

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
APRIL 4, 2016**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, April 4, 2016 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Joseph S. Winslow, Jr., Chairman  
Cecil Perry, Vice-Chairman  
Jeff Dixon  
Dr. William R. Sterritt  
Frankie Meads  
Bettie Parker

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** Lloyd E. Griffin, III

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Rodney Bunch, County Manager  
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Winslow. Chairman Winslow gave the invocation and Commissioner William Sterritt led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Winslow welcomed everyone present.

**1. PRESENTATION OF PINS TO EMPLOYEES FOR YEARS OF SERVICE:**

Chairman Winslow called on the following county employee to receive a pin recognizing his years of service to Pasquotank County:

<b>Employee</b>	<b>Department</b>	<b>Years of Service</b>
Rodney Bunch	County Manager	25 years

The Board congratulated and thanked Mr. Bunch for his years of service.

**2. COMMENTS FROM BETSY MEADS:**

Chairman Winslow recognized Ms. Betsy Meads, Vice-Chairman of the Republican Party. She said she would like to address the Board regarding scheduling of meeting rooms at the courthouse. She said prior to 2014 the Republican Party had been meeting monthly in the courthouse, as well as once a year for their annual meeting, which was typically on a Saturday in March. She stated that in 2014, she was told she would no longer be able to use it because of changes in security. In 2015, they held their convention elsewhere. She called the courthouse and asked if she could reserve a courtroom for March 12<sup>th</sup> for their convention and was told that they do not do that anymore. She said she informed staff that according to the newspaper the Democratic Party was having their convention at the courthouse on March 5<sup>th</sup>. She said staff excused herself and came back to the phone shortly after and asked her when she would like to schedule the convention. She said she felt sorry for the employee because it was awkward for the employee to think that she knows the policy and find out that she did not know the exceptions. She noted that she is not blaming staff.

Ms. Meads said the Republican Party would like to recommend a policy be implemented that will be binding on everybody, whether it is Baptist or Methodist, Rotary or Ruritan, Unaffiliated, Democrat, or Republican. She added they believe there should be a charge for use of the courthouse as well to cover costs for utilities and staff.

After discussion, staff was instructed to investigate the current Courthouse Use Policy and report back to the Board at their next meeting.

**3. COMMENTS FROM KIM PARRISH:**

Chairman Winslow recognized Ms. Kim Parrish, SPCA President. She announced the new SPCA should be open in late May. She thanked the Board for their support. The new facility was purchased in 2011 with funds that had been set aside specifically for a new facility. She said they began the fundraising process and raised the amount they were told they needed to raise by the USDA. She stated that they borrowed approximately \$900,000. She noted that they prepared a business plan in order to find places they could cut costs within their current budget

and see if they could take care of the current mortgage. She feels pretty comfortable they can pay the mortgage. The SPCA will also continue to do fundraisers and receive private donations.

Ms. Parrish stated that the SPCA has requested an allocation increase of \$10,000 for the next fiscal year, which will increase their contribution from \$117,000 to \$127,000. She noted that the Pasquotank County shelter, which includes Camden and Elizabeth City, brings in 2,400 animals a year. Camden allocates \$23,000 and Pasquotank County allocated \$117,000. Currituck County brings in 1,011 animals per year and their county allocation is \$140,000. The Tri-County shelter brings in 1,800 animals per year and their allocation is \$175,000. She said they are bringing in a lot more animals and their allocations are a little less than she thinks they should be when compared to the surrounding counties.

Ms. Parrish explained that the Pasquotank County Animal Shelter is an open admission shelter, which means they have to take every animal that comes through the doors.

Ms. Parrish said she is very proud of the new shelter and she is looking forward to everyone attending the grand opening.

Commissioner Dixon asked Ms. Parrish to send the statistical information to staff for review at budget discussions. He said it is his hope that once the old shelter is abandoned, the property can be sold and the proceeds be given to the new shelter. Ms. Parrish said she can have a conversation with the family and see what their intent is moving forward.

Ms. Parrish stated that in the last five years their in-take numbers have come down by 400 per year, which she attributes to their aggressive spay/neuter program.

Commissioner Dixon asked Ms. Parrish if she would support paying members of the Pasquotank County Animal Control Board for attending meetings. Ms. Parrish said she would not personally accept payment. Commissioner Meads stated that the reason he suggested the board receiving a minimal payment is due to the meeting being scheduled in the middle of the day and sometimes lasting for more than an hour.

Commissioner Perry asked if adjacent counties can bring animals to the Pasquotank County Shelter. Ms. Parrish said they only accept animal from Pasquotank County, Elizabeth City, and Camden County. She went on to say they cannot turn away any animals brought in from Camden, Elizabeth City or Pasquotank County regardless of their condition or what type of animal they are. She said they recently accepted pigs and have had goats, rabbits and genie pigs in the past. She said they utilize their resources to find homes for them or place them with rescue groups.

Commissioner Sterritt said the SPCA is a perfect example of the grassroots effort to do something for the county that is of importance. He said over the years they have raised and saved money and put themselves in a position where they can build a new shelter. He stated that the new facility is going to be an outstanding facility and the staff at the SPCA needs to be applauded for all the work they do. Ms. Parrish agreed that they have an outstanding staff. She thanked the Board for their support.

#### **4. COMMENTS FROM CRAIG POFF:**

Chairman Winslow recognized Mr. Craig Poff with Iberdrola Renewables. Mr. Poff updated the Board on the windfarm project. He reported that 150 local people were onsite working today. He said \$263,000 was put into local businesses during the month of February and this figure does not include purchases from local material suppliers, fuel, payroll, or per diem allowances. He went on to say there were 8,100 man hours of local people during the month of February as well.

Mr. Poff reported that road work is still in progress at the site. Twenty to thirty miles of the sixty miles is complete. Dominion is working on the construction of the substation in Perquimans County. They are heavily focused on preparing foundations. Six or seven foundations have been poured and numerous other foundations are under construction.

Mr. Poff said he will be available for tours of the site on Monday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> for those who are interested.

Commissioner Dixon stated that he went on the last tour and was totally impressed. He noted that diversity of the workforce on the site looks really good.

Commissioner Parker asked if local people are being utilized for contracting services. Mr. Poff stated that there are between thirty and fifty local companies involved in some way shape or form daily.

Commissioner Perry said he has heard nothing but positive comments in his community about the project.

**5. COMMENTS FROM MAYOR JOE PEEL:**

Mayor Peel stated that one of the things he has been working on is establishing a Civic Leadership Institute program to inform students about the complex challenges that affect our community and develop the knowledge, experience and leadership skills they need to make a positive difference in lives of local citizens. He initially approached the Chamber of Commerce, who ran a similar program twenty years ago to see if they would be interested in running the program. He said the chamber informed him that they were not interested and the costs would be much higher if they did.

Mayor Peel said the Institute for Emerging Issues recently published its Civic Health Index for 2015. It was found that rural and urban communities in North Carolina are more challenged to engage residents than suburban areas. In particular, rural residents report substantially less volunteering activities. Families with incomes over \$75,000 report civic engagement levels that far outpace those of families earning no more than \$35,000 for most, but not all, indicators. He said generally, African Americans and Latinos in North Carolina report lower levels of civic participation than do white and non-Latinos. He noted we have a lot of that population that live in this area which make the need even greater.

Mayor Peel said the goal is to create people who are civically aware.

Mayor Peel said the Community Relations Commission (CRC) is willing to be responsible for recruiting participants and implementing this program. The CRC was created and is supported by both the City Council and the Pasquotank County Commissioners. The mission of the CRC is to promote the equal treatment of all individuals, discourage discrimination of all types and promote harmony and equal opportunity among all people. He said the program will be free to participants as funding would be provided by the City and County governments through their funding of the CRC. He asked that the Board provide an increase of \$3,500 in their appropriation to the CRC so that they can conduct the program.

Mayor Peel explained that the program will be a 9-month program, with approximately 20 participants.

Commissioner Dixon said he feels this is a badly needed program, because clubs such as the Jaycees, Lions, and the Quannah are barely holding on. He said when he came home from college he joined the Jaycees. He stated that many former civic leaders have come and gone who were Jaycee members. He said he learned Robert's Rule of Procedure, Parliamentary Procedure, board elections and much more. He stated that young women and men who are coming back to our community from college need to be given an incentive to do civic duties in our community. Commissioner Meads stated that he learned these procedures in Civic Class in 9<sup>th</sup> grade.

Commissioner Perry noted that the NCACC has requested that we start this type of program in our schools. He said it was mentioned that minorities are left out in many things that go on in our community. He said if we do not give people an opportunity to be involved, we will not get the best we can out of our community. He stated there is a tremendous division of people in our community. He went on to say since the structuring of our government in 1965, African Americans are not truly allowed to be involved in government, because of gerrymandering. He said he also has concerns with the way we employ people. He said we employ people by using two or three different people, not allowing everyone to have an equal chance at being employed. Mayor Peel said that is why he believes the CRC is the best group to lead this.

Commissioner Parker said she has not had a chance to study the request and she would like to be able to review it more. She asked where this idea was initiated. Mayor Peel said he initiated the idea. He added that he spent a lot of time researching civic engagement.

Commissioner Sterritt asked what age group the participants will be. Mayor Peel said that needs to be discussed further. He feels a more diverse group will make it a better experience. Commissioner Dixon said they need to be young, college graduates that come back to the community. Commissioner Parker agreed. Commissioner Dixon feels the program should be “certificate based”.

Chairman Winslow asked who will determine the individuals who will participate. Mayor Peel said once the program is approved, the details will be looked into further.

Commissioner Parker asked Mayor Peel what he needed from our Board at this point. Mayor Peel said \$3,500. He noted that the City will be asked to contribute \$3,500 as well.

Commissioner Perry said it is important that we look at the people that are selected very carefully, because many times minorities are left out of things. Basically, he said they feel that they are not part of the community. Many times there are a lot of very smart minorities in this community that are not participating in anything. He hopes that the people that make this program available will reach out to people and make them feel comfortable with participating. He said we need to reach out to the entire community. Mayor Peel assured Commissioner Perry if they receive the funds to start this program he will personally make sure that he is involved in it.

County Manager Bunch stated that he was a participant in the program over twenty years ago. He said there were approximately a dozen people in the class. He said a number of them have succeeded and gone on to other places, but there are some still here who are involved in public committees and continuing to serve. He said a lot can be learned from the program.

**6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Board considered the following consent agenda

a. Approval of Minutes of March 21, 2016 Commissioner Meeting

b. Approval of Tax Releases and Refunds

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following tax releases and refunds:

**Tax Refunds**

		County	City
1.	Angeline Leigh Smith		166.92
2.	Travis Cyntell Hunter		114.12
3.	James L. & Bessie Walton	182.04	

**Solid Waste Fee Releases**

	OWNER’S NAME	PARCEL ID #	REASON FOR RELEASE
1.	James L. Perry	P6-11	Vacant

**Solid Waste Fee Refunds**

	OWNER’S NAME	PARCEL ID #	REASON FOR RELEASE
1.	Sandra G. Smith	P143A-60	Vacant

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Frankie Meads to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**7. REPORT FROM COUNTY MANAGER:**

County Manager Rodney Bunch reported that on March 7<sup>th</sup> the Board declared five parcels as surplus. Staff has identified adjacent landowners for two of the surplus properties. Letters have been mailed to each adjacent landowner informing them the county will accept offers to purchase the surplus property.

Mr. Bunch said five sheriff's vehicles have been declared surplus. The vehicles have been listed on GovDeals.com. He said he will provide a detailed breakdown of the vehicles and the sale price after the sales are finalized.

Mr. Bunch reported that Mike Etheridge and his staff are assisting in removal of the existing playground equipment at FunJunktion so the new playground can be constructed by Trillium. He said they are attempting to salvage the existing equipment so that it can be offered for sale on GovDeals.com.

Mr. Bunch stated that staff is currently working on annual insurance renewals.

Mr. Bunch reported that five individuals have been selected for interviews for the Maintenance Superintendent position.

Mr. Bunch reminded the Board of upcoming event/meetings.

Mr. Bunch reported that multiple gunshots were fired in front of the courthouse this morning. He noted the front of the building and one window frame were hit, but they did not come into the courthouse. One vehicle parked on the street was hit by two bullets. He said we are very fortunate that no one was hurt. He went on to say that clothing and firearms have been located, but no one has been arrested at this point.

The Board discussed various ways of dealing with firearms being discharged in the County and City and possible solutions.

Motion was made by Jeff Dixon, seconded by Cecil Perry that the Chairman for the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners, Mayor for the City of Elizabeth City, the District Attorney, the Pasquotank County Sheriff, the Elizabeth City Chief of Police, and the City and County Managers meet to discuss public safety issues in our community. The motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Meads said the first three people that would be targeted at the courthouse are the three deputies performing security in the lobby. Commissioner Perry suggested installing more security cameras. Chairman Winslow stated that this problem is occurring throughout the county and not just at the courthouse and it needs to be addressed. He said all citizens in the county should feel safe. Commissioner Parker said this problem has been going on for quite some time. She said this problem is spreading like a cancer. She said it should have been nipped in the bud in the neighborhoods where it starts. Commissioner Perry added that witnesses are afraid to speak out. Commissioner Dixon noted that businesses were affected and some even closed their doors due to policy.

#### **8. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Sterritt attended the DSS meeting this morning. He said his term on the DSS Board expires on June 30, 2016. He said he is willing to serve another term if the Appointments Committee sees fit.

Commissioner Dixon commended Mr. Bunch on his written Manager's Report and asked that he continue to do so.

Commissioner Parker said she plans to attend the ribbon cutting ceremony for the Elizabeth City Public Safety Administrative Building. She said she will be representing the county at the RMA Youth Connection 2016 this Saturday.

Commissioner Perry represented the County at the recent Agricultural Extension Program in Plymouth. He also gave greetings on behalf of the County Saturday at AT&T Workshop for Seniors at Elizabeth City State University.

Chairman Winslow said he would like to express his condolences to the family of Former Elizabeth City Mayor, Roger McLean. He said he was a fine man. Commissioner Parker noted that the funeral is scheduled for Wednesday.

Chairman Winslow asked if there was any further business to come before the Board. There being no further business, he asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion was made by Joe Winslow, seconded by Cecil Perry to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:25 PM.

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CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO THE BOARD