

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 2, 2022**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, May 2, 2022 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lloyd E. Griffin, III, Chairman
Charles H. Jordan, Vice-Chairman
Cecil Perry
William "Bill" Sterritt
Barry Overman
Sean Lavin
Jonathan Meads

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Sparty Hammett, County Manager
Patrice Stewart, Tax Administrator
Sharon Cooper, Tax Appraiser
Tommy Wooten, Sheriff
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Lloyd Griffin. Commissioner Barry Overman gave the invocation and Commissioner Bill Sterritt led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Griffin welcomed those in attendance.

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Vice-Chairman Charles Jordan requested that the agenda be amended to add the following item recommended by the Finance Committee to the Consent Agenda: 1) Approval of request for Special Event Requiring Road Closure.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Sean Lavin to amend the agenda to add Items #1 to the Consent Agenda. The motion carried unanimously.

2. BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW:

Chairman Griffin convened the Board of Equalization and Review for 2022 and asked if there were any appeals to be heard. Tax Administrator Patrice Stewart stated that there are no appeals to be heard at this time. Attorney Cox asked that the Board recess the Board of E&R until June 6th and reconvene at that time. If there are no appeals at that time, the Board of E&R can adjourn for the year.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Jonathan Meads to recess the Board of Equalization and Review for 2022 until Monday, June 6, 2022 at 6:00 PM. The motion carried unanimously.

3. PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION FOR 2022 EMS WEEK:

Chairman Griffin called on EMS Chief Jerry Newell and Operations Manager Jamar Whitaker to accept a proclamation for 2022 EMS Week. He read and then presented the following proclamation to Mr. Newell and Mr. Whitaker:

2022 EMS Week Proclamation

To designate the Week of May 15 - 21, 2022 as Emergency Medical Services Week in Pasquotank County.

WHEREAS, Emergency Medical Services is a vital public service; and

WHEREAS, the members of Emergency Medical Services teams are ready to provide lifesaving care to those in need 24 hours a day, seven days a week; and

WHEREAS, access to quality emergency care dramatically improves the survival and recovery rate of those who experience sudden illness or injury; and

WHEREAS, Emergency Medical Services has grown to fill a gap by providing important, out of hospital care, including preventative medicine, follow-up care, and access Community Paramedicine; and

WHEREAS, the members of Emergency Medical Services teams, whether career or volunteer, engage in thousands of hours of specialized training and continuing education to enhance their lifesaving skills; and

WHEREAS, it is appropriate to recognize the value and the accomplishments of Emergency Medical Services providers by designating Emergency Medical Services Week; now

THEREFORE, the Pasquotank County Commissioners hereby proclaim the week of May 15 - 21, 2022 as Emergency Medical Services Week with the theme “EMS: Rising to the Challenge.”

Adopted this the 2nd day of May, 2022.

4. COMMENTS BY GEORGE HAGUE:

Chairman Griffin recognized George Hague of 2321 Dalia Drive to address the Board. Mr. Hague voiced his concerns with three unelected individuals appointing the members of the Citizens’ Advisory Council, as well as the political affiliation of the members.

5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

The Board considered the following consent agenda:

a. Approval of Minutes of April 18, 2022 Commissioner Meeting

b. Approval of Tax Releases and Refunds

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following tax refund and solid waste fee release:

Tax Refund

		County	City
1.	Matthew Oen Christmas	124.93	120.07

Solid Waste Fee Release

		Parcel ID #	Reason for Release
1.	Zenia Judith Cebera Barahona	11-E-90	Vacant

c. Approval of Budget Amendments

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

Sheriff

Increase	010.0240.4380.38	DPS-Block Grant	24,495.00
Decrease	010.4310.5600.38	DPS-Block Grant	24,495.00

Tax Administration

Increase	010.0110.4113.00	Pick-up Taxes (dropped off AR)	1,880.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.11	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘11	1,160.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.12	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘12	1,160.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.13	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘13	1,330.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.14	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘14	1,100.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.15	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘15	1,100.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.16	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘16	930.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.17	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘17	935.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.18	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘18	935.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.19	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘19	934.00
Increase	010.0110.4111.20	Ad Valorem Taxes ‘20	810.00
Increase	010.0110.4115.00	Interest on Delinquent Taxes	14,900.00

Increase	010.0110.4116.00	Advertising	2,155.00
Increase	010.0300.4431.01	Sheriff's Fees	2,285.00
Increase	010.4140.5498.00	Tax Foreclosures	31,614.00

Convenience Sites

Increase	065.0375.4745.09	Solid Waste Fee-09	435.00
Increase	065.0375.4745.10	Solid Waste Fee-10	603.00
Increase	065.0375.4745.11	Solid Waste Fee-11	507.00
Increase	065.0375.4575.12	Solid Waste Fee-12	507.00
Increase	065.0375.4575.13	Solid Waste Fee-13	576.00
Increase	065.0375.4575.14	Solid Waste Fee-14	576.00
Increase	065.0375.4745.15	Solid Waste Fee-15	576.00
Increase	065.0375.4745.16	Solid Waste Fee-16	288.00
Increase	065.0375.4745.17	Solid Waste Fee-17	288.00
Increase	065.0375.4745.18	Solid Waste Fee-18	288.00
Increase	065.0375.4745.19	Solid Waste Fee-19	288.00
Increase	065.0375.4745.20	Solid Waste Fee-20	144.00
Increase	065.0375.4746.00	Interest on Delinquent SW Fees	2,382.00
Increase	065.7425.5498.00	Tax Foreclosures	7,458.00

d. Adoption of Resolution Supporting Construction of the Mid-Atlantic Bridge

The Albemarle Rural Planning Organization (ARPO) has requested the Board adopt the following resolution supporting construction of the Mid-Currituck Bridge and its continued inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Plan:

Resolution

Supporting Construction of the Mid-Currituck Bridge and its Continued Inclusion in the State Transportation Improvement Plan

WHEREAS the Rural Transportation Advisory Committee (RTAC) is the duly recognized transportation planning policy board for the Albemarle Rural Planning Organization (ARPO); and

WHEREAS, the Mid-Currituck Bridge project has been in the development process for over thirty years; and

WHEREAS, the popularity of Outer Banks of North Carolina, including Dare County and its towns, Currituck County and the Town of Southern Shores, continues to grow, resulting in an ever increasing number of residents and visitors to the Outer Banks, particularly the northern Outer Banks; and

WHEREAS, the Outer Banks of North Carolina generates substantial revenue for the state of North Carolina, particularly through tourism, and also serves a role as an ambassador area for the State by introducing hundreds of thousands of visitors from all over the United States and the world to the many wonders of North Carolina; and

WHEREAS, this revenue and the goodwill that visitors feel towards the Outer Banks and North Carolina is tested annually through frustrations attributed directly to traffic congestion; and

WHEREAS, the purpose of the Mid-Currituck Bridge is to substantially improve traffic flow on the project area's thoroughfares, i.e. NC 12 and US 158, substantially reduce travel time for persons traveling between the Currituck County mainland and the Currituck County Outer Banks, and to substantially reduce the hurricane clearance time for residents and visitors who use US 158 and NC 168 during coastal evacuation; and

WHEREAS, building the Mid-Currituck Bridge will reduce congestion and alleviate delays, thus promoting and enhancing economic development, while bolstering the tourism industry ;and

WHEREAS, alternatives to the Mid-Currituck Bridge project have been studied thoroughly and have been rejected in favor of the Mid-Currituck Bridge; and

WHEREAS, in recognition of the viability and need of the Mid-Currituck Bridge, the North Carolina Department of Transportation has demonstrated a commitment to construction of the bridge by placing it in the State Transportation Improvement Plan based on the agency's prioritization process and strong support by local municipalities and counties ;and

WHEREAS, the US District Court for the Eastern District of North Carolina ruled in December 2021 that NCDOT and the Federal Highway Administration have complied with all applicable federal laws and regulations in planning for the bridge; and

WHEREAS, the court's decision properly affirms the project's compliance with the federal National Environment Policy Act; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE PASQUOTANK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS THIS 2ND DAY OF MAY 2022, that it affirms its commitment to the Mid-Currituck Bridge Project and advocates for advancement of this crucial project and its continued inclusion as a funded project in the State Transportation Improvement Plan.

ADOPTED this 2nd day of May, 2022.

e. Adoption of Proclamation for Older Americans Month 2022

Every May, the Administration for Community Living leads the celebration of Older American's Month. This year's theme, *Age My Way*, focuses on how older adults can age in their communities, living independently for as long as possible and participating in ways they choose. The Albemarle Commission Area Agency on Aging has requested adoption of the following proclamation proclaiming May 2022 as Older Americans Month in Pasquotank County:

Older Americans Month 2022

A PROCLAMATION

Whereas, Pasquotank County includes a growing number of older Americans who contribute their strength, wisdom, and experience to our community; and

Whereas, communities benefit when people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds are welcomed, included, and supported; and

Whereas, Pasquotank County recognizes our need to create a community that provides the services and supports older Americans need to thrive and live independently for as long as possible; and

Whereas, Pasquotank County can work to build an even better community for our older residents by:

- Planning programs that encourage independence.
- Ensuring activities are responsive to individual needs and preferences.
- Increasing access to services that support aging in place.

Now, therefore, The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim May 2022 to be Older Americans Month, and urge every resident to recognize the contributions of our older citizens, help to create an inclusive society, and join efforts to support older Americans' choices about how they age in their communities.

Dated this 2nd day of May, 2022

f. Approval of Request for Special Event Requiring Road Closure

The Finance Committee recommended approval of an application to the NCDOT submitted by Brenda Reinking requesting road closure of 100 Sample Drive on May 21, 2022 from 11:00 AM to 9:00 PM for a special event.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Charles Jordan to approve the Consent Agenda, as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

6. FISCAL YEAR 2022-23 GOALS:

Chairman Griffin explained that as a follow-up to the 2022 Retreat, the Board directed staff to develop proposed goals for Fiscal Year 2022-23. Some of the Fiscal Year 2021-22 Goals were multi-year goals, and they have been continued for Fiscal Year 2022-23.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Barry Overman to approve the following Fiscal Year 2022-23 Goals. The motion carried 6 to 1, with Commissioner Lavin voting in opposition.

FY2022-23 Budget

- Develop a revenue neutral budget.
- Based upon funding availability, provide a Cost of Living Increase for all employees (percentage to be determined during the budget process).
- Review Pasquotank County's existing revenue sources and identify any strategies for maximizing revenue, beyond raising taxes, to be used during the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget process.
- Conduct research and analysis to determine if there are opportunities for other sources of revenue that are not currently being utilized by the County to be used during the Fiscal Year 2023-24 budget process.

County Manager

- Initiate annual community meetings for staff to convey information to citizens and to answer questions.
- Develop a Public Information Plan to implement strategies that enhance Pasquotank County's public image, improve citizen and employee engagement, and promote broader access to information about Pasquotank County government.
- Work with the College of the Albemarle, Elizabeth-City Pasquotank Public Schools, and other organizations to educate the public regarding the ¼ Cent Sales Tax.
- Complete project to establish permanent Board of Commissioners Meeting Room with state-of-the-art technology.
- Develop a formal Telework policy and identify positions within the County where Telework is a potential option.

County Attorney

- Continue process of updating and codifying county ordinances.
- Provide oversight of the Restructuring discussion to ensure that Pasquotank County meets all legal requirements mandated by the State of North Carolina.

Information Technology

- Continue to expand the use of new technology based on cost versus benefits and funding availability.

Emergency Medical Services

- Review compensation for certified Emergency Medical Services employees to address recruiting and retention.

Fire Services

- Provide an allocation of funding for an annual banquet for each of our four Volunteer Fire Departments to help recognize the firefighters for their commitment to Pasquotank County.

Finance Office

- Aggressively pursue grant funding to assist with: Broadband; Northern (Newland) Park construction; Utilities Department capital projects; and other County needs.

Sheriff's Office

- Complete the second phase of the strategy to improve Courthouse Security to include funding two additional full-time Deputies to be assigned to the Courthouse.
- Identify alternative funding to address additional areas of improvement identified in the recently completed Courthouse Security Assessment.
- Increase funding for training for Sheriff's Office staff.

Planning and Inspections

- Finalize street condition assessments and notify property owners/developers of their subdivision's status and maintenance options.
- Finalize the Comprehensive Plan Update to provide a vision for the County while addressing future growth and land use.

Utilities Department

- Continue implementing Water and Sewer Master Plan projects as recommended by staff and approved by the Board in February 2020.

Countywide Drainage

- Continue to work through the Drainage Advisory Committee to address countywide drainage and water quality issues.
- Continue the effort to establish a Drainage District in the desert.

Economic Development

- Engage with aerospace companies to promote the development of the Pasquotank County Aviation Research and Development Commerce Park for aviation related investments.
- Engage with speculative builders to promote the Pasquotank County Commerce Park for a potential shell building partnership.
- Engage with Off Shore Wind industry to promote the Pasquotank County Commerce Park or other county properties for industry support of the future Off Shore Wind Farm development.

Lobbyist/Legislative

- Follow-up monthly with our Lobbyist to ensure support of both the NCACC's legislative goals and Pasquotank County's local goals.
- Schedule two Board presentations for our Lobbyist to provide legislative updates and updates on their efforts in pursuing the County's legislative goals.

Commissioner Lavin stated that he made an objection at the last meeting about procedurally how some of the things were added and he would like that to be noted for the record.

7. LOCAL LEGISLATION FOR ¼ CENT SALES TAX REFERENDUM REVISED LANGUAGE:

County Manager Sparty Hammett explained that counties have the option to increase their sales tax by 1-quarter of a penny (Article 46 sales tax in N.C. G.S. 105-535), provided the public approves via a referendum. The Finance Committee recommended placing the ¼ Cent Sales Tax, which will sunset on September 30, 2023, back on the ballot in November. Currently, a County may not stipulate the use of the money on the ballot. A county Board of Commissioners may adopt a resolution that stipulates how they plan to use the revenues.

He said he provided a handout with the agenda titled NCACC Brief Ballot Language which provides background on proposed legislation which was Priority Goal 3 of the NCACC's 2021-22 Legislative Goals – "Support legislation to allow counties to include specific language on the ballot referendum designating how the proposed quarter-cent local sales tax levy will be spent." The legislation was not approved. He spoke with the County Lobbyist Jackson Stancil. He indicated that he did not know whether the Senate would actually consider the Bill in the Short Session. Mr. Stancil recommended that the Board move forward with local legislation as a backup since the County is placing the ¼ cent sales tax on the ballot in November. Mr. Hammett said he recommends approval to work with Jackson Stancil to draft the proposed local legislation, which would allow Pasquotank County to place specific language on the ballot regarding how the proposed quarter-cent local sales tax levy will be spent.

Chairman Griffin explained that the ¼ cent sales tax which is currently in place offsets a tax increase. Mr. Hammett said the tax brings in about the equivalent of five cents of property tax. He noted that it is very beneficial and about half of it is paid by individuals who do not live in Pasquotank County.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Cecil Perry for staff to work with the County's Lobbyist Jackson Stancil to draft proposed local legislation which would allow Pasquotank County to place specific language on the ballot

regarding how the proposed quarter-cent local sales tax levy will be spent. The motion carried 6 to 1, with Commissioner Meads voting in opposition.

8. REQUEST FOR LOCAL LEGISLATION FOR CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL:

County Manager Sparty Hammett provided a PowerPoint presentation which discussed Local Legislation, member selection, and an overview of Community Review/Advisory Boards and their responsibilities.

He said at the September 13, 2022, Finance Committee Meeting, he reported that Richland County South Carolina Sheriff, Leon Lott, was honored as 2021 National Sheriff of the Year. Sheriff Lott is known for community policing and community involvement, and Richland County is one of the few counties in the country with a citizen review board. There were only 11 counties nationwide with citizens review boards, according to a June 2020 National Association of Counties (NACo) article, and Richland County's program was a major focus in the article. That number is increasing significantly since 2020. He, Sheriff Wooten, and Chief Deputy Fogg met with Sheriff Lott, two members of his Citizens' Advisory Council, and Richland County Sheriff's Office command staff members to discuss their Citizens' Advisory Council and community programs.

Mr. Hammett stated that one major goal in meeting with Sheriff Lott was to glean from his experience in successfully creating a Citizens' Advisory Council that has meaningful impact. Hearing first-hand about Richland County's program was impressive. The meeting with Sheriff Lott supported that creating a Citizens' Advisory Council would be a very positive move for our citizens, the Sheriff's Office, and Pasquotank County. He said Sheriff Wooten requested he take the lead in forming a Task Force as a first step in implementing a Citizens' Advisory Council. The Sheriff was committed to the process and willing to open his Office up similar to Richland County, we just need to work out the logistics of any constraints we have with NC laws, determine the parameters of review, and determine the membership. He said he, the Sheriff, his team had ongoing discussions regarding how to make substantive and meaningful changes.

At the September 13th Board meeting, the Board approved retaining Police2Peace to move forward with the first two components of the Peace Initiative – Micro Community Listening Sessions and Peace Officer framework, with a not to exceed budget of \$50,000 using Contingency Funds, and directed the County Manager to work with the Sheriff's Office in forming a Task Force as the first step toward implementing a Citizens' Advisory Council.

Mr. Hammett provided a breakdown of how current Citizen Advisory Boards select their members. Some are selected by law enforcement leaders, while others are selected by City Council members, and City Managers. For counties that have a Citizen's Board or Council, the Sheriff typically selects the members, but again Sheriff Wooten did not want to select the members and asked the County Manager to form a Task Force to establish the CAC and select the members. When forming the CAC, the Task Force did not look at political affiliation because political party should be irrelevant at a local government level. Pasquotank County does not request information on political affiliation for any board or committee.

Mr. Hammett explained that the following three concerns draw attention to the possible benefits of Citizen Boards: the persistent gap of confidence or trust in police by people of color; proposals to reform or strengthen police actions where there is a risk of negative impact on a suspect or a community; and a heightened focus on police accountability and improving community views of police. In 2020, a national Gallup poll found that "56% of White adults and 19% of Black adults say they have 'a great deal' or 'quite a lot' of confidence in the police. Twelve NC cities and three counties have formally appointed citizen advisory boards. They are all fairly similar. They serve as a standing forum for voices from the community and for receiving and discussing information from the police or Sheriff's Office. The goals of the citizen advisory boards vary, but the themes are: community voice; awareness and education; support of law enforcement; input on law enforcement functions and community concerns; and specific topics on attention and comment.

Four NC Cities have boards designated to hear appeals of citizen complaints: Charlotte; Durham; Greensboro; and Winston-Salem. All four of the boards are review-focused models. They conduct reassessments of completed investigations by reviewing the quality of police internal affairs investigations. Each appeal must be initiated by the complainant who is not

satisfied with the determination of the internal affairs investigation and outcome. The number of appeals that proceed to hearing is small, usually one to three appeals per year. Citizen Review Boards receive training in law enforcement investigation principles and techniques, as well as other training. For both Citizen Review and Advisory Board members, participation in ride-alongs with officers/deputies to observe and better understand operations is typical. Many larger jurisdictions have citizen police academies, and members are required to attend.

Pasquotank County Sheriff's Office Citizens' Advisory Council proposed responsibilities include:

- Review appeals of citizens' complaints against deputies and/or employees of the Sheriff's Office (SO).
- Hear appeals/grievances from SO employees concerning disciplinary actions against deputies and/or employees.
- Review internal policies and procedures of the SO.
- Participate in the hiring process.
- Provide a community voice/representation to the SO.
- Help to promote public awareness about policing.
- Provide input on new SO programs/initiatives.
- Provide input on current law enforcement issues/concerns.

Mr. Hammett stated that our community has to be better prepared to respond to any future incidents related to law enforcement use of force. The implementation of the Citizens' Advisory Council will provide a mechanism for providing citizen input into the operations of the Sheriff's Office and the ability to get information out to better respond to any future incidents. According to *Principles of Good Policing – Department of Justice – Potential Flashpoints* include: the incident itself; investigation of the incident; community reaction to the incident; announcement of the result of the investigation; announcement of procedural court decision(s), sentencing, or jury verdicts; and new incidents involving police or grievances. A good example is on Thursday, February 17, 2022 a School Resource Officer used a Taser on a 15-year Pasquotank County High School student. This incident was a potential flash point that was deescalated due to the strong working relationship developed between NAACP President Keith Rivers and Major Aaron Wallio. The ability to review appeals of citizen complaints is needed to give the Pasquotank SO CAC validity, provide transparency, and improve community trust.

Mr. Hammett said the Pasquotank County Sheriff's Office receives a minimal number of complaints. The CAC would review complaints only if a citizen is not satisfied with the internal investigation. The CAC would only be granted access to the personnel action and internal investigation records associated with the complaint. All four of the existing Citizen Review Boards in North Carolina with the statutory authority to review appeals of complaints are advisory boards and do not have the final say on an appeal. The CAC will have a similar role. The Sheriff will review the CAC's findings and will have the final decision. CAC Members would sign a Confidentiality Agreement and would not be given copies of documents. Without Local Legislation, the CAC cannot legally review appeals of citizen complaints.

Mr. Hammett explained that a Local Act will be needed to enable the Citizens' Advisory Council to review appeals of citizen complaints against the Pasquotank County Sheriff's Office. He said he discussed the potential legislation with our Lobbyist, Jackson Stancil, and he indicated the Short Session of the North Carolina General Assembly starts on May 18, 2022. They also discussed the process for introducing the legislation and completing the draft of the proposed legislation. When the Local Act is approved, Pasquotank County will be the first county in North Carolina to have a citizen review board with the authority to review citizen complaints. He said he and Sheriff Wooten recommend approval to work with our Lobbyist, Jackson Stancil, to finalize the following draft proposed legislation:

AN ACT TO ALLOW PASQUOTANK COUNTY TO DISCLOSE LIMITED PERSONNEL
INFORMATION TO THE MEMBERS OF THE CITIZENS' ADVISORY COUNCIL TO
FACILITATE ITS REVIEW OF CITIZEN COMPLAINTS

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:

Section 1. In order to allow citizen review of the Sheriff's Office complaint process, the Sheriff and his designees, may release the findings of disciplinary actions taken against a deputy and the facts relied upon in determining the action to establish an appeal process for citizen complaints. The information may be released to the person who filed the complaint and to members of the Citizens' Advisory Council (CAC). CAC members shall maintain as confidential all personnel information to which they gain access as a member of the CAC. Each member of the CAC shall execute and adhere to a Confidentiality Agreement. For purposes of this subdivision, the "findings of disciplinary actions" includes determinations that the action is sustained, not sustained, unfounded, exonerated, classified as an information file, or classified as any other disciplinary disposition category subsequently adopted by the Pasquotank County Sheriff's Office. In the event that the CAC hears an appeal of a citizen complaint, the findings of the case, as defined in this subdivision as well as the facts and circumstances of the case, may be released by the Sheriff and his designees, to any person whose presence is necessary to the appeals hearing as determined by the Sheriff or his designees.

Sheriff Tommy Wooten said he loves everyone in Pasquotank County. He took an oath and was sworn to serve and protect every single person of the 41,000 citizens in this County and that is what he intends to do. He is not mad at nobody. He is not upset with nobody. He understands that there is a lot of misunderstanding. Some people like the idea and some don't and that's fine. He said he is disheartened to say the least, but after praying a lot about it, he has come to a place of understanding. He understands that some people have worries about the implications of what this may or may not bring. With that being said, he totally expects to get some heat from some people. He totally expects for Sheriffs and Chiefs to be upset with him.

Sheriff Wooten said he chose to go this route because he felt like it was the right thing to do. After viewing laws in our neighboring state South Carolina and some other places, he has realized so many times that as law enforcement in North Carolina we are very restrictive. Rightfully so, it is to protect personnel records/files. There are a lot of laws in North Carolina that really put law enforcement behind a curtain. For the last ten years, everybody in this room has seen the implications of what that does. He said he is a firm believer, because he has lived it. You can't believe everything you see in the media. Things get told several times, and they change.

Sheriff Wooten said he is sorry if he says anything that offends someone, but he is speaking from his heart. He said this legislation is not going to get passed. He has already been called from the legislative level. The snake has already been cut off at the head. He does not know how, but it has already been done. He plans to follow through with pushing it up, and they will let it die, because that is what's going to happen. We have worked for six to eight months trying to think outside the box. When he got elected he understood the implications of being a political figure, even though he feels a Sheriff's position is kind of unique, because you are law enforcement. There are not too many politicians who have the ability to take somebody's freedom from them. To him, being a Sheriff is somewhat different. He does not like politics, but he understands that he is a politician, so he has to find for himself what that middle ground is. In order to effect change, you have to change something. This was an idea that he had many years ago and he wanted to follow through with it (the local legislation). He said again he is not mad. He understands that there are concerns on both sides. He understands that this could be opening Pandora's Box. He gets it.

Sheriff Wooten said he had this idea for every citizen in this County. He for one, being the chief law enforcement official in this County, has nothing to hide. Every time he gets a complaint at the Sheriff's Office, they call them back and take care of it, but people say, "Sure you have". He has heard people say, "The good ole boys system" for the last fifteen years. He said the point of this is to open the Sheriff's Office up to where the CAC can see minor complaints and be more of an open book to the community, because in the last ten years in law enforcement you are a target when you put a badge on. Sheriff Wooten said every person that goes to BLET and comes to work understands that.

Sheriff Wooten said he did it for the citizens fair in part, but he also did it for the deputies of the Sheriff's Office, so they can stop walking around with their heads hung low. When they go out on the streets they get berated, cussed out and fussed at. He wanted to do this to build some kind of trust in our community, whether it be by local legislation or not, it doesn't matter. He said he was thinking outside the box to do something different, because what they have been doing the last ten years has not been working. He said if we keep doing what we did the

last ten years for the next ten years, nothing is going to change. He couldn't imagine what it would be like after our critical incident for a deputy to go down the street. He has witnessed this. Just the melancholy state that deputies are in, because they feel like the community as a whole hates them and does not support them. He knows that is not true for everybody, but that is how the deputies feel. When they work in it day in and day out, twelve to eighteen hours at a time, 65 days of protests, it has been engrained in them. That's why he tried to do this. He said he is at peace with himself, and what he has to do at the Sheriff's Office. He said he appreciates the County Manager, his Major, and everybody coming together to try to make this thing happen.

He has heard a lot of rumors on one side, about political affiliation. He said his employee he asked to do this is being attacked, and he would like all the attack to come to him. It's not fair to his employee. It's also not fair to the rest of the staff at the Sheriff's Office who don't oppose this, because none of them have anything to hide. He stated that the laws are good, but it has continuously had law enforcement hiding behind a curtain. Without this, he will think outside the box and come up with something different to do, and come back to the table to try to do something to make the lives of the citizens more trustworthy with law enforcement and to make the lives of the people putting their lives on the line every single day worth it. He said everyone knows you don't get into law enforcement for the pay or the notoriety, power, and prestige. Maybe forty years ago, but not now. You get in law enforcement, like he did, because you have a servant's heart. He got into law enforcement because he truly feels it is what the good lord wanted him to do. He said he has excelled there and he will continue to excel there.

Sheriff Wooten said some people on one side have made a lot of comments and have a lot of misunderstanding regarding the implications of what this is going to bring. He has rumors coming from the other side of how it is going to be a vessel to form a commission to fire deputies and to impeach the Sheriff. He said go ahead and try. He said he stands here tonight and respectfully thanks everyone for at least taking the time to consider this. He thanked everyone who has worked very hard on it. He said he is very emotional, because it has been a very hard road. He has never been attacked so much in his life for trying to do something that he thought was the right thing. He said whatever the vote is, is what it is, because it is already killed on the legislative level. He said God Bless and goodnight.

County Manager Hammett stated that once again this is very important to this County as a whole. He would recommend that the Board vote to approve to still move it through as Local Legislation. If it does get turned down or not move forward in the short session, there are other ways of moving it forward in the full session.

Chairman Griffin stated that the three members that participated in the Advisory Board are County Manager Hammett, Major Aaron Wallio, and NAACP President Keith Rivers. He noted that they spent a lot of time. He said he has been there before on projects that at the end of the day there was not full support of the Board. He said the Sheriff was very specific that he feels this is a good tool to help him be a better Sheriff and give us a better community.

Commissioner Meads said the Sheriff has the power to develop a CAC Board without the Board's approval. He doesn't like giving the CAC judicial power that they have not been elected to have. He thinks we will run into problems letting them look at personnel files. He thinks the Sheriff should develop a CAC, without Local Legislation.

Commissioner Perry said he is a little bit surprised. He has lived in Pasquotank County all his life, probably longer than anyone in the room. He sees nothing but progress that this program would bring. He doesn't understand why when certainly ideas are attempted, why the same group of people come forward and try to prevent them. He worked in the public schools for forty years and was nominated as principal of the year. There are problems in the community and when we attempt to solve them people start talking about politics. Politics need to leave the room. We need to think positively about how we can make change. There will always be people that come forward to prevent change. He thinks it's a shame, and he is very disappointed. He thinks this is an opportunity to move our County forward and work together.

Commissioner Lavin said he thinks the CAC has a lot of things that it could do, but he thinks those things can be done without a legislative change. He has a lot of concerns about the structure that he brought up previously. He has concerns about the oversight and the lack of background check practices. In fact, none at all apparently were done with our current

selection. He is sure a lot of the people are good people, but we are talking about giving people access to personnel records, involving them in the hiring process, and talking about making changes in state level laws to accommodate these people. Even in the presentation, the Manager talked about the levels of preparational training that other advisory boards put their members through, but we didn't even make sure that the folks that we chose had any valuable skills or experience. He doesn't understand if people have never been in a room or had a job where they were expected to hire somebody, he doesn't understand what value they bring into those types of activities, especially when you start considering disciplinary actions or viewing complaints. He thinks we have completely missed the boat.

Commissioner Lavin stated that he has no problem being one of the first counties in North Carolina to establish such a program, he just don't want to be the last. He thinks we owe it to our citizens to make sure that we do it right. There has been a lot of effort and time put into developing this and getting as far as we can, but again he has some very simple, fundamental issues with what we are doing and it is a shame to him that we would rather not even address it, and would rather just pull those through it. He said we have always got certain individuals who want to demonize people for views that are slightly different than their own or constantly bring back the problem of race. He said that is why this community won't move forward because we keep focusing on the wrong issues.

Commissioner Overman said he had an idea of what he might say, but after hearing Sheriff Wooten, his heart goes out to him. He said you've taken a man who wanted to step out of the political view and succumb himself to scrutiny that no other politician in the area he has known has had to do, with no care or concern who is chosen to be on that board to review him, to make sure that his office is doing adequate for the community. He said the Sheriff said it better than he can sum it up. It's just a shame. We are never going to move forward because we keep getting stuck. He said it breaks his heart for him. He has grown to respect him because of what he has said tonight from his heart.

Commissioner Overman said he ran for the School Board because he thought maybe he could contribute because he was a parent and he had lived here all his life. He lived under eight years of non-partisan leadership and it was wonderful. They got a lot of stuff done. It was still hard. Then, he came to the Board of Commissioners and he will never forget the first meeting he attended when they voted Commissioner Jeff Dixon as Chairman of the Board. Mr. Dixon walked down the hallway and he turned to him and said, "I appreciate you coming across the aisle and electing me Chairman". He said he didn't know what he was talking about. He asked him what he meant. Mr. Dixon said he appreciated him voting for him since they are not the same political party. He told him that he didn't think about that, and he voted for him because he is a good man and deserved it. He said unfortunately we do get caught up in that.

Commissioner Overman said we live in a County of 40,000 people and he has gotten some of the same calls recently that Sheriff Wooten got. People are surprised at the way he voted on certain items. He said if you follow his life you will find that he was born and raised a white, Christian man and that is what he is going to be. That doesn't mean that he and Mr. Jordan aren't best friends. They do not look at each other's color. He doesn't give a flip what his background is. He is a good man. He said to hold the Sheriff responsible for putting himself out there for more scrutiny to make sure he does a good job, to go against that is just foolishness. He doesn't understand it and probably never will. He will continue to vote with his heart. He said I can promise you one thing, when people call me and say they want to share something with him and they have a concern, I do not ask them what their affiliation is, because I ran for commissioner at-large because I wanted to support the 40,000 people who live in this County. He doesn't care where they come from, if they moved here two years ago, or if they have lived here all their lives. He is glad to help everyone if he can and that is the way it should be. He said kudos to the Sheriff for putting himself out there. He hates that he has been pushed around back and forth, trying to find a middle ground. He has a high respect for him tonight.

Vice-Chairman Jordan said ditto to Commissioner Overman. He thinks the Board spends a lot of time discussing this issue. One of the things always in the back of his mind is what would be best for the citizens of Pasquotank County. He will continue to look at what is best for all of the citizens of the County. He thinks this is an opportunity for us to have increased transparency of what is going on in the Sherriff's Office. One of the things lingering in his mind was if Sheriff Wooten was in support of the CAC. Sheriff Wooten has made it very clear that he is in support of it. If he is willing to allow this, hopefully it will increase the confidence

in our Sheriff's Office. To hear the Sheriff give his passionate statements tonight crystalizes it for him.

Chairman Griffin stated that if you read back through the proposed legislation, and you heard the Manager's report that this is case by case, and it goes further past the policies and procedures and somebody has really overstepped the bounds or there is a complaint that has been brought back to life. The legislation, as it's written, is to address that. It's not opening up every Sheriff's Department employees' file. It's not some kind of judicial process. This is a review in which something could have gone wrong in our law enforcement. When the Sheriff spoke tonight about what is happening to his department and his community we need to support him. He said the Board has supported the whole community and the Sheriff's Office since this incident happened over a year ago. The three advisory board members worked hard on this. It took a lot of support from the members, as a nonpolitical entity that came together and collected 13 people to support this position. Those 13 people came from across the whole county. Not only were those 13 people chosen, our Board sat up here and thanked them for sitting on this board three or four weeks ago.

Chairman Griffin said he thinks some of the legislators in Raleigh are being a little narrow minded when looking at this because Pasquotank County is in the east. Many of the politicians in Raleigh have never been to the northeastern part of North Carolina, unless they were passing through to go to Dare County or Norfolk. He stated that we live in one of the poorest communities in the state, and we try to fight for what we have. We have a Sheriff who stands up for what he believes in. The Sheriff is elected by the people, just like the seven Board members. This was the Sheriff's decision to go and ask for this outside advisory board, and he went the extra steps, to go with the Manager and his Chief Deputy to go meet with Sheriff Lott in South Carolina to better understand how he could bring this program into our community to be able to be more responsive to complaints. He said he will support the legislation whether the legislators in Raleigh feel that this is a good local Bill or not. If you have three other counties and a number of cities that have had these advisory boards it must not be too bad of a program.

Commissioner Perry said if he hears anything in reference to race and it affects him as a citizen of the United States of American, he will express himself. He doesn't care who likes it. He will express the truth. He is a Christian and he loves everyone, but he is not fearful of expressing what he sees, and right here he sees a lot of things that are not perfect, but by the same token we should all be trying to work to make Pasquotank County a place that everybody can have equal treatment.

Commissioner Meads said Chairman Griffin made a comment that three other counties in our state have this board, but there are no others counties that have this kind of power. Chairman Griffin said there are not; however they do have advisory boards set up, which were set up by their Sheriff's Offices.

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Barry Overman to approve staff working with the County's lobbyist to finalize the proposed legislation and introduce it to the North Carolina General Assembly during their short session. The motion carried 5 to 2, with Commissions Lavin and Meads voting in opposition.

9. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Sterritt reported that the COA Trail is complete. The County's donation was instrumental in making this happen. On May 24th, the Board will be invited to a celebration at COA. He attended the monthly Community Relations Commission meeting. Stacy Williams and Tonya Jacobs were the key speakers. Ms. Williams is the Senior Center Director. She provided a presentation on activities at the Senior Center. She asked for support with outreach in the community to get more people to come to the Center. Ms. Jacobs is from the Housing Authority. She discussed plans that have been on hold because of HUD not having lifted their restrictions at the centers to continue educational tutoring with students after school. Their meeting time has changed from 6:00 PM to 5:30 PM.

Commissioner Meads attended a dinner with Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson. He stated that he is an awesome speaker. He talked about the American dream not being dead, but is very much alive. He was very impressed and feels that we are very blessed to have a Lieutenant Governor like Mark Robinson.

Commissioner Lavin received a couple calls regarding Workforce Development. The Downtown Elizabeth City group is frantically preparing for the Potato Festival. They still need some volunteers.

Commissioner Overman attended the Tourism Board meeting, the Committee of 100 Annual meeting, and the EMS Board meeting. They all discussed normal business.

Vice-Chairman Jordan attended the Regional Library Board meeting. They met in Camden because they are in the process of completing their new library. They are supposed to move in the first of June. He attended the Jail Board meeting. They are working on their budget for 2022-23. They were asked to go back and look at their budget because there were some concerns. The Trillium Board met. They have new leadership now and things are moving forward. They are working on some new mental health programs. He attended the 80th Anniversary Celebration at T-Com. Additionally, he attended the Tourism meeting.

Chairman Griffin stated that Workforce Development is still against consolidation of the Workforce Development Boards into prosperity zones. The locals feel that there will be disparity. He attended a Highway 17/I-87 meeting this week. All the right-of-ways from Williamston to Washington have been acquired. Groundbreaking is being done. He reported that the County's Division I Engineer, Sterling Baker passed away.

There being nothing further to come before the Board;

Motion was made by Jonathan Meads, seconded by Sean Lavin to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:02 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD