

**Special Meeting**  
**Monday March 4, 2024**  
**5:00pm**  
**Chowan County Public Safety Center**  
**305 West Freemason St.**  
**Edenton, NC**

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

Commissioner Tray Taylor was absent.

Staff present County Manager Kevin Howard and Board Clerk Susanne Stallings. County Attorney Lauren Arizaga-Womble also present.

**Closed Session**

Commissioner Kehayes moved to go into closed session in accordance with NCGS 143-318-11 (a) (3 and 5) attorney client and contract negotiations. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

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 (6-0).

**Adjourn**

Commissioner Evans moved to adjourn. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (6-0).

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Bob Kirby, Chairman

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Susanne Stallings  
Clerk

**Chowan County Board of Commissioners**  
**Regular Meeting**  
**Monday, March 4, 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 March 4, 2024.*

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

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 in the pledge.

Commissioner McLaughlin then offered the invocation.

**Approval of Agenda**

Board Clerk Susanne Stallings noted two additions to the meeting agenda. Discussion of Tower lease at the Landfill and John A. Holmes High School Project.

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

**Public Comment**

Chair Kirby opened the floor for public comment.

Carolyn Ayers, 100 Crestwood Ln spoke in favor of a proposed bond referendum for a pool. She stated that traveling to Elizabeth City to utilize a pool is difficult for residents as well as school swim teams. She noted that other school sports do not require such a long commute for practice.

Lee Lolkema 1105 W Sound Shore Dr. encouraged the Board to have a public pool on the bond referendum. She stated that traveling to Elizabeth City to use their pool is a 3 hour commute round trip. She stated a pool in Chowan County would be an economic development incentive. She noted that area schools would be able to use a pool in Chowan and she noted that it is not free for Chowan County students to use the YMCA pool.

Tom Abbott, 106 Hickory Lane stated his support of the enhancement of Bennett's Millpond. He stated that the site could be used by universities for research projects and could serve as a field lab. He stated with regards to the High School project he would like to see the school sell or give the bricks from demolition to the public. He added that with regards to a community pool he felt a public/private partnership would be most beneficial to build the pool.

Stephan Karl 219 E Queen Street stated he wanted to express his support for the pre grant application for Bennett's Millpond. He stated the grant would benefit the county and the site and is a winner for all as the financial burden would be lowest for the County.

Susan Birkhead 1537 Virginia Road stated her concern with the current conditions of Bennett's Millpond. She stated the location is great but needs attention. She stated there have been some issues with theft and damage. She stated she would like to see the site saved and maintained for all that like to enjoy the site.

Chair Kirby called for any further public comment, there was none.

### **Consent Agenda**

#### **Minutes**

The Board will review and consider approval of the February 19, 2024 Regular Meeting and February 26, 2024 CIP Committee Meeting.

#### **Tax Refund/Release Report**

Dwelling LLC	\$574.27	Overpayment
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Commissioner McLaughlin moved to approve the consent agenda as presented. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

### **John A. Holmes High School Items**

#### **Construction Testing and Inspections Services**

Superintendent Dr. Michael Sasser and Bob Sebire provided the Board with information on testing services that are required as part of the construction process. Mr. Sebire stated that proposals for testing and inspections and commissioning were received this month. He noted that the final approval from the Board of Education would be at their March 5<sup>th</sup> meeting. He stated that they recommend SM&E at a cost of \$163,000 which is covered in the owners cost line. He noted this testing is for soils, concrete and to ensure the project is conforming.

Chair Kirby asked how much is budgeted for testing.

Mr. Sebire stated that the line in the budget is \$600,000 and this cost is coming in about \$300,000 less than the anticipated total testing expenses that were budgeted.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked what additional testing would be required.

Mr. Sebire stated that the line covers all testing. He stated that 90% of testing is for soils, concrete, masonry and steel. He stated that all tests are performed on site.

Dr. Sasser noted that the air testing was an additional cost that was budgeted in the owners cost line.

Commissioner Cummings noted that the available funds are not included in the request.

Mr. Sebire stated that the costs are well within the budgeted cost.

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

### **Recreation Department Pre Grant Application**

Recreation Co-Director Shannon Ray presented the Board with a grant pre application for consideration for improvements to Bennett's Millpond. She stated the grant funds are from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) She stated the total project cost is \$168,274 and the grant amount is \$134,619. She stated that \$33,655 was needed for in kind funding. She stated the grant would be used to make repairs to the decking on the "chimney trail", replace the boat platform, add concrete walkways, add handicapped parking spaces, replace the roof on the pavilion, remove two large trees, add picnic tables and security lighting and finally add gates to both entrances.

Chair Kirby asked if the County would have to pay before the grant is funded.

Ms. Ray stated no.

Chair Kirby noted an issue with the math on the attached quote.

Ms. Ray stated she would make the necessary corrections. Ms. Ray added that the site is currently open 24/7 and the gates would allow staff to open or close the property as necessary. She added that she has spoken with the Sheriff about the need for additional patrols to look into vandalism or other issues that have happened at the millpond.

Commissioner McLaughlin asked if the old chimney that is at the site could be cleaned up and removed.

Ms. Ray stated that is not included in the cost estimate.

Mr. Karl stated he would be happy to remove the brick chimney personally.

Ms. Arizaga-Womble noted that any removal of County property would have to be approved by the County Manager.

Commissioner Cummings asked about repairs to the entrance at Rocky Hock Rd.

Ms. Ray stated that DOT has made repairs and added additional gravel in the past. She noted that there is nothing in the current estimate to address the entrance.

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

**Register of Deeds Office and Clerk of Court Renovation Quotes**

Mr. Howard presented the Board with bids for carpet, painting and electrical work at the Courthouse (Register of Deeds and Clerk of Court offices). He noted the total cost estimates are around \$35,000. He stated he would like to request \$40,000 for the project for any unforeseen expense that may come up. He stated that the bids for the project were moved to the end of March to allow for more bids to be received.

Commissioner McLaughlin moved to appropriate \$40,000 for the described projects at the Courthouse. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**Perquimans Chowan and Gates County Lease of Landfill property for Perquimans County**

**Tower**

Ms. Arizaga Womble stated that the lease was approved by the Board at the February 19, 2024 meeting. She noted that Perquimans County received a grant to construct a communications tower and the site at the landfill where Chowan County is part owner was identified. She stated that the tower would provide additional Viper Radio coverage that would benefit Perquimans, Chowan and Gates County. She stated that the Board will be required to adopt a resolution approving the lease of the site. She stated that she will be bringing back to the Board, a resolution that authorizes the County to enter into the lease. She noted the lease is for 99 years.

Commissioner Cummings moved to authorize the attorney to draft a resolution passed on the described terms. Chair Kirby asked for all in favor, the motion passed unanimously (7-0).

**Financial Items**

Ms. Smith presented the following:

- a. 2024 Budget Amendments  
2024-050

Account Number	Account Description	Revenue (Inc+/Dec-)	Expense (Inc+/Dec-)
<b><i>Opioid Settlement Fund</i></b>			
28-3301-238-00	Opioid Settlement Revenue	82,394.55	
28-9930-995-00	Designated for Future Appropriations		82,394.55
	Balanced	82,394.55	82,394.55
<b>Justification:</b>			
	To amend the 2024 budget to include Opioid Settlement Fund payments received through 02/29/24.		

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

b. Financial Report January 2024

Finance Officer Cathy Smith provided the Board with financial reports for January 2024. A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled March 4, 2024.

c. Update on JA Holmes Highschool Project Expenses

Ms. Smith provided an update on the high school construction project expenses. A copy of the report is in the meeting file labeled March 4, 2024.

**External Board/Committee Report**

Board members are asked to report on the activities of the external boards to which they have been appointed.

Commissioner Lawrence reported on the Senior Center Board.

**Manager's Report**

County Manager Kevin Howard stated he did not have any updates for the Board.

**Timely and Important Matters**

Commissioner Lawrence stated he would like more information on the proposed locations in the Town for electric vehicle charging stations.

**Adjourn**

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

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Bob Kirby, Chairman

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Susanne Stallings  
Clerk