

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
JUNE 16, 2014**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, June 16, 2014 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jeff Dixon, Chairman  
Joseph S. Winslow, Jr., Vice-Chairman  
Lloyd E. Griffin, III  
Cecil Perry  
Gary G. White  
Frankie Meads

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Dr. William R. Sterritt

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Rodney Bunch, County Manager  
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney  
Sheri Small, Finance Officer  
Karen Jennings, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Jeff Dixon. Commissioner Lloyd Griffin gave the invocation and Vice-Chairman Joe Winslow led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Dixon welcomed everyone present.

**1. COMMENTS FROM THE PUBLIC REGARDING THE BUDGET:**

Chairman Dixon recognized Ms. Anna Stewart of 136 Danielle Drive to address the Board. Ms. Stewart stated that in Pasquotank County there is a problem. She said the Board is raising taxes, increasing debt, and spending too much money. She said if property taxes are increased, Pasquotank County will have the highest property tax rate in the Albemarle area. She stated that according to the U.S. Census Bureau the median household income in Pasquotank County from 2008 to 2012 was \$46,032. The home ownership rate from 2008 to 2012 was 64.9%. Ms. Stewart said this means that 64.9% of Pasquotank County's population is footing the bill. She said with the price of gas and food going up, the Board of Commissioners now wants to add to the burden on property owners, and the taxpayers cannot continue to fix the budget mistakes. She stated that the people of Pasquotank County voted against a sales tax increase in 2012, but the Board of Commissioners increased property taxes that year. She noted that the revenue neutral rate is 75.1¢ and the Board wants to add to it in order to buy a new fire truck for the Weeksville Fire Department when the current fire truck will pass pump tests. She said this is one example of frivolous spending. She stated that the Board also wants to increase county employees' pay when the average Pasquotank County resident hasn't seen a raise in years. She stated that last year the Board raised taxes and plans to raise taxes this year. She asked what the Board is going to do next year and when the spending will stop. Ms. Stewart asked the Board to vote against a property tax increase this year.

Chairman Dixon called on Mr. James Morris of 959 Halls Creek Road. Mr. Morris said that approximately 15 years ago Albemarle Hospital had millions of dollars in the bank and Pasquotank County had few debts. He stated that the county now owes over \$60 million, the Hospital has been leased, and county management says taxes need to be increased because of the revaluation of property. He said there have been and are numerous lawsuits against the county and new county building projects have been plagued with all sorts of problems. He asked what the reasons are for the financial condition of Pasquotank County. He stated that about four years ago he started to look at the management of Pasquotank County, specifically the management of the Solid Waste and Landfill Department. He said in his opinion, based on his observations of daily operations, the problem is poor leadership, poor management, and poor operational policies. He said new leadership and management would make the decisions necessary to correct these problems. He said there is much waste in the county budget and something needs to be done about it.

Mr. George Hague of 2321 Delia Drive stated that he believes a more accurate budget can be forecast based on a longer range of past history. He said at least four previous fiscal years of historical data should be looked at to determine that the line items currently being seen are not abnormal deviations. He said a longer range of past historical data is a necessity for trend

analysis. He stated that he does not believe the Board has enough empirical data to make a sound budgetary decision for the taxpayers of Pasquotank County. He said he believes while the county is deeply in debt the Board should tighten the county's budget. He pointed out some of the increases in the budget and questioned several expenditures. He said the county should instead apply some of these funds to its debt. He stated that this budget increases spending and raises taxes and he urged the Board to vote against it.

Mr. Jimmy Westbrook stated that he asked the Board of Commissioners six years ago to not tax him out of his house. He stated that the county is spending more money than it has. He said he is currently living on Social Security and he received a 1<sup>3</sup>/<sub>4</sub>% increase this year. He pointed out that if the county increases property taxes by 13¢ he will be going in the hole.

Mr. Darryl Johnson stated that the proposed budget has flaws that seriously need to be addressed. He said there must be ways the county can tighten its belt without raising taxes. He said the fire truck for Weeksville Fire Department needs to be looked into, as well as the car and roof for COA. He noted if COA is paying its President what she is being paid, COA can buy a car. He stated that the people of the county living on fixed incomes, such as his mother, simply cannot afford a tax increase of anything more than revenue neutral. He said people who have a mortgage and are underwater will be further underwater due to the increased taxes. He asked the Board to vote against this budget and come up with one that will better benefit the residents of Pasquotank County.

## **2. COMMENTS FROM COMMISSIONERS REGARDING BUDGET:**

Commissioner Frankie Meads stated that he agrees with what most everyone has said tonight and this has been one of the issues he has been pushing since he got on the Board. He said being a County Commissioner is a new job for him, but budgeting is not a new job for him. He explained that he took on a job with a building supply company that was bankrupt and since that time the company has held its own and is working. He said he also serves on the Independent Building Supply Association Board and they look at things quite differently than the county does. He stated that five years ago that organization was at the brink of bankruptcy and now is stable. Commissioner Meads said he appreciates the help of those who have come tonight and he believes their help can make Pasquotank County better. He stated that Pasquotank County does need to lower its tax rate because it is high compared to the other counties in the region. He added that Pasquotank County is losing population while other counties are gaining population and he believes this is due to the tax rate. Commissioner Meads said he has seen some improvements since he has been on the Board and he thinks the members of the Board are interested in lowering the taxes in Pasquotank County, but need the push from the public to keep them in that direction.

Vice-Chairman Joe Winslow explained that when he came on the Board three and one-half years ago, the county's bond rating was A-. He stated that the bond rating is now an A which tells him that the rating agencies see the improvement the county has made, even though it has been slight. He said that citizens concerned about their taxes have come to him and it concerns him to see how they are struggling. He stated that he pulled the tax card of a lady who came to him regarding her taxes. He said he compared the tax she paid in 2013 to what she would pay in 2014 based on a 76¢ tax rate, and the amount of taxes she would pay in 2014 dropped by \$70 which made the lady very happy. Vice-Chairman Winslow stated that a lot of people will see a drop in their taxes while some will see their taxes increase for various reasons. He said the Board is not trying to raise taxes, but is trying to make the tax rate revenue neutral. He stated that the Board is trying to do everything possible to improve the county's financial situation. He thanked the public for its input.

Commissioner Cecil Perry stated that he does not want to see a tax increase, however there are a lot of things involved in determining whether or not to raise taxes. He said the Board has looked at every line item and has actually removed some things from the budget. He stated that the Board is not increasing taxes for the sake of increasing taxes and realizes that some people have hardships. He said he will do whatever he can to maintain the best possible tax rate for the county's citizens to make Pasquotank County as progressive as possible, knowing that there are some things over which he has no control. He thanked everyone for their comments.

Chairman Jeff Dixon said he would like to clarify some issues because some of the statements made tonight are incorrect. He stated that Pasquotank County peaked in its debt load in 2007 at \$68 million and ever since then has been paying off about \$3 million each year and is now at about \$53 million. He said the county will continue to pay \$3 million every year and may

possibly be out of debt in about 18 years unless it has to build another school or some type of major infrastructure. He said an upgraded credit rating from Standard & Poor's from an A- to an A is significant and is not possible if a county has serious debt problems. Chairman Dixon explained that the county's per capita debt is \$1,085 and is not out of line when compared to other counties in the region. He said Dare County's per capita debt is \$3,720; Chowan's, \$1,342; Beaufort's, \$1,163; Perquimans', \$1,035; Currituck's, \$912; and Camden's, \$903. He noted that the proposed budget has an increase of 4.3%, and when adjusted due to the current consumer price index of 3%, that is an increase of 1.3%. He said all of this will be going for public safety purposes. He said the revenue neutral tax rate is 75.1¢ and the proposed tax rate is 76¢ which equates to a tax increase of .9¢. The revenue from the additional .9¢ will be used to purchase equipment so the county will not have to borrow the funds. Chairman Dixon explained that Pasquotank County is required to do a revaluation every eight years and has no choice. He said the last time revaluation was done was at the peak of the housing market and this time it was at the bottom of the market. He stated that the new valuations will now be in effect for eight more years. He noted that revaluations can be done more frequently, however Pasquotank County cannot afford to do it because of the costs involved. He stated that he believes the proposed budget is very fair and he thanked Commissioners and staff for their work on the budget. He added if there had not been a revaluation, there probably would not be a need for a tax increase.

### **3. REPORT ON NEXT GENERATION 911:**

Chairman Dixon called on Communications Director Tobie McPherson to provide a report on Next Generation 911. Mr. McPherson stated that Next Generation 911 will provide the ability for the Central Communications Center to receive text messages. He said the National Emergency Number Association is being pushed to do this by the deaf and hard of hearing. He explained that there is no cost to establish this and it would just be a matter of sending letters to all of the different carriers. He noted that when at home the deaf and hard of hearing are safe, but when they are out they do not have the capability of calling in an emergency situation, but they would have the capability of sending a text message. He said the 911 Center would still prefer anyone with the ability to call to do so. Mr. McPherson said the motto for Next Generation 911 is "Call if you can, text if you can't". He stated that the new equipment recently purchased with grant funds enables the county to be able to provide this service. He added that he wanted the Board to be aware of this new service that is being made available.

### **4. PUBLIC HEARING ON PROPOSED 2014-15 COUNTY BUDGET:**

Chairman Dixon declared the meeting to be a public hearing on the proposed 2014-15 county budget. He asked if anyone else would like to address the Board regarding the budget.

Mr. Anthony Meads stated that he is Commissioner Frankie Meads' son. He said he was born and raised in Pasquotank County and lived in Indiana for a couple of years before moving back to Pasquotank County. He stated in Indiana his vehicle and house taxes were half of what they are here in Pasquotank County. He said one of the things his Dad has done since he has been a County Commissioner was to give back some of the money he was paid for being a Commissioner. He asked how many other Commissioners have given money back. He stated that he works with elderly people all the time. He said he has encountered many widowed elderly women as well as young people who are on fixed incomes who have to buy their clothes at Good Will because they cannot afford to shop anywhere else. He stated that we live in a generation where younger people do not have a respect for this nation and the men and women who have died for our freedom, and this generation does not respect and have a concern for their finances. He said just because someone has gray hair does not mean they have more knowledge. He stated that knowledge is worthless without wisdom. He suggested that the members of the Board take their knowledge and ask for wisdom so they might cut the budget.

Mr. Darryl Johnson stated that he seriously doubts that anybody here is interested in the Standard and Poor's rating and whether it is A or A+, as long as it stays good. He said the whole point everyone is trying to make is that taxes were too high last year and the year before, and now the Board plans to increase taxes by another 13¢. He noted that when another revaluation is done, that 13¢ will probably not go away. He said he fully believes if the Board will look into things it can lower the budget and decrease the amount of the tax increase needed. He stated that some people's taxes will go down, but some will go up and that's the part that is not right.

Mr. Johnnie Walton asked why so many people are leaving the area. He suggested an internal audit of county government be done to see why people are leaving.

At the absence of further comments, the public hearing was closed.

Commissioner Lloyd Griffin stated that nine or ten meetings have previously been held to discuss the budget, and the County Manager and Finance Officer met several times a week as they have put the budget together. He said the process began in March when staff asked department heads to submit their proposed budgets. Staff then pared the department budgets and presented them to the Board to review. Commissioner Griffin said several things continue to come to the Board of Commissioners including roof repairs for the schools, vehicles for the Sheriff's Department, and fire trucks. He said the Board needs to fund these needs as a matter of public safety. He noted that for fire rating purposes the county must provide a certain level of service at each of the volunteer fire departments. He said this includes the proper equipment that is properly maintained. He added if the fire rating is lowered property insurance will increase. He stated that someone mentioned that the Board is not listening to what the community has to say, however members of the Board listen to the community every day at the gas station, coffee shop, Wal-Mart, or the lumber yard. Commissioner Griffin said the decrease in population has also been mentioned tonight. He said he believes the economy had something to do with this, however some growth is now being seen. He stated that during the slow economy, the county still had to provide services to its citizens. He added that the Commissioners have listened to the public, have made progress in reducing the debt, and have worked this year to reduce the proposed budget. He noted that during the last revaluation in 2006 the economy was growing and the tax rate was reduced from 84¢ to 48¢ which was 2¢ below the revenue neutral rate of 50¢. He said ever since then the county has had to increase taxes to make up for the 2¢ the rate went below revenue neutral. He stated that hopefully the .9¢ above revenue neutral this year will avert a 2¢ tax increase next year.

Vice-Chairman Joe Winslow stated that it is hard to convey how much the members of the Board really care. He said they see what is going on in the community and they agonize over the budget. He stated that it is very difficult to make the decisions that have to be made. He said he is an accountant and has been in business 40 years and the last four or five years have been the hardest period of time his clients and friends, as well as the people of Pasquotank County have gone through. He said it is not taxes but the economy that has affected a lot of people who have left the county. He stated that the Board did not want any tax increase, but is trying to meet the needs of the county.

Commissioner Frankie Meads pointed out that it was said earlier that Beaufort County's debt per capita is \$1,000, but the Beaufort County tax rate is 53¢ and their solid waste fee is \$90. He said if Pasquotank County's tax rate were 53¢, he could stand another \$100 of debt and would not get upset about it as a taxpayer. He said another thing that has been discussed was requiring the Board of Education to use part of its fund balance to pay for several school projects. He stated although they will be using some fund balance he does not believe it is enough because their projected fund balance at the end of June will be \$4.1 million. He said he is opposed to the county borrowing money and paying interest when the school system has funds available. Commissioner Meads stated that he believes county departments should not be asked what they want at budget time, but should be told what they will get. He said if the county can do better, it ought to do better for the taxpayers of Pasquotank County.

Chairman Dixon asked for the Board's decision regarding the budget. He noted that by law the Board must pass a budget by June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Joe Winslow to approve the FY 2014-15 county budget as proposed.

Discussion followed and Commissioner Meads stated that the Board should consider the comments of those who have spoken tonight. He pointed out that no one has spoken in favor of the budget and that should send up a red flag to the Board that it should study the budget further and see if there are some areas that can be cut. He added that one Commissioner is not here tonight and he believes that the full Board should be present to vote on something as important as a \$39 million budget which is only done once a year.

The motion to approve the budget carried by a five to one margin with Commissioner Meads voting against the motion. The following budget ordinance was adopted.

**BUDGET ORDINANCE  
FISCAL YEAR 2014-2015**

**BE IT ORDAINED THIS 16th DAY OF JUNE, 2014 BY THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA:**

**I. GENERAL FUND**

**SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS:** The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the General Fund for the operation of county government and its activities for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015, in accordance with the chart of accounts heretofore established for this county:

Governing Board.....	\$ 97,972
County Manager.....	275,338
Personnel/Payroll.....	97,223
Finance Department.....	278,750
Data Processing.....	303,859
Tax Administration.....	559,201
County Attorney.....	189,055
Court Facilities.....	60,000
Elections Board.....	198,513
Register of Deeds.....	260,982
Public Buildings.....	1,046,244
Health & Social Services Building.....	252,553
Non-Departmental.....	265,286
Sheriff's Department.....	3,292,121
School Resource Officers.....	293,861
Jail.....	2,960,983
Central Communications.....	1,032,999
Emergency Management.....	86,341
Central Fire Department.....	409,193
Intercounty Fire Department.....	48,500
Newland Fire Department.....	75,427
Weeksville Fire Department.....	48,710
Providence Fire Department.....	76,913
Nixonton Fire Department.....	34,974
Building Inspector.....	142,931
Emergency Medical Services.....	3,739,684
Animal Control.....	245,261
Planning Department.....	122,994
Geographic Information Systems.....	112,630
Economic Development.....	105,472
Cooperative Extension Service.....	232,334
Soil & Water Conservation.....	73,961
Public Health.....	217,109
Public Schools.....	10,504,858
College of The Albemarle.....	1,698,712
Parks & Recreation & Senior Center.....	999,873
Special Appropriations:	
-Miscellaneous.....	420,984
-Contribution to:	
Public Assistance Fund.....	3,269,028
Pasquotank-Camden Library Fund.....	570,419
Reappraisal Reserve.....	40,000
Capital Reserve.....	198,745
Contingency.....	40,000
Debt Retirement.....	<u>4,835,172</u>

**TOTAL GENERAL FUND**

**\$ 39,815,165**

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School Resource Officers.....	293,861
Jail.....	2,960,983
Central Communications.....	1,032,999
Emergency Management.....	86,341
Central Fire Department.....	409,193
Intercounty Fire Department.....	48,500
Newland Fire Department.....	75,427
Weeksville Fire Department.....	48,710
Providence Fire Department.....	76,913
Nixonton Fire Department.....	34,974
Building Inspector.....	142,931
Emergency Medical Services.....	3,739,684
Animal Control.....	245,261
Planning Department.....	122,994
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TOTAL GENERAL FUND

\$ 39,815,165

Miscellaneous Revenue.....	2,000
Contribution from Pasquotank County General Fund .....	570,419
Fund Balance Appropriated .....	<u>30,000</u>
 TOTAL LIBRARY FUND	 \$ 625,719

#### IV. CAPITAL RESERVE FUND

SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS: The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Capital Reserve Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Capital Reserve .....	\$ 401,000
Reserve - Public Safety .....	<u>198,745</u>
 TOTAL CAPITAL RESERVE FUND	 \$ 599,745

SECTION 2 – REVENUES: It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Capital Reserve Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Interest Earned.....	\$ 1,000
Transfer from General Fund.....	198,745
Fund Balance Appropriated .....	<u>400,000</u>
 TOTAL CAPITAL RESERVE FUND	 \$ 599,745

#### V. EMERGENCY TELEPHONE FUND

SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS: The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Emergency Telephone Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Operating Expenses.....	\$ 293,000
 TOTAL EMERGENCY TELEPHONE FUND	 \$ 293,000

SECTION 2 – REVENUES: It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Emergency Telephone Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

NC 911 PSAP.....	\$ 284,248
Interest Earned.....	300
Fund Balance Appropriated .....	<u>8,452</u>
 TOTAL EMERGENCY TELEPHONE FUND	 \$ 293,000

#### VI. REAPPRAISAL RESERVE FUND

SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS: The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Reappraisal Reserve Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Reappraisal.....	\$ 40,000
 TOTAL REAPPRAISAL RESERVE FUND	 \$ 40,000

SECTION 2 – REVENUES: It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Reappraisal Reserve Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Transfer from General Fund.....	\$	40,000
<b>TOTAL REAPPRAISAL RESERVE FUND</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>40,000</b>

#### **VII. DRAINAGE DISTRICT FUND**

**SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS:** The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Drainage District Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Maintenance .....	\$	5,300
<b>TOTAL DRAINAGE DISTRICT FUND</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>5,300</b>

**SECTION 2 – REVENUES:** It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Drainage District Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Revenue from Assessments.....	\$	5,300
<b>TOTAL DRAINAGE DISTRICT FUND</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>5,300</b>

#### **VIII. OCCUPANCY TAX FUND**

**SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS:** The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Occupancy Tax Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Tourism Board.....	\$	505,000
<b>TOTAL OCCUPANCY TAX FUND</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>505,000</b>

**SECTION 2 – REVENUES:** It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Occupancy Tax Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Occupancy Tax Revenue.....	\$	505,000
<b>TOTAL OCCUPANCY TAX FUND</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>505,000</b>

#### **IX. WATER SYSTEM FUND**

**SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS:** The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Water System Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Operating Expenses.....	\$	2,822,521
Capital Outlay .....	159,800	
Contingency .....	5,253	
Operating Expenses – Sewer Department.....	164,736	
Capital Outlay - Sewer Department.....	10,000	

<b>TOTAL WATER SYSTEM FUND</b>	<b>\$</b>	<b>3,162,310</b>
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**SECTION 2 – REVENUES:** It is estimated that the following revenues will be available in the Water System Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Sale of Water.....	\$	2,770,000
Hookups .....	45,000	
Sewer Revenue.....	200,000	
Interest on Investments.....	4,000	
Penalties & Fees.....	75,000	



Tower Rental.....	62,310
Miscellaneous.....	<u>6,000</u>
TOTAL WATER SYSTEM FUND	\$ 3,162,310

#### X. REVERSE OSMOSIS PLANT FUND

SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS: The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Reverse Osmosis Plant Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Operating Expenses.....	\$ 754,261
Capital Outlay.....	43,000
Debt Retirement.....	1,248,452
Contingency.....	<u>16,870</u>

TOTAL REVERSE OSMOSIS PLANT FUND \$ 2,062,583

SECTION 2 – REVENUES: It is estimated that the following revenues will be available to the Reverse Osmosis Plant Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Sale of Water.....	\$ 1,900,000
Elizabeth City - 24" Line.....	122,583
Interest Earned.....	<u>40,000</u>

TOTAL REVERSE OSMOSIS PLANT FUND \$ 2,062,583

#### XI. LANDFILL FUND

SECTION 1 – APPROPRIATIONS: The following amounts are hereby appropriated in the Landfill Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Operating Expenses – Landfill.....	\$ 2,368,636
Capital Outlay - Landfill.....	55,000
Operating Expenses – Convenience Sites.....	2,208,310
Capital Outlay - Convenience Sites.....	12,000
Operating Expenses - Transfer Station.....	112,454
Capital Outlay - Transfer Station.....	<u>3,500</u>

TOTAL LANDFILL FUND \$ 4,759,900

SECTION 2 – REVENUES: It is estimated that the following revenues will be available to the Landfill Fund for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2014 and ending June 30, 2015:

Tipping Fees.....	\$ 2,230,000
Solid Waste Fees.....	2,355,000
Tire Disposal Fees.....	50,000
White Goods Disposal Fees.....	12,000
Sale of Scrap Metal.....	30,000
Miscellaneous.....	<u>82,900</u>

TOTAL LANDFILL FUND \$ 4,759,900

#### XII. SCHOOL APPROPRIATIONS

SECTION 1: The appropriation to the Board of Education first shall be made from any such funds which are dedicated to the use of the schools and secondly shall be made from general county fund revenues to the extent necessary to meet approved appropriations.

SECTION 2: The total appropriation for Current Expense from General Fund is \$10,004,858.

SECTION 3: The total appropriation for Capital Outlay from General Fund is \$500,000.

### XIII. OTHER PROVISIONS

SECTION 1: The County Budget Officer is hereby authorized to transfer appropriations within a fund as contained herein under the following conditions:

- a) He may transfer amounts between objects of expenditure within a department except salary amounts without limitation.
- b) He may not transfer any amounts between departments or funds from any contingency appropriation within any fund.

SECTION 2: No expenditure may be made in any line item that exceeds the amount set forth in the chart of accounts without prior authorization by the County Manager or Board of Commissioners.

SECTION 3: The County Manager and Clerk to the Board are hereby authorized to execute the necessary agreements within funds included in the Budget Ordinance for the following purposes: (1) Form grant agreements to public and non-profit organizations; (2) Leases of normal and routine business equipment where the annual rental of each is not more than \$20,000; (3) Consultant, professional or maintenance service agreements where the annual compensation of each is not more than \$20,000; (4) Purchase of apparatus, supplies, materials, or equipment where formal bids are not required by law;

(5) Agreements for acceptance of State, Federal, public, and non-profit organization grant funds, and funds from other governmental units for services to be rendered; (6) Construction or repair work where formal bids are not required by law; and (7) Liability, health, life, disability, casualty, property or other insurance or retention and faithful performance bonds (other than for the Sheriff and Register of Deeds). Other appropriate county officials are also authorized to execute or approve such insurance and bond undertakings as provided by law.

### XIV. FEES

SECTION 1: There is hereby established a fee of \$66.00 per ton for residential garbage and \$69.00 per ton for commercial garbage disposed of at the Pasquotank County Transfer Station for the purpose of raising the revenue listed in the Landfill Fund - Part XI, Section 2 of this ordinance.

SECTION 2: There is hereby established a fee of \$50 per ton for land clearing and inert debris disposed of at the Pasquotank County LCID Landfill for the purpose of raising the revenue listed in the Landfill Fund - Part XI, Section 2 of this ordinance.

SECTION 3: There is hereby established a fee of \$50 per ton for construction and demolition material disposed of at the Pasquotank County C&D Landfill for the purpose of raising the revenue listed in the Landfill Fund-Part XI, Section 2 of this ordinance.

SECTION 4: There is hereby established a solid waste availability fee of \$144 per household for the purpose of raising the revenue listed in the Landfill Fund-Part XI, Section 2 of this ordinance. The solid waste availability fee will remain at \$75 for low-income senior citizens who qualify for the property tax reduction.

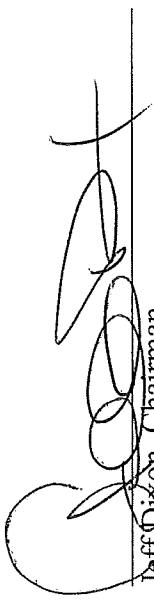
### XV. TAX LEVY

SECTION 1: There is hereby levied a tax at the rate of seventy-six cents (76¢) per One Hundred Dollar (\$100.00) valuation of property listed for taxes as of January 1, 2014 for the purpose of raising the revenue listed in the General Fund - Part I, Section 2 of this ordinance.

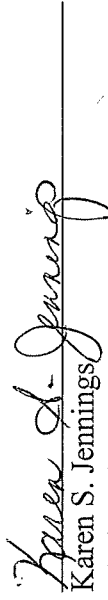
SECTION 2: This rate of tax is based on a total valuation of property for the purpose of taxation of \$2,954,200,160 and an estimated rate of collection of 95%.

SECTION 3: There is hereby levied an assessment of twenty-seven cents (27¢) per acre for the Newland Drainage District for the purpose of raising the revenue to maintain the drainage in the service district.

Approved on June 16, 2014 by the following vote of the members of the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners: five in favor; one opposed.

  
 Jeff Dixon, Chairman  
 Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners

Attest:

  
 Karen S. Jennings  
 Clerk to the Board

**5. CONTINUATION OF BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW:**

Chairman Dixon reconvened the Board of Equalization and Review for 2014. County Attorney Mike Cox reported that all issues have been resolved and all appeals have been settled. He advised that the Board of Equalization and Review can adjourn for 2014.

Motion was made by Joe Winslow, seconded by Frankie Meads to adjourn the Board of Equalization and Review for 2014. The motion carried.

**6. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:**

Chairman Dixon asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. Vice-Chairman Winslow requested that the following items recommended by the Finance Committee at its meeting today be added to the consent agenda: 1) Approval of tax releases; 2) Approval of budget amendments; 3) Approval of request to rehire former Social Services employee at Step 2; 4) Approval of salary for recently appointed Elections Director; and 5) Approval of R.O. bulk water rate of \$6.00 per 1,000 gallons.

Commissioner Perry requested that Item 4 be removed from the consent agenda and considered separately.

Motion was made by Joe Winslow, seconded by Lloyd Griffin to add items 1, 2, 3, and 5 above to the consent agenda and to add item 4 to old business. The motion carried.

It was also requested that the agenda be amended to add the following items to old business: 1) to call for a public hearing to receive comments on a Memorandum of Agreement to enter into a Business Investment Program Grant Agreement with Thompson Thrift Development, LLC; and 2) to allow the upset bid process to begin when staff is satisfied that all of the qualifications are met on a lease agreement between Pasquotank County, the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Police Athletic League, and the Boys and Girls Club of Elizabeth City.

Motion was made by Joe Winslow, seconded by Cecil Perry to amend the agenda to add the two items above to new business. The motion carried.

**7. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Board considered the following consent agenda including amendments recommended by the Finance Committee:

a. Approval of Minutes of June 2, 2014 Commissioner Meetings

b. Approval of Tax Releases and Refunds

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

Releases:

	County	City
1. Brianne Jennings Woodley	216.01	177.46
2. Paul Mathew Denton	130.26	
3. Paul Mathew Denton	173.41	

4.	Albamarle Prof. Pk. Assoc.	19,650.27	15,386.76
5.	Anthony Pierce Wolfinbarger	184.40	149.89
6.	Albamarle Prof. Park LLC	8,178.65	6,404.14
7.	Adam Cristen Spencer	134.19	
8.	Angie Reyes Figueroa	119.23	94.42
9.	Jason Scott Willis	131.56	110.04
10.	Andrew D. Hiebert	118.69	98.26
11.	Mary Jane Bonn	116.99	96.92

## Refunds:

1.	Michael Gerard Jordan	159.88	
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c. *Approval of Budget Amendments*

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

**DSS**

Increase	011.0240.4536.00	LIEAP	385.00
Increase	011.5400.5688.03	LIEAP	385.00

**Ag Ext**

Increase	010.0230.4370.00	State Grants	2,752.00
Increase	010.4950.5600.34	Grant - SHIP	2,752.00

**Special Approp**

Increase	010.0230.4360.05	Juvenile Justice Pass-Thru	132,974.00
Increase	010.6600.5615.10	Juvenile Justice Pass-Thru	132,974.00

**Seized Assets**

Increase	020.0240.4431.05	Forfeiture-Federal	75,000.00
Increase	020.4300.5269.00	Law Enforcement Expense	75,000.00

**Soil & Water**

Increase	010.0230.4370.00	State Grants	1,000.00
Increase	010.4960.5310.00	Travel	1,000.00

**Landfill**

Increase	065.0230.4370.00	State Grants	27,083.00
Increase	065.7420.5600.00	Grant Funds	9,424.00
Increase	065.7420.5351.00	Maintenance-Building	17,659.00

**Landfill**

Decrease	065.7420.5440.03	Contracted Services-Transfer	107,951.00
Increase	065.7420.5440.02	Contracted Services-LCID	50,000.00
Increase	065.7420.5500.00	Capital Outlay	57,951.00

**Landfill**

Decrease	065.7420.5383.00	Waste Water	12,000.00
Increase	065.7430.5383.00	Waste Water	12,000.00

**IT**

Decrease	010.4135.5352.01	Maintenance-Equipment	12,000.00
Increase	010.4135.5500.00	Capital Outlay	12,000.00

**County Manager**

Increase	010.0110.4112.13	MV Taxes-'13	6,668.00
Increase	010.4120.5121.00	Salaries & Wages	5,245.00
Increase	010.4120.5181.00	FICA	308.00
Increase	010.4120.5182.00	Retirement	365.00
Increase	010.4120.5491.00	Dues & Subscriptions	750.00

**Debt Proceeds**

Increase	010.0700.4970.00	Loan Proceeds	870,000.00
Increase	010.4192.5500.00	Capital Outlay	223,000.00
Increase	010.5910.5636.01	Additional Funding	647,000.00

**Jail**

Increase	010.0600.4980.00	Jail - Perg/Camden	441,119.00
Increase	010.4320.5700.19	Debt Service	441,119.00

**Jail**

Increase	010.0110.4111.13	Ad Valorem Taxes-'13	60,000.00
Increase	010.4320.5190.00	Professional Services	40,000.00
Increase	010.4320.5362.00	Juvenile Services	20,000.00

**Emerg Mgmt**

Increase	010.0230.4433.02	Emergency Management Grants	29,768.00
Increase	010.4330.5600.00	Grant Funds	16,150.00
Increase	010.4330.5636.01	Additional Funding	13,618.00

**Planning**

Increase	010.0110.4111.13	Ad Valorem Taxes-'13	4,140.00
Increase	010.4910.5121.00	Salaries & Wages	500.00
Increase	010.4910.5126.00	Salaries & Wages-PT	3,640.00

**Schools**

Increase	010.0991.4991.00	Fund Balance Appropriated	14,975.00
Increase	010.5910.5636.01	Additional Funding	14,975.00

**Debt Retirement**

Increase	010.0110.4111.13	Ad Valorem Taxes-'13	11,399.00
Increase	010.9100.5394.01	Trustee Services-COPS	2,992.00
Increase	010.9100.5395.00	Issuance Cost	8,407.00

**Debt Retirement**

Increase	010.0110.4111.13	Ad Valorem Taxes-'13	6,580.00
Increase	010.9100.5700.27	QSCB	6,580.00

**DSS**

Increase	011.0230.4547.00	Special Child Adoption	6,000.00
Increase	011.5310.5682.03	PP Adoption Awareness	6,000.00

**RO Plant**

Increase	063.0550.4839.00	Miscellaneous Revenue	125,000.00
Increase	063.0350.4713.00	Sale of Water	43,800.00
Increase	063.7135.5192.00	Legal Fees	78,800.00
Increase	063.7135.5500.00	Capital Outlay	90,000.00

**Parks & Rec**

Increase	010.0110.4113.00	Pick Up Taxes	5,000.00
Increase	010.6130.5360.00	Saw Mill Park	5,000.00

*d. Approval to Rehire Former Social Services Employee at Step 2*

The Finance Committee has recommended that the Board approve a request from the Social Services Director to rehire a former employee, Shelley Spruill, who left in good standing about a year ago at Grade 13, Step 2, with the understanding there will be no salary increase after the six month probationary period.

*e. Approval of New R.O. Bulk Water Rate*

The Finance Committee has recommended that the Board approve a new R.O. bulk water rate of \$6.00 per 1,000 gallons. The new rate will be effective July 1, 2014 for the sale of bulk water to Pasquotank County, to Perquimans County, and to the City of Elizabeth City.

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

**8. APPROVAL OF SALARY FOR DIRECTOR OF ELECTIONS:**

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of a request from the Board of Elections to increase the salary of Kelli Price who has recently been appointed Director of Elections. The Finance Committee has recommended that the salary for Ms. Price be increased to \$42,871, the same salary the former Director of Elections was making when he resigned. Vice-Chairman Joe Winslow noted that the Board had been advised by the Chairman of the Board of Elections that Ms. Price has done an exemplary job since assuming the Interim Director's position in April with two weeks' notice and less than a month before a primary election. He said it was also explained to the Finance Committee that in addition to doing an outstanding job, she has had experience in other counties.

Commissioner Perry said he believes the fact that there is not a minority working in the Elections Office needs to be addressed. He said he thinks the Board should advocate for a minority to be appointed in that office whenever possible. He stated that there is a racial problem in Pasquotank County with people not knowing how to treat one another and get along with one another. He pointed out that during the last city election, people went all the way to Raleigh in an effort to try to keep Elizabeth City State University students from participating when they were eligible. He said he believes it is nothing more than right to try as much as possible to integrate that office to let people know that we are all one people. He stated that everyone is not going to work together as long as there is a group of people who keep them separated. He said one of the ways to get together and help one another is by having people when they go into the Elections Office to feel very comfortable and ask the questions they need to ask about voting. He added that he realizes the Board of Commissioners cannot do anything other than pay the salary of the elections staff. He said to appoint someone without having them go through a particular process is troubling. He stated that the county needs to take a good look at what it does in order to improve the relationship of people in the county and help it move forward.

Motion was made by Joe Winslow, seconded by Frankie Meads to approve a salary of \$42,871, Grade 20, Step 8, for recently appointed Elections Director Kelli Price retroactive to June 1, 2014. The motion carried 6-0.

**9. CALL FOR PUBLIC HEARING ON MEMORANDUM OF AGREEMENT TO ENTER INTO A BUSINESS INVESTMENT PROGRAM GRANT AGREEMENT WITH THOMPSON THRIFT DEVELOPMENT, LLC:**

The Board considered calling for a public hearing to receive comments on a Memorandum of Agreement for entering into a Business Investment Program Grant Agreement with Thompson Thrift Development, LLC. The public hearing will be scheduled for Monday, June 30, 2014 at 2:00 PM in the Hugh Cale Commissioners Board Room.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Joe Winslow to call for a public hearing on June 30 at 2:00 PM on a Memorandum of Agreement to enter into a Business Investment Program Grant Agreement with Thompson Thrift Development, LLC. The motion carried.

**10. APPROVAL TO BEGIN UPSET BID PROCESS ON LEASE AGREEMENT BETWEEN PASQUOTANK COUNTY, THE POLICE ATHLETIC LEAGUE, AND THE BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB:**

County Attorney Mike Cox explained that approval from the Board is needed to begin the upset bid process on a lease agreement between Pasquotank County, the Police Athletic League, and the Boys and Girls Club for space in the old Elizabeth City Middle School. Since the lease would be for a 10 year term, it must be advertised for upset bids. Mr. Cox requested that the Board allow the upset bid process to begin when staff is satisfied that all of the qualifications are met on a lease agreement. He said the goal is to hold a public hearing on the lease at the Board's meeting on July 14, 2014.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Cecil Perry to allow the upset bid process on a lease agreement between Pasquotank County, the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Police Athletic League, and the Boys and Girls Club of Elizabeth City for space at the old Elizabeth City Middle School once staff is satisfied that all of the qualifications are met on a lease agreement. The motion carried.

**11. ADOPTION OF ORDER FOR THE TAX ADMINISTRATOR:**

The Board considered the adoption of an order directing the Tax Administrator to collect the taxes set forth in the 2014 tax records.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Joe Winslow to adopt the following order directing the Tax Administrator to collect the 2014 taxes. The motion carried by a five to one margin with Commissioner Meads voting against the motion.

**TO: THE TAX ADMINISTRATOR OF PASQUOTANK COUNTY**

You are hereby authorized, empowered and commanded to collect the taxes set forth in the 2014 tax records filed in the office of the Pasquotank County Tax Administrator, and in the tax receipts herewith delivered to you in the amounts and from the taxpayers likewise therein set forth. You are further authorized, empowered and commanded to collect the 2014 taxes charged and assessed as provided by law for adjustments, changes and additions to the tax records and tax receipts delivered to you which are made in accordance with law. Such taxes are hereby declared to be a first lien on all real property of the respective taxpayers in Pasquotank County, and this order shall be a full and sufficient authority to direct, require and enable you to levy on and sell any real or personal property of such taxpayers, for and on account thereof, in accordance with law.

**12. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION OPPOSING ANY ACTION BY THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO REQUIRE THE UNC BOARD OF GOVERNORS TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF DISSOLVING OR DEVELOPING A PLAN TO DISSOLVE ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY:**

The Board considered a resolution that would oppose any action by the General Assembly to develop a plan to dissolve Elizabeth City State University. Chairman Dixon explained that the city has adopted a similar resolution. He said although the Senate has removed language from the Senate Bill which would have effectively required a study of the closure of ECSU, the resolution opposes any further action in this regard.

Motion was made by Joe Winslow, seconded by Cecil Perry to adopt the following resolution opposing any action by the General Assembly to study the feasibility of dissolving or developing a plan to dissolve Elizabeth City State University. The motion carried 6-0.

**RESOLUTION OPPOSING ANY ACTION BY THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY TO REQUIRE THE UNC BOARD OF GOVERNORS TO STUDY THE FEASIBILITY OF DISSOLVING OR DEVELOPING A PLAN TO DISSOLVE ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY**

WHEREAS, Senate Bill 744 entitled "The Current Operations and Capital Improvements Appropriations Act of 2014" has been revised to remove language in Section 11.6 as follows: "The Board of Governors of The University of North Carolina shall study the feasibility of dissolving any constituent institution whose fall full time equivalent student enrollment declined by more than twenty percent (20%) between the 2010-2011 fiscal year and the 2013-2014 fiscal year and shall develop a plan for its dissolution. The Board of Governors shall report its findings and recommendations, including the plan for dissolution, to the 2015 General Assembly"; and

WHEREAS, although Elizabeth City State University was not specifically named in Section 11.6 of Senate Bill 744, it was the only campus in the 16-member University of North Carolina System that met the stated criteria; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth City State University was established by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1891 and plays an important role as one of the country's historically black colleges and universities; and

WHEREAS, it is acknowledged and agreed that Elizabeth City State University has suffered an enrollment decline in recent years, which has led to a significant budget shortfall; however, major steps have been taken to address the budget challenges and progress is being made under the direction of capable leadership; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth City State University leadership has devised a plan alongside University of North Carolina System governance to increase its enrollment; and the University is currently in the midst of conducting a search for a permanent Chancellor; therefore, the University must be granted the necessary time to reverse its downward enrollment trend of recent years and move forward with its critical mission to provide quality educational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, it must also be properly appreciated that in addition to its role of providing educational opportunity to a populace that might otherwise not be able to attain a higher education and the better life afforded by that education, Elizabeth City State University has been and continues to be a major economic engine for an oft-forgotten, economically depressed Northeastern North Carolina by creating, as the region's third-largest employer, \$118 million in output sales, \$83 million in gross regional product and \$59 million in labor income; and

WHEREAS, local government officials are currently engaged in major economic development efforts, which will require collaboration with Elizabeth City State University to provide the necessary training for high-paying jobs in a blossoming local aviation industry; and

WHEREAS, a large majority of K-12 teachers hired in Northeastern North Carolina are educated at Elizabeth City State University; and

WHEREAS, it is the finding of the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners that the simple exercise of performing the proposed study would stymie the University's efforts to increase enrollment, engage a chancellor, retain qualified and dedicated instructors and staff and grow the University as is desired by all concerned; and further would do irreparable harm to the economy of Pasquotank County, Elizabeth City and Northeastern North Carolina.

NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners is grateful that the Senate has revised Section 11.6 of Senate Bill 744 to remove the provision that would have studied the feasibility of closing Elizabeth City State University;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED by the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners that any further action by the North Carolina General Assembly to require the UNC Board of Governors to study the feasibility of dissolving or developing a plan to dissolve Elizabeth City State University is vehemently opposed.

ADOPTED this the 16<sup>th</sup> day of June 2014.

**13. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION ENCOURAGING A PILOT PROGRAM TO INCREASE STUDENT ENROLLMENT AT ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY:**

The Board considered a resolution that would encourage a pilot program to allow students living within a distance of seventy miles from Elizabeth City to pay in-state tuition rates to attend Elizabeth City State University. This would allow residents of the Hampton Roads area of Virginia to attend ECSU at in-state tuition rates. Old Dominion University in Virginia has a program similar to this one which allows residents of North Carolina to attend Old Dominion at in-state tuition rates if they live within seventy miles of ODU. Chairman Dixon noted that Chesapeake, Virginia has over fourteen high schools that would be a great recruitment area for potential students to attend Elizabeth City State University.

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Joe Winslow to adopt the following resolution encouraging a pilot program to allow students living within a 70 mile distance of Elizabeth City to pay in-state tuition rates to attend Elizabeth City State University. The motion carried 6-0.

**RESOLUTION  
ENCOURAGING A PILOT PROGRAM TO INCREASE STUDENT ENROLLMENT  
AT ELIZABETH CITY STATE UNIVERSITY BY THE UNC BOARD OF GOVERNORS  
AND/OR THE NORTH CAROLINA GENERAL ASSEMBLY**

WHEREAS, although now removed from the Appropriations Act of 2014, Section 11.6 of Senate Bill 744 provided for a study of the feasibility of dissolving any constituent institution whose fall full time equivalent student enrollment declined by more than twenty percent between



the 2010-2011 fiscal year and the 2013-2014 fiscal year and to develop a plan for its dissolution; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth City State University is the only campus in the 17-member University of North Carolina System that meets this stated criteria; and

WHEREAS, it is acknowledged and agreed that Elizabeth City State University has suffered an enrollment decline in recent years, which has led to a significant budget shortfall; however, major steps have been taken to address these enrollment and budget challenges and progress is being made under the direction of capable University leadership; and

WHEREAS, Pasquotank County supports all efforts by Elizabeth City State University and the UNC Board of Governors to increase student enrollment, engage a chancellor, and retain qualified and dedicated instructors and staff, because the loss of the University would do irreparable harm to the economy of Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County and Northeastern North Carolina and deny educational opportunity to a populace that might otherwise not be able to attain a higher education and the better life afforded by that education; and

WHEREAS, local government officials in Northeastern North Carolina have long realized that partnering in a regional approach to economic development is the most prudent course to follow for an economically-challenged region such as ours, a concept embraced by Government Pat McCrory when he encouraged capitalizing on our region's close proximity to Hampton Roads, Virginia; and

WHEREAS, in times of flat and/or declining state appropriations as now is being experienced, allowing out-of-state enrollment at an in-state tuition rate would serve to augment a declining student enrollment and enhance student quality; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth City State University is currently unable to fill its available student seats with in-state college entrants; and

WHEREAS, Elizabeth City State University is uniquely located within close proximity of a major metropolitan area in the State of Virginia.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners supports and encourages the development of a pilot program by the UNC Board of Governors and/or the General Assembly to allow students living within a distance of seventy miles from Elizabeth City to pay in-state tuition rates to attend Elizabeth City State University.

ADOPTED this the 16<sup>th</sup> day of June 2014.

**14. CALENDAR:**

The Clerk reviewed the calendar of upcoming meetings and events.

**15. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Vice-Chairman Winslow stated that he would like to thank those people who came out tonight. He explained that the Board works very hard to develop a budget for Pasquotank County and it shows that the public cares when they attend the meetings and express their views.

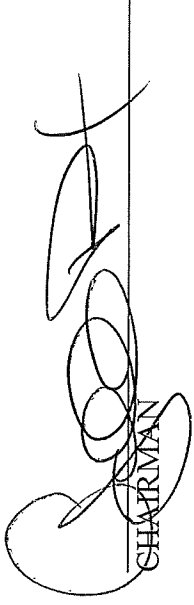
Chairman Dixon said he would like to thank staff for their work in preparing the budget. He noted that except for the revaluation this year's budget has been pretty painless. He said he would also like to thank the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools for using over \$1 million of their fund balance to pay for several school projects. He stated that additionally he would like to thank the COA Board of Trustees for understanding that the county could not fund all of their projects this year.

Chairman Dixon stated that he has not heard the results from the last SunEnergy job fair, however he hopes it had a better turnout than the first job fair. He stated that the first job fair only had 20 Pasquotank County residents show up for 450 available high paying construction jobs. He said the city and county are trying to bring jobs to the area which in turn helps lower taxes. He stated that some huge announcements are over the horizon that will need a lot of workers. He said if the workers are not here, the businesses may have no choice but go elsewhere.

Chairman Dixon explained June 30 would be time for another joint city county meeting, but he made the decision to not have one at this time. He said he hopes everyone is agreeable with that.

There being no further business, Chairman Dixon asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Joe Winslow to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:22 PM.

  
CHAIRMAN

  
CLERK TO THE BOARD