

**AGENDA
CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, FEBRUARY 6, 2023
6:00 PM**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVE AGENDA

- 1. PETITION OF CITIZENS – AGENDA TOPICS**
- 2. APPROVE CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. January 17, 2023 Regular Session Minutes**
 - B. Tax Releases and Refunds**
 - C. Solid Waste – Disaster Debris Contracts Budget Amendment**
 - D. Solid Waste – Emergency Repairs Budget Amendment**
 - E. Emergency Services – Side Scan Sonar Budget Amendment**
 - F. Convention Center – Contracted Services Budget Amendment**
 - G. The Wall That Heals – Budget Amendment**

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS:

- 3. TAX – REPORT OF UNPAID TAXES, TAX LIEN ADVERTISEMENT DATE AND REVALUATION 2023 UPDATE: Leslie Young, Tax Administrator**
- 4. SOIL & WATER – STREAMFLOW REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (StRAP) AWARD: Patrick Baker, Natural Resource Conservationist, II**
- 5. APPOINTMENTS**
- 6. COUNTY ATTORNEY’S REPORT: Arey Grady**
- 7. PETITIONS OF CITIZENS**
- 8. COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT: Jack Veit**

9. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

10. CLOSED SESSION

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, FEBRUARY 6, 2023. THE MEETING CONVENED AT 6:00 PM.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Chairman Jason R. Jones
 Vice-Chairman Denny Bucher
 Commissioner Chadwick Howard
 Commissioner Sherry Hunt (Remote)
 Commissioner Thomas F. Mark
 Commissioner E. T. Mitchell
 Commissioner Beatrice R. Smith

STAFF PRESENT:

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

County Attorney, Arey Grady, recited the following invocation, followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

O infinite one, Your love for us is great. You who are rich in mercy, bend Your ear to us and hear our prayers. Draw near to us this day and allow us to experience Your generous and forgiving embrace and to receive Your manifold kindness.

Then may we respond with the faith of our hearts and not just the ideas from our heads, for nothing we can conceive in our minds will come anywhere near to the devotion You desire of us. Help us to trust You with our innermost being and not just rely on the work of our hands, for the tasks You set before us are best accomplished when we yield our wills to Yours and align our efforts with Your grace plan.

For we are what You have made us to be. We are each unique witnesses to Your handiwork, created to do the good work You have called us to do.

Grant that all of us this day demonstrate the faith and trust You deserve in all that You have prepared for us. Then may our lives serve to glorify You as we call upon Your name. Amen.

Based upon the invocation given by Chaplain Margaret Grun Kibben at the January 24, 2023 session of the US House of Representatives

Commissioner Mark motioned to approve the agenda, as presented, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

PETITIONS OF CITIZENS (AGENDA TOPICS)

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

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Mark motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, inclusive of the Minutes of January 17, 2023, Regular Session; Tax Releases and Refunds (**Credits = \$3,598.21; Refunds = \$3,028.65**); Solid Waste – Disaster Debris Contracts Budget Amendment; Solid Waste – Emergency Repairs Budget Amendment; Emergency Services – Side Scan Sonar Budget Amendment; Convention Center – Contracted Services Budget Amendment; and The Wall That Heals Budget Amendment. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion which carried 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Solid Waste

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1010000-39901 Fund Balance	\$8,000.00	1014720-44000 Contractual Services	\$8,000.00
TOTAL	\$8,000.00	TOTAL	\$8,000.00

Justification: Requesting approval of the proposed budget amendment to fund costs associated with Recovery Management Associates, LLC, a firm that provides disaster debris consulting services for Craven County. Together, Recovery Management Associates, LLC and Craven County will request proposals and qualifications for Craven County’s Debris Monitoring and Disaster Debris Removal services contracts.

Solid Waste

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1010000-39901 Fund Balance	\$14,000.00	1014721-42601 Maint, Repair Buildings and Grounds	\$14,000.00
TOTAL	\$14,000.00	TOTAL	\$14,000.00

Justification: Requesting approval of the proposed budget amendment to cover the deficit caused by unanticipated emergency repairs to the sewage line at the Monette’s Convenience Center and the lighting system at the Croatan Convenience Center. Together, the two repairs cost more than \$17,000.00. In order to fund the remainder of the fiscal year 2023, the Solid Waste Department is requesting the Board’s approval for a budget amendment in the amount of \$14,000.00.

Emergency Services

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1010000-39901 Fund Balance	\$5,131.00	1014320-42602 Maintenance & Repairs	\$5,131.00
TOTAL	\$5,131.00	TOTAL	\$5,131.00

Justification: Craven County Emergency Services obtained a side scan sonar from a grant to help in search and rescue. This special equipment has been used many times to assist in missing person recovery, evidence collection and other missions that required sonar use for the mission. The unit has since been damaged and is in need of repair, which is estimated to cost \$5,130.43. This unit is used as a regional response upon request from Emergency Management and other agencies to assist in missing person cases.

Convention Center

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1015920-3444 Catering Commission	\$11,900.00	1015920-44000 Contractual	\$11,900.00
TOTAL	\$11,900.00	TOTAL	\$11,900.00

Justification: Due to the increase in event days, additional contracted cleanings of the center have been required in order to meet the demand of the clients. Convention Center staff is requesting a budget amendment in the amount of \$11,900.00 that will recognize additional Catering Commission revenue and increase the Contractual Services expenditure line for cleaning services for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Special Appropriations

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1010000-39901 Current Year FB	\$5,000.00	1014111-49614 Wall that Heals	\$5,000.00
TOTAL	\$5,000.00	TOTAL	\$5,000.00

Justification: Commissioner Hunt presented information on The Wall that Heals, a ¾ size replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial coming to Havelock November 2-5, 2023. Commissioner Hunt stated Craven County has the 3rd highest number of veterans in North Carolina and the project will benefit all the citizens and children in Craven County as well as friends and family in the neighboring counties of Jones, Pamlico, Carteret and Onslow. The \$5,000.00 will be applied to the cost of the infrastructure of the wall.

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: TAX

Report of Unpaid 2022 Taxes and Tax Lien Advertisement Date

Tax Administrator, Leslie Young, presented the Board the amount of 2022 taxes that remain unpaid, which are a lien upon real estate. She stated that NCGS 105-369(a) requires this report. Ms. Young stated the delinquent tax amount for 2022 is \$2,045,130.97 which equates to a 98.18% collection rate. In comparison to the previous year which recognized gap billing, which had a 95.8% collection rate, the County is better positioned.

She indicated the statute also requires the Board to order the tax collector to advertise the liens for 2022 in a newspaper of general circulation in the County. Ms. Young requested that the Board authorize the liens to be advertised in the Sun Journal.

Commissioner Mark motioned for approval to advertise in the Sun Journal on April 11, 2023, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell, and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Revaluation 2023 Update

Ms. Young provided an update on the 2023 revaluation, inclusive of finalizing details and a projected timeline. The following dates were highlighted:

- Tuesday, February 14th - the last day that values will be certified.
- Wednesday, February 15th - when the files are being sent to the print vendor
- Monday, February 20th - a detailed report will be presented to the BOC
- Monday, February 27th - the tax revaluation notices will be mailed
- Tuesday, February 28th - all values will be made public on the website

While values will continue to be certified up until February 14th, she stated that as February 6th, the overall County average shows a 36.11% increase; and she emphasized this is an average and is in line with other counties. Ms. Young addressed inquiries about the cost table and the economy.

Commissioner Jones stated he wanted the public to understand even though the valuation of property is going to increase, it does not mean taxes will rise; as the new tax rate is set by the BOC by July 1, 2023 in response to the tax valuations.

**DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: SOIL & WATER
STREAMFLOW REHABILITATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (StRAP)**

Natural Resource Conservationist II, Patrick Baker, reported that Craven County Soil & Water Conservation District has been notified by the NC Division of Soil & Water Conservation of a Streamflow Rehabilitation Assistance Program (StRAP) award in the amount of \$388,939.00. He relayed that these funds are intended to remove stream debris from a 2.96-mile segment of Swift Creek between Butler Ford Road and NC Hwy 118 and to reduce flooding by removing stream

debris across the state's waterways through proactive efforts rather than reactive following storm events.

He indicated under this program, the extracted debris must be removed from the 100-year floodplain or processed in such a manner that the debris would not pose a risk of reentering the stream during a subsequent flooding event.

Mr. Baker highlighted the program is 100% grant funded and there is no County match required.

He stated that on December 22, 2022, staff published a request for proposal for debris removal contractors. The proposals were due by January 20, 2023. Three proposals were received and after review and rating by the review team, Mr. Baker requested the Board of Commissioners to award the StRAP contract to J and J Environmental, LLC. The allocated construction budget for this project is \$326,349. He disclosed that J and J Environmental's bid came in at \$186,200, which would allow for the ability to move upstream on Swift Creek to perform an additional \$140,149 worth of work. Mr. Baker requested award this contract to J and J Environmental, LLC. For a not to exceed amount of \$326,349.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to award the StRAP contract to J & J Environmental, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Mark, and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

APPOINTMENTS

Pending

Chairman Jones reviewed the following pending appointments:

- Emergency Medical Services (Medical Community Rep)
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) (Sheriff Designee – was an SRO; and Seat 6 previously held by Eric Queen)
- Voluntary Agricultural District (District 6)
-

Current

Craven Aging Planning Board

It was the consensus of the Board that this appointment be deferred.

Craven County Planning Board

Commissioner Mitchell nominated Johnnie Robinson for reappointment. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Robinson was reappointed by acclamation.

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council

Commissioner Mark nominated Keith Morris for reappointment. Commissioner Bucher nominated Michael Paul for reappointment. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Morris and Mr. Paul were reappointed by acclamation.

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Council

Chairman Jones nominated Captain C.J. "Charlie" Hill for appointment to replace Jean Matthews. There being no additional nominations, Captain Hill was appointed by acclamation.

Fireman's Relief Fund Board of Trustees

It was the consensus of the Board to defer the Twp. 5 appointment.

Commissioner Jones nominated Carl Jarman and Roger Wetherington for reappointment. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Jarman and Mr. Wetherington were reappointed by acclamation.

Fire Tax Commissioner's Board

Commissioner Mark nominated Timothy Mason, Allen Gaskins and Chris Wetherington for reappointment. Commissioner Mitchell nominated Shane Turney and Dallas Brown for reappointment. Commissioner Jones nominated Howard Carrier and Chris Register for reappointment. There being no additional nominations, the slate was reappointed by acclamation.

Fire Tax Commissioners' Board

Commissioner Howard nominated Donald Shannon for appointment to replace Martin Hernandez. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Shannon was appointed by acclamation.

Upcoming

Chairman Jones reviewed upcoming appointments due to expire in March, 2023.

COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT

Approval of Conveyance after Expiration of Upset Bid Period – 2706 McKinley Avenue, New Bern (Parcel No. 8-037-061-C)

County Attorney, Arey Grady, reported that Craven County previously received and approved an offer to purchase this real property, in the amount of \$2,500, subject to the completion of the upset bid process. The offer was advertised, and there were no upset bids, the final bid being \$2,500. He indicated the upset bid period has now expired, and recommended approval of the conveyance at the purchase price of \$2,500. The County and the City of New Bern originally acquired this property through a tax foreclosure, with past due taxes and costs of foreclosure totaling \$3,219.12. The tax value of this property is \$4,500.

He noted that this property is jointly owned with the City of New Bern, which has already granted final approval of this offer.

Mr. Grady stated should the Board of Commissioners authorize this transaction, a resolution should be adopted, which in turn will authorize the execution and delivery of the necessary documents.

Commissioner Mark motioned to adopt the following resolution approving conveyance after expiration of the upset bid period, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

**Craven County
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE
AFTER EXPIRATION OF UPSET BID PERIOD**

WHEREAS, Craven County and the City of New Bern own certain real property identified as Tax Parcel Number 8-037-061-C (hereinafter "the Real Property"), the Real Property having been acquired by Craven County in deed recorded in Book 3505, Page 0202 in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Craven County; and,

WHEREAS, Craven County and the City of New Bern previously received and approved an Offer to Purchase the Real Property, and subsequently advertised said offer for upset bids as required by North Carolina General Statute §160A-269; and,

WHEREAS, the upset bid period required under North Carolina General Statute §160A-269 has expired; and,

WHEREAS, the Craven County Board of Commissioners deems it advisable and in the best interest of the County to sell its interest in the Real Property to the successful bidder and to convey its interest in said property by quitclaim deed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY THAT:

Section 1. The last and highest bid of Stephonie Coward-Leary in the sum of \$2,500.00 for the Real Property is hereby accepted, and the Offer to Purchase previously executed by Craven County subject to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269 is hereby ratified and confirmed in its entirety.

Section 2. Upon payment of the full purchase price, the Chairman, the County Manager, the Assistant County Manager, the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and/or County Attorney are authorized to take all actions necessary to accomplish the transactions contemplated by this Resolution, including but not limited to the execution and delivery of the quitclaim deed attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

ADOPTED THIS 6th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2023.

Approval of Conveyance after Expiration of Upset Bid Period – 1000 Neuse Avenue, New Bern (Parcel No. 8-015-023)

Mr. Grady reported that Craven County previously received and approved an offer to purchase this real property, in the amount of \$3,000, subject to the completion of the upset bid process. The offer was advertised, and there were no upset bids, the final bid being \$3,000. He indicated the upset bid period has now expired, and recommended approval of the conveyance at the purchase price of \$3,000. The County and the City of New Bern originally acquired this property through a tax foreclosure, with past due taxes and costs of foreclosure totaling \$7,144.75. The tax value of this property is \$6,000.

He noted that this property is jointly owned with the City of New Bern, which has already granted final approval of this offer.

Mr. Grady stated should the Board of Commissioners authorize this transaction, a resolution should be adopted, which in turn will authorize the execution and delivery of the necessary documents.

Commissioner Mark motioned to adopt the following resolution approving conveyance after expiration of upset bid period, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

**CRAVEN COUNTY
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE
AFTER EXPIRATION OF UPSET BID PERIOD**

WHEREAS, Craven County and the City of New Bern own certain real property identified as Tax Parcel Number 8-015-023 (hereinafter “the Real Property”), the Real Property having been

acquired by Craven County in deed recorded in Book 2534, Page 732 in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Craven County; and,

WHEREAS, Craven County and the City of New Bern previously received and approved an Offer to Purchase the Real Property, and subsequently advertised said offer for upset bids as required by North Carolina General Statute §160A-269; and,

WHEREAS, the upset bid period required under North Carolina General Statute §160A-269 has expired; and,

WHEREAS, the Craven County Board of Commissioners deems it advisable and in the best interest of the County to sell its interest in the Real Property to the successful bidder and to convey its interest in said property by quitclaim deed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY THAT:

Section 1. The last and highest bid of Argelis E. Arauz Fallas in the sum of \$3,000.00 for the Real Property is hereby accepted, and the Offer to Purchase previously executed by Craven County subject to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269 is hereby ratified and confirmed in its entirety.

Section 2. Upon payment of the full purchase price, the Chairman, the County Manager, the Assistant County Manager, the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and/or County Attorney are authorized to take all actions necessary to accomplish the transactions contemplated by this Resolution, including but not limited to the execution and delivery of the quitclaim deed attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

ADOPTED THIS 6th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2023.

Approval of Conveyance after Expiration of Upset Bid Period – 115 Hilmont Road, New Bern (Parcel No. 8-219-006)

Mr. Grady reported that Craven County previously received and approved an offer to purchase this real property, in the amount of \$7,500, subject to the completion of the upset bid process. The offer was advertised, and there were no upset bids, the final bid being \$7,500. He indicated the upset bid period has now expired, and recommended approval of the conveyance at the purchase price of \$7,500. The County and the City of New Bern originally acquired this property through a tax foreclosure, with past due taxes and costs of foreclosure totaling \$6,349.65. The tax value of this property is \$15,000.

He noted that this property is jointly owned with the City of New Bern, which has already granted final approval of this offer.

Mr. Grady stated should the Board of Commissioners authorize this transaction, a resolution should be adopted, which in turn will authorize the execution and delivery of the necessary documents.

Commissioner Mark motioned to adopt the following resolution approving conveyance after expiration of upset bid period, seconded by Commissioner Howard and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

**CRAVEN COUNTY
RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING CONVEYANCE
AFTER EXPIRATION OF UPSET BID PERIOD**

WHEREAS, Craven County and the City of New Bern own certain real property identified as Tax Parcel Number 8-219-006 (hereinafter “the Real Property”), the Real Property having been acquired by Craven County in deed recorded in Book 3569, Page 533 in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Craven County; and,

WHEREAS, Craven County and the City of New Bern previously received and approved an Offer to Purchase the Real Property, and subsequently advertised said offer for upset bids as required by North Carolina General Statute §160A-269; and,

WHEREAS, the upset bid period required under North Carolina General Statute §160A-269 has expired; and,

WHEREAS, the Craven County Board of Commissioners deems it advisable and in the best interest of the County to sell its interest in the Real Property to the successful bidder and to convey its interest in said property by quitclaim deed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF CRAVEN COUNTY THAT:

Section 1. The last and highest bid of Argelis E. Arauz Fallas in the sum of \$7,500.00 for the Real Property is hereby accepted, and the Offer to Purchase previously executed by Craven County subject to the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269 is hereby ratified and confirmed in its entirety.

Section 2. Upon payment of the full purchase price, the Chairman, the County Manager, the Assistant County Manager, the Clerk to the Board of Commissioners and/or County Attorney are authorized to take all actions necessary to accomplish the transactions contemplated by this Resolution, including but not limited to the execution and delivery of the quitclaim deed attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference.

ADOPTED THIS 6th DAY OF FEBRUARY, 2023.

PETITIONS OF CITIZENS – GENERAL TOPICS

1. Brandon Daniel, Bear Hole Road in Vanceboro
2. Ruth Cooper, Colleton Way in Trent Woods

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT

County Manager Jack Veit reported on the recent Legislative breakfast held in Kinston, where three Senators and one Representative spoke. He highlighted Medicaid expansion as a topic of impact for Craven County. He also reported on the C1A meeting and the great economic developments of 2022.

Mr. Veit stated the GREAT grant contracts were received last week, which would address some of the broadband issues. He indicated he was meeting with a Bright Speed representative next week; and wanting to talk to Optimum about how to make broadband more feasible for folks like Mr. Daniels, who presented earlier.

Finally, he gave mention to the new audio-visual equipment installed in the boardroom and the annual budget kick-off meeting held with department heads on February 1st.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Mark commented on an upcoming Hwy. 70 meeting. He reported on his town hall meeting in Fairfield Harbor being hosted in his absence by Assistant County Manager Gene Hodges. He stated there were about 30 people in attendance and had several department heads present to talk about CARTS, the tax revaluation, solid waste, and economic development.

Commissioner Mitchell indicated a concern of hers and the BOC since 2019 has been the increasing number of unwanted dogs and cats at the animal shelter. She also stated it is a public health issue and the key to reducing the number of unwanted animals is to lower the costs of spaying and neutering. Currently there is a part-time veterinarian at the animal shelter performing these operations, but the problem is keeping up with the volume.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to authorize the County Manager and the Health Director to hire a full-time Veterinarian/Director for the animal shelter. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Howard. The motion was approved in a 7-0 roll call vote.

In response to a question about cost, Mr. Veit responded it would be a Grade 81, with authorization up to a Step 10, so \$100,000-\$125,000 to advertise for best candidates. Other inquiries regarding being the Director, and appropriate funding were addressed.

Commissioner Howard reported on a recent town hall meeting with 65 residents showing up and over 100 people online. He thanked Recreation Director Billy Wilkes and Sheriff Hughes for being present. Mr. Howard indicated they talked about the golf course, the new park, tax revaluation, drug enforcement, the Havelock bypass, and private versus public roads.

Commissioner Smith spoke about the issue of food deficiency and hunger among senior adults. She reported on the grocery reimbursement program being coordinated by the Eastern Carolina Council of Governments where senior adults can turn in up to \$500 worth of grocery receipts to get reimbursed. For the public she stated interested individuals should call 252-638-1790 for more information about enrollment.

Commissioner Hunt had nothing to report.

Commissioner Bucher reported on the James City project and the necessary utility work for water, sewer, electric, broadband, and even the railroad, which has to be completed before actual road construction begins.

Mr. Bucher also remarked on touring the inside of the Sudan Temple and the total disarray and destruction of the interior by vandals, in addition to the hurricane damage that was never rehabilitated.

CLOSED SESSION

At 7:00 pm, Commissioner Mark motioned to enter into Closed Session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) to consult with an attorney in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege as it relates to the case of Patrick v. Craven County; and (a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of information that is privileged or confidential. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved.

When the Board returned to Open Session at 7:45pm, County Attorney Arey Grady reported no action was taken in Closed Session.

At 7:46 pm Commissioner Mark motioned to adjourn; seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved.

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Nan Holton
Clerk to the Board