

Regular Meeting  
November 7, 2005

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners met in regular session on Monday, November 7, 2005 at 9:00 a.m. in the Panel Room of the 1767 Courthouse.

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

Absent: Louis Belfield, due to a family emergency.

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

#### Consent Agenda

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

Ayes 6

No 0

#### Budget Amendments

5333 DSS	decrease	\$11,632	Smart Start funding
Various depts.	Increase	7,469	reimbursement from FEMA for Hurricane Ophelia expenses
4370 EMS	increase	8,166	bioterrorism grant
6132 Rec	increase	49,985	state grant for Dillard's Mill Dam restoration
Various depts.	Increase	24,465	insurance proceeds – lightning Strike 7-15-05
4268 Sr Center	increase	1,716	aging grant
4268 Sr Center	increase	6,896	aging grant
5352 DSS	increase	40,000	medicaid transportation reimbursement
5345 DSS	increase	81,546	day care funding

#### Tax Releases

CS Brown	\$166.66	listed in Perquimans Co
SW Harrell	\$349.69	reduced value – unfinished garage
BL Hux	\$217.97	vehicle totaled
VJ Kopp	\$223.35	vehicle sold
AH Perry	\$174.91	vehicle sold
LD Shaw	\$176.70	listed in Virginia
DM Tynch	\$253.74	vehicle sold

Public Hearing – Occupancy Tax

The regular meeting was recessed and the Chairman declared a public hearing on the County's proposal to increase the occupancy tax from three to five percent.

Richard Bunch, representing the Edenton Chowan Chamber of Commerce and the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority, spoke in favor of the increase for additional revenue to support the efforts of the Tourism Development Authority. He noted the many magazines and articles where the Chowan/Edenton tourism efforts are publicized, the events sponsored by the TDA, including sailing races and fishing tournaments, as well as supporting other traditional events, including the Edenton Pilgrimage and the Candlelight Tour.

No other comments were offered.

The public hearing was closed and the regular meeting reconvened.

Commissioner Downum made a motion that the following resolutions be approved to increase the occupancy tax rate to five percent, and to establish membership to the Tourism Development Authority as determined by the General Assembly.

Ayes 6

No 0

Resolution

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Assembly enacted SL 1989-174 authorizing the Chowan County Board of Commissioners to increase the occupancy tax by two percent – from three percent to five percent; and,

WHEREAS, Chowan County sought enactment of legislation upon the request of the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority, the Edenton Chowan Chamber of Commerce and the Edenton Town Council, among others; and,

WHEREAS, Chowan County has duly conducted a public hearing advertised in accordance with the North Carolina General Statutes; and,

WHEREAS, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners has determined that an increase in the occupancy tax will benefit the citizens of Chowan County in many ways, including increased jobs and general betterment of the County.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners does hereby authorize an increase in the occupancy tax from three to five percent, effective December 1, 2005.

Adopted today, November 7, 2005.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk

## Resolution

WHEREAS, the North Carolina General Statutes require that the membership of the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority includes at least one-third of the membership be individuals actively engaged in the collection of the tax, and at least one-half of the membership be individuals actively engaged in the promotion of travel and tourism in Chowan County.

NOW, THEREFORE, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners authorizes the membership of the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority to be as follows:

That the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority shall include nine members;  
Two members shall be County Commissioners, as appointed by the Board of Commissioners;

Two members shall be Edenton Town Councilors, as appointed by the Edenton Town Council;

Three members shall represent the lodging establishments that collect the tax, as appointed by the Board of Commissioners;

Two members shall be actively engaged in tourism promotion activities, as appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

The County Manager of Chowan County and/or his designee, the Town Manager of Edenton and/or his designee and the Executive Director of the Edenton Chowan Chamber of Commerce and/or his designee shall serve as ex-officio members of the Tourism Development Authority without voting privileges. The County Manager may serve as an alternate member for a Commissioner when the Commissioner is not able to attend, and the Town Manager may serve as an alternate member for a Councilperson when the Councilperson is not able to attend.

The Chairman of the Tourism Development Authority shall be appointed by the Board of Commissioners.

Adopted and effective today, November 7, 2005

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk

### Library

Library Board member Dawsey Pruden reported that the renovated library plans call for a North Carolina archives room to be included, and that local residents will be encouraged to place their family records and other archives at the library.

### Planning and Inspections

Planner Elizabeth Bryant reported that sixteen single family homes were permitted in September and October.

#### Unsafe Building at 309 Cypress Drive

Mrs. Bryant presented a request for authorization from the Board to demolish an unsafe building at 309 Cypress Drive. She noted that the County and the Building Inspectors has granted extensions to the owner, Marvin Rae, but no work has been initiated. A letter to Mr. Rae was delivered to his last known address and received by a relative who is handling the property.

Commissioner Alligood moved that authorization be approved to have the building at 309 Cypress Drive demolished and the lien placed on the property.

Ayes 6

No 0

#### Preliminary and Final Plat – Phelps Subdivision on Yeopim Road

Commissioner Winslow motioned that the County approve the subdivision plat as submitted by Christopher Scott Phelps for a six-lot subdivision on Yeopim Road, as recommended by the County Planning Board.

Ayes 5

No 1 Gardner

Discussion prior to the vote concerned buffer requirements and driveways, and the subdivision regulations concerning buffers and driveways on primary and secondary roads.

Mrs. Bryant said that in the subdivision revision, this issue will be revisited since the County may wish to provide buffers and driveway restrictions for the small subdivisions as well as the larger subdivisions.

#### Application by US Cellular for a Wireless Communications Tower on Virginia Road

Mrs. Bryant presented an application by US Cellular for a wireless communications tower to be located on Virginia Road, as reviewed and recommended by the Planning Board.

Attorney Tom Johnson, representing US Cellular, said that US Cellular planned this construction in response to customers' complaints of poor service. FAA and Historic Properties approvals have been received. A lease is in place with C.A. Perry & Son for property for the tower. The tower is scheduled to be in service by the end of this year. He distributed maps showing the improved service areas that will result with the addition of this tower.

#### Social Services Funding Cutbacks by Federal Government

DSS Director Ben Rose discussed proposed federal cutbacks in funding to Social Services programs including: decreased WorkFirst funding which includes day care funds for the working poor in low paying jobs and cannot afford day care costs; decreased Child Welfare treatment and foster care funds; increased restrictions for food stamps benefits; reduced Medicaid for long term care and drug reimbursements; and reduced Child Support administrative reimbursement from 66% to 50%.

Mr. Copeland said that the County will prepare a letter to the congressional delegation stating the County's predicament with these cuts.

#### Strategic Planning for Chowan County

In the mid 1990's, the County, Town, Chamber of Commerce, the Board of Education and the Hospital spearheaded an effort to develop a Year 2000 strategic plan, referred to as Edenton-Chowan 2000. An impressive number of the stated goals has been accomplished, including the development of an Economic Development Corporation, industrial parks, an incentive policy to attract development, and an incubator facility for start-up businesses.

The Rural Development Institute of East Carolina University will provide staff to assist in updating this strategic plan. Planning sessions, a public meeting, a survey and research and analysis of the data received is included in the proposal from ECU. The County's share of the cost is estimated at \$2-3,000.

Commissioner Alligood moved that the County participate in the update of the strategic plan as described.

Ayes 6

No 0

#### Historic/Scenic Bicycle and Pedestrian Path Proposal

The County and the Town requested that NC DOT include monies in the forthcoming DOT Transportation Improvement Plan for the development of a plan for a bike and pedestrian path. This money, if included in the TIP, will not require a local match. The County and the Town would be responsible for right-of-way acquisitions, which will be minimal if existing roadways are followed.

#### Convenience Sites and Landfill Update

County Manager Cliff Copeland reported that the transition continues to progress. Recycling rates continue to improve with the new system in place. Additional containers have been placed at the Soundside Road site. A new paper compactor has been installed at the Landfill.

#### Board Appointments – Nursing Home Community Advisory Committee

By motion of Commissioner Cole, Willis Privott was reappointed to an additional term and Daisy Bemby was appointed to a first term on the Chowan County Nursing Home Advisory Committee.

Ayes 6

No 0

#### Finance Committee

Finance Officer Lisa Jones presented the October financial report with the EMS fund, the Water fund, and the Solid Waste fund all showing positive cash flow. Revenue for the General Fund is on budget. She reported that \$275, 000 has been collected in land transfer tax since July 1. Medicaid expenses are at three percent below expenses for the same time last year.

Mr. Copeland reported that he and Mrs. Jones continue to work on a capital improvements plan and hope to have a draft ready to present at the December meeting.

#### Water System Expansion Needs

Mr. Copeland presented a letter from Water System Engineer Bill Diehl outlining the needs of the Water System to meet projected customer demands, including an additional treatment plant, backwash treatment, wells with raw water main and an overhead tank. The Finance Committee recommends that this growth be paid for by the new development and not by the existing customer base. A development fee of \$2500, to be assessed at the time of the tap-on request, is being proposed by the Finance Committee. County staff will continue to work on a development fee proposal to be presented at the December meeting.

#### Recreation Survey

Recreation Supervisor Robbie Laughton reported that the survey being conducted by East Carolina University is in progress.

#### Tourism Development Authority Board Appointments

Commissioner Gardner moved that Katrina Barnes (Hampton Inn) and Dilip Amin (Super 8) be appointed to the Tourism Development Authority.

Ayes 6

No 0

#### Manager's Report

Mr. Copeland noted the recent article in The Chowan Herald "Heroes" which highlighted Commissioner Jimmy Alligood, a member of the Edenton Chowan Rescue Squad since 1979 and a community leader.

Commissioner Alligood thanked Mr. Copeland and responded that the incident reported in the article was successful because of the team effort of the EMS, where staff members work well together and are a family.

#### Jail Overcrowding

Mr. Copeland also reported that Judge Parker has scheduled a special session of Superior Court to help relieve the overcrowding in the jail. A backlog of cases and backup in the State prison system has seriously crowded the local jail capacity.

A sixteen-bed expansion is being designed for the jail, in cooperation with Gates County.

#### Energy Forum

He announced an energy forum to be held at the COA auditorium in Elizabeth City on November 22, which will be an educational meeting to discuss gas demands, off-shore drilling and the federal energy legislation.

#### FSA Office Consolidation Proposal

The federal government has also announced that it will not consolidate Farm Services Agency offices this year, contrary to its earlier plans.

#### Outlying Landing Field

The Navy is conducting a supplemental environmental impact statement, which may or may not be good news for Bertie County, Perquimans County or Washington County in their opposition to the location of an OLF in their respective counties. Public meetings are being held this week in these three counties as well as Beaufort County.

#### Tax Collection Rate

Commissioner Winslow complimented Tax Administrator Lynda Hendricks and the Tax Office staff for the excellent job done to reach a tax collection rate of 97.87% for last budget year.

#### EMS Transport

Commissioner Alligood noted that since the EMS has started doing transport and convalescent calls, the cash flow of the EMS has significantly improved. He expressed his appreciation to the EMS staff for the great job being done.

The meeting was adjourned.

Nancy B. Morgan, County Clerk