve the citizens of Sunny View. In recognition of that fact, I think it is appropriate that we consider Chief McGuinn's request to fund better water access for Sunny View. However, in addition to that scenario, I have also been thinking of some other possibilities. Obviously, we are not going to be able to provide additional funding in this budget year, and consequently, my fellow commissioners may be wondering why I have placed this item on tonight's agenda.

The answer to that question is that I don't think we should wait until budget time next year to consider our options. In fact, as I was discussing the situation with a Sunny View resident, we decided to think outside the box. I am uncertain of the want or need for a water line in Sunny View. And, of course it is a long way from a Polk County water source to the Sunny View Elementary School, the Fire Department and to the County Line. That is unless we consider doing what we have done on the southern end of the county, in Sunny View. By this, I mean, let's consider purchasing water from Lake Lure.

My friend and I checked the distance from the Lake Lure water tower and the Rutherford County Line, and it is just over 2 ½ miles. We considered potential users along such a line (along Hwy 9), and we identified approximately one residence or business per tenth of a mile along that route.

I asked the County Manager to inquire as to the feasibility and interest from Lake Lure, to sell water to Polk County for this area. Surprisingly, there seems to be some interest.

With the future of water along this section of highway 9 in Polk County so far into the future, it just seems like a logical thing to consider.

Tonight, I am asking you as a Board of Commissioners for Polk County to authorize our County Manger and County Engineer to begin studying the costs and feasibility of such an endeavor, to provide better fire protection to Sunny View, along with providing an-alternative water source for the Sunny View School and area businesses and residents along the proposed line.”

The consensus of the Board was favorable.

Citizen Comments – 1) Robert Shepherd, Sunny View Fire Department, felt the County should fund the dry hydrants and not burden the tax payers. He requested a list from the Board of what information they needed for this project.

Chairperson Walker suggested that they continue to work with Bill Smith, Engineer, from Coopers Gap, and update the Board in 6 months. GIS has agreed to assist with creating maps. Commissioner Watson recommended to the Sunny View Fire Department that the Board of Commissioners be involved in this process earlier on - prior to budget discussions - so they can create a dialogue; and so that the Board can determine the best way to spend the taxpayers' money wisely.

11. NCACC Legislative Day – Chairperson Walker and the County Manager attended the meeting in Raleigh. Chairperson Walker reported on the meeting, which included speakers March Basnight, thirteen-term Senator and President Pro Tempore, and Joe Hackney, fifteen-term Representative and NC Speaker of the House of Representatives. Chairperson Walker encouraged all the Commissioners to attend such an informative legislative day, which touched upon many subjects involving the State's budget, economic issues, and the Gulf Spill tragedy.
12. Tax Refund Request – Melissa Bowlin, Tax Collector, requested May refunds of \$2,080.22. Commissioner Melton made a motion to approve the request, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.
13. County Manager's Report – 1) Mr. Whitson gave an update on the DSS facility. He stated that the site plans are complete. The pre-bid conference is June 29th and the bids will be opened July 8th. 2) The Budget Public hearing is scheduled for June 14th. The June 21st Board meeting will include the architect's presentation of the DSS facility and the Alexander's Ford Project.

14. Board Vacancies (Review) – 1) Unified Development Ordinance (UDO) Committee - 5 vacancies from the 20/20 Vision Comprehensive Plan, 12 applications; and 2 vacancies from the Planning Board, 3 applications.
 - 2) Polk County Appearance Commission - 3 vacancies, 1 application.
 - 3) Zoning Board of Adjustments – 2 vacancies, 2 applications.
 - 4) Harmon Field Board – 2 county vacancies, 3 applications. These are for review again. There was some confusion over the number of applications sent from the town (the Clerk was on vacation) but this has been resolved.
 - 5) Library Board – 1 vacancy, 1 application.
 - 6) Mental Health Advisory Board – 1 vacancy, 1 application.

Due to the large number of applications for the Unified Development Ordinance Committee, Commissioner McDermott recommended that the committee from the 20/20 Vision Comprehensive Plan be increased from 5 to 8 members, and from 2 to 3 members from the Planning Board. The Board was in favor of this recommendation.

15. Budget Amendments – BA #85 Solid Waste \$18,670 - Estimated money needed to cover 2 full-time positions; one position is vacant and the other is out due to injury. Commissioner McDermott made a motion to approve BA #85, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously. Budget Addition BA #24 911 Communication Fund \$42,354 - To increase revenue and expense for actual revenue received. Commissioner Melton made a motion to approve the budget addition, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.

Project Budget Ordinance Polk County Human Services Facility \$2,000,000. Discussion followed. The Commissioners' intent is not to spend \$2,000,000, but to safely cover the project if necessary. Vice-Chairperson Gasperson made a motion to approve the Ordinance, seconded by Commissioner McDermott and the motion carried 4-1 (Melton opposed). Commissioner Melton stated that he is in support of the new facility but wanted the project budget ordinance lowered to \$1.5 million.

BA #25 Budget Addition Elections \$6,747 - To increase revenue and expense for actual reimbursements from the towns for the election. Vice-Chairperson Gasperson made a motion to approve BA #25, seconded by Commissioner McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.

BA #26 Capital Reserve Fund \$13,059 - To increase revenue and expense in the Capital Reserve Fund for the future purchase of an Emergency Management truck with excess grant funds received in the current year. Commissioner Melton made a motion to approve BA #26, seconded by Commissioner McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.

BA #102 Sheriff's Dept. \$21,000 - Transfer from fuel line to purchase (4) watch guard cameras for patrol vehicles. Commissioner Melton made a motion to approve BA #102, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.

16. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items – There were none.
17. Commissioners' Comments – Commissioner Gasperson was pleased with the progress on the DSS building and thanked the County Manager and the Commissioners. Commissioner McDermott agreed and is also pleased with moving forward on the UDO. Commissioner Melton thought 11 was a good number for the UDO Committee. Commissioner Watson thought the Project Budget Ordinance will come in under \$2,000,000. He is pleased the Board is working with the Sunny View Fire Department.
18. Closed Session - Attorney Client Privilege G.S. 143-318.11 (a) (3). Commissioner Melton made a motion to go into Closed Session, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.
19. Return to Open Session – Commissioner Watson made a motion to return to open session, seconded by Commissioner McDermott and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner Watson made a motion to authorize the interim County Attorney, Mike Egan, to prepare a complaint against White Oak, LLC, for recovery of funds due for the waterline extension, and to file the complaint in Superior Court. This motion was seconded by Commissioner McDermott and the motion carried unanimously.
20. Adjourn - Commissioner Melton made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

ATTEST

Cindy Walker
Chairperson

Anne Britton
Clerk to the Board