

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA  
SEPTEMBER 11, 2023**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, September 11, 2023 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:** Charles H. Jordan, Chairman  
Barry Overman, Vice-Chairman  
Lloyd E. Griffin, III  
Sean Lavin  
Jonathan Meads  
Sam Davis, III  
Clifford Shaw

**MEMBERS ABSENT:** None

**OTHERS PRESENT:** Sparty Hammett, County Manager  
John Shannon, Assistant County Manager  
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney  
Mike Barclift, Management Fellow  
David Smithson, Utilities Director  
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Charles Jordan. Chairman Jordan welcomed those in attendance and asked that everyone stand and observe a moment of silence in remembrance of 9/11 and the families of those who senselessly lost their lives. Vice-Chairman Barry Overman gave the invocation and Commissioner Clifford Shaw led the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

**1. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:**

County Manager Sparty Hammett requested that the agenda be amended to add an Update by the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Public Schools to the agenda under Public Comments.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Sean Lavin to amend the agenda to add an update by the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Public Schools to the agenda under Public Comments. The motion carried unanimously.

**2. UPDATE FROM CONGRESSMAN DON DAVIS' OFFICE:**

Chairman Jordan called on Chris Hardee, Regional Director for Congressman Don Davis. Mr. Hardee said he is here tonight to provide a brief update of Congressman Davis' first six months in office. He thanked the Board on behalf of Congressman Davis for giving him a few minutes of their time this evening.

Mr. Davis explained that the First Congressional District covers 19 counties, making up about 1/5 of the state. He said Congressman Davis saw fit to divide the district into regions, and he covers the east. He said he is the person that counties, towns, school boards, or other civic groups can reach out to.

Mr. Davis said that Congressman Davis wants to remind the Board that he is working for the east. The Congressional office, based in Greenville, has a designated casework team that acts as a liaison between constituents of the district and federal agencies to work through whatever issue they are facing. They are a neutral third party in the process. Their more frequent cases involve the Department of the State with passport assistance, Social Security, the IRS, and the Department of Veterans Affairs. They provide commendations and greetings as well, such as recognition for something that happens in the school system that needs federal recognition, long term retirees, or individuals who are having a 90<sup>th</sup> or 100<sup>th</sup> birthday. Official U.S. Flag requests are handled through their office as well. Special flags that have been flown over the U.S. Capital, with certificates can be ordered.

The Congressional office has three staff members that are reaching out to the community. They meet with elected officials, civic groups, non-profits, and other constituent groups. Every month they are also providing mobile office hours in each of the counties so they are able to meet

constituents where they are located. Additionally, they offer Congressional opportunities for youth. The opportunities include the Congressional Art Competition, App Challenge, and Military Academy Nominations. College students can also compete for an internship in the district or DC Office. He stated that Congressman Davis is very much a proponent of keeping youth engaged. He said the Congressional office also assists in grants, such as infrastructure grants. They cannot initiate grants, but once they are in place, they can help push them through the process. Finally, what Don Davis does best is to represent the people and counties in the halls of the United States Congress, and make sure that the 1<sup>st</sup> Congressional District is seen and heard on a regular basis in Washington.

Since being in office, Congressman Davis has held nine town hall meetings, a telephone town hall meeting where over 8,200 individuals participated, listening sessions, and roundtables. He has participated in local school and business tours. He provides a monthly newsletter and is very active on his social media accounts. He said Congressman Davis is very active and engaged with his constituents and provides community outreach.

Congressman Davis serves as a Vice-Ranking member of the House Agriculture Committee and Vice-Ranking member on the House Armed Services Subcommittee on Readiness. He has introduced eight pieces of legislation, six of which are bipartisan. He has co-sponsored over 150 pieces of legislation, (more than 100 are bipartisan). He has co-led 21 pieces of legislation. Mr. Hardee stated that Congressman Davis is one of the most bipartisan freshmen in the House, with an 85% bipartisan record on co-sponsorships. Congressman Davis is the Democratic Co-Chair of the bipartisan Agriculture Labor Working Group and a member of the House Armed Services Committee's Quality of Life Panel.

Mr. Hardee provided an Appropriations and Community Project Funding Update. He said Congress has set the stage for a chaotic September with the House and Senate on a collision course over appropriations and the risk of a partial government shutdown already being accessed. Out of the 12 annual appropriations bills that Congress has to pass every year, the House has only passed one of its bills; the military construction and VA Funding bills. Because the 12 bills have yet to pass, and members are in their districts until mid-September, there will not be enough time to get all government funding bills passed and negotiated before the end of the Fiscal Year on September 30th. This will likely mean consideration of a continuing resolution, which means a continuation of current funding levels- not approving the next year's appropriations bills which contain the community project funding requests. He stated that with all of this said, the projects are in their respective committee report accompanying appropriation bills. Still, they cannot guarantee that these bills will pass this year because of the political-will to decrease overall funding levels.

Mr. Hardee said from our rural farms to our bustling cities across this district, the Congressman often says it's the honor of his lifetime to represent Northeastern North Carolina in the halls of the US Congress, whether it is cutting red tape for our service members and veterans, getting things for our farmers, or working to strengthen our local economy. He asked if the Board has any questions for him.

Commissioner Lavin thanked Mr. Hardee for coming and providing an update from Congressman Davis' office. He hopes that Mr. Hardee will pass along the Board's appreciation for the Congressman's substantial visibility and presence in our area. He said we have a lot of projects and infrastructure needs here and the Board appreciates his continued support.

Chairman Jordan said to please let Congressman Davis know that the Board appreciates all that he does for Pasquotank County.

### **3. UPDATE FROM ELIZABETH CITY-PASQUOTANK COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS:**

Chairman Jordan called on Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Keith Parker to provide an update on the school system.

Dr. Parker said that he received a letter around this time last year from the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction that informed him that ECPPS had been identified as one of 29 low performing school districts in the state of North Carolina. The reason for that is more than half of the schools in our district (8 out of 13) were identified as low performing by the state. Dr.

Parker informed the Board that the district's teachers, administrators, staff and students have made tremendous progress during the last school year and he is incredibly proud of them. He said in just one year's time their staff and students worked so hard and their students progressed so much that they have exited the low-performing status designation. He said to be able to make that accomplishment in just one year's time speaks to the dedication of their amazing staff, students, and support of their parents. ECPPS was one of four districts in eastern North Carolina that exited that distinction. He said the number of students who passed their end of grade tests increased by over 25 percent districtwide, and the number of students who graduated increased by 10 percent last year.

Dr. Parker called on school officials and students from each of the schools represented to come forward and be recognized for their schools growth.

River Road Middle School exceeded growth (92.6); student proficiency increased by 12 points; and is 2 points from a C. Elizabeth City Middle School exceeded growth (90.3); increased a letter grade to C; and increased student proficiency by 12 points. Sheep Harney Elementary School exceeded growth (86); student proficiency increased by 19 points; and increased to a letter grade of C. P.W. Moore Elementary School exceeded growth (85.1); proficiency increased by 17 points, and is 4 points from a C. H.L. Trigg Alternative School – New Graduation Pathways; Project-based learning; and focusing on increased graduation rate. J.C. Sawyer Elementary School – Met growth (80.3); proficiency increased by 10 points; and increased a letter grade (9 points from a C). Weeksville Elementary School – Met growth (74.1); 2 points away from a B School; and increased student proficiency by 6 points. Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Early College – Met growth (81.8); 7 points away from an A School; and increased graduation rate to 95 percent. Pasquotank Elementary School – Met growth (72.4); 6 points away from a C School; and increased student proficiency by 11 points. Northside Elementary School – Increased student proficiency by 13 points (1 point away from a C School); and focused on innovation and success for all students. Central Elementary School – Met growth (75.8); 7 points away from a C School; and increased student proficiency by 5 points. Northeastern High School – Increased graduation rate to 72 percent; 3 points away from a C School; and increased student proficiency by 8 points. Pasquotank County High School – 2 points away from a C School; Increased graduation rate by 17 points, and received Rural Schools Grant with Transcend.

Commissioners had their pictures taken with schools officials and staff from each of the schools represented. Chairman Jordan said the Board is very proud of the job ECPPS is doing and that they are moving in the right direction. He said he wants the school system to know that the Board will be here to support them as much as possible.

#### **4. COMMENTS BY LLOYD MEADS:**

Chairman Jordan called on Lloyd Meads of 266 Highway 343 South, Camden to address the Board. Mr. Meads said he is in the process of selling his home in Camden and buying some property to build on in Pasquotank County. He was shocked when he found out he could not put a little camper on the property temporarily to live in until his house is built. He asked for the Board's help in changing that rule.

#### **5. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SEALED BID SALES FOR COUNTY OWNED PROPERTIES:**

County Attorney Mike Cox explained that the Board approved selling six vacant, county owned properties at its meeting on August 7<sup>th</sup>. Staff met to discuss the best strategies for selling each property. The County has traditionally sold property through the upset bid process, but due to the size, location, cost, and other factors associated with the properties, staff is suggesting the properties be sold via the sealed bid process. He stated that the Seagull Dr. property has had the most interest to date, but it has been set aside at this time because it is designated as "open space" on the plat, and will need to be handled separately.

Commissioner Lavin said if the properties are sold through the sealed bid process, there will be no opportunity to have anybody to upset the bids. He said he knows it is easier on staff, but he is not sure that it is the best thing for the residents of the county. Attorney Cox reminded the Board that they can reject bids if they feel they are not sufficient. The Clerk to the Board noted that the cost to advertise upset bids will probably exceed the actual bids received due to their locations, sizes, and building restrictions.

Motion was made by Jonathan Meads, seconded by Clifford Shaw to adopt the following resolution to sell the five properties utilizing the sealed bid process.

**RESOLUTION AUTHORIZING SEALED BID SALES  
FOR PROPERTIES LOCATED IN  
PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**

**WHEREAS**, the County of Pasquotank owns several parcels that are surplus and the County intends to sell said parcels; and

**WHEREAS**, the properties are described as follows:

1. P143-63; PIN # 892409061282; Knobbs Creek Drive, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being .7 acres, more or less;
2. 55-E-105; PIN # 891315649265; Douglas Street, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being 3,710 square feet, more or less;
3. P122a-219; PIN # 891319617522; 139 Oak Grove, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being 5,000 square feet, more or less;
4. P122a-220; PIN # 891319616571; Apple Street, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being 5,000 square feet, more or less;
5. P98-2; PIN # 8859022522; Soundneck Road, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being 28,200 square feet, more or less.

**WHEREAS**, North Carolina General Statute §160A-268 permits the County to sell real property by advertisement and sealed bid; and

**THEREFORE, THE PASQUOTANK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS RESOLVES THAT:**

1. The Board of Commissioners authorizes the sale of the following tracts of land by sealed bid:

1. P143-63; PIN # 892409061282; Knobbs Creek Drive, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being .7 acres, more or less;
2. 55-E-105; PIN # 891315649265; Douglas Street, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being 3,710 square feet, more or less;
3. P122a-219; PIN # 891319617522; 139 Oak Grove, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being 5,000 square feet, more or less;
4. P122a-220; PIN # 891319616571; Apple Street, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being 5,000 square feet, more or less;
5. P98-2; PIN # 8859022522; Soundneck Road, Elizabeth City, NC in the Pasquotank County Tax Office and being 28,200 square feet, more or less.

2. The county will accept sealed bids for the property until 10:00 a.m., Monday, November 6, 2023. Bids shall be delivered to the office of the County Manager, Room E201, Pasquotank County Courthouse, 206 E. Main Street, Elizabeth City, NC.

3. At 10:00 a.m., Monday, November 6, 2023, all bids received shall be opened in the County Manager's Office and the amount of each bid recorded. The record of bids shall be reported to the Board of Commissioners at their 4:00 p.m. Finance Committee meeting on Monday, November 6, 2023.

4. The Board of Commissioners will determine the highest responsible bidder for the property and will award the bid by its regular meeting on November 20, 2023. Bids will remain open and subject to acceptance until the Board of Commissioners awards the bids.

5. To be responsible a bid must be accompanied by a bid deposit of five percent (5%) of

the amount of the bid. A bid deposit may take the form of cash, a cashier's check, a certified check, or a surety bond. The deposit of the bidder to whom the award is made will be held until the sale of the property is closed; if that bidder refuses at any time to close the sale, the deposit will be forfeited to the county. The deposits of other bidders will be returned at the time the Board of Commissioners awards the properties to the highest responsible bidders.

6. In addition, to be responsible, a bidder must be current on payment of all property taxes owed to the county.

7. The county reserves the right to withdraw the property from sale at any time and the right to reject all bids.

8. Title will be transferred by non-warranty deed.

Adopted this 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

The motion carried unanimously.

**6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Board considered the following consent agenda:

a. Approval of Minutes of August 21, 2023 Commissioner Meeting

b. Approval of Tax Releases and Refunds

The Tax Office has recommended approval of the following tax releases and refunds:

**Tax Release**

	Taxpayer	County	City
1.	Katherine Lane & Doris Tammy Lane	199.30	

**Solid Waste Fee Releases**

	Owner's Name	Parcel ID #	Reason for Release
1.	Lucy G. & Michael G. Beamon	P108-17	Vacant
2.	Angerine Brite Heirs	39-B-32	Vacant
3.	Willie Brown Heirs	P10-15	Vacant
4.	Nancy P. Chessman	P141-49	Vacant
5.	Karen Allison Evans	P61-27	Vacant
6.	Charles Jr. & Carolyn JP Everett	21-F-10-11A	Vacant
7.	Florence Evans Etal	P126-32	Vacant
8.	Family Worship Center of EC Inc	P35-36	Vacant
9.	Jarvis Ferebee	P139-5	Vacant
10.	Jean Roach Ferebee & Vivian Roach Gibson	P112-32	Vacant
11.	Gussie R. Layden Heirs	P119-75	Vacant
12.	George C. Jr. & Gwendolen Manos	P12-43&44A	Vacant
13.	Gracie Meads Heirs	P35-59	Vacant
14.	Elizabeth S. Overton Life Est.	P98-16	Vacant
15.	Reginald Overton	P99-8	Vacant
16.	Sam E. Spence	P112-2	Vacant
17.	Mary R. Stokley Life Est.	P122A-113	Vacant
18.	Lemuel E. White	P110-55	Vacant
19.	Mary Phillis W. White	P77-2	Vacant

c. Approval of Budget Amendments

The Finance Office has requested approval of the following budget amendments:

**Sheriff**

Increase	010.0991.4991.00	Fund Balance Appropriated	44,000.00
Increase	010.4310.5500.00	Capital Outlay	44,000.00

EMS

Increase	010.0991.4991.00	Fund Balance Appropriated	29,950.00
Increase	010.4370.5500.00	Capital Outlay	29,950.00

Public Buildings

Increase	010.0991.4991.00	Fund Balance Appropriated	377,680.00
Increase	010.4190.5500.00	Capital Outlay-Boardroom	377,680.00

*d. Approval of Contract Extension with Ralph Hodge Construction Company*

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of a request by Ralph Hodge Construction Company for a 115-day time extension for completion of Northside Road Pump Station and Water Line Upgrades Project.

*e. Award of Contract for RO Water System Asset Inventory & Assessment*

The Finance Committee has recommended awarding the contract for the RO Water System Asset Inventory and Assessment to Green Engineering at a cost of \$150,000, with the cost being paid by a \$150,000 grant.

Motion was made by Sam Davis, seconded by Sean Lavin to approve the Consent Agenda, as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

**7. CONSIDERATION OF LEASE EXTENSION WITH BRIGHTSPEED:**

County Attorney Mike Cox explained that in 1994, the County and Brightspeed of Eastern North Carolina, LLC entered into a lease whereby Brightspeed leased a 6,216 square foot parcel within the Commerce Park. The original lease for twenty years ended 2014, and the parties amended the lease in 2014 to add an additional term, which ended June 30, 2023. Brightspeed has approached the County about a second amendment that would extend the lease for an additional five years, with an automatic renewal for four additional years. The annual rent for the term that ended June 30, 2023, was \$2,700. Under the proposal of the second amendment, the annual rent would be \$2,970 for the first five years and \$3,267 for the remaining four years.

Mr. Cox said the Finance Committee recommended approval of the lease extension on July 17<sup>th</sup>, and the required 30-day notice has been published.

Motion was made by Sam Davis, seconded by Sean Lavin to adopt the following resolution approving the amended lease with Brightspeed:

**RESOLUTION APPROVING LEASE WITH BRIGHTSPEED**

**WHEREAS**, Pasquotank County owns property located within the Pasquotank County Commerce Park near the intersection of Corporate Drive and Commerce Drive (being approximately 6,216 square feet) and shown on the survey recorded in Deed Book 564, Page 74 of the Pasquotank County Public Registry; and

**WHEREAS**, Brightspeed wishes to amend an existing lease for said county owned property; and

**WHEREAS**, the County has determined the property will not be needed during the term of the lease; and

**WHEREAS**, the County and Brightspeed have agreed to enter into an amendment to an existing lease for a term of five (5) years, beginning July 1, 2023, with an automatic renewal for an additional four (4) years beginning July 1, 2028; and

**WHEREAS**, the annual rent for the initial five (5) year extension is \$2,970 and \$3,267 per year for the four (4) year renewal term; and

**WHEREAS**, NCGS 160A-272 authorizes the county to enter into leases up to ten (10) years upon resolution of the county commissioners adopted at a regular meeting after thirty (30) days' notice; and

**WHEREAS**, the required notice has been published and the Board of Commissioners is convened at a regular meeting.

**THEREFORE, THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS OF PASQUOTANK COUNTY RESOLVES THAT:**

The Board of Commissioners hereby approves the amended lease of county property described above to Brightspeed for five (5) years, with an automatic renewal for an additional four (4) years on terms as described hereinabove and directs the chairman to execute any instruments necessary to secure the lease.

ADOPTED this 11<sup>th</sup> day of September, 2023.

The motion carried unanimously.

**8. REPORTS BY COUNTY ATTORNEY:**

County Attorney Mike Cox provided an update on the Animal Control Board Ordinance amendments. He said the amended ordinance has been provided to the Special Projects Committee, the Sheriff's office, and the SPCA for their review and comments. He said the current ordinance is very outdated and needed a complete overhaul. He also wants to run the rabies section by the Health Department, because they control that portion. Next, he will put the draft out to the Animal Control Board for their review. He anticipates bringing the draft ordinance back to the Special Projects Committee in approximately a month before presenting it to the full Board for their review and comments.

**9. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Shaw attended the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Annual Conference in Raleigh the week of August 23. On August 28, he welcomed students at P.W. Moore Elementary School on their first day of school. On September 7, he toured the SOULS Ministry feeding program at their new location, where they provided 51 meals that evening. On September 9, he toured Fort Liberty with his son. They were preparing to honor the falling soldiers from 9/11.

Commissioner Davis attended the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Annual Conference. He said he had a wonderful time. This morning he attended the monthly DSS meeting. They discussed the increase in adult mental health patients in the system, which is a crisis across the state. The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is going to have a town hall meeting at Elizabeth City State University on September 14<sup>th</sup>. He encouraged Board members to attend.

Commissioner Meads attended the Health Board meeting. He had lunch with Lieutenant Governor Mark Robinson. Lt. Governor Robinson told him that he is very concerned about law enforcement and teachers due to the lack of respect and support these hard working professions receive. Everyone is having a hard time filling those positions. He also talked about how our county, state and federal governments should have guardrails installed for our businesses, not roadblocks. Mr. Meads said he feels like the Board set up a roadblock at the last meeting when they voted to amend the Pasquotank County Zoning Ordinance to eliminate duplexes as a permitted use in the A-1, Agricultural District. He said someone approached him after the meeting and said they would like to relook at the decision. The Lt. Governor discussed the problems with affordable housing throughout the state. He said when we as a county install roadblocks; it makes it hard to produce affordable housing. He said he is looking forward to Lt. Governor Robinson becoming our next Governor. He also attended a volleyball game where there was a tribute to 9/11. It really gets to him when he thinks of all the sacrifices made that day. He said those people who sacrificed their lives that day are the real heroes of this country.

Commissioner Meads said on October 27, the Albemarle Regional Health Services will hold a State of Health Summit at the K.E. White Graduate Center. He hopes that members of the Board will attend.

Commissioner Lavin said it is very nice to see a packed courtroom this evening, and to celebrate the news of how our schools are performing. He attended the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Annual Conference. It was a great opportunity not only to sit and talk

with fellow commissioners, but also to attend some of the focus groups. Many of the problems he heard were very similar to ours.

Commissioner Griffin thanked the men and women who sacrificed their lives on 9/11. He reported that the airport addition is moving along. They are working with Elizabeth City State University to expand their footprint at the airport. He will be attending the Highway 17 meeting on Wednesday. He said during his travels for work, he sees a lot of road construction happening on Highway 17, but there is none on this side of the Roanoke River.

Vice-Chairman Overman attended the Sentara Albemarle Advisory Board meeting. He attended the North Carolina Association of County Commissioner Conference, and the Community College Trustees Conference. He's very excited for the Elizabeth City Pasquotank County Schools and all they have accomplished this year. He stated that Dr. Parker's leadership has a lot to do with it. He said you always want to follow somebody that you know is going in the right direction, and Dr. Parker has put us in the right direction.

Vice-Chairman Overman said that 9/11 was a big deal in his world. He was doing a fire inspection at a daycare when the plane struck the first tower and he got called back into the office. It really changed the trajectory of everything. He said he told his kids standing in the airport three weeks ago, that he did not have to deal with this when he was there age. You could walk straight in and get on your plane. It didn't make sense to them, because they have never known a world with that kind of freedom. On 9/11, he was put on standby. A lot of his co-workers went and several have passed from complications of breathing that atmosphere. When he looks back now, he realizes how blessed he was that he did not have to go. Had they called, he said he would have gone. He said 9/11 changed the world forever.

Vice-Chairman Overman reported that the Weeksville VFD has run 91 calls this year. He remembers when they use to run 18 calls per year. He noted that he performed CPR three times in the last ten days. The world around us is just different than it was. The \$15 stipend per call the Board approved for volunteer firemen has been huge. The firefighters are turning out and taking care of people. They are learning their jobs better, because they are proud of their community and they are proud of the stipend the Board gave them. The Weeksville Volunteer Fire Department will be having their annual BBQ Chicken dinner the first Saturday in October.

Chairman Jordan attended the Sentara Advisory Board meeting. They received an update on what is going on with the new hospital. He and County Manager Hammett had the opportunity to meet with the new president, which seems to be a very nice young lady. He said she has experience with opening a new hospital and he thinks she will do fine. He attended the Trillium Governing Board meeting. They are still waiting on finalization of the state budget. He said he also attended the North Carolina County Commissioners Annual Conference.

Motion was made by Sean Lavin, seconded by Sam Davis to adjourn the meeting.  
The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:34 PM.

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CHAIRMAN

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CLERK TO THE BOARD