

**Special Meeting**  
**RETREAT**  
**Wednesday, February 19, 2020**  
**8:30am**  
**Eastern 4H Environmental Education & Conference Center**  
**100 N Clover Way**  
**Tyrrell County, Columbia NC**

This meeting was recorded. A copy of the recording is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020.

Present Chair Patti Kersey, Commissioners Greg Bonner, Ron Cummings, Don Faircloth, Bob Kirby, Ellis Lawrence (came in later) and Larry McLaughlin.

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

Board Chair Patti Kersey welcomed everyone in attendance.

**Capital Improvement Plan and Update**

County Manager Kevin Howard provided the Board with a PowerPoint on the Chowan County Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). A copy of the PowerPoint is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020. Mr. Howard discussed the purpose and the procedure for the CIP. He noted the CIP includes projects that exceed the cost of \$50,000. He noted the plan includes projects that are ongoing as well as approved projects. Mr. Howard then reviewed the current requested projects by building and discussed the projects in detail.

Commissioner McLaughlin discussed Swain Auditorium and stated he would like for the Board to consider putting together a committee to discuss potential visioning and uses for the building. He stated once he gets the names together for a committee he will take it to the CIP committee first for a recommendation.

The Board was provided copies of the Preliminary 2021-2025 CIP document. A copy of the document is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020.

The Board discussed the Animal Shelter needs. Mr. Howard plans to meet with the County Managers to discuss capital needs at the Animal Shelter.

**Current Projects**

Mr. Howard provided a PowerPoint highlighting current projects, accomplishments, facility improvements and goals for 2020. A copy of the PowerPoint is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020.

The Board took a break at 10:00am.

### **Financial Advisor Update**

Mr. Howard reported that he met with the Financial Advisor two weeks ago and he hoped to have something soon. He stated that after the numbers are available the County will then work with the Bond Counsel. He noted everything has to go to the LGC in May for the November election.

### **School Update**

Superintendent Rob Jackson noted that the School Board is meeting with the construction management firm. He stated the schools cannot promote the bond referendum or advocate for it. He noted that the schools can only educate the public on the bond and the process but cannot advocate for the project. He noted the school will begin the RFP process to select the architect soon.

Retreat Facilitator and NCACC Outreach Associate Neil Emory provided the Board with a PowerPoint that detailed funding sources for school capital projects. A copy of the PowerPoint is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020. The PowerPoint detailed various funding sources such as bonds for education and lottery funds. He discussed local financing methods and best practices. He noted that traditional financing included general obligation bonds (GO) as well as other methods. Additionally he provided some Chowan County debt information and statistics.

The Board took a break at 11:10am.

### **Health Insurance**

Cathy Maxfield with Pierce Group Benefits (The County's plan administrator) provided the Board with a PowerPoint update on the health plan review. A copy of the PowerPoint is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020. Ms. Maxfield noted that the County is looking for a good renewal near the end of March when the numbers come in. She provided the Board with information on the current benefits offered to Chowan County employees including various resources available.

Mr. Howard provided the Board with a handout that summarizes Chowan County's plan with the neighboring County plans. And, Finance Officer Cathy Smith provide the Board with a handout of information on the County's Health Insurance Expenditures for the past five years. A copy of both handouts is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020.

The Board took a break at 12:00pm for lunch.

Commissioner Lawrence joined the group during this time.

Following lunch the Board reconvened.

### **Program Review Update**

Finance Officer Cathy Smith noted that the program reviews are ongoing for both EMS and Recreation. She noted that Recreation is looking at each program with regards to budgeting.

### **Fire Coverage**

Tax Administrator Melissa Radke provided the Board with a PowerPoint (a copy is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020). The PowerPoint highlighted which items and components are used to determine the \$0.055 Fire District Tax. She noted the County is currently under Rural Fire Protection. The only other option under the statutes is County Service Districts. She provided the information as to what options are available should the County decide to change to Service Districts.

Mr. Emory provided a PowerPoint and discussion on Fire Insurance Rating System and Insurance Protection Classes, and what impact various Protection Class improvements can have on lowering insurance premiums. A copy of the PowerPoint is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020.

Edenton Fire Chief Billy Bass and Center Hill Cross Roads Fire Chief LW Nixon provided the Board with information on substation requirements. A copy of the handout is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020. The Board discussed the rating system with the chiefs as well as current issues with staffing and volunteer recruitment and coverage. Both Chiefs indicated increased funding for equipment and personnel are necessary. The Chiefs discussed creation of Memorandums of Understanding with neighboring stations to increase ratings and improve response.

### **Litter**

Commissioner McLaughlin, Chamber Director Win Dale and Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin discussed current issues and strategies in place to address litter in Chowan County. The Board discussed potential remedies such as cameras, fines, enforcement, service projects, billboards and public service announcement campaigns. The Board agreed that education is critical in prevention of littering.

Mr. Dale noted the upcoming litter sweeps in April. He noted that there will be public service announcements and he will be trying to work with local corporations to get up signage at fast food restaurants to discourage the littering of fast food trash.

Ms. Stallings will check with Extension and Soil staff to see what educational programs are in place and get Mr. Dale in touch with these staff.

### **Zoning**

Planner Brandon Shoaf provided the Board with a PowerPoint. A copy of the presentation is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020. Mr. Shoaf discussed pending zoning issues such as unsafe buildings. He noted the costs to remedy these properties as well as the enforcement

### **Solid Waste/Recycling**

Angel White, Perquimans Chowan Gates Landfill Manager provided the Board with a PowerPoint handout of information on an overview of the Convenience Site operations and updates. Landfill policies and procedures. And recycling issues noting what Counties are mandated to recycle as well as the recent flooding of recyclable markets and recycling costs. She shared some proposed solutions that are currently in place and noted the PCG landfill Board as well as the ARSWMA Board will be meeting to address some of the scrap tire and other issues in the future. A copy of the PowerPoint presentation is in the meeting file labeled February 19, 2020.

### **Summary**

Mr. Emory provided the following summary of the matters discussed at the retreat:

- CIP items will be discussed in the budget process, keep this updated.
- Swain Auditorium Committee – will be a future agenda item to appoint a committee to discuss potential uses
- Animal Shelter – Mr. Howard will meet with the Managers for long term needs. Three Counties may want to discuss long range plan for the facility.
- Develop a timeline for the school project and bond referendum and funding sources deadlines. School will have to select Architect. November will be here soon, be out front of the issue will be helpful to get information out to the public. Board should look for a monthly update on this.
- Benefits are a large budget item, health care spirals upward, want to be able to recruit employees and have a competitive plan. If state opens up plan that may be beneficial to look into.
- Look at what your goal is with regards to fire. Look at strategies to achieve your goal. Neighboring counties are looking at similar matters.
- With regards to litter, education, enforcement may be helpful.
- Zoning he stated that the Board will need to be mindful of the new legislation for rewriting and merging the County and Town ordinances.
- With regards to recycling he stated that this issue is common across the state for most Counties.

At 4:30pm Chair Kersey thanked Mr. Emory and the Board members for the retreat discussion, she then declared the meeting adjourned.

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Patti F. Kersey, Chair

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Susanne Stallings, Clerk