

Regular Meeting  
January 9, 2006

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, January 9, 2006 at 9:00 a.m. in the Panel Room of the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse.

Present: Jimmy Alligood, Louis Belfield, Ralph Cole, Bill Gardner, Harry Lee Winslow.  
Absent: Jerry Downum, Wayne Goodwin.

Vice Chairman Ralph Cole presided in the absence of Chairman Wayne Goodwin due to a doctor's appointment out of town.

Vice Chairman Cole called the meeting to order and Commissioner Gardner presented the invocation.

Consent Agenda

By motion of Commissioner Alligood, the Consent Agenda, including the minutes and the following tax releases and budget amendments, was approved.

Ayes 5  
No 0

Tax Releases

ME Brown	\$115.27	vehicle repossessed
IT Bunch	\$109.02	vehicle sold
SL Collins	\$118.00	vehicle sold
BF Dees	\$108.92	listed in Illinois (military)
HH Gilliam	\$224.33	submitted info corrected
JF Kennedy	\$186.25	pricing corrected
AM Kincy	\$147.66	listed in Perquimans
WJ Leary Jr	\$133.81	listed in Pequimans
PG McCoy	\$241.07	listed in Texas (military)
Melton Blds.	\$121.08	vehicle sold
JN Mills Jr	\$107.32	new tags purchased
JE Parks	\$147.50	tagged incorrectly
EF Pierce	\$229.03	new tags purchased
LE Rea	\$130.53	vehicle turned in
DC Swindle	\$126.01	listed in Maryland
SC Cherry	\$100.13	vehicle traded

Budget Amendments

4268 Sr Center	\$6578	inc	Sr. Care Grant
5232 Sentencing Services	\$6933	inc	Sentencing Services Grant partial 05/06
4350 Planning	\$825,496	inc	Hazard Mitigation Grant – acquisition

5372 DSS	\$8853	inc	& demolition (Isabel)
4330 Emerg.Mgmt	\$6245	inc	disaster crisis funding
4730 SoilWater Conservation	\$49172	inc	Community Emergency Response Team Grant Clear& Snag Grant

#### Planning and Inspections Report

##### Building Inspector

Planner Elizabeth Bryant introduced Nick Lokies, recently hired as the County's third building inspector, to work with Holly Colombo and Kent Pierce. Mr. Lokies lives in Gates County and previously worked for an engineering firm in Greenville. He will be attending his second session of training this week.

Mrs. Bryant reported that Inspections performed 3915 inspections in 2005, investigated 256 code enforcement violations, issued 176 zoning and sign permits, 859 trades permits, 54 mobile home permits, 276 residential permits, and 56 non-residential permits.

#### Technical Review Committee

She announced that the technical review committee will meet Thursday of this week to review the proposed Welch Road subdivision.

#### Contract Award for HMGP Demolition – Blackbeard Road Site

Commissioner Gardner made a motion that the County approve the low bid, Boyd Copeland Construction for \$4,500, for the demolition and removal of the hurricane damaged property at 324 Blackbeard Road. Other bids were Steiner & Daughters \$8,100 and CA Perry \$16,900.

Ayes 5

No 0

#### Finance Report

Finance Officer Lisa Jones reported that all revenues are on budget as of the financial report for December 31, 2005.

Commissioner Winslow moved that the Board approve the Capital Project Ordinance for Phase II of the Walker Gymnasium Renovation, in the amount of \$119,600.

Ayes 5

No 0

#### Water Development Fee

Commissioner Belfield made a motion that the County authorize a payment plan for the \$3500 Water Development Fee -- of a \$500 down payment and 24 monthly payments of \$125, to be included on the monthly water bills. The motion also included approval of a \$250 discount for full payment.

If the house is sold, the owner must clear the account before the water account can be transferred to the new owner. Mr. Rascoe will be asked to prepare wording for the financing agreement to insure full payment by the owner.

Ayes 5

No 0

#### NC Public Schools Facilities Needs Survey 2005

Schools Superintendent Dr. Allan Smith and Associate Superintendent Rob Boyce presented the Edenton Chowan Schools 2005 Survey of Schools Facilities Needs, as required by the Department of Public Instruction every five years.

Average daily membership projections, capacity estimates and building needs are addressed. With the State's projected cost of \$136/sf, Chowan County's building needs are estimated at \$24.2 million.

Commissioner Belfield moved that the County accept the report to be forwarded to the Department of Public Instruction.

Ayes 5

No 0

#### Adoption of Recreation Master Plan

An adopted Recreation Master Plan is a required part of the County's application for assistance from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. Robbie Laughton presented highlights from the Master Plan as presented in the December special meeting and requested that the Commissioners adopt the Master Plan, to be included in an application to be submitted this month for assistance from the PRTF.

Commissioner Alligood moved that the County adopt the Recreation Master Plan as submitted at the December special meeting.

Ayes 5

No 0

Mr. Laughton also announced that Chowan County will host a basketball tournament in March for 90 teams of 7-18 year olds.

#### Appointment of a Local Board Member for the US Selective Service System

Commissioner Gardner made a motion that David Barrett be appointed to represent Chowan County as a Local Board Member for the US Selective Service System.

Ayes 5

No 0

#### Courthouse Security

The State appropriated \$5000 to the County to upgrade courthouse security. A committee of the Clerk of Court, the Sheriff, the Maintenance Director and the County Manager met and prioritized security needs for the courthouse. The top three priorities will be funded with the \$5000 appropriation, a wireless panic/duress alarm system, surveillance cameras and improvements to the key/card swipe access system. Since the needs exceed the grant allocation, additional items will begin to be addressed in the 2006-07 budget, such as a Kevlar panel at the bench, manned walkthrough metal detectors, a 15K generator and enhanced exterior lighting.

## 2005 Legislative Summary

County Manager Cliff Copeland briefly mentioned some of the items in the 2005 Legislative Summary, including H607 to preserve farmland, and H1288 to require counties to develop a plan for destruction of abandoned mobile homes. He also mentioned opposition to a bill that would eliminate the E-911 Emergency Telephone Service tax. He noted the bill to give counties relief from the Medicaid burden, which would free up \$1.1 Million in Chowan County. North Carolina remains the only state in the nation that requires its counties to fund Medicaid. He encouraged the Commissioners that the County take a more pro-active approach in communications with Legislators and the Association of Counties.

## Purchase of Voting Machines

Mr. Copeland announced that the Elections Board will conduct a public forum January 17, 2006 at 5:00pm in the conference room at the Agriculture Center. After the public forum, the Elections Board will meet with the Board of Commissioners and officially present a recommendation on the purchase of voting machines.

The voting machines utilized by Chowan County have been decertified by the State Board of Elections. Under legislation adopted by the General Assembly, the County will need to have contracted for the purchase of new voting machines before the end of this month, January. The State received bids from two companies for two types of machines – direct record and optical scan. After receiving bids, one of the companies withdrew its bid leaving only one company, Election Systems and Software.

By motion of Commissioner Gardner, the Board of Commissioners will meet with the Board of Elections on Wednesday, January 18 at 5:00 pm in the Panel Room, to receive the Board of Election recommendation.

Ayes 5

No 0

## Low Income Energy Assistance Resolution

DSS Director Ben Rose presented a resolution from Washington County, seeking the Board's support for a request to the State for more money for assistance to low income residents for heating expenses.

Commissioner Allgood moved that the County approve the following resolution.

Ayes 5

No 0

### Resolution

WHEREAS, the federal Low Income Energy Assistance Program allocates funds to the State of North Carolina to provide low-income families with limited financial assistance toward meeting their heating-related needs during the cold winter months; and,

WHEREAS, due to the real potential that the current heating season will adversely affect the ability of low income families to meet and pay for heating fuel even more than in previous years, as a result of estimated natural gas prices increasing over 50 percent and fuel oil and propane prices increasing over 30 percent from the previous winter heating season prices; and,

WHEREAS, the amount of funding to Chowan County has not increased and will not meet the needs of low-income households, placing these households in jeopardy of life-threatening crises unless additional funding is allocated to the State of North Carolina by the United States Government.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Chowan County Board of Commissioners calls upon the Governor of the State of North Carolina and the North Carolina General Assembly to contact members of the United States Senate and the United States House of Representatives and advocate for additional funding to the Low Income Energy Assistance Program for the State of North Carolina for the current heating season; and,

FURTHER, requests the Governor of the State of North Carolina to identify any and all emergency funds to supplement federal IIEAP funds for the 100 counties in the State to alleviate this critical adverse heating situation.

Adopted today, January 9, 2006.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk

Mr. Rose also discussed the County's crisis in funding day care expenses. Increased demands and increased costs of day care forced the County to put a freeze on new clients to the day care program. Chowan County has a waiting list of 136 children. In October when Day Care Program funds were reallocated, Chowan County received no additional funds, when other counties received large subsidies. Mr. Rose has corresponded with the State concerning this inequity, with no positive results. He will address these issues at a meeting this week.

#### Software for 911 Central Communications

Chowan County continues to have problems with the software provider for the VISIONS software used at 911 Central Communications. The company has changed hands four times and service problems continue. No system update has been provided since 2003. Staff members have investigated another software provider which is servicing neighboring counties with much success.

Commissioner Belfield made a motion that the Public Safety Committee be authorized to investigate other software service providers and to proceed with an agreement to secure a new provider. Mr. Copeland stated that a visit to a neighboring county using Southern Software programs will be arranged this week for staff members and the Public Safety Committee to attend.

Ayes 5

No 0

#### Northeast Partnership

Mr. Copeland distributed copies of a draft letter prepared by the Northeast Partnership Managers' Group, to be presented to the Executive Committee of the Northeast Partnership at a meeting on Friday. This letter concerns the employment of Executive Director Rick Watson at the Partnership and also with Parton Enterprises. The Managers'

Group is recommending that unless Mr. Watson terminates his association with Parton Enterprises, that he must resign from the Northeast Partnership.

#### Highway 32 Upgrades

Two years have passed and still no upgrades to Highway 32 have been done, since DOT has again frozen the funds allocated to the Highway 32 project. Mr. Copeland will request an opportunity to appear before the Board of Transportation to address this issue.

#### County Attorney – Bill Culpepper Resignation

Bill Culpepper has accepted an appointment to the North Carolina Utilities Commission and has resigned as County Attorney for Chowan County, where he has served since 1979. Mr. Copeland presented his letter of resignation to the Board of Commissioners.

#### Executive Session – Personnel

Mr. Copeland requested an executive session to discuss the appointment of a new County Attorney, and a second item, to set a salary for the Sheriff position for the upcoming election.

The regular meeting was recessed and the executive session convened.

The duties of the County Attorney and the job responsibilities now held by Staff Attorney Peter Rascoe were discussed. Mr. Copeland recommended that Mr. Rascoe be appointed County Attorney and continue to serve as Special Projects Officer.

Mr. Copeland announced that Sheriff Fred Spruill has decided not to run for re-election and requested that a sheriff salary be set at \$55,000 for the upcoming election.

The executive session was adjourned and the regular meeting reconvened.

Commissioner Alligood made a motion that the sheriff salary be set at \$55,000.

Ayes 5

No 0

Commissioner Belfield made a motion that Peter Rascoe be appointed County Attorney, along with his duties as Special Projects Officer, and that the salary be negotiated by the County Manager.

Ayes 5

No 0

The meeting was adjourned.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk