

Regular Meeting  
March 7, 2005

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, March 7, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. in the Panel Room of the Old Courthouse.

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

Chairman Wayne Goodwin called the meeting to order and Commissioner Cole presented the invocation.

#### Consent Agenda

Commissioner Downum moved that the Consent Agenda be approved, including the following tax releases and budget amendments:

#### ***Tax Releases***

B Banwart	\$203.66	Taxed at too high value
J Dapper	\$125.69	Situs
J Parrish	\$181.45	Vehicle purchased in December
B Riddick	\$111.67	Wrong account
S Stallings	\$133.51	Vehicle returned
E White	\$115.52	Returned vehicle

#### ***Budget Amendments***

3531 DSS	inc	\$15,100	Increase in daycare funding
		6,370	Increase in crisis funding
4730 NRCS	dec	988	Correct to align with actual funding
3612 Recreation	dec	8,722	D F Walker renovation
3600 ALC	inc	66,045	Establish budget for ALC operation

#### Scattered Site Housing Program

Carolyn Morris with Albemarle Commission asked the Board to approve a line item transfer of \$55,000. The change was needed due to the fact that the house should not be demolished since it is in the historic district. The house, located at 115 E Carteret Street, has a lead problem. A risk assessment has been performed on the 960 sq feet home. Commissioner Cole made a motion to approve the transfer.

Ayes 7

No 0

Mr. Evans in the audience was added to the agenda. He presented his concern about speeding drivers on Tip Toe Road and questioned the Board about the possibility of changing the speed limit to 45 instead of 55. He also shared a concern regarding the exit ramp at exit 224. To the right side of that exit is a yield sign and to the left is a stop sign.

County Manager Cliff Copeland said he would contact DOT about these concerns and ask DOT to update Mr. Evans on the issue.

#### Volunteer Projects

Horticulture Agent Katy Gray made a presentation on the Master Gardener Program which consists of 40 hours of training and followed by 40 hours of service to the County. Projects that have been underway through this program include the entrance way at the American Legion, pruning at the Agriculture Center and also wheelchair accessible gardens for the Chowan Life Center. Projects are selected from interests of the Master Gardeners and/or requests from others. This program serves Chowan, Gates and Perquimans Counties.

#### Planning and Inspections Report

Planner Elizabeth Bryant introduced the new Administrative Assistant, Susanne Stallings. Mrs. Bryant also thanked the Commissioners for approving the subdivision buffer requirement at last month's meeting because it was a big help when reviewing plans that were brought to her last week for a 23-lot project.

#### Public Safety Committee Report

Commissioner Alligood asked the Sheriff to give an update on the proposed communications tower that was discussed at the Public Safety Committee meeting. Sheriff Spruill said the proposed site has been investigated and surveyed. He stated that work should start in July with a completion date of October. The Sheriff also discussed a Highway grant for \$16,850, with no local match, to be utilized by June. Monies from this grant can be spent on trailers to haul equipment, traffic cones and checkpoint signs used at license checks, seat belt checks, etc. Commissioner Belfield made a motion to adopt a resolution to accept the grant.

Ayes 7

No 0

Emergency Services Director Doug Belch discussed an EMS call summary that was presented to the Public Safety Committee. Emphasis was placed on the increased amount of calls from 2004 to 2005. County Manager Cliff Copeland noted that the point-to-point transfers take a lot of time, but hopes that the extra calls will contribute to a positive cash flow for EMS. He stated that as calls increase, the County will need to investigate the use of a transfer team. Commissioner Alligood stressed that the EMS department is extremely busy and more assistance is needed. He also stated that Bertie County has 6 different transfer teams which seem to be doing well and that Chowan County might be losing money by not having one. Commissioner Downum asked what training is required. Commissioner Alligood stated that EMT's can fill the positions. Mr. Copeland said this issue is being closely monitored.

#### Human Resources Committee Report

Commissioner Gardner asked Social Services Director Ben Rose to report on his behalf from the Human Resources Committee. Mr. Rose discussed proposed Medicaid

legislation which would assist counties by the State assuming responsibility for Medicaid funding. The proposal includes plans that the county contribution would decrease over the next few years, as the State assumed more responsibility. He also discussed the food stamps program on an outreach plan with a 68% penetration rate. This is to increase benefits for those over 65 and is a new program for the elderly which becomes effective in September.

Mr. Rose stated that discussions have been made concerning a satellite office in the northern end of the County to assist with access for the elderly population and others with transportation issues.

Mr. Rose reported that an increase in participation for prescription drugs and long term care has taken place.

Commissioner Gardner asked Recreation Director Robbie Laughton to update from his discussions at the Human Resources Committee meeting. Mr. Laughton reviewed the February monthly report. He said that the number of participants in town, which takes place at the Old Armory due to gym renovations at D F Walker, is over 3300. Participant rate for the Northern Community Center is 4500, for a total of 7800 participants. He discussed projects that are currently underway. He stated the Walker gym renovation which includes new goals, bleachers, restrooms and dressing rooms is almost complete. Another project is the Holladay's Island camping platforms which will be open to public in the middle of April.

Mr. Laughton stated that with this much demand, the facilities steadily need to be upgraded and/or expanded. He thanked the County Manager and the Board for their continued support for the recreation department.

In response to Commissioner Gardner's question about the condition of Earnhardt Field, Mr. Laughton stated that the safety issues have been resolved. Mr. Copeland noted that facility issues will be addressed in the Capital Outlay Plan. He stated that he would like to see the County be able to identify a dedicated and steady stream of funding for recreational uses to address the dramatically increasing demands for service.

Commissioner Goodwin asked Mr. Laughton to update the Board on the golf course proposal. Mr. Laughton explained that this proposed project is for a Par-3 Golf Course located behind the Northern Community Center on 7 acres of land. The Chowan Golf and Country Club is aware of the project and is interested in assisting with the project. This golf course would be open to the public and information is being gathered regarding annual maintenance costs, revenues, and other issues to determine the feasibility.

Commissioner Goodwin stated this is an interest from the public and he hopes to see such a golf course available.

#### Finance Report

Finance Officer Lisa Jones stated that budget packets have been sent out to the Department Heads and are due back March 16<sup>th</sup>. Mrs. Jones stated that she and the County Manager will review and prioritize capital needs requests and are developing a 5-year Capital Outlay Plan. Mrs. Jones reported that EMS collections for February were \$63,000. She stated that revenues are budgeted at \$55,000 per month, and this is the first time collections have exceeded budget.

Mrs. Jones asked the Board to approve a signature card with RBC Centura which will authorize the Chairman, Manager, Finance Officer and Asst Finance Officer to sign for the County. Commissioner Belfield made a motion that the authorization be approved.

Ayes 7

No 0

Commissioner Belfield also moved that Kim Smith, Assistant Finance Officer, be authorized to assist with transactions for the County.

Ayes 7

No 0

#### 2006 Property Revaluation Update

Tax Supervisor Lynda Hendricks commented on time and efforts the Tax Office staff has put in to get the job done. Mrs. Hendricks introduced Robert Ezzell of Pearson Appraisals, who is assisting with the revaluation process. She stated that the County has 12,000 parcels of land which are on 131 maps at the Courthouse. Of those 131 maps, 107 have been checked by the staff. Mrs. Hendricks reported that she attended a meeting with Cooperative Extension Chairman Mike Williams on land use. She stated she will hold an informal meeting to inform the public of the process and will invite landowners, attorneys, real estate agents, and appraisers. She stated that public hearings will take place in July, with the adoption of values to take place in August. Tax bills will be mailed in September. This revaluation will affect the 2006-2007 budget year and fairly significant increases in values are expected.

#### Public Hearing and Public Meeting Dates

Rural Operating Assistance Program

Law Enforcement Center/Emergency Operating Center Funding

2005 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant

Board of Equalization and Review

The County Manager requested that the Board schedule a public hearing to receive comment on the Rural Operating Assistance Program application and also a public meeting on the Law Enforcement Center/Emergency Operating Center funding. He asked the Board to schedule these two items for the April 4 meeting at 6:15 pm. He also requested that the Board schedule a public hearing to receive comment on needs that may be addressed through a 2005 Small Cities Community Development Block Grant, at the April 4 meeting at 6:00 pm. Also, that the Board schedule a meeting of the Board of Equalization and Review for the April 4 meeting at 7:00pm and May 2 meeting at 9:30am.

Commissioner Alligood motioned that the agenda items be scheduled as requested.

Ayes 7

No 0

#### Public Comment

None offered.

### Manager's Report

Hunting legislation approved last session failed to include the "must be able to show written permission from the landowner to hunt" as requested. Representative Culpepper will have the request resubmitted in this year's session.

The County Manager said plans are still moving along with the sewer study. He stated as work progresses, there will be a Planning/Enterprise Committee meeting for a status update scheduled.

He reported that Commissioner Alligood had asked about a weekly column in The Chowan Herald to summarize departmental activities for the public. Cliff stated he will be implementing that process soon. He asked the Board for feedback on the weekly manager reports and the Board said they were very informative.

The meeting was adjourned.

Carrie B. Byrum, Deputy County Clerk