

Regular Meeting
March 3, 2003

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, March 3, 2003 at 9:00 am in the Commissioners Room, Courthouse.

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

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

Consent Agenda

By motion of Commissioner Jones, the Consent Agenda, including the minutes of the February meeting, and the following budget amendments and tax reliefs, was approved.

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Budget Amendments

5333 DSS	inc	\$61,853	Smart Start funding
5372 DSS	inc	\$12,600	Crisis funding
4248 Rec/Walker	inc	132	insurance pymt-damage to building
6130 Rec	inc	500	donation to purchase signs
4920 EDC	inc	\$145,000	State assistance to Edenton Dyeing & Finishing
6131 Rec	inc	449	fees-afterschool program
4268 SrCenter	inc	6,991	Albemarle Commission grant
4317 Sheriff	inc	25,000	donations/drug seizures
6130 Rec	inc	50,000	Pembroke Creek boardwalk grant

Tax Reliefs

SL Holder	\$103.73	vehicle turned in
TA Lane	\$102.86	listed in Perquimans

Finance Report

County Manager Cliff Copeland presented the January financial report with all funds showing no unusual conditions. The finance committee will meet in March.

College of the Albemarle Chowan Campus - Walker School Renovation
Commissioner Winslow introduced COA Interim President Lynne Bunch to present proposed plans for renovations at the Old Walker School for a Chowan Campus. Bond monies of \$900,000 are available from the State for this project. Mrs. Bunch presented results from a long range facility plan to determine space needs and also a study prepared by Traub Architecture to design a conversion of the former DF Walker School into a college campus. At the present, 16,553 square feet of space is dedicated to program and support areas. An additional 20,780 sf is needed to meet current space needs. The Construction Technologies Program has the greatest need for space (6,000sf). With a 4% projected growth by 2010, a total square footage requirement of 47,859 sf is estimated.

To renovate four existing buildings at the Old Walker School, provide landscaping and build two buildings (automotive and technology) was estimated at \$7.4 million by Architect Jerry Traub.

Phase I (using the \$900,000 bond money) is proposed to provide:
* conversion of the outdoor appearance (establish parking, outdoor lighting, entrance and roads (from Blades Street), fencing around Center and signage;
* renovate buildings 3, 4 and 2 as far as the money will go.

Following a favorable comment from the Board of Commissioners, the COA Board of Trustees will consider approval at its March 10 meeting for submission to State Construction. Mrs. Bunch hopes to have approval to begin work in early fall.

Chowan Campus Dean Lynn Hurdle-Winslow stated that with additional space, the cooperative programs between COA and the High School will be expanded, as well as additional college-level programs.

Commissioner Alligood made a motion that the Commissioners approve the plan as presented.

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Pembroke Creek No Wake Zone Proposal

Upon request and petition from landowners along Pembroke Creek, and following the Commissioners' discussion at a previous meeting, Commissioner Jones and the County Manager met with an official from the Wildlife Commission who confirmed that, in his opinion, there are safety issues that should be addressed.

By motion of Commissioner Jones, the Board voted to request Representative Bill Culpepper to draft legislation designating a no wake zone from the Pembroke Creek/Highway 17 Bridge northwest into the Creek behind and around Dillard's Island, and to schedule a public hearing to receive comment on the proposal at the April 7 meeting at 6:00 pm.

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Baptist Children's Home

Commissioners Belfield, Goodwin and Jones, County Manager Copeland, Economic Development Director Richard Bunch and Rev. Don English, Pastor of Center Hill Baptist Church and Moderator of the Chowan Baptist Association, visited one of the North Carolina Baptist Children's Homes, the Kennedy Home at Kinston, last week. Baptist Children's Home is interested in locating a facility in Northeastern North Carolina to serve emergency needs and eventually, longer term needs.

Commissioners Belfield, Goodwin and Jones spoke favorably about the home and the meeting with Bob Stump, BCH representative. DSS Director Ben Rose has had conversation with Mr. Stump since the visit to investigate ways BCH and the County can work together to meet emergency care and family crisis needs.

Rev. English spoke supporting the needed service for local children and voiced the support of the 64 churches in the Chowan Baptist Association.

Mr. Bunch noted that ten acres are requested for two \$750,000 home units with up to 15 jobs at above local average salary.

By motion of Commissioner Goodwin, the County staff was instructed to work with Baptist Children's Homes to work out arrangements for an emergency care agreement and to identify a site for the construction of the homes.

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Clean Water Management Trust Fund Grant - Country Club Area Drainage
Commissioner Winslow made a motion that the County accept a grant in the amount of \$414,000 to fund the creation of buffers, wetlands and conservation easements in the vicinity of the Chowan Golf and Country Club, and that the County adopt the Capital Project Ordinance, according to NC General Statutes. No direct contribution from the County is required, but the County will provide administrative support. The Project Ordinance will include a contribution from Chowan Golf and Country Club in the amount of \$50,000 and an EPA 319 Grant in the amount of \$120,000, for a total project cost of \$584,000.

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Draft Solid Waste Management Plan and Schedule Public Hearing
The Planning and Enterprise Committee will review the proposed Solid Waste Management Plan, as prepared by the Albemarle Solid Waste Authority, at its April 3 meeting. The Committee will present its recommendation at the April 7 meeting. By motion of Commissioner Alligood, a public hearing will also be held at the April 7 meeting to receive comment on the proposed plan, at 6:00pm.

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Public Safety Committee Report

Commissioner Cole noted the importance of good law enforcement in a community, and specifically commended Sheriff Fred Spruill for the outstanding job being done to insure a safe environment. He presented the Sheriff's handout describing activities of law enforcement in Chowan County and commented that "the public does not realize all that goes on to provide this safe environment".

The Sheriff's handout explained the many facets of law enforcement and the duties required, training requirements, jail administration, central communications dispatch, court and other services.

The Sheriff noted that the crime rate has decreased in Chowan County over the last three years.

Commissioner Cole reported that EMS Coordinator Doug Belch spoke concerning the recruitment efforts for volunteer, part-time and full-time EMS coverage in the County.

Commissioner Alligood, a 24-year veteran of the Rescue Squad, noted the continuing increase of training hours requirements and other demands making recruitment difficult.

Human Services Committee

Commissioner Jones introduced DSS Director Ben Rose. Mr. Rose expressed his appreciation to the Commissioners for allowing him and his staff to present information on the areas of work in the department. He noted two items:

- *Since Chowan County has moved from food stamp "coupons" to the "debit card" system, food stamp fraud has been reduced by 75%.
- *An additional \$72,000 day care allocation has been received from the State, a reallocation of funds, which has prevented any clients being removed from the Chowan program.

Commissioner Jones introduced Recreation Dept Director Robbie Laughton who presented 2002 participation numbers:

Youth participants - 1355 registrations on 104 organized sports teams
1658 other programs
Adult participants - 550 registrations on 34 sports teams
1270 other programs

totaling almost 5000 registrations, one-third of County population, plus all the spectators.

In 2002, there were 26,409 registrations for various programs at the Northern Chowan Community Center with a total revenue of \$30,184 generated by fees.

Mr. Laughton noted the quote from a movie, "if you build it, they will come", and they surely have.

Planner Chad Sary announced that a Greenways Plan Public Review is scheduled for March 12, 5:30-7:00pm at the Walker Recreation Center.

Manager's Report

Mr. Copeland announced that Fire Chief Westbrook had the new Edenton Fire Department tanker equipment outside for the Commissioners' inspection. He also commented on the fire inspections program in Chowan County, headed by Chief Westbrook, working with inspectors Firemen Swanner and Copeland. Inspections are done annually or every two to three years, as set by the State of North Carolina. Chief Westbrook expressed his appreciation to the Commissioners for the purchase of the new equipment and the Board's support.

A Rural Internet Access Authority grant has been received by Chowan County for a community portal to various government and non-profit sites. Joe Sliva will serve as administrator of this project.

Commissioner Downum presented a letter and information from Bill Miller concerning county Medicaid costs. Mr. Miller provided a copy of a position paper he presented to the AARP North Carolina's Advocacy Council at its February meeting. He requested that Chowan County support the Association of County Commissioners in its efforts that the State assume county shares of Medicaid payments, as is the case in other states. The benefit of these payments coming from the State, instead of County taxes, is that everyone will pay a fairer share of the burden, and counties with a high percentage of Medicaid patients will not be using a disproportionate share of their operating budgets to fund the program.

Review of County Hunting Laws

Commissioner Jones made a motion that the County Manager be authorized to form a committee including the Manager, the Sheriff, Commissioners, landowners and representatives of the local hunting clubs, to review the County's hunting laws. These laws have not been reviewed since 1985.

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Board Appointment - Albemarle Commission

Commissioner Alligood made a motion that Glorious Elliott be appointed to the Albemarle Commission Board of Directors as the County's second member, along with Commissioner Cole.

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Cable Service

Commissioner Alligood requested that the County Manager's Office contact the cable company to determine if cable service could be provided to the Macedonia/Wildcat Road area.

Public Comment

None offered.

The meeting was adjourned.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk