

Regular Meeting
December 5, 2005

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, December 5, 2005 at 6:00 pm in the Panel Room of the 1767 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 Belfield moved that the Consent Agenda, including the minutes, tax releases and budget amendment, be approved.

Ayes 7

No 0

Tax Releases

CC Bean	\$137.74	vehicle sold
DB Davenport	\$246.13	listed in Bertie
WW Dibbern	\$109.49	relieve town tax
ME Hamilton	\$112.47	vehicle sold
Colonial Credit Inc	\$133.56	vehicle sold

Budget Amendment

4268 Sr.Center	\$5,000	state grant
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Organizational Meeting

County Manager Cliff Copeland moderated the organizational meeting, as stipulated in the North Carolina General Statutes that Boards of Commissioners organize themselves annually at the first meeting in December.

Mr. Copeland opened the floor for nominations for Chairman.

Commissioner Belfield made a motion that Chairman Goodwin and Vice Chairman Cole continue to serve in those positions for the 2006 year.

Ayes 7

No 0

The County Manager turned the meeting over to Chairman Goodwin. Chairman Goodwin asked that all Commissioner Committees remain the same, which was agreeable to the Board members.

Concerning the meeting schedule, Commissioner Alligood made a motion that all meetings be held at 6:00pm, instead of the alternating schedule of morning and evenings meetings.

Ayes 2

No 5

The alternating schedule will remain, 9:00 a.m. and 6:00p.m.

Reschedule January Meeting

Due to the New Year Holiday, the January meeting will be January 9 at 9:00 a.m., by motion of Commissioner Gardner.

Ayes 7

No 0

Planning/Inspections Report

Planner Elizabeth Bryant reported that the Planning Board reviewed a sketch plan for a 19-lot subdivision on Gliden Road. The developers were seeking comment from the Planning Board and a plat is expected at a later date.

She reported that the Building Inspectors have performed more than 3600 inspections and issued more than 1100 permits so far this year.

The unsafe building in Cape Colony was demolished last week and the lot is being cleared of debris.

Mrs. Bryant said that a part of the Land Use Plan process includes citizen input and the establishment of an advisory committee to work with the consultants and public.

Commissioner Winslow moved that Roger Spivey and Fred Smith from the Planning Board and Commissioner Allgood serve as the County's representatives on the advisory committee.

Ayes 7

No 0

Development Fees

Mr. Copeland presented the development fee proposal discussed at last month's meeting. He noted the County's need to plan ahead to insure a county water supply and the County Engineer's ten-year projected growth. Water treatment, wells, tanks and the replacement of water mains total more than \$9 million. Since it should not be the burden of existing users to pay the cost of expansion, like other counties, a user fee is recommended. A one-inch tap fee of \$2500 and a two-inch tap fee of \$3500 is recommended, to be assessed at the time the tap-on is requested.

Commissioner Downum made a motion that the following Ordinance to Create a Water Use Development Fee be authorized, effective immediately.

Ayes 7

No 0

Ordinance to Create A Water Use Development Fee

WHEREAS, Chowan County currently operates a "public enterprise" pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 153A-274, specifically a water supply and distribution system for the use and benefit of the County and its citizens; and,

WHEREAS, Chowan County is currently experiencing, and does project, unprecedented residential development growth which will cause the need to expand its current system to provide for greater use capacity for a larger number of customers in the immediate future; and,

WHEREAS, pursuant to North Carolina General Statute 153A-277, Chowan County has the authority to “establish and revise from time to time schedules of rents, rates, fees, charges and penalties for the use of or the services furnished by a public enterprise”; and,

WHEREAS, the current tap-on fee charged by Chowan County for each new water customer is not projected to cover the costs of capital improvements necessary to expand the water system to a capacity sufficient to serve the projected number of new water customers over the next five to ten years; and,

WHEREAS, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners finds that it is not equitable to increase the water rates of existing customers to pay for capital improvements necessary to serve new water customers.

NOW, THEREFORE, after consideration of the projected estimated capital costs necessary to expand Chowan County’s current water supply and distribution system to accommodate a capacity sufficient to serve the projected increase in water customers over the next five to ten years,

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Chowan County that a Water Use Development Fee is hereby created and shall be imposed, in addition to the existing tap-on fee, on all new water customers henceforth in an amount determined as follows:

1. \$2500 for each new water tap no greater than one inch in size.
2. \$3500 for each new water tap no greater than two inches in size.
3. Water customers requiring a tap greater than two inches in size will be charged a fee based on Chowan County’s evaluation of the developer’s engineering plans and considering the development’s potential impact on water system capacities.
4. The Water Use Development Fee shall be due and payable before a tap is installed by the Chowan County Water Department.

The provisions of this ordinance shall be effective from and after the date of its adoption, this the 5th day of December, 2005.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk

Food Stamp Program

DSS Director Ben Rose presented a history and report of the current food stamp program in Chowan County. Working poor families, the aged and the disabled comprise 60-75% of the County’s caseload, totaling 2000 individuals in 950 households, for a total of \$2 million per year.

Energy Program

Mr. Rose discussed the Crisis Intervention Program whereby the County uses these funds of approximately \$20,000, to assist in crisis events. Emphasis is placed on serving families with young children, elderly and disabled members. Money is also allocated to assist families in crisis such as lay-offs and temporary disabilities.

John Locke Foundation Report – Medicaid Program in North Carolina

Mr. Copeland shared information from a report by the John Locke Foundation which examined the North Carolina Medicaid Program. North Carolina is the only state which requires its counties to fund Medicaid costs, up to 15% of the general fund budget and 39% of the property tax revenues in some counties. The John Locke Foundation report determined that the State of North Carolina should eliminate the county share of Medicaid in five years.

Recognition of 2005 Albemarle Resource Conservation and Development Awards
Mr. Copeland announced that at its recent awards banquet, the Albemarle Resource Conservation and Development Service recognized individuals for their contributions to the conservation and development efforts in the Albemarle Region. Peter Rascoe and Robbie Laughton were among those recognized. Mr. Rascoe was recognized for his efforts to secure a partnering contract with Chowan County and the USDA to fund the ARC&D interim coordinator. Mr. Laughton was recognized for his assistance in the construction of the Holladay's Island camping platforms.

Board Appointment – ARC&D Board

Peter Rascoe has served as the County's representative on the ARC&D Board, but his recent appointment to the Clean Water Management Trust Fund Board required that he resign from the ARC&D position. By motion of Commissioner Downum, Robbie Laughton was appointed to fill the vacant seat.

Ayes 7

No 0

Resolution Regarding the Reallocation of Pre-Trial Release Program Funding

Commissioner Alligood moved that the following resolution be approved supporting the reallocation of funding for the Pre-Trial Release Program.

Ayes 7

No 0

Resolution

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Legislature passed SB 622 , with Section 17.23 addressing the Criminal Justice Partnership program, and eliminating funding for the Pre-Trial Release program (PTR) as of July 1, 2006; and,

WHEREAS, currently there are 30 active clients across the six-county Albemarle area in the PTR Program. At the termination of the PTR Program, all 30 of these clients would need to return to custody under another type of bond as these defendants were released under an unsecured bond with PTR conditions. Most likely the bond will need to be secured and most likely that person will go to jail until either able to post bond or adjudicated by the court; and,

WHEREAS, to return these 30 clients to custody would involve an influx at the three local jails, Albemarle District Jail, Chowan County Detention Center and the Currituck County Jail; and since the current population of each of these detention centers is already

above capacity, inmates will need to be housed at other jails, resulting in additional costs to the county taxpayers of an average of \$46/day and medical costs; and,

WHEREAS, the PTR program provides assistance for Judges and District Attorneys, including information regarding residence, employment/school, community ties, arrest record, probation information and information from the arresting officer, which allows more accurate and fair decisions to be made; and,

WHEREAS, the PTR program facilitates resolutions of charges, freeing up jail space and court calendar space; and,

WHEREAS, the elimination of the PTR Program is not endorsed by the Albemarle Region Criminal Justice Partnership Program Advisory Board; and,

WHEREAS, it is the conclusion of the Chowan County Board of Commissioners that closure of the PTR Program will have a serious impact on the justice system across the six-county Albemarle area, and will place an additional cost burden on counties and taxpayers.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Chowan County Board of Commissioners requests that funding for the PTR Program be restored, thus allowing the Albemarle Region Criminal Justice Partnership Program to continue to be an asset to the taxpayers and to the justice system of the six-county Albemarle area.

Adopted today, December 5, 2005.
Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk

Quarterly Fiscal Monitoring Report for the Albemarle Mental Health Center
Albemarle Mental Health Center's Quarterly Fiscal Monitoring Report for September 30, 2005, was presented to the Board of Commissioners, as required by Mental Health Reform legislation (which requires that the Center's Quarterly Fiscal Monitoring Report be presented to the Board of Commissioners at least twice per year).

Public Comment

Dawsey Pruden said that when he went to the convenience site this morning, all the dumpsters were full from the weekend. The overflow dumpster is six feet high and short people and elderly folks are not able to get the trash over the side of the dumpster. He requested that the County investigate a shorter sided dumpster or open sided dumpster.

New 4-H Agent Introduced

Extension Director Mike Williams introduced Ginger Morelock, the new 4-H Agent. Ms. Morelock replaced Amy Damrow who left to return to school.

Manager's Report

Library

Mr. Copeland announced that the loan application with the USDA for the renovations to the library has been submitted.

Law Enforcement Center

He also reported that staff members are working with the architects on the plans for the law enforcement center to determine ways to trim some of the costs. Several ideas are being discussed and a report will be presented to the Commissioners.

Selective Service

A request has been received from the Selective Service System requesting the appointment of a volunteer willing to serve as a member of the local draft board. The Commissioners agreed to seek a volunteer to serve in this capacity.

Layoffs at George C Moore and Weyerhaeuser

Mr. Copeland announced that word was received last week from Weyerhaeuser in Plymouth and from George C. Moore in Edenton that layoffs are planned. Production contracts for the Edenton George C. Moore have been transferred to a plant in South America and the Edenton plant expects the first phase of layoff in April of 2006. Weyerhaeuser announced the closing a one of the paper divisions at the Plymouth plant, involving 200 workers. Mr. Copeland stated that the local job market is strong and believes that these workers will be able to find work with other local employers. The Chamber of Commerce has already identified a transition team to provide job location assistance, workforce development, educational assistance and providing basic human needs along with creating and providing working relationships with the individuals going through this transition period. Job fairs will be scheduled for the workers.

Commissioner Cole noted that Elizabeth City State University has a job fair planned for the Spring where these workers may participate.

Funding for Hugh Williamson Memorial Project and Bandon Kitchen Project

Staff Attorney Peter Rascoe reported that the General Assembly funded two local projects, the Hugh Williamson Memorial Project and the preservation of the Bandon Plantation Kitchen. The allocation was not made to Chowan County, but to the Department of Cultural Resources. These projects will have to go through the state bidding and contracting requirements. In a meeting with representatives from Cultural Resources, local representatives were assured that the plans and local preferences will be considered in the decisions to construct and complete these projects.

2006 Revaluation

Tax Administrator Lynda Hendricks said that revaluation notices were mailed November 28 and that 190 individuals have met with the appraiser to review their property values.

Taxpayers have complimented the consistency in values.

Ms. Hendricks will continue to respond to inquiries and the Board of Equalization and Review will be scheduled in the Spring.

The meeting was adjourned.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk