

Regular Meeting  
September 13, 2004

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, September 13, 2004 at 9:00 a.m. 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 Jones presented the invocation.

Consent Agenda

Commissioner Alligood moved that the Consent Agenda, including the meeting minutes, the following budget amendments and tax releases and the Capital Project Ordinance, be approved.

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Budget Amendments

4381 Animal Shelter	inc	\$1/500	SPCA part-time position
5321 DSS	dec	24	Links Funding
5333 DSS	dec	33/651	Smart Start
5354 DSS	inc	80/350	Day Care Funding
6132 Rec Dept	inc	85/140	grant for Walker gym

Tax Reliefs

JR Hartwell	\$169.02	duplicate tags
CM Lane	\$297.30	duplicate listing
GH Fenner	\$1143.53	listed in Florida

Phase One - Water Dept Generator Project - Capital Project Ordinance \$430,000.

Board Appointments

Airport Commission

By motion of Commissioner Jones, Marge Soper was reappointed to the Airport Commission.

Edenton Planning Board

Bill Gardner chose not to seek reappointment to the Edenton Planning Board. Commissioners will make an appointment at the next meeting.

Corrections to Junk Car Ordinance and Noxious Weeds and Nuisance Ordinance

Planner Elizabeth Bryant presented a proposed amended Noxious Weeds and Nuisance Ordinance and recommended two changes:

1. to change the title to more clearly define the purview of the ordinance, to "Public Nuisance Ordinance",
2. to include language that identifies an abandoned vehicle as a nuisance, therefore an abandoned vehicle can be declared a public health and/or public safety hazard, as defined by State Statute; then, the County has the authority to remove the vehicle.

She requested that the Junk Car Ordinance be amended to include the definition of an abandoned vehicle, as required by State law. A vehicle must be declared abandoned before it can be considered "junked".

These corrections to the ordinances will bring them into compliance with State Statutes which grants the County regulatory authority. Commissioner Alligood made a motion that the Board approve the changes to the Public Nuisance Ordinance and the Junk Car Ordinance.

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#### Cell Phone Tower Coverage

Since Hurricane Isabel, the lack of cell phone coverage in the northern sector of the County is recognized as a public safety issue. During the last two months, when County staff has met with community organizations to discuss planning initiatives, one of the issues constantly presented is the lack of cell phone coverage north of Edenton. County staff visited the Greenville NC U.S. Cellular office to discuss the construction of a cell tower in Chowan County to alleviate this problem. U.S. Cellular plans to build a tower in Chowan County in 2006 or 2007.

Alternatives to accelerate this schedule were discussed. The U.S. Cellular representatives suggested that local officials document how the lack of cell phone coverage affected the County's ability to provide service following the storm, and provide this information to the appropriate officers of the U.S. Cellular Corporation. Mr. Copeland also suggested that the same information be submitted to Alltel as well. Who the carrier is does not matter, as long as the County receives the service.

Mr. Copeland presented a resolution for the Board's consideration to be submitted to U.S. Cellular, Alltel and the Federal Communications Commission.

By motion of Commissioner Jones, the Commissioners authorized the following resolution.

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#### Resolution

WHEREAS, cell phones are increasingly utilized by the citizens of Chowan County and have become a vital communications link; and,

WHEREAS, as demonstrated by Hurricane Isabel, cell phone coverage is less susceptible to disruption by storms and other disasters; and,

WHEREAS, Chowan County's Sheriff's Department, Emergency Management Services, the Water Department and the Fire Departments utilize cell phones in the provision of public safety and public health efforts.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners does hereby request that U.S. Cellular provide improved cellular tower coverage in the northern sector of Chowan County so that the public health and safety of our citizens might be enhanced; and,

FURTHER, DIRECTS that this Resolution be submitted to the President of U.S. Cellular and to the Federal Communications Commission.

Adopted today, September 13, 2004, by the Chowan County Board of Commissioners.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk

#### Human Services Committee Report

Janet Respass, DSS Supervisor for the Work First Program, presented a recommendation that the County continue the Standard Status for the Work First Program, that the County will continue to utilize the State's recommended policy, that a separate plan for the County not be developed.

By motion of Commissioner Cole, the Board authorized the Standard Status for the Work First Program.

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Commissioner Jones noted that only two states in the nation, North Carolina being one of them, require counties to pay medicaid costs not federally funded. Mr. Copeland responded saying that this will cost Chowan County \$1.1 million this year. Mr. Copeland also stated that with the financial condition of the

State, he does not anticipate much change, but that the NC Association of Counties continues to lobby for the State to put a cap on costs to the counties, that the State pick up the difference.

Recreation Dept Director Robbie Laughton presented reports that 1168 youth, 243 adults and 147 coaches participated in summer activities. Fall schedule signups include 423 youth, 144 adults and 57 coaches. A certified instructor has been hired for the new gymnastics/ tumbling program and 44 youth are enrolled.

A letter from Bob and Jill Jordan on behalf of the parents, ballplayers and coaches of the Albemarle 2004 16-year old Babe Ruth Team was presented, thanking the Board of Commissioners for its support. Mr. Laughton commented that the team "made us proud" with their diligence, stamina, sportsmanship and victory. He noted several on-going projects, including the Walker gym renovations, Holladay's Island camping platforms, Bennett's Millpond, Pembroke Creek Boardwalk, and the Purser Field parking lot improvements. He also reported on an agreement between the County Recreation Department and the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southeast Virginia to bring expanded programs to Chowan County. Operations are scheduled to begin in January at the Old Walker School/Recreation Dept.

#### Public Comment

Jim Leggett complimented the Commissioners on their efforts to control junked vehicles in the County and, at the same time, protect owners' rights.

#### Manager's Report

Mr. Copeland reported that the Personnel Policy will be presented to the Finance Committee in October, for presentation to the Board. Boatbuilding Institute.

He announced that College of the Albemarle is working with the County to establish a boatbuilding institute to train employees for the boatbuilding industry. Chowan County has three major boatbuilding industries, one repair business, and a new boatbuilding company ready to locate in the County in the next few months. Trained manpower is an issue for these companies since they all have plenty of work.

#### Old Courthouse Re-Opening

The schedule of events includes:

Thursday, October 7 2:00 pm - Quarterly meeting of the NC Historical Commission

Thursday, October 7 7:00 pm - dinner in honor of Justices of NC Supreme Court and members of NC Historical Commission at Hayes Plantation

Friday, October 8 9:30 am - Special session of NC Supreme Court Friday, October 8 12:00 noon - lunch in honor of Justices of NC Supreme Court

Friday, October 8 2:00 pm - Public ceremony to re-open Courthouse Friday, October 8 6:00 pm - Edenton Historical Commission host to formal gala on the Courthouse Green (ticketed event).

The regular meeting was adjourned and the Commissioners toured the Old Courthouse.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk