

Chowan County Board of Commissioners
Special Meeting
Friday, April 29, 2024
Chowan County Public Safety Center
305 West Freemason Street
6:00pm

This meeting was recorded. A copy of the recording is in the meeting file labeled April 29, 2024.

Present: Chair Bob Kirby, Commissioners, Ron Cummings, Alex Kehayes, Ellis Lawrence, Tray Taylor and Larry McLaughlin.

Commissioner Chris Evans was absent.

Staff present County Manager Kevin Howard, Finance Officer Cathy Smith and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings

Chair Kirby called the Special Meeting to order.

Chowan County America 250 Committee

Mr. Howard stated that the County is eligible to apply for grant funds to celebrate this event. He stated that the grant requires the County to approve a resolution stating it would form a committee.

Commissioner McLaughlin moved to approve the resolution as presented. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Resolution of Chowan County Recognizing and Approving of the Chowan County Official America 250 NC Committee

A resolution of Chowan County, North Carolina, supporting the America 250 NC committee for the United States semiquincentennial (AMERICA 250 NC).

WHEREAS, Roy Cooper, Governor of North Carolina created AMERICA 250 NC to plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the United States and North Carolina's integral role in that event and the role of its people on the nation's past, present, and future: and

WHEREAS, AMERICA 250 NC has a mission to engage ALL North Carolinians and ALL 100 counties through their many signatures and officially recognized programs, projects, and events over the commemoration by inspiring future leaders and celebrating North Carolina's contributions to the nation over the last 250 years; and

WHEREAS, by adoption of America 250 NC's mission, Chowan County Committee is officially formed to achieve the goals of America 250 NC.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the County of Chowan hereby endorses AMERICA 250 NC and its mission; and RESOLVED, the County of Chowan officially establishes an AMERICA 250 NC Committee made up of a diverse group of citizens to work with AMERICA 250 NC on any and all activities. The participants of the Chowan County Committee will be strictly voluntary roles and there will be no compensation for participation.

IT IS FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the Chowan legislative delegation and the AMERICA 250 NC Committee.

ADOPTED this 29th day of April, 2024.

2024 Bond Referendum

Mr. Howard stated that based on the previous discussions from the April 19, 2024 meeting the Board will need to determine an amount to be used in the bond referendum question. He noted the total of the projects presented in the 10 year opinion of probable cost is over \$35,000,000. He stated that it is based on the information gathered in the resident surveys.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if the list of projects is prioritized.

Mr. Howard stated yes, the list is based on how the consultant and staff feel is the best order to proceed on recreation projects.

The Board reviewed each of the proposed projects on the probable cost list.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked what are the expansion needs at the Northern Chowan Community Center.

Recreation Co-Director Shannon Ray stated that the facility will need improvements in the future.

Ms. Ray discussed the immediate needs for a new Senior Center. She stated there have been discussions about including a pool, gym and recreation offices in one facility with the senior center.

It was noted some of the projects on the probable cost lists were not major expenses.

Mr. Howard stated he would recommend only putting major capital projects on the referendum.

Board members asked for more information on the Red Banks Farm project proposal and what it included.

Mr. Howard stated the County purchased over 90 acres of land with Clean Water Management Trust fund monies back in the early 2000's. He stated a plan was designed in 2008 for a

recreation complex on the site. He stated it would include baseball fields, soccer fields, tennis courts and walking trails. He stated that the land that was purchased has deed restrictions which prohibit the construction of buildings.

Board members discussed adjoining land to the site that could be purchased for the construction of a senior center, gym and offices.

Ms. Ray stated that she did not feel the County should wait 10 years for the construction of a senior center.

The Board discussed the comments from the April 19th meeting where it was suggested the Board consider phasing a referendum and “build on prior successes” as it continues through the list of proposed recreation projects.

Commissioner Cummings stated he felt the Board should consider including some of the proposed projects in the capital improvement plan instead of borrowing monies for every project on the list.

The Board discussed how the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) is funded with Land Transfer Tax which has decreased over the past year. The Board discussed the potential for additional tax revenues in future budgets from the windfarm project tax revenue. It was noted that tax revenue could increase as much as \$1 million the first year the turbines are on the tax rolls.

Board members indicated that if a centralized recreation complex is constructed they would recommend giving the various parks in located in Town back to the Town of Edenton or sell them as surplus property rather than maintaining various parks and fields.

Mr. Howard stated the Town of Edenton is in support of a Recreation Complex.

Commissioner McLaughlin shared that recent discussions with Town officials regarding the bond referendum have included these properties being given back to the Town to be developed as “passive parks” or recreational space for the neighborhoods adjoining the parks.

Chair Kirby urged the Board to consider their charge as Commissioners under the general statutes. He stated that the County has services in which it is mandated to provide such as Schools, Sheriff, DSS, Register of Deeds and Court. He stated that recreational services are above and beyond this charge.

Mr. Howard noted that the Board will need to decide on an amount to be on the bond referendum.

Board members discussed various obligations that are upcoming such as addressing a possible new middle school as well as a new R/O Water Plant.

It was noted that the final version of the Recreation Master Plan would be presented to the Board at their meeting on May 6th. The Board agreed that it would decide on the bond referendum amount at one of the scheduled upcoming budget meetings on May 13th.

Adjourn

Being no further business, Commissioner Cummings moved that the meeting be adjourned. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

Bob Kirby, Chairman

Susanne Stallings
Clerk