

Special Meeting
RETREAT
Wednesday, March 20, 2024
8:30am
Northern Chowan Community Center
2869 Virginia Road
Tyner, NC 27980

Present Chair Bob Kirby, Commissioners Ron Cummings, Larry McLaughlin, Chris Evans, Ellis Lawrence (came in later) and Alex Kehayes.

North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) Outreach Associate Denise Stinagle were also present.

Commissioner Tray Taylor was absent.

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

Board Chair Bob Kirby welcomed everyone in attendance.

Denise Stinagle welcomed the Board and thanked them for inviting her to the retreat. She provided a copy of the Highlights for Chowan County from the 2023 NCACC Map Book. A copy of the handout is in the meeting file labeled March 20, 2024.

Current and Future Capital Projects and Funding Update

CIP Schedule

Mr. Howard reviewed the 2024-2028 Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Recommended Funding Schedule. A copy of the schedule is in the meeting file labeled March 20, 2024.

Commissioner Lawrence joined the meeting.

The Board was provided a copy of the Capital Reserve Fund report is in the meeting file labeled March 20, 2024.

Jail Study

Sheriff Edward Basnight and Mr. Howard discussed the current study which is ongoing. Mr. Howard noted that the Board will be provided with various scenarios from building a new jail to partnering with neighboring facilities. It was noted that if the County builds a jail, the County will look into housing Federal Inmates to identify a revenue source.

EMS Building

Mr. Howard stated the County will have to look into options for the future of EMS. He stated that EMS is outgrowing the current building. He stated that there have been discussions in the

past of EMS partnering with the Town Fire Department but at this time the County is unsure what the best option will be for the EMS building.

Swain Auditorium

The windows are finished in the building. He noted that the County has been approached by the Town with interest in taking ownership of the building if the Recreation Bond passes. He stated that more discussions will be needed.

John A. Holmes Highschool Update

Mr. Howard noted the project is ongoing. He noted the Boy Scout Hut building is to be moved in April.

Fire Substation Progress

Centerhill Crossroads Fire Department Chief LW Nixon provided an update on the status of the renovation to Unit 3 substation. He stated that the Fire Department recently tested for water haul certification. He stated that the department is working on auto-aid agreement with Hobbsville Volunteer Fire Department. He stated that maps will need to be drawn and then added to GIS to allow dispatch to activate auto aid when Hobbsville is needed.

Edenton Fire Chief Billy Bass discussed with Kevin Howard their negotiations for the purchase of land for a substation in the southern portion of the County to expand the 6 mile fire insurance district. Negotiations are ongoing with the landowners and more information will be forthcoming. Mr. Bass shared that he has identified a truck to be put at the substation. He stated that he would like to see two bays in the design of the building. It was noted that only heat, electricity and water would be needed. Mr. Bass discussed the possibility of the Town purchasing a new ladder truck with FEMA grant monies. He stated that about \$90,000 in funds would be required from the County and Town to be split 50/50.

Discussion of County Hunting Regulations

Kyle Barkely and Sheriff Edward Basnight discussed regulations in place in Chowan County and the State. He stated that typically the most questions or concerns from residents come from dogs used for hunting deer or coyote. He noted that in Chowan County Wildlife Resources Commission does not regulate dog hunting unless it is on game lands. He stated that most issues come from dogs crossing private property or hunters retrieving dogs on private property. He stated that North Carolina is not a "right to retrieve" state and hunters are required to have permission before entering property to retrieve a dog. He noted that property that is posted and has the purple paint markings helps Wildlife officers with trespassing enforcement. He stated that hunters trespassing on private property can be charged with a misdemeanor. He discussed the rights of hunters with regards to the dogs. He noted that it is unlawful to remove tracking collars from hunting dogs. He discussed hunting regulations with regards to licenses and tag requirements. Mr. Barkely provided the Board with his contact information and offered his assistance if a Commissioner or constituent has questions regarding hunting regulations.

Sheriff Basnight stated his office gets a lot of calls from residents with questions about hunting, shooting near residences or hunting dogs crossing property or killing livestock. He stated that a

lot of these concerns are referred to Wildlife officers and his officers spend time educating the public. He stated that most problems occur with the small percentage of hunters who do not obtain permission from property owners before entering their property to retrieve a dog.

The Board recessed for a 15 minute break, after that Chair Kirby called the meeting back to order.

Bond Referendum Discussion

Mr. Howard and Ms. Smith provided the Board with copies of the timeline for the bond referendum to be placed on the November 5, 2024 ballot. The Board reviewed the timeline and Ms. Smith noted which items have to be completed. It was noted that the Board is not obligated to borrow the all of monies if the referendum is approved. Board members asked what information would be provided to the public prior to the referendum.

Mr. Howard stated that the impact on the tax rate would be noted in the referendum.

The Board discussed various projects that would be included in the referendum such as an indoor pool (Natatorium, Senior Center and other recreation improvement projects).

It was noted that estimated costs for some of the projects will be included in the masterplan report in May.

Lunch

Chair Kirby declared the meeting recessed until 1pm for lunch.

At 1pm Chair Kirby called the meeting back to order.

Timbermill Project Status Update

James Stovall, Miguel Tapetillio, Shawn Stanislawski, Richard Bunch and Win Dale were present to update the board on the status of the project. A PowerPoint presentation was given and a copy of the presentation is in the meeting file labeled March 20, 2024. Planner Brandon Shoaf was also present to answer questions from the Board. Mr. Stovall noted that most of the ground work has been completed. He noted that components are coming from Morehead City and the turbine blades will be shipped by truck.

Board members asked if there any reason why all of the turbine components are not all brought in by barge? Representatives stated this is determined by the manufacturer.

Chair Kirby asked where are the components, cell, turbine, blades and steel for the towers manufactured?

Mr. Stovall stated he did not have this information but could provide it at a later time.

Chair Kirby asked how many workers at the site are Chowan County residents.

Mr. Bunch stated that several local companies have been contracted for the project.

Mr. Kirby asked when will the towers be erected.

Mr. Stanislawski stated this will happen as soon as possible after delivery.

Chair Kirby asked when do they expect to have the first turbine erected?

Mr. Stanislawski said hopefully early June.

Chair Kirby asked when are the towers going to be commissioned after erection?

Mr. Stovall said by the end of the year.

Board members noted resident concerns regarding potholes in the road and asked if these would not be repaired until after construction?

Mr. Bunch stated that they are making repairs as they are realized. He asked that Board members make him aware of any concerns and noted that speed limits and safety are top priority for the contractors.

Update from TDA (Tourism Development Authority)

TDA Director Erienne Mizelle provided the Board with a PowerPoint update from the Tourism Development Authority. She noted the increase in occupancy tax collection since 2021. She noted the increased presence of the TDA on social media. She detailed various tools that the TDA is utilizing to increase occupancy and visitors in Chowan County. Some of these initiatives include advertising, hosting bloggers, relaunch of the Visit Edenton website, addition of interactive maps and itineraries for visitors. She discussed the use of Placer.ai to assist the TDA with examining visitor patterns and counts. She provided information on brochures and printing updates that have been done. A copy of the PowerPoint is in the meeting file labeled March 20, 2024.

New ABC Store Discussion

Bob Turner, ABC Board member spoke on behalf of the ABC Board. He shared that the ABC Board decided to go looking for a building to purchase because they have outgrown the current facility. He stated that often the alcoholic beverages are on sale however due to the smaller storage area they have, they are unable to purchase larger quantities at the reduced price and that cuts into the profits. He stated the main reasons for wanting a new facility is that the current building is aging and in need of repairs as well as additional storage is needed. He stated the Board has located a potential property that is for sale and has entered into a purchase contract. He stated the Board has located a potential buyer for the current building.

The Board recessed for a 15 minute break, after that Chair Kirby called the meeting back to order.

Update to full Board on Joint County and Town Discussions

Chair Kirby and Commissioner McLaughlin shared that they have been meeting in small groups with Town officials which have been beneficial in learning what projects the Town has ongoing. He stated these discussions have been helpful and that in a future meeting the County will discuss its ongoing projects.

Water Project Updates and Timeline

Greg Churchill and Scott Godefroy with Rivers and Associates provided the Board with a summary of findings regarding the Reverse Osmosis (RO) Water Treatment Plant (WTP) Study. A copy of the findings and map is in the meeting file labeled March 20, 2024. Mr. Churchill noted that the collection of data is not finalized and that a final report will be forthcoming with a recommendation for placement of the components of the Water Treatment Plant.

Commissioner Evans left the meeting.

Summary

Ms. Stinagle summarized the discussions from the day to the Board.

At 4:00pm Chair Kirby thanked the Board members for the retreat discussion, he then declared the meeting adjourned.

Bob Kirby, Chair

Susanne Stallings, Clerk