

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
FEBRUARY 19, 2018**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, February 19, 2018 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Cecil Perry, Chairman
Dr. William R. Sterritt, Vice-Chairman
Jeff Dixon
Joseph S. Winslow, Jr.
Frankie Meads
Charles H. Jordan

MEMBERS ABSENT: Lloyd E. Griffin, III

OTHERS PRESENT: Rodney Bunch, County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Shelley Cox, Planning Director
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Cecil Perry. Commissioner Charles Jordan gave the invocation and Vice-Chairman Sterritt led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Perry welcomed everyone present.

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Chairman Perry asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. County Attorney Mike Cox recommended the agenda be amended to add the following items recommended by the Finance Committee today: 1) Approval to reduce listing price for Moyock Property; 2) Approval of Pay Grade/Step for Planning Clerk IV; and 3) Clarification for contribution to Albemarle Area United Way; 4) Approval of Providence VFD Flashing Lights; 5) Approval to accept offer by Camden County to purchase property; 5) Approval to eliminate emergency services director position; and 6) Approval to hire new county manager and approval of employment contract.

Motion was made by Jeff Dixon, seconded by Joe Winslow to amend the agenda to add items #1 through #5 above to the Consent Agenda and add item #6 to New Business. The motion carried unanimously.

2. PRESENTATION OF AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN:

Chairman Perry recognized Dr. Stan Dixon, with the University of Mount Olive who said he is here to present Pasquotank County's Agricultural Development Plan. He thanked Cooperative Extension Director Ellen Owens and her staff for being very supportive in helping put the plan together. He said the plan was funded by the North Carolina Agriculture Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, which is managed by the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Science. The trust was set up in 2005 with House Bill 607. The major goal of the trust fund is to fund programs to support farming, forestry, and horticulture in North Carolina. As of 2016, 55 counties in North Carolina have adopted agricultural development plans in their counties. He said they have five that they are working on currently, which will be adopted in 2018. The Department of Agriculture, along with the trust fund contracted with the University of Mount Olive Agri-Business Center to develop a plan for Pasquotank County.

Dr. Dixon provided a summary of the plan. He stated that Pasquotank County has a viable agricultural sector that is an important part of the total county fabric of life. The goal of the plan is to reflect the importance of agriculture and assess the opportunities, challenges and issues that are currently facing the industry. The plan provides recommendations, based on citizen input, on ways to enhance agriculture, forestry, agribusiness and agritourism.

Dr. Dixon said farmland is an irreplaceable natural resource, and the farmers who are stewards of the resource impact the economy and quality of life for all county residents. The economic impact of the agriculture sector in 2012 was 7.9 percent of the county's value added total income. The agriculture sector also accounts for 7.1 percent of Pasquotank County's total employment. Pasquotank County has the resources, natural and human to ensure that agriculture can prosper in the future. The impact of agriculture in Pasquotank County in 2012:

- Agriculture and agribusiness contributed \$109,881,023 in total income
- Pasquotank ranked 7th in the state in wheat production
- Pasquotank ranked 9th in the state in vegetables and fruit production
- In total cash receipts from agriculture, Pasquotank County ranged 50th in the state

Dr. Dixon stated that county farmers were surveyed and 43 percent said they lacked sufficient land to expand or diversify their operations. Pasquotank County farmers reported facing other critical issues, low commodity prices, rising production input cost and development pressure. Pasquotank County farmers are confronted by other challenges to their operations, such as aging farmer population, with the average age of farmers being 58.8 years and 100 percent not having farm transition plans. These issues present opportunities to enhance agriculture through education and support of citizens and local government. Of the non-farm citizens surveyed, 100 percent believe that local government should take action to preserve farmland as a valuable resource. Eighty six percent of non-farm citizens believe that farming enhances the scenic beauty and open spaces of the county while providing a positive impact on the environment. All of non-farm respondents support farm and forest preservation efforts in the county.

Dr. Dixon said at the center of the Pasquotank County Agricultural Development Plan, based on information provided by farmers, agribusiness leaders and non-farm residents through personal interviews and surveys are six proposed recommendations. The recommendations and action steps were developed to provide a guide for protecting and enhancing agriculture in Pasquotank County. The success of this plan depends on the collaboration between local government, agricultural organizations, farmers, agribusiness, and citizens of Pasquotank County. The plan needs to be evaluated annually to celebrate accomplishments and add new recommendations as needed. The recommendations are:

- Support measures to protect and promote forest and farmland in Pasquotank County.
- Promote and increase enrollment in Voluntary Agricultural District (VAD) and create and adopt Enhanced Voluntary Agricultural District (EVAD) programs.
- Develop and conduct programs to assist Pasquotank County farm and forest landowners with farm transition planning.
- Promote appreciation and awareness of the benefits of agriculture to Pasquotank elected officials and citizens.
- Expand and support youth agricultural educational programs.
- Develop technical, business and marketing training for the maintenance and expansion of agriculture in Pasquotank County.

Dr. Dixon concluded that the intent of the plan is neither to limit nor restrict landowners' rights and uses. The plan is intended to serve as a guide for actions to provide farmers, landowners and citizens an increased awareness of farmland preservation opportunities. Agriculture is important to Pasquotank County and its economy and to the well-being of family farms. However, he said the final decision on farmland preservation rests in the hands of the owners of farms and forests.

Vice Chairman Sterritt thanked Dr. Dixon for his hard work on the plan. He said it will be very valuable to our local community college that is in the process of starting a two-year agriculture program, which will dovetail with NC State University.

Motion was made by Jeff Dixon, seconded by Bill Sterritt to adopt the Pasquotank County Agricultural Development Plan as presented. The motion carried unanimously.

3. APPOINTMENT TO LIBRARY BOARD:

At the January 8, 2018 meeting the Board accepted a recommendation from the Appointments Committee to nominate Dr. Anthony Sharp for appointment to the Library Board. Chairman Perry stated that the Board can approve the appointment or can nominate someone else for the position. He asked if there were any other nominations.

Motion was made Joe Winslow, seconded by Jeff Dixon to close the nominations for the Library Board. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Jeff Dixon, seconded by Joe Winslow to appoint Dr. Anthony Sharp to the Library Board to fill the unexpired term of Charles H. Jordan which will expire on June 20, 2020. The motion carried unanimously.

4. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

The Board considered the following consent agenda:

a. Approval of Minutes of January 29 and 30, and February 5, 2018 Commissioner Meetings

b. Approval of Tax Releases, Tax Refunds and Solid Waste Fee Releases

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following tax releases, tax refunds and solid waste fee releases:

Tax Releases

		County	City
1.	Nathan A. Potter Sr. & Karen Joan Kidwell	1649.43	
2.	Patricia A. Hill	144.00	
3.	John H. Siemens	711.48	
4.	RCW LLC	212.04	
5.	RCW LLC	214.83	
6.	S & T Williams Properties LLC	1414.49	
7.	John W. & Frances M. Cherry	144.00	
8.	Bradley Wade Roberts	355.55	
9.	Bradley Wade Roberts	324.14	
10.	Executive Express	1185.80	
11.	Kirk Peavy	3.81	3.24

Tax Refunds

		County	City
1.	Noel Fleming Bongartz		163.31
2.	John Michael Stinson	169.06	
3.	Michael James Zakrajsek	313.26	

Solid Waste Fee Release

	Owner's Name	Parcel ID #	Reason for Release
1.	Mary S. Berry Lf. Est.	24-B-16	Vacant
2.	Nolan M. Bundy	P6-5	Vacant
3.	Ernest & Darline Cole	50-F-308	Vacant
4.	Nancy P. Cressman	P141-49	Vacant
5.	Shawn Etheridge Etal.	P59-31	Vacant
6.	Raymond M. Godfrey Jr	P34-9	Vacant
7.	Raymond M. Godfrey Jr	P60-26	Vacant
8.	Raymond M. Godfrey Jr	P33-35	Vacant
9.	William E. & Wilhemenia D. James	39-B-25	Vacant
10.	Harry Jr. & Alice Faye Selby Kellogg	56-F-2	Vacant
11.	Gracie Meads Heirs	P35-59	Vacant
12.	James Pool Heirs	P64-60	Vacant
13.	Abe Shannon Etal	P95-24	Vacant
14.	Floyd Simpson	P58-15	vacant
15.	William L. Spellman Lf. Est.	P99-9	Vacant
16.	Tony & Cordelia Spence	P80-36	Vacant
17.	Linwood & Flora Turner	59-B-12	Vacant
18.	Mary O. & John W. Gibson Lf. Est.	P63-4	Vacant

c. Approval of Budget Amendments

The Finance Committee has recommended approval fo the following budget amendments:

Seized Assets

Increase	020.0240.4431.05	Forfeiture-Federal	30,000.00
Increase	020.4300.5269.00	Law Enforcement Officer	30,000.00

Non-Departmental

Increase	010.0180.4290.00	Gross Receipts Tax	6,000.00
Increase	010.4195.5440.00	Contracted Services	6,000.00

Parks & Rec

Increase	010.0180.4290.00	Gross Receipts Tax	2,000.00
Increase	010.6130.5359.00	Maintenance- Grounds	2,000.00

Capital Reserve

Increase	010.0991.4991.00	Fund Balance Appropriated	5,454.00
Increase	010.8200.5960.05	Reserve- Commerce Park	5,454.00

Economic Dev

Increase	010.0110.4111.17	Ad Valorem Taxes- '17	1,000.00
Increase	010.4920.5625.09	Incentive Grant	1,000.00

GIS

Increase	010.0180.4290.00	Gross Receipts Tax	1,500.00
Increase	010.4915.5261.00	Departmental Supplies	1,500.00

d. Approval to Allow Rodney Bunch to Purchase County Cell Phone

The Finance Committee has recommended allowing Rodney Bunch to purchase his county cell phone for \$1 upon his retirement February 28, 2018. The number attached to the phone will remain property of the County.

e. Approval of Lease Proposal with the State of North Carolina

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the lease proposal with the North Carolina Department of Agriculture for the Northeast Marketing Center. The lease is for 1,386 square feet located at 1205 McPherson Street. The lease amount is for \$16,475 per annum, which is the equivalent of \$11.48 per square foot. The lease term is three years beginning January 1, 2018 and ending December 31, 2020.

f. Approval to Reduce Listing Price for Moyock Lots

The Finance Committee has recommended that the sales listing agreements with Rose & Womble be amended to reflect a sales price of \$250,000 per acre.

g. Approval for Pay Grade/Step for Planning Clerk IV

The Finance Committee has recommended that Brenda Noland be placed on Pay Grade 12, Step 9 @ \$32,604. The Planning Clerk IV position is assigned Pay Grade 12. Step 9 is the equivalent of 8 years' experience (1/2 of the time Ms. Noland was employed as an office manager).

h. Clarification for Contribution to Albemarle Area United Way

The Finance Committee has clarified that the \$1,200 annual contribution to the Albemarle Area United Way is for the term of lease agreement (three years).

i. Approval for Providence VFD Flashing Lights

The Finance Committee has recommended that Pasquotank County enter into an agreement with NCDOT for installing an actuated fire signal at the Providence VFD in an estimated amount of \$30,000.

j. Approval to Accept Offer by Camden County to Purchase Property

The Finance Committee has recommended that the offer by Camden County in the amount of \$275,000 be accepted for the purchase of Pasquotank County's 1/3 undivided interest in the NCDC property and the Camden Medical Park.

k. Approval to Eliminate Emergency Services Director Position

The Finance Committee has recommended that the Emergency Services Director position be eliminated and to revert back to the Emergency Medical Services Director and Central Communications Director positions effective March 1, 2018.

Jerry Newell will be appointed Emergency Medical Services Director at Grade 32, Step 13 @ \$68,927. Kylie Felton will be appointed Interim Central Communications Director and provided a \$1,000 per month stipend for a six month probationary period. Upon successfully completing the probationary period, Ms. Felton would be appointed Central Communications Director on Pay Grade 25, Step 8 @ \$52,635.

Motion was made by Jeff Dixon, seconded by Joe Winslow to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

5. **RECOMMENDATION FROM THE APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE:**

Commissioner Jordan stated that the Appointments Committee would like to nominate Robert Phippen, Jr. to fill Don McCabe's unexpired term on the COA Board of Trustees and nominate Dr. Anthony Sharp to replace Doug Gardner on the COA Board of Trustees when his term expires on June 30, 2018. Final approval of these appointments would be held over until the next meeting.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Bill Sterritt to nominate Robert Phippen, Jr. and Dr. Anthony Sharp to the COA Board of Trustees with final approval at the next meeting. The motion carried unanimously.

6. **APPOINTMENT OF SPARTY HAMMETT AS COUNTY MANAGER AND APPROVAL OF EMPLOYMENT CONTRACT:**

Attorney John Liedy reported that Mr. Hammett has agreed to the Board's proposal as offered.

Motion was made by Jeff Dixon, seconded by Joe Winslow to approve the appointment of Sparty Hammett as County Manager based on an annual salary of \$125,000 and to approve his employee contract effective March 19, 2018 for a two-year term that may be extended for successive one-year periods. The motion carried unanimously.

7. **REPORTS FROM COUNTY MANAGER:**

County Manager Bunch provided the following report:

Governor Cooper recently launched "Hometown Strong", a new initiative to partner with local governments to support local economies, improve infrastructure, and strengthen rural communities. Governor Cooper appointed Pryor Gibson and Mary Penny Kelley to lead Hometown Strong. Mr. Gibson is a former member of the NC General Assembly. Ms. Kelley formerly served as a senior advisor for policy and innovation at the NC Department of Environmental Quality, where she had also served as an executive attorney for nearly a decade. Mr. Gibson and Ms. Kelley met with Wayne Harris and I Tuesday, February 13th to tell us about the initiative and solicit ways that state government might help us improve our economy. Among many items discussed, we talked a great deal about the need for broad band service to rural areas to help children do school homework assignments. Mr. Gibson had definitely done a lot of research on Pasquotank County before meeting with us as he was very familiar with our business climate. He was extremely impressed in the fact that we had ECSU, COA, and Mid Atlantic Christian University. He also was impressed to learn more about our US Coast Guard Base.

The following vehicle was surplus and recently sold on GovDeals.com:

Description	Buyer	Buyer's City & State	Sold Amount
1995 Ford Econoline E350	Mark Barefoot	N Topsail Beach, NC	\$2,505.00
			\$2,505.00

8. **PRESENTATION TO COUNTY MANAGER RODNEY BUNCH:**

Chairman Perry presented Rodney Bunch a plaque thanking him for his compassion, guidance and outstanding leadership over the past 27 years with Pasquotank County.

Mr. Bunch said he appreciates the opportunity he has been given for 27 years. He stated that most of the Board was not here 27 years ago, but they have spent a great deal of time with him. He said he was first hired as Pasquotank County's Planning Director and then given the great opportunity of being the County's first and only Assistant County Manager, which put him in line to become the next County Manager for the past five years. He stated that it has been a great ride and he appreciates it very much.

9. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Frankie Meads stated that he has enjoyed working with Mr. Bunch during his time on the Board. He praised his self-control.

Commissioner Jordan reported that he met Mr. Bland Baker, Director of Trillium this past week to bring him up to par with the duties of the Northern Regional Advisory Board.

Commissioner Dixon stated that he was Chairman when Mr. Bunch was hired as County Manager. He said Mr. Bunch is a blessing in disguise. With his 20 years' of experience in Planning and his time as Assistant Manager he fell into Manager at a very good time. He said the County was struggling due to the recession and Mr. Bunch, along with staff held the ship upright. He noted that the County only raised taxes minimally. He is honored and privileged to have worked with him and wished him the best in his retirement.

Chairman Perry stated that he met Mr. Bunch about fourteen years ago when he became a county commissioner. He noted that Mr. Bunch does not talk a lot, but he is honest and straightforward. He said he speaks a lot of words without saying them. He wished him the best in his retirement.

Vice-Chairman Sterritt stated that he would hold his comments for Mr. Bunch for the Economic Development Committee meeting on Wednesday. He reported that former and current members of the Community Relations Commission had a nice meeting with Mayor Parker recently and they plan to meet with Chairman Perry in the near future. He said they have been facing some problems with membership and they hope that the meetings they are having will solve that problem.

Chairman Perry reported that he gave greetings at an event this past weekend honoring local football players from our area. Two former professional football players were in attendance. He praised the fact that there were a lot of young high school players who are honor roll students.

Commissioner Jordan thanked Mr. Bunch for making him feel very comfortable while transitioning as a new commissioner. He noted that Mr. Bunch is very easy to talk to and has been very helpful to him and he would like him to know how appreciative he is.

There being no further business;

Motion was made by Jeff Dixon, seconded by Charles Jordan to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried unanimously and the meeting was adjourned at 7:45 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD