

THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF THE COUNTY OF CRAVEN MET IN REGULAR SESSION IN THE COMMISSIONERS' ROOM OF THE CRAVEN COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING, 406 CRAVEN STREET, NEW BERN, NORTH CAROLINA, ON MONDAY, JANUARY 4, 2021. THE MEETING CONVENED AT 7:00 P.M.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Vice Chairman Denny Bucher
Chairman George S. Liner
Commissioner Theron L. McCabe
Commissioner Thomas F. Mark
Commissioner E. T. Mitchell
Commissioner Beatrice R. Smith (after oath)

STAFF PRESENT:

Jack B. Veit, III, County Manager
Craig Warren, Finance Director
Amber Parker, Human Resources Director
Arey Grady, County Attorney
Nan Holton, Clerk to the Board

STAFF EXCUSED:

Gene Hodges, Assistant County Manager

Following the Pledge of Allegiance, County Attorney, Arey Grady, recited the following invocation:

O, God, our help in ages past, our hope for years to come, thank You for the spirit of contentment we can receive from You, bringing quietness and faith to our hearts.

Today, use our County Commissioners and other County representatives for Your purposes, enabling them to live worthy of Your name. May the words they speak bring edification and unity, as they build bridges of cooperation. Lord, give them the wisdom to depart from strife, remembering that soft answers turn away anger.

We pray in Your great name. Amen.

Based upon the invocation given by Doctor Barry C. Black at the February 25, 2020 session of the US House of Representatives

OATH OF OFFICE – BEATRICE R. SMITH

Ms. Elise Waddell gave the Oath of Office to Beatrice R. Smith, while her sister Ann Herndon held the Bible for her. Ms. Smith recognized other family members and friends that came to support her.

At 7:07 p.m., a five minute recess was taken for transition and photographs.

Chairman Jones welcomed Ms. Smith to the Board and extended her an opportunity to make comments. She expressed her pleasure in joining the Board of Commissioners and extended her gratitude to them putting their trust in her. Ms. Smith stated she wants to honor Mr. Johnnie Sampson's legacy and brings her A-game for the people of Craven County. She indicated she will listen to her District Three constituents and will work cooperatively with the entire Board. Ms. Smith remarked that she brings her service, her knowledge, her education and her love for people to do what is right for everyone, not being bound by age, color, race, or ethnicity. Ms. Smith revealed that she is an easy going individual but will look wrong in the eye and call it for what it is. She concluded by stating that it is her job to see that the people in Craven County are

as blessed as her abilities have allowed her to be from her humble beginnings in the Spring Garden community.

Commissioner Mark motioned to approve the agenda, as presented, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and carried unanimously.

PETITONS OF CITIZENS

There were no citizens from the public that signed up to speak.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Liner motioned to approve the consent agenda, inclusive of the Minutes of December 7, 2020 Reconvened Session, December 7, 2020 Regular Session, December 14, 2020 Reconvened Session, Tax Releases and Refunds (\$15,147.34 (Credits); \$2,807.51 (Refunds), Sheriff’s Office Donation Checks-Budget Amendment and Recreation Department Budget Amendment. The motion was seconded by Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Sheriff’s Office

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1014310-38301 Misc. Donations	\$450.00	1014310-43502 Uniform Purchase	\$250.00
		1014310-43246 Supplies K-9	\$200.00
TOTAL	\$450.00	TOTAL	\$450.00

Justification: This budget amendment reflects two donation checks made to support the Sheriff’s Office. One check was given by a local restaurant and will be used towards purchasing proper uniforms for an Honor Guard. Honor Guard uniforms can be used to provide funeral honors and other ceremonial purposes in the County. The other check is from a Craven County citizen to help support the K-9 program. This amount will help cover expenses such as dog food, supplies, and medical care for the K-9 program.

Recreation & Parks

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1015910-38301 Misc. Donation	\$2,600.00	1015910-47321 Capital \$500-\$4,000	\$2,400.00
		1015910-43240 Other Supplies	\$ 200.00
TOTAL	\$2,600.00	TOTAL	\$2,600.00

Justification: A \$2,600 donation was received from the wife of a Craven County citizen who was an avid tennis player and played at Creekside often. The other \$200 of the donation will be used to purchase tennis rackets for the park that will be loaned out to citizens who would like to learn the sport.

COMMISSIONERS APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

Chairman Jones referred the Commissioners to the 2021 Commissioner Board Appointments they had been provided, indicating there were few changes from 2020. He thanked each Commissioner for their willingness to serve.

Commissioners' Appointments January, 2021 – December 2021

A. Required by Statute :

Tourism Development Authority (**Mark**)
 Craven County Health Board (**Bucher**)
 East Carolina Workforce Development Board (**Smith**)
 New Bern Craven County Library Board (**Mitchell**)
 Military Civilian Community Council (**McCabe**)
 Aging Planning Board (**Liner**)
 Kellenberger Foundation (**Jones**)
 Tryon Palace Commission (**Jones**)
 Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (**Smith**)
 Smart Start (**Smith**)
 ECCOG (**Mitchell**)
 Down East RPO (**McCabe**)
 Swiss Bear (**Bucher**)
 MPO (**Mitchell**)
 EDO/C1A (**Bucher**)
 Dix Crisis Center (**Liner**)

B. Required in By-Laws:

CRSWMA -Voting Member (**Jones**)
 Local Emergency Planning Committee (**McCabe**)
 Cove City Library Board (**Jones**)
 Havelock City Library Board (**Liner**)
 Vanceboro Library Board (**Mark**)
 Highway 70 Corridor Committee (**Mark**)
 Partners in Education (PIE) (**Jones**)
 Craven-Pamlico Regional Library (**Jones & Liner**)
 Highway 17 Association (**Mark**)
 ACT (**Mitchell**)
 Trillium (**Liner**)
 SE Economic Development Partnership (**Mitchell**)
 U252 (**Bucher**)

C. Other Boards with Commissioner Presence:

ABC Board (**Bucher**)
 Coastal Regional Airport Authority (**Jones & Liner**)
 Craven Community College Board of Trustees (**Mitchell**)

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: SOLID WASTE

Assignment of Purchase Contract for 240 Bailey Lane, Vanceboro, NC

It was reported that Craven County is ready to accept an assignment of a purchase contract for the Bailey Lane property (adjacent to the County's convenience site in Vanceboro). The purchase price is \$39,000, with a due diligence deadline of March 30, 2021 and a closing on April 15, 2021. The offer was made through a third party, and in turn the third party will assign the contract to Craven County.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve the execution and delivery of an Assignment Agreement and approve the Purchase Contract, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Liner and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Request for Exemption of Engineering Services

Solid Waste Director, Steven Aster, stated that the Craven County Solid Waste Department was given direction to proceed with the acquisition of property in Vanceboro for future development of the Vanceboro Convenience Center. Under the advice from the County Attorney, the Solid Waste Department requested that the Board approve a resolution of exemption for the project. This exemption will allow the Solid Waste Department to contract with Avolis Engineering to perform engineering and surveying services and forgo the formal Request for Qualifications process.

Commissioner Liner motioned to approve the following resolution of exemption, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Mark and approved unanimously.

CRAVEN COUNTY
RESOLUTION PURSUANT TO
N.C.Gen.Stat. §143-64.32

WHEREAS, N.C.Gen.Stat. §143-64.31 requires the selection of firms to perform architectural, engineering, and surveying services by a County to be without regard to fee, after public announcement of such services; and,

WHEREAS, Craven County ("County") proposes to enter into an engineering service contract to determine the environmental appropriateness of an available parcel for the acquisition of 240 Bailey Lane, Vanceboro NC.

WHEREAS, the amount of professional fees under the proposed Service Contract is estimated to be less than Fifty Thousand and No/100 Dollars (\$50,000.00); and,

WHEREAS, N.C.Gen.Stat. §143-64.32 allows a County to exempt itself from the requirements of N.C.Gen.Stat. §143-64.31, when the amount of professional fees is estimated to be less than Fifty Thousand and No/100 Dollars (\$50,000.00); and,

WHEREAS, the County finds that it is in its best interest to exempt the proposed Service Contract from the provisions of G.S. §143-64.31.

NOW, THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY RESOLVES:

Section 1. The above-described Service Contract is hereby made exempt from the provisions of G.S. §143-64.31 for the reasons stated in this resolution.

Section 2. This resolution shall be effective upon adoption.

Adopted this 4 day of January, 2021.

Budget Amendment for Engineering Services

Mr. Aster requested that the Board approve a Budget Amendment in the amount of \$7,325 to fund the preliminary engineering services for the due diligence review of the Vanceboro property. Avolis Engineering provided the Solid Waste Department with the break-down of costs as follows; Phase 1 Environmental Assessment \$2,500, and a property boundary survey for \$4,825.

Commissioner Liner motioned to approve the following budget amendment, as requested, seconded by Commissioner McCabe and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Solid Waste Department

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1010000-39901	\$7,325.00	1014721-44000	\$7,325.00
Current Fund Balance		Contractual Services	

TOTAL \$7,325.00 TOTAL \$7,325.00

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: SOCIAL SERVICES – PANDEMIC LOW INCOME HOME ENERGY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (LIEAP)

Social Services Director, Geoffrey Marett, requested to budget additional funding received from the Controller's office for Pandemic Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (Pandemic LIEAP) including administrative funds in the amount of \$172,991 in pandemic LIEAP funding and \$25,434 in administrative funds for the LIEAP temporary workers. There is no County match. Funds are 100% Federal.

Mr. Marett responded to inquiries regarding qualifications, payments being paid to the vendor, applicable to anyone who lives in the County for payment of their heating source.

Commissioner McCabe motioned to approve the following budget amendment in the amount of \$198,425.00, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Mandated 5215, Admin 5210

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1015215-33424 Energy Assistance	\$172,991.00	1015215-42307 Energy Assistance Prog (LIEAP)	\$172,991.00
1015212-33416 Services Staff & Overhead	\$25,434.00	1015210-44050 Contract Employees	\$25,434.00
TOTAL	\$198,425.00	TOTAL	\$198,425.00

Commissioner Liner requested a report in February regarding those who were served by these funds.

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: CONTRACT AWARD – EMERGENCY WATERSHED PROTECTION PROGRAM

Natural Resource Conservationist II, Patrick Baker, reported that following Hurricane Florence, the County pursued disaster funding through the USDA-NRCS Emergency Watershed Protection Program (EWP) for stabilizing critically eroding areas which if left undone pose a significant risk to life and or property. The County was awarded state and federal funding totaling \$4,003,608.83 for program implementation. The federal funding is provided by the USDA – Natural Resources Conservation Service totaling \$2,956,087.83. The state funding is provided by the NCDA&CS - Division of Soil and Water Conservation totaling \$1,047,521.00. Participation in the program required a local sponsor which the Soil and Water Conservation District and Craven County both agreed to do. The sponsor is responsible for administration and execution of the activities associated with the project. All work will be performed at no cost to the County or the landowner. He stated that County staff is working with Wayne Floyd, the County’s Disaster Recovery Consultant on this project. Recovery measures will target 41 shoreline erosion sites along the Neuse River and 1 inland stream bank erosion site located west of Fort Barnwell. Request for Proposals for these EWP sites were sent out on December 3rd with the proposals being due back on the 18th of December by 4:00 p.m. On December 10th a required pre-bid conference call meeting was held with 12 bidders present. On December 22nd the Bid Review Committee ranked the four (4) submitted bids and has recommended that the County move forward with the two (2) highest ranked bidders which were also the two (2) lowest priced bidders. The County proposes to split the groupings between these two (2) low bidders, which will keep the program within budget and will provide a time savings for the overall project implementation. The two recommended qualified bidders for this project are Trader Construction Company of New Bern, NC and Asimpa, LLC of Heflin, Alabama. Contingencies are also available within the project budget for any unforeseen cost overruns.

Trader Construction Company: \$1,810,280.00
Asimpa, LLC: \$1,523,240.00

Total: \$3,333,520.00

Mr. Baker requested that the Board of Commissioners accept the two lowest responsible qualified bidders, Trader Construction Company and Asimpa, LLC to perform the work on this project. Once all contract documents are executed, staff will provide a notice to proceed to the approved contractors.

The anticipated start date is January 18, 2021 and is projected to be completed by April 30, 2021.

Commissioner McCabe motioned to approve the lowest responsible qualified bidders, Trader Construction Company and Asimpa, LLC to perform the project, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Mr. Baker and Chad Strawn, Assistant Planning Director, addressed questions regarding administrative costs, location of the Ft. Barnwell site, location of the Harlowe site, and the vetting system used to select the contractors.

APPOINTMENTS

Pending

Chairman Jones reviewed the following pending appointments.

- Adult Care Home Advisory Committee
- Community Child Protection Team
- Craven Aging Planning Board
- Craven/Pamlico Regional Library
- Nursing Home Advisory Committee
- Regional Aging Advisory Board
- Voluntary Agriculture District Advisory Board

Current

Coastal Regional Solid Waste Management Authority (CRSWMA)

In regards to the current appointment to CRSWMA, Chairman Jones requested this appointment be tabled and the Board was in consensus.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)

Commissioner Jones and Commissioner Mitchell motioned to reappoint Eric Queen to the JCPC. Mr. Queen was reappointed by acclamation.

Upcoming

Chairman Jones referred the Board to the following list of upcoming appointments to boards and committees for their review.

Fire Tax Commissioners

- Shane Turney (*since 02/2015, 3rd term*)
- Allen Gaskins (*since 2/2019, 1st term*)
- Chris Wetherington (*since 02/2015, 3rd term*)
- Timothy Mason (*since 2/2019, 1st term*)
- Martin Hernandez (*since 2/2013, 4th term*)
- Dallas Brown (*since 2/2013, 4th term*)

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council

- Keith Morris (*since 5/2014, 2nd term*)
- Michael Paul (*since 2/2019, 1st term*)

Fireman's Relief Fund Board of Trustees

- Theron McCabe (4th term)
- Carl Jarman (4th term)

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

County Attorney, Arey Grady, had nothing to report.

PETITION OF CITIZENS (GENERAL TOPICS)

There were no citizens from the public that signed up to speak.

COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT

County Manager, Jack Veit, wished everyone a Happy New Year and stated that while 2020 is behind us the pandemic is still among us. He welcomed Commissioner Smith and wished her well over the next two years.

Mr. Veit indicated that budget discussions would begin soon.

He then provided an update on COVID19, referencing the recent spike in cases, the number of patients in the hospital and reminded everyone to continue wearing a mask, washing their hands often, and waiting six feet apart.

Mr. Veit reported that CarolinaEast was provided the Phizer Covid vaccine and has already been administering to the medical staff; and that the Moderna vaccine came in and is being used for first responders. Vaccination stage 1A should be completed next week and then move to 1B with the priority being individuals 75 years and older. Mr. Veit noted that shipments of the vaccine are sporadic, so as the supply sustains each level of administration, they will then move to the next level. He indicated he would ask Health Director, Scott Harrelson, to present a report to the Board at their next meeting.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Mitchell welcomed Ms. Smith and stated she looked forward to working with her. She thanked Ms. Smith for her willingness to serve the community. Mrs. Mitchell wished everyone a belated Merry Christmas and Happy New Year. She expressed concern over the rising COVID numbers.

Commissioner Liner welcome Ms. Bea and stated it was a pleasure to have her on the Board. He extended his assistance with anything she may need from his area. He recognized that another difficult year lies ahead.

Commissioner McCabe wished all a Happy New Year and thanked Ms. Smith for serving and stated he was happy to have her serving alongside.

Commissioner Smith stated she was happy to be on the Board and looks forward to doing the job, while she continues to learn the process.

Commissioner Mark joined the others in welcoming Ms. Smith.

Commissioner Bucher welcomed Ms. Smith to the Board. He then relayed his personal issues and his constituents' complaints with Suddenlink as a local provider. He stated he wanted to clarify for those listening that as a County, the Board of Commissioners have no power over this situation, as the General Assembly made that change about ten years ago.

He noted that the City of Tarboro recently wrote a very strong letter to the Attorney General about Suddenlink and he suggested that the Craven County Board of Commissioners write a similar letter to the Attorney General. Mr. Bucher also expressed dissatisfaction that Suddenlink has no office locally, making it more difficult to speak to anyone in customer service without long phone waits.

Commissioner McCabe inquired about that status of improving the internet connections in his district.

Mr. Veit reviewed the grant that was authorized by funding and the negotiations between legislation and the governor. He indicated there is significant interest from two companies to pursue connection for underserved areas, but they are having to look at fixed based options.

Commissioner Liner motioned that a letter addressing the issues with Suddenlink be crafted and sent to the Attorney General. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.

Chairman Jones highlighted that he and Commissioner Mark have met with several interested companies and have signed letters of support to acknowledge the need for internet all across the County, but stated the problem is getting the grants needed from the State and Federal sources.

CLOSED SESSION

At 8:03 p.m. Commissioner McCabe motioned to go into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) for Attorney/Client privilege. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mark and approved unanimously.

When the Board returned to Open Session at 10:01 p.m., it was reported that action was taken to pursue counsel.

At 10:03 p.m., Commissioner Liner motioned to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Mark and carried unanimously.

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Nan Holton
Clerk to the Board