

**AGENDA
CRAVEN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
REGULAR SESSION
MONDAY, APRIL 17, 2023
8:30 AM**

CALL TO ORDER

ROLL CALL

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

APPROVE AGENDA

- 1. CONSENT AGENDA**
 - A. Minutes of April 1, 2023 Regular Session**
 - B. Tax Releases and Refunds**
 - C. Garage – Budget Amendment**

- 2. BOYS AND GIRLS' CLUBS OF THE COASTAL PLAINS PRESENTATION:
DRE NIX, VP OF PROGRAMMING AND OPERATIONS**

- 3. JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL (JCPC) PRESENTATION:
JENNIFER DACEY, CHAIR**

- 4. CRAVEN COUNTY SCHOOLS REAPPORTIONMENT REQUEST: STACY
LEE, CHIEF OFFICER OF SYSTEMS AND OPERATIONS**

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS

- 5. SHERIFF – K-9 ATHOS DONATION: Sgt. Rebecca Hopper**

- 6. FINANCE – ANNUAL AUDIT CONTRACT FOR FISCAL YEAR 2023: Craig
Warren, Finance Director**

- 7. APPOINTMENTS**

- 8. COUNTY ATTORNEY'S REPORT: Arey Grady**

- 9. COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORT: Jack Veit**

- 10. COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS**

11. **HUMAN RESOURCES – REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR TO FILL REGISTER OF DEEDS UNEXPIRED TERM: Amber Parker, Human Resources Director**
12. **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, APRIL 17, 2023. THE MEETING CONVENED AT 8:30 AM.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

- Chairman Jason R. Jones
- Vice-Chairman Denny Bucher
- Commissioner Chadwick Howard
- Commissioner Sherry Hunt
- 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.

Lord, we honor You today in prayer and thanksgiving. We pray for our County Commissioners and all who represent Craven County. Grant them peace that passes all understanding and amazing grace to sustain them when days are long and rest is short.

Father, You are our refuge and fortress. You provide everything we need for life and godliness. You hear our ardent intercession, and smile when we raise our voices in praise and worship. We thank You for Your presence, love and grace.

It is in Your mighty Name we pray. Amen.

Based upon the invocation given by Reverend Dr. Alan Keiran, at the January 27, 2012 session of the US House of Representatives

Commissioner Mark motioned to approve the agenda as presented; his motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell. Chairman Jones indicated the need to switch Items 11 and 12, to hold the Closed Session prior to the Human Resource report. Commissioners Mark and Mitchell amended their motion to adjust the agenda, as requested. Their motion was approved unanimously.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Mark motioned to approve the Consent Agenda, inclusive of the Minutes of April 3, 2023 Regular Session; Tax Releases and Refunds (**Credits = \$4,351.72; Refunds = \$536.05**); and Garage Budget Amendment. Commissioner Mitchell seconded the motion, which was approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Garage

REVENUES	AMOUNT	EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT
1014230-38214	\$15,000.00	1014230-43240	\$15,000.00
Transfer – CCCMG Fees/Operations		Other Supplies	

TOTAL	\$15,000.00	TOTAL	\$15,000.00
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Justification: Cover the cost of transferring funds into the Garage Other Supplies line for the remainder of the fiscal year due to cost increases on tires, repair parts & materials, service parts & materials, and specialized tools that have affected the expenditure line more than anticipated during FY23 budget planning.

BOYS AND GIRLS’ CLUBS OF THE COASTAL PLAINS PRESENTATION

Ms. Dre Nix, Vice-President of Programming and Operations, gave the mid-year impact report on the Boys and Girls Club of the Coastal Plains and spoke about her responsibilities. There are three club locations in Craven County serving over 300 youth. She stated they cater to ages 6 to 18 years of age, Monday through Friday, typically from 3:00 – 6:00 pm. She provided information about homework assistance, hot meals, community service, and workforce development. Ms. Nix responded to several questions about teen pregnancy, drug abuse, marketing, homework assistance, community service activities, and other funding sources.

JUVENILE CRIME PREVENTION COUNCIL PRESENTATION

Ms. Jennifer Dacey, JCPC Chair, presented the Board with the JCPC funding plan for FY23-24 and reported funding levels remain unchanged from FY22-23. She did indicate that the VOLT Center needed \$400 for more supplies, but they just moved that from their administrative line item. Ms. Dacey reported that all the programs have resumed to pre-Covid normality and are very busy.

PROGRAM PROVIDER	TOTAL
Area Day Reporting Center	\$128,254
Teen Court, Mediation Center of EC	\$192,026
VOLT Workforce Development	\$50,880
Girls Empowered	\$36,000
Craven JCPC Administration	\$2,435
TOTAL	\$409,595

Ms. Dacey highlighted the resolution requesting support for Step Pay and Compression Increases for certified staff with the Division of Juvenile Justice as they were passed over by the State budget. She indicated she has had conversations with legislators about this and the great difficulty in hiring in social services due to this issue. In addition to adopting JCPC’s proposed funding plan, she requested Craven County adopt the resolution, found in their packet.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve the JCPC funding plan, as presented. Her motion was seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved unanimously.

Commissioner Mark motioned to adopt the following Resolution Supporting Step Pay & Compression Increases For Division Of Juvenile Justice And Delinquency Prevention Certified Staff. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.

**CRAVEN COUNTY
RESOLUTION SUPPORTING STEP PAY & COMPRESSION INCREASES for
DIVISION OF JUVENILE JUSTICE AND DELINQUENCY PREVENTION CERTIFIED
STAFF**

WHEREAS, the Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention provides secure confinement in Juvenile Detention Centers and commitment services in the State’s Youth Development Centers that are essential to the protection of the community and rehabilitation of juveniles; and

WHEREAS, the lack of adequate staffing within facilities constrains effective implementation of the therapeutic and rehabilitative model of care; and

WHEREAS, the county-appointed Juvenile Crime Prevention Council is legislatively charged with ensuring the availability of appropriate dispositional alternatives for justice-involved youth that are both therapeutic and conducive to rehabilitation; and

WHEREAS, staff within the State's juvenile facilities, as well as Juvenile Court Services have been passed over for step-pay and increases that would recognize and reward experience, and make compensation more competitive, as well as ensure qualified staff recruitment and retention; and

WHEREAS, the Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention is contending with an overwhelming vacancy rate, largely due to the impact of the pandemic which has driven salaries and wages higher across the board; and

WHEREAS, Compression Salary Increases for Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention staff were removed from the state's current budget prior to final approval; and

WHEREAS, similar salary adjustments or increases WERE approved for staff in the newly-formed Department of Adult Correction;

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED, that the Craven County Board of County Commissioners supports the adequate and timely increase of the salaries of juvenile facility and court services staff across the State of North Carolina to make those positions competitive and to ensure qualified staff are compensated adequately for years of experience for the purposes of retention, as well as lay the groundwork for recruitment which will ensure the immediate and ongoing protection of the community and strengthen rehabilitative services for those juveniles most in need.

Adopted this 17TH day of April, 2023.

CRAVEN COUNTY SCHOOLS REAPPORTIONMENT REQUEST

Mr. Stacy Lee, Chief Officer of Systems and Operations, requested reapportionment of already approved Public School Building Repair and Renovation funds as shown below:

Previous approved allocations

- Internet phone cabling= \$235K
- GCF Middle School Performing Art Center ADA Lift= \$5K
- New Bern High School childcare conversion - \$100K
- GCF Middle School canopy= \$50K
- Painting multiple sites = \$210K
- Grease traps= \$60K
- Safety and security updates= \$140K

Proposed allocations

- Internet phone cabling= \$235K
- GCF Middle School Performing Art Center ADA Lift= \$5K
- GCF Middle School canopy= \$50K
- Painting multiple sites = \$260K
- Grease traps= \$60K
- Safety and security updates = \$190K

He emphasized this is for the current fiscal year.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve the reapportionment of approved Public Schools Building Repair and Renovation Fund, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: SHERIFF – K-9 ATHOS DONATION

Sgt. Rebecca Hopper reported that K-9 Athos has been donated to the Craven County Sheriff's Office by the Throw Away Dogs Project to replace retired K-9 Kai, who has officially retired from duty due to constant tooth issues that hindered his ability to train and work. She indicated Kai will remain with his handler, former deputy, Tosha Weikel.

Sgt. Hopper requested the Board's approval to accept the donation of K-9 Athos and approve the Memorandum of Disposition for K-9 Kai.

Commissioner Mark motioned to approve the donation and the MOD, as requested, seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved unanimously.

DEPARTMENTAL MATTERS: FINANCE

Finance Director, Craig Warren, reported that Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co, P.A. submitted a proposal to perform the County's annual audit for the current fiscal year ending June 30, 2023. The proposed fee is \$76,350 which is an increase of \$3,750 or 5.1% over last year. This fee includes both the Coastal Carolina Regional Airport and the Craven County Tourism Development Authority. Both the Airport and TDA will be billed for their portion of the fee. Mr. Warren recommended that the County continue to contract with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co, P.A. for the performance of the County's annual audit for fiscal year 2023.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to approve the annual audit contract for fiscal year ending June 30, 2023 with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co., P.A., as requested, seconded by Commissioner Smith and approved unanimously.

APPOINTMENTS

Pending

Chairman Jones reviewed the following pending appointments:

- Craven Clean Sweep
- Craven County Planning Board
- Emergency Medical Services
- Fireman's Relief Fund Board (District 5)
- Highway 70 Corridor Committee
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)
- Local Emergency Planning Committee
- Volunteer Agricultural District (District 6)

Current

Emergency Medical Services Advisory Committee

Commissioner Bucher nominated Michael Bright for reappointment. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Bright was reappointed by acclamation.

Fireman's Relief Fund Board of Trustees

Chairman Jones nominated Donald Heath for reappointment. There being no additional nominations, Mr. Heath was reappointed by acclamation.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

Commissioner Mitchell nominated Jordan Sawyer for reappointment. Commissioner Mark nominated Ira Whitford for reappointment. Commissioner Bucher nominated Chip Hughes for reappointment. There being no additional nominations, all were reappointed by acclamation.

Upcoming Appointments

Chairman Jones reviewed upcoming appointments to boards and committees that are due to expire.

COUNTY ATTORNEY’S REPORT – INITIAL OFFER TO PURCHASE REAL PROPERTY: 837 PAVIE AVENUE, NEW BERN (PARCEL NO. 80-007-097)

County Attorney, Arey Grady, reported that Craven County has received an offer in the amount of \$12,333.00 for this real property, which was acquired jointly with the City of New Bern through a tax foreclosure, with past due taxes and costs of foreclosure totaling \$6,210.10. The tax value of this property is \$42,130.00.

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

Mr. Grady indicated should the Board of Commissioners approve this transaction, the proposed resolution should be adopted, which will in turn authorize advertisement for upset bids. Once the upset bid process is concluded, this transaction will be brought back before the Board of Commissioners for final approval.

Commissioner Mitchell motioned to adopt the following resolution approving the transaction and authorizing the upset bid process, seconded by Commissioner Mark and approved unanimously.

**CRAVEN COUNTY
RESOLUTION ACCEPTING OFFER TO PURCHASE
SUBJECT TO UPSET BIDS**

WHEREAS, Craven County and the City of New Bern own certain real property identified as Tax Parcel Number 8-007-097 (hereinafter “the Real Property”), the Real Property having been acquired by Craven County and the City of New Bern in deed recorded in Book 3569, Page 525 in the Office of the Register of Deeds of Craven County; and,

WHEREAS, Craven County and the City of New Bern have received an Offer to Purchase the Real Property, a copy of said offer being attached hereto and incorporated herein by reference; and,

WHEREAS, the City of New Bern has previously approved said offer: and,

WHEREAS, the Craven County Board of Commissioners is authorized to sell Craven County’s interest in real property pursuant to North Carolina General Statute §160A-269.

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

1. The Craven County Board of Commissioners hereby authorizes the initiation of the upset bid process for the Real Property by advertising notice of the offer to purchase in accordance with the provisions of North Carolina General Statute §160A-269.
2. 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.

ADOPTED THIS 17th DAY OF APRIL, 2023.

COUNTY MANAGER’S REPORT

County Manager, Jack Veit, informed the Board that staff is rapidly finishing up the budget, as they have held productive meetings with department heads and outside agencies. He referenced the Board calendar for the following dates:

- May 1st – Craven County Schools and Craven Community College will present their budget requests
- May 15th – Mr. Veit will present the recommended FY23-24 budget

- May 15th-19th – Budget work sessions
- June 5th – Public Hearing for the FY23-24 Budget

Mr. Veit reported that Economic Director, Jeff Wood, was working fervently on funding for development at the airport and identifying funds for the large industrial park concept located off of Hwy 17 in conjunction with Jones County.

Mr. Veit reported on attending the NC Association of County Commissioners' Directors meeting held at the Riverfront Convention Center on Friday evening. He expressed the desire to have the NC ACC annual conference return to Craven County.

COMMISSIONERS' REPORTS

Commissioner Mark reported on attending a recent CarolinaEast Board meeting where appointments were discussed and a precinct meeting where Representative Tyson provided information about the State budget.

Commissioner Hunt had nothing to report.

Commissioner Smith announced she is holding a Town Hall meeting on May 8th at the George Street Senior Center at 7:00 pm. She indicated several county department heads would be present to speak and she invited her District 3 constituents to attend.

Commissioner Mitchell commented that her mobility is improving.

Commissioner Howard had nothing to report.

Commissioner Jones recognized current Register of Deeds, Sherri Richard, and requested a motion to go into Closed Session to discuss matters pertaining to that office.

CLOSED SESSION

At 9:12 am, Commissioner Mark motioned to go into closed session pursuant to NCGS 143-318.11 (a)(6) to address personnel matters. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved unanimously.

At 9:29 am, the Board returned to Open Session and Mr. Grady reported no action was taken in Closed Session.

HUMAN RESOURCES – REQUEST FOR APPOINTMENT OF SUCCESSOR TO FILL REGISTER OF DEEDS UNEXPIRED TERM

Human Resources Director, Amber Parker, relayed that Craven County Register of Deeds, Sherri B. Richard, announced her retirement and her last day in office will be June 30, 2023 leaving a vacancy in the office for the remainder of her term set to expire December of 2024. NCGS 161-5 Vacancy in office (a1) states: When a vacancy occurs from any cause in the office of register of deeds, the board of county commissioners shall fill such vacancy by the appointment of a successor for the unexpired term, who shall qualify and give bond as required by law. If the register of deeds was elected as the nominee of a political party, the board of county commissioners shall consult the county executive committee of that political party before filling the vacancy and shall appoint the person recommended by that committee, if the party makes a recommendation within 30 days of the occurrence of the vacancy.

Mrs. Richard was a nominee of the Craven County Democratic Party for the 2020 election and their Executive Committee has nominated Michelle L. Toth to fill the unexpired term.

Ms. Parker stated that NCGS 153A-92 authorizes the Board of Commissioners to approve the schedule of pay, expense allowances, and other compensation of all county officers and employees, whether elected or appointed, and may adopt position classification plans. The Register of Deeds position is not included in Craven County's pay and classification plan.

She indicated the board is requested to appoint Michelle L. Toth as successor to fill the Register of Deeds unexpired term effective July 1, 2023 and to set a salary for Ms. Toth at \$75,000. Ms. Toth is the current Assistant Register of Deeds for Craven County, she is a Certified Assistant Register of Deeds by the North Carolina Association of Register of Deeds, and she has worked for the Craven County Register of Deeds Office since October 8, 2003.

Ms. Parker presented a nomination letter submitted by the Craven County Democratic Party to the Board of Commissioners requesting the appointment of current Assistant Register of Deeds, Michelle L. Toth, to fill the unexpired term of retiring Register of Deeds, Sherri B. Richard.

Commissioner Mark motioned to appoint Michelle L. Toth as successor to fill the unexpired Register of Deeds, effective July 1, 2023 and set the salary at \$75,000, based upon Ms. Toth's qualifications and years of experience. His motion was seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and approved 7-0 in a roll call vote.

Chairman Jones invited both Ms. Richard and Ms. Toth to make remarks. Ms. Richard thanked the Board for their support over the past 22 years. She emphasized she loved her job and knows she will miss it, but feels it is time to step away. She stated Michelle will do a great job.

Assistant Register of Deeds, Michelle Toth, thanked the Board for the opportunity and declared she is going to do her best for Craven County and hopes that it will be a smooth transition.

At 9:34 pm, Commissioner Mark motioned to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Mitchell and unanimously approved.

Chairman Jason R. Jones
Craven County Board of Commissioners

Nan Holton
Clerk to the Board