Chowan County Board of Commissioners
Regular Meeting
Monday April 5, 2021
Chowan County Public Safety Center
305 West Freemason Street
5:00pm

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

Staff present County Manager Kevin Howard, Human Resources Manager Carrie Byrum and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

DSS Director Christine Dowdell and Assistant Mary White also joined the closed session.

Closed Session
Commissioner Evans moved to go into closed session in accordance with NCGS 143.318.11.a.6 (personnel). Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

The minutes of the closed session are sealed.

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

Regular Meeting
Monday, April 5, 2021
6:00 pm
Chowan County Public Safety Center
305 West Freemason Street

This meeting was recorded. A copy of the recording is in the meeting file labeled April 5, 2021.

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

Staff present County Manager Kevin Howard, Finance Officer Cathy Smith, County Attorney Lauren Arizaga-Womble and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings.

Regular Meeting
Chair Kirby called the regular meeting to order and led all in the pledge of allegiance.

Commissioner Evans then offered the invocation.

Approval of Agenda

Ms. Stallings noted a request to amend the agenda to add a discussion regarding a DSS employee salary adjustment.

Commissioner McLaughlin moved to approve the agenda as amended. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Public Comment
Ms. Stallings noted that no public was signed up to speak and none was submitted.

Consent Agenda
All items on the Consent Agenda are considered to be routine and may be enacted by one motion. If a County Commissioner requests discussion on an item, the item will be removed from the Consent Agenda and considered separately.

Tax Refund/Release

Nixon, J.	$143.47	Paid Twice

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

Trillium Health Resources Annual Report
Bland Baker, Northern Regional Director for Trillium Health Resources provided the Board with the annual report on mental health services. A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled April 5, 2021. Highlights from the presentation included impacts of Medicaid Transformation for Standard Plan Insurance, COVID 19 Impact and ongoing project updates were also given. It was noted that 537 Chowan County consumers were served by Trillium (398 for Mental Health services, 114 with Substance Abuse services and 66 I/DD).

Chair Kirby asked if 4% of the population served is high or low.

Mr. Baker stated it depends on the size. He stated it is also the job of Trillium to educate the public about the available resources. He noted they work closely with the Health Department and Social Services about available resources.

Chair Kirby asked for information regarding copays and enrollment times.

Mr. Baker stated he did not have that information available that evening.

Chair Kirby asked about the financial impact on the County.

Mr. Baker discussed the revenues that are earmarked by legislation that are to be used for mental health services.

Commissioner Lawrence asked about the independent living individuals who receive services. He asked if they are monitored.

Mr. Baker stated the level of illness determines the level of monitoring.

Mr. Howard stated that there is no match required for the Medicaid.

Commissioner Kehayes stated that the Sheriff Deputies have been trained on dealing with mental health crisis.

Asset Inventory Assessment

Greg Churchill the County's Engineer along with Project Manager Scott Godefroy of Rivers and Associates provided the Board with the County's Asset Inventory Assessment which was paid for in 2020 with a state grant. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation along with the Inventory Assessment report is in the meeting file labeled April 5, 2021.

Mr. Churchill noted that the grant was in the amount of $150,000 that included a local 5% match.

Mr. Godefroy noted the purpose of the assessment which will assist the County with preserving knowledge regarding system assets. He stated the plan will help with planning for future capital projects needs and to develop a capital improvement plan. The assessment inventories the assets, assesses their condition, ranks and prioritizes needs and provides a capital improvement plan. Mr. Godefroy reviewed the total assets included in the inventory assessment. 1,120 valves, 358 hydrants, 4 elevated storage tanks, 7 wells and 260 miles of pipeline. The inventory reviewed the permitted capacity for the wells and the average daily demand. With regards to treatment, the plan reviewed the Water Treatment Plant at Valhalla and the current major components. Current water storage capacity was also noted (1,750,000 gallons). Water distribution assets such as the watermain, valves, hydrants, pump station and interconnects were also reviewed. Mr. Godefroy noted the plan evaluated the asset conditions of the water supply, water treatment, water storage and water distribution. The plan included recommendations to conduct a water system hydraulic analysis and integrate the data into the GIS database, routinely update and add new asset maintenance information to the GIS database. Cleaning and evaluation of wells 6,7,8 and 9 were recommended along with performing any necessary repairs or replacement. It was recommended to phase the cleaning and refurbishment of Train 2 then Train 1 filters and softeners. Replace pumps and perform electrical upgrades were items included in the treatment recommendations. Maintenance of and replacement of the base tank was also recommended. A ten (10) year capital plan with 8 projects totaling an estimated $11,173,949 was also provided to the Board. It was recommended that the Board adopt a WAMP (Water Asset Management Plan) to allow the County to be competitive in funding applications and it was recommended that the Board adopt a 10 year CIP with annual reviews and updates.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked about the location of the base tank.

Mr. Godefroy noted this is located on Soundside Road.

Chair Kirby asked about pressures and could a study eliminate the need for one of the tanks.

Mr. Churchill stated this is possible.

Commissioner Kehayes asked about the cost to have a new water treatment facility.

Mr. Godefroy stated approximately $9 million.

Commissioner Kehayes asked about grant monies to fund capital projects.

Mr. Godefroy stated that the State has some monies.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if Rivers monitors the grants available.

Mr. Churchill stated that grants are a big part of what they do. He stated they will notify the county when any grants become available.

Chair Kirby called for a five minute recess, after five minutes he called the meeting back to order.

Tax - Late File Tax Exemption Application

Tax Administrator Melissa Radke provided the Board with a request to accept a late file of a tax exemption from Fountain of Life Church. A copy of the appeal is in the meeting file labeled April 5, 2021. She stated the church purchased the property in 2019. She stated the church did not apply for an exemption at that time and have since hired a new financial administrator. She noted the statutes require the Board to determine if there is good cause.

Commissioner Cummings asked if the Board's previous decisions set precedence.

Ms. Radke stated the Board has approved some previous late exemption requests from churches.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked about implication if the exemption is not approved.

Ms. Radke stated the church will have to pay.

Chair Kirby asked if this decision binds the Town.

Mr. Howard stated the County is contracted to collect on behalf of the Town so yes. He added the Town does not hear appeal requests.

Commissioner McLaughlin stated that the applicant was in transition moving in the property and stated he would move to accept the late application from Fountain of Life Church.

Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

School Items

Presentation from Superintendent

School Superintendent Dr. Michael Sasscer provided the Board with an update on the status of the John A. Holmes Highschool project and plans for Phase II. A copy of the PowerPoint is in the meeting file labeled April 5, 2021. Dr. Sasscer noted the architects are on hold as the Board of Education is going to meet on April 13th and will be providing the Board of Commissioners with a potential recommendation to proceed with both Phase I and Phase II of the high school project.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked how is the information being shared with the public.

Dr. Sasscer stated that there is a dedicated website link on the School's page that takes the public to the documents and proposed designs.

County Financial Analysis
Mr. Howard provided the Board with a report prepared by Davenport and Associates regarding the County's Financial Analysis. He noted this report was shared with the joint school committee at their last meeting. A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled April 5, 2021. He noted that the financial advisors state that the County can proceed with the project and based on the current debt schedule there will be no impact on the tax rate. (case 1) he noted that case 2 which includes a natatorium does however include an impact on the tax rate of 1.26 cents.

Chair Kirby stated it looks as though the Board of Commissioners will be making a major financial decision in the coming weeks.

Mr. Howard noted the financial advisor has stated the County can do the project without having to raise taxes however if the project is sent to a referendum and it fails, USDA financing is not an option.

Contract with Auditor for Feasibility Study
Mr. Howard provided the Board with a contract with Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Co, P.A. for a feasibility report for the County regarding the John A. Holmes High School Project and future County Debt Obligations/Borrowing Capacity. This study is a requirement for the County to apply for USDA funding. He stated that they will take the school project and look at other County capital needs. Along with the Davenport report and they will provide an analysis of the County's ability to do other projects over the 10-15 years. Mr. Howard noted that the Board has been told that if the schools occupy the new building in June-July the next payment will not be due for one year. He sated that there will be required interim financing. He stated the USDA loan will pay this off. He noted that the cost of this study is $13,600 plus expenses.

Commissioner Lawrence moved to approve the contract as presented. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Financial Items

Budget Amendments
BA2021-050

Account Number	Account Description	Revenue (Inc+/Dec-)	Expense (Inc+/Dec-)
Sheriff			
11-3493-890-00	Insurance Proceeds	9,968.87	
11-4310-353-00	Repairs - Vehicle		9,968.87
	Balanced	9,968.87	9,968.87
			-
Justification:			

To amend the 2021 budget for Sheriff's Office to include insurance proceeds for motor vehicle accident.

BA2021-051

Account Number	Account Description	Revenue (Inc+/Dec-)	Expense (Inc+/Dec-)
Inspections			
11-4350-121-00	Salaries - Regular	1,500.00	
11-4350-299-00	Departmental Supplies		1,500.00
	Balanced	1,500.00	1,500.00
			-
Justification:			

To amend the 2021 budget for Inspections to include computer purchase for new employee. No additional funding is being requested and monies are being transferred between line items. A surplus is available in salaries due to the vacant position that has not been filled in this fiscal year.

BA2021-052

Account Number	Account Description	Revenue (Inc+/Dec-)	Expense (Inc+/Dec-)
Elections			
11-3417-367-00	HAVA Grant	7,729.83	
11-4170-602-00	HAVA Grant		7,729.83
	Balanced	7,729.83	7,729.83
			-
Justification:			

To amend the 2021 budget for Board of Elections to include funding received from HAVA (Help America Vote Act).

BA2021-053

Account Number		Account Description	Revenue (Inc+/Dec-)	Expense (Inc+/Dec-)
After School Plus				
11-3612-486-00		After School Plus Revenue	2,201.00	
11-6131-291-00		Program Support Expenditure		2,201.00
JCPC Council				
11-3523-004-00		JCPC Council Revenue	(2,201.00)	
11-5230-443-00		JCPC Council Expenditure		(2,201.00)
		Balanced	-	-
Justification:				
	To amend the 2021 budget for Recreation to include revision to JCPC program. Monies are being transferred from JCPC Council to the After School Plus Program.			

Commissioner McLaughlin moved to approve the projects as presented. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

Update on JA Holmes Highschool Project Expenses
Finance Officer Cathy Smith provided an update on the project expenses to date. A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled April 5, 2021.

DSS Salary Adjustment
Commissioner McLaughlin moved to approve a salary adjustment for DSS Employee Chell'le Craig to increase her current salary from $39,000 to $$40,466 effective April 16, 2021.

Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed (6-1 Kirby).

External Board/Committee Report
Chair Kirby stated that the Board members are asked to report on the activities of the external boards to which they have been appointed.

Commissioner McLaughlin reported on the CIP Committee activities.

Commissioner Kehayes reported on the Health Department (ARHS) Board.

Chair Kirby reported on the Albemarle Commission Board.

Manager's Report
County Manager Kevin Howard updated the Board on the following:

Project Tracking Sheet - A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled April 5, 2021.

The COA parking lot paving is complete.

Timely and Important Matters
Commissioner Lawrence discussed his concerns over connectivity with Zoom for some of his Committee meeting assignments.

Adjourn
Being no further business Commissioner Kehayes moved to adjourn the meeting. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

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Bob Kirby, Chairman	Susanne Stallings, Clerk