

POLK COUNTY  
Monday, September 20, 2010  
BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' REGULAR MEETING  
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, staff, media and citizens.

Prior to the meeting, Chairperson Walker respectfully reminded all citizens of Polk County's approved "Rules of Debate: Decorum Between Polk County Board of Commissioners". Hand-outs of meeting decorum were available.

1. Call to Order/Welcome – Chairperson Walker called the meeting to order.
2. Invocation – Commissioner Watson acknowledged World Alzheimer's Day September 21, 2010, in his invocation.
3. Pledge of Allegiance – Commissioner McDermott led the Pledge of Allegiance.
4. Approval of Minutes – Approval of September 7, 2010, Regular Board of Commissioners' meeting minutes. Commissioner McDermott made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Approval of Agenda – County Manager Whitson added to the agenda 5 (a) Board of Education budget amendment and 5 (b) status of White Oak litigation. Commissioner McDermott made a motion to approve the amended agenda, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.
  - 5 (a). Budget Amendment #1 Capital Outlay Board of Education - Reflects carry over from fiscal year 2009-2010 for projects not completed at year-end and completed during the current year (\$21,623 out of the school board's budget). Commissioner Melton made a motion to approve the amendment, seconded by Commissioner Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.
  - 5 (b). Mr. Whitson announced that White Oak Development Partners, LLC, paid \$15,000 toward their water line contract and requested 120 additional days to answer the law suit the county filed against them. They now have until January of 2011 to respond to the suit.
6. Transportation Authority Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy – Tracy Ravan, Transportation Authority, stated that these are federal adjustments to and

guidelines for the previous policy. Commissioner Watson made a motion to amend F (6) of the policy to read “No covered employee shall consume alcohol within eight (8) hours (instead of 4) prior to the performance of safety-sensitive job functions”, and to include grammatical revisions to the policy suggested by Commissioner McDermott, seconded by Vice-Chairperson Gasperson and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Language Access Plan (LAP) - Paula Kempton, Isothermal Planning and Development Commission, was present to review the plan and answered questions. The Plan is a federally mandated policy for Scattered Site Block grant recipients. Commissioner McDermott made a motion to adopt the draft plan with (2) minor revisions, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.
8. A Model Code of Ethics (Statutory Requirement) for North Carolina Local Elected Officials – Chairperson Walker requested this item be placed on the agenda. She reported that all the Commissioners have completed the required workshop and outlined, through a power point presentation, a strategy for discussion beginning with the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting and finalizing the policy on November 15<sup>th</sup>. The consensus of the Board was to add commentary to the policy. “Censure” will be discussed at the October 4<sup>th</sup> meeting along with aspirational versus prohibitive codes and Pg. 23 possibly for approval. She further recommended discussion in the meeting and a subcommittee to pull it all together. Chairperson Walker and Commissioner McDermott agreed to work on this subcommittee.

Citizen Comment – Rickie McFalls hopes that the Polk County Ethics Code will have some teeth in it, with possible monetary fines.

9. St. Luke’s Strategic Plan – Commissioner McDermott requested this item be placed on the agenda for an update of the St. Luke’s Hospital strategic vision statement. She met with Ken Schull, St. Luke’s CEO, and Susan McHugh, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, and the County Manager. She reported that St. Luke’s is in the black for the first time since 1997. After the strategic plan is completed they will start on a facilities plan. Under the strategic plan they are working on growth, performance excellence, quality, customer satisfaction, employee engagement and community benefit. St. Luke’s will spend about 5 million dollars on computerized medical records. They will need \$3.5 million by next spring. They are working with 8 other hospitals under the CHS umbrella and it is helping quite a lot. They have hired a new Chief Financial Officer, and a new Executive Director for the Foundation has started work. They are also looking for candidates for a Chief of Nursing Operations. St. Luke’s took the County’s jumpstart contribution, quadrupled it with other grants and local fundraising, and appears to have turned the corner. 344 total employees have benefited from jobs saved partly through the donations of taxpayers of Polk County. The \$285,000 to St. Luke’s Hospital was clearly important and saved many jobs.

10. Don and Betsy Freeman Adult Day Health Care Center – Mr. Whitson reported that the paving, parking spaces and striping are complete. He also discussed the signs, fire alarm bid contract and budget for landscaping. Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve a budget for \$1,000 (out of the existing budget) for 4 signs for the Center, seconded by Commissioner Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

Citizen Comment – Keith Holbert (requested verbatim): “Does the county manager still have a discretionary spending limit of \$5,000. If so, and I am not accusing anyone of anything, it seems suspect that the \$1900.00 cost of the alarm system for the Adult Day Care facility was brought before the board at the last meeting. Did Commissioner Gasperson ask that it be postponed to delay the grand opening? Was it to keep Watson from getting free press that may have enhanced his re-election bid? The timing made a person wonder.”

Commissioner Watson made a motion to approve the landscaping budget of \$1850 (out of the existing budget) for the plantings and mulch, seconded by Commissioner Melton and the motion carried unanimously. John Vining and the Master Gardeners have volunteered their time and labor to landscape the entrance.

11. Architectural Fees Regarding Prequalification – Commissioner Watson requested this item be placed on the agenda. He inquired about the possibility of ADW lowering their fee since the decision was made by the Board not to pre-qualify general contractors. Jim Powell of ADW replied in a letter dated 9/16/10 that they “believe that they have provided valuable service in connection with Pre-Qualifying General Contractors, and further have provided additional services not in the original fee proposal in qualifying contracts through the bid process, for which they have not requested additional fees.” The remainder of the letter is on file in the Clerk’s office.
12. Board Vacancies (Vote) – 2 reappointments to the Economic Development Commission, Robert Morgan and Mary Lyth, and 1 new application, Marc Crowe. Commissioner McDermott made a motion to reappoint Robert Morgan and Mary Lyth, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously. Commissioner McDermott made a motion to appoint Marc Crowe, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.
13. Citizens for Non- Agenda Items – 1) Michael Gage, as a member of Columbus Town Council, questioned the County’s request for Columbus to re-zone a piece of property. Michael Gage, as a citizen, announced that the Constitution was read on the Courthouse steps during Constitution Week. 2) Cheryl Every expressed her surprise that \$130,000 on grading was already underway on the DSS building before the bids were approved. She did not feel this was prudent or acceptable.

14. Commissioner Comments – 1) Vice-Chairperson Gasperson was insulted that anyone would accuse him of delaying the opening of the Adult Day Care Facility for political reasons. 2) Commissioner McDermott thinks the Adult Day Care has been a very good project and thanked the Board for a good meeting and debate. 3) Commissioner Watson is pleased that the Adult Day Care Facility is moving forward. 4) Commissioner Melton thanked the citizens for attending the meeting and responding in a polite manner. 5) Chairperson Walker read a letter from a citizen praising the Mobile Recycling Program, and also the assistant on the truck who is helpful to everyone. The letter also stated that she hopes this program continues.
15. Adjourn – Commissioner McDermott made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Watson and the motion carried unanimously.

ATTEST

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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Anne Britton  
Clerk to the Board

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Cindy Walker  
Chairperson