

Regular Meeting
April 15, 2014
4:00 pm
Chowan County Public Safety Center
305 West Freemason St. Edenton, NC

MINUTES

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners held their special meeting at 4:00pm on Tuesday, April 15, 2014.

Present Chairman Keith Nixon, Commissioners Jeff Smith, Greg Bonner, Alex Kehayes, Emmett Winborne, Ellis Lawrence (came in during public comment) and John Mitchener.

Staff present County Manager Kevin Howard, Finance Officer Willie Carawan and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

Call to Order

Chairman Nixon called the meeting to order and led the pledge.

Commissioner Kehayes then offered the invocation.

Approval of Agenda

Chairman Nixon noted that BA-1314-051 has been requested by staff to be added to the agenda. Commissioner Mitchener moved to approve the agenda as amended. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Public Comment

Chairman Nixon opened the floor to public comment.

There was none.

Resolution in Memory of Susan Skiles Rountree, Register of Deeds

Commissioner Mitchener moved to approve the resolution as presented.

Board Clerk Susanne Stallings read the resolution into the record.

**RESOLUTION
IN MEMORY OF
Susan Skiles Rountree "Sue"**

WHEREAS, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners hereby honors the memory of Sue Rountree as a public servant to the citizens of Chowan County; and

WHEREAS, Sue Rountree worked for the citizens through employment in Chowan County for 34 years; and

WHEREAS, Sue Rountree began working in the Tax office in 1979 and later became the Assistant Register of Deeds in 1981. She was appointed Register of Deeds July 1, 1995.

WHEREAS, at the time Sue Rountree came to work in the Register of Deeds Office, all documentation was in paper form and could only be researched manually. Sue worked diligently to bring the Register of Deeds office into the digital age.

WHEREAS, the passing of Sue Rountree leaves her fellow Register of Deeds staff and associates across the State of North Carolina with a deep feeling of sorrow for the loss of such a valuable and respected colleague; and

WHEREAS, Sue Rountree is remembered as a kind and generous woman who loved her family, friends, co-workers and the citizens of Chowan County; and

WHEREAS, Sue Rountree will continue to stand as a model of true integrity and credibility as a leader and servant for many years to come.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Chowan County Board of Commissioners extends their deepest sympathy to the family of Sue Rountree.

ADOPTED this the 15th day of April, 2014.

Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Commissioner Lawrence joined the meeting.

Ronnie Rountree remarked on the kindness his late wife Sue Rountree.

Chairman Nixon, Commissioner Winborne, Mitchener and Bonner all remarked on the outstanding good character and devotion of Sue Rountree to Chowan County and its residents.

Appointment of Register of Deeds

Board Clerk Susanne Stallings explained the process outlined in NCGS 161-5 and House Bill 652 (Chapter 376) for filling a vacancy for Register of Deeds. She noted that the Board was provided a letter of recommendation from Sue Rountree before her passing that recommends Lynn Gilliard. She noted the Democratic Party has also provided a letter of recommendation for the appointment of Lynn Gilliard.

Commissioner Smith moved to appoint Lynn C. Gilliard as the successor to fill the unexpired term as Chowan County Register of Deeds in accordance with NCGS 161-5 (a2). Ms. Gilliard's starting salary will be the base advertised salary for Chowan County Register of Deeds which is \$39,673 and the appointment will become effective at the time the oath is administered by the

Clerk to the Board of Commissioners. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Ms. Stallings noted that Ms. Gilliard is awaiting all the required seals and bonds to be in place before receiving the oath of office. Ms. Gilliard will contact Ms. Stallings to notify her when to come and administer the oath of office. (Ms. Gilliard’s oath was administered by the Clerk to the Board on April 22, 2014).

Board members congratulated Ms. Gilliard on her appointment.

Consent Agenda

Chairman Nixon then presented the consent agenda.

a. Budget Amendments

BA1314-048

Account Code	Description	Old	+ or (-)	New
33-4192-014-03	Jail	20,000.00	(226.00)	19,774.00
33-4192-014-04	Jailer's House	7,911.00	226.00	8,137.00
Capital Reserve				
22-3990-990-00	Fund Balance Appropriation	-	(59,386.00)	(59,386.00)
22-7120-595-00	Capital Outlay - Wells	-	59,386.00	59,386.00
Water Development				
	Balanced:	\$ 27,911.00	\$ -	\$ 27,911.00
Justification:				
<i>Budgeting funds to cover the Jailer's House final invoice and WaterWell (5)</i>				

BA1314-049

Account Code	Description	Old	+ or (-)	New
11-4310-121-00	Salaries & Wages - Regular	594,534.00	(14,000.00)	580,534.00
11-4310-181-00	FICA Tax	59,203.00	(1,000.00)	58,203.00
11-4310-182-00	Retirement	47,587.00	(1,000.00)	46,587.00
11-4310-183-00	Hospitalization	85,500.00	(7,000.00)	78,500.00
11-4310-184-00	Supplemental Retirement	31,182.00	(600.00)	30,582.00
11-4310-122-00	Salaries & Wages - OT / Hol	55,000.00	5,000.00	60,000.00
11-4310-126-00	Salaries & Wages - Part-time	65,000.00	18,600.00	83,600.00

Sheriff's Office

11-4270-183-00	Hospitalization	54,150.00	(800.00)	53,350.00
11-4270-261-00	Office Supplies	1,500.00	(500.00)	1,000.00
11-4270-299-00	Departmental Supplies	2,000.00	(500.00)	1,500.00
11-4270-321-00	Telephone & Postage	2,500.00	(1,000.00)	1,500.00
11-4270-352-00	Maint & Repair - Equip	6,000.00	(1,000.00)	5,000.00
11-4270-420-00	Equipment Rental	4,500.00	(4,500.00)	-
11-4270-122-00	Salaries & Wages - Overtime	41,000.00	2,800.00	43,800.00
11-4270-126-00	Salaries & Wages - Part-time	6,000.00	5,500.00	11,500.00

Central Communication

11-4320-695-00	Contr Svcs - Central Prison	33,000.00	(9,000.00)	24,000.00
11-4270-122-00	Salaries & Wages - Overtime	43,800.00	9,000.00	52,800.00

Jail / Central Communication

Balanced:		\$ 1,132,456.00	\$ -	\$ 1,132,456.00
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Justification:

Request from the Sheriff's Office to cover personnel operation costs

BA1314-050

Account Code	Description	Old	+ or (-)	New
11-9800-980-30	Transfer to Debt Service	1,397,175.00	(10,000.00)	1,387,175.00
11-4730-605-00	Hydrilla Eradication	-	10,000.00	10,000.00

Water Development

Balanced:		\$ 1,397,175.00	\$ -	\$ 1,397,175.00
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Justification:

Using funds originally budgeted for Library Trust Note to treat Hydrilla

Finance Officer Willie Carawan presented the Board with the budget amendments.

Commissioner Winborne stated he was glad to see Hydrilla treatment monies included in the proposed budget.

Chief Deputy Andy Bunch explained the budget amendment for the Sheriff/Jail and 911.

Commissioner Lawrence moved to approve the consent agenda as presented, Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Child Support Services Contract

Social Services (DSS) Director Clifton Hardison provided the Board with a proposed contract with Young Williams PC for a renewal of the contract for Child Support Services provided to Chowan County.

Commissioner Kehayes asked if the price is locked in for four years.

Mr. Hardison stated the pricing is based on other counties and is standard as previous years. He noted the increase was \$13,000 over 4 years and stated he felt that was reasonable.

Commissioner Bonner moved to approve the contract as presented. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Manager's Report

Mr. Howard stated he did not have any new items of which to report.

External Board and Committee Reports

Commissioner Kehayes stated he has completed his research of the Hopeline and its benefit to Chowan County. He stated that he has concluded that Hopeline provides a valuable service to the County.

The Board discussed previous policies to appropriate to non-profit entities.

Chairman Nixon stated he would like for DSS to look into funding Hopeline through its budget.

Commissioner Kehayes stated that the expense for housing victims would be a responsibility of the County if the service was not provided by Hopeline.

Budget Amendment 1314-051

Account Code	Description	Old	+ or (-)	New
33-9930-995-00	Designated for future Appropriation	52,813.00	(6,700.00)	46,113.00
33-4192-014-09	HVAC Units - Ag Bldg	-	6,700.00	6,700.00
Water Development				
	Balanced:	\$ 52,813.00	\$ -	\$ 52,813.00
Justification:				
<i>Additional funds needed to replace HVAC units</i>				

Mr. Howard presented the requested budget amendment to replace HVAC units at the Agricultural Building.

Commissioner Mitchener moved to approve the budget amendment as presented and to utilize monies from capital reserve to fund the replacement.

Chairman Nixon noted these funds come from the Land Transfer monies.

Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed (4-3 Nixon, Smith and Winborne).

Timely and Important Matters

Ms. Stallings noted that the Department of Revenue has requested time to meet with the Board prior to the May 5th meeting to provide an overview of the responsibilities of the Board of Equalization and Review.

The Board discussed the meeting and by consensus decided to meet at 4:30 prior to the 6:00pm meeting.

Chairman Nixon called for a five minute recess.

Budget work session

After five minutes, Chairman Nixon called the meeting back to order.

Mr. Howard presented the Board with a draft proposed budget for FY 2014-15. He stated the proposed budget included all the initial requests from departments. He stated that the difference between revenues and expenditures is approximately 10 cents on the tax rate. He noted that this is mostly a decrease in property values due to the revaluation. He noted that the vehicle tax revenues are lower than previous years because the county is required to budget what shown on the previous year audit. He noted that collections will most likely come in higher than what must be projected. He noted that he was providing the Board with a summary of all requests from departments which was \$10,000 or more than the previous year request. He noted he will be meeting with the billing company in the next week to iron out the revenues and request from the general fund for EMS operations.

Chairman Nixon asked if capital requests were included in the proposed budget.

Mr. Howard stated yes. He stated he will provide the Board with a list of all capital requests.

Chairman Nixon noted that \$100,000 has been placed in contingency.

Commissioner Smith stated he would like to review the budget again later with the manager's recommended decreases. He stated he would also like to request information on the school's fund balance.

Chairman Nixon stated he would like to schedule a joint meeting with the School Board.

Commissioner Mitchener recommended inviting COA to present their budget request.

Mr. Howard noted that the 10 cent tax increase would bring the budget to revenue neutral. He stated that after his recommended reductions the gap between revenues and expenditures would decrease.

Commissioner Lawrence stated his priority was education. He stated he would like for management to hold the line on the current year budget.

Commissioner Mitchener stated he would like to see an explanation for each department increase.

Commissioner Winborne stated the deficit concerned him. He recommended the Board look into the School fund balance. He stated he wanted to approve this budget with no tax increase.

Commissioner Kehayes stated that his concern was the percentage of increases. He stated that many of the increases could not be justified with the revaluation.

Commissioner Bonner stated that while he understands the concept of going revenue neutral his priority is consider any request from departments for increases and determine if the need is great. He stated he would like for any tax increase to be less than 5%.

Commissioner Smith stated that he wants the tax rate to remain the same. He stated that this would be where he would like to use the penny that was discussed in the previous budget year to assist the residents and lessen the tax burden. He stated that revenue neutral is not good for all residents as many agricultural land owners have seen an increase in their property values with the revaluation.

Chairman Nixon stated that he would like to see some salary increase for employees. He stated that the county is not out of the crisis from previous Board's mismanagement. He recommended that departments look into increasing their revenues and review their fee schedules to increase the revenue within the general fund. He stated he would like Chowan County's tax burden to be less than Pasquotank and neighboring counties. He discussed tax burden studies from around the state. He stated that he would like to see what 1% COLA would cost (a dollar amount). He stated that he would consider utilizing some fund balance to offset the difference. He stated the Board has in the past requested a school local budget.

Mr. Howard stated he would work on making his recommendations and bring back a proposed honest budget to the Board. He noted that there would be some impact on services if there is no increase in the tax rate.

Chairman Nixon discussed consolidation of departments to lessen the impact of effects on services. He asked about employee health insurance. He noted that the ECP Board annual appropriation should be looked into. He asked the manager to look at the employee health insurance.

The Board discussed and by consensus requested the manager make his recommended reductions to the departmental requests.

Closed Session

Commissioner Smith moved that the Board go into closed session, in accordance with NCGS 143-318 (11) (a) (5), contract negotiations. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

The minutes of the closed session are sealed.

Commissioner Mitchener moved to come out of closed session. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Being no further business, Commissioner Bonner moved that the meeting be adjourned. Chairman Nixon asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

D. Keith Nixon, Chairman

Susanne Stallings, Clerk