

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
SEPTEMBER 30, 2019**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a joint meeting with the City Council of Elizabeth City on Monday, September 30, 2019 at the Carolina Center in the Pasquotank County Commerce Park.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Dixon, Chairman
Lloyd E. Griffin, III, Vice-Chairman
Cecil Perry
Frankie Meads
Charles Jordan
Barry Overman
Sean Lavin

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Sparty Hammett, County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Sheri Small, Finance Officer
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board
Hartley Askew, Deputy Clerk

Also present were members of the City Council, the Mayor, City Manager, Assistant City Manager, City Attorney, City Clerk, and City staff. Following dinner, the meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairman Jeff Dixon and Mayor Bettie Parker. All attendees gave pause for a moment of silent reflection. Commission Meads led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

Chairman Dixon welcomed everyone present. He stated that the City and County are on a roll when it comes to economic development thanks to our new Economic Development Director, Christian Lockamy. He said we have had several job announcements in the last couple months, and enrollments are up at our local colleges and universities, which are great indicators that things are turning around. He said as elected official the two board's must work together to continue this trend.

1. PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION IN SUPPORT OF STUDENT COUNCIL:

In March, 2019, the City Council formed a Student Council comprised of members of Elizabeth City State University, College of the Albemarle, and Mid-Atlantic Christian University. Through bridging the divide between college students and governing officials, the City hoped to create unity and inclusion. The County was asked to support the Student Council and their mission.

Chairman Dixon called on members of the Student Council to accept the following proclamation, which was read by Mayor Parker:

*Proclamation
In Support of the Student Council*

WHEREAS, in a small city in Northeastern North Carolina, the impact of both governing and business decisions are felt by all residents, particularly by the youth in the area; and

WHEREAS, it has been a long-running mission of the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City to support and strengthen our youth, granting them a voice and a listening ear by which they may project their ideas and engage in valuable discussion; and

WHEREAS, on March 25, 2019, the City Council dedicated a Work Session as a Town and Gown discussion, inviting student representatives from the City's three institutes of higher learning to attend, raise their voices and be heard; and

WHEREAS, shortly thereafter, a Student Council comprised of members of Elizabeth City State University, College of the Albemarle, and Mid-Atlantic Christian University joined together to support one another, collaborate on ideas, and make decisions in hopes of making their experience in Elizabeth City as memorable and inclusive as possible; and

WHEREAS, through bridging the divide between college students and governing officials, both the City Council and the Student Council hope to be the bearers of bringing a revolutionary change, creating unity and inclusion for all within our City.

WHEREAS, Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners also supports the efforts of the City Council and the Student Council to create unity and inclusion;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Mayor Bettie J. Parker, Chairman Jeff Dixon, members of the City Council of the City of Elizabeth City and members of the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners present this proclamation in support of the Student Council and publicly salute their great efforts in our community.

Adopted this the 30th day of September 2019.

Members of the Student Council thanked the Board and Council for the opportunity they have been given.

2. ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION STRATEGIC PLAN PRESENTATION:

Christian Lockamy, Director of Economic Development, stated that the Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County Economic Development Commission (EDC) has been engaged in a 5-year strategic planning process since the first quarter of 2019. The EDC launched this initiative through Electricities of North Carolina and was paired with Creative Economic Development Consulting out of Elkin, North Carolina to facilitate the project.

The plan was guided by a steering committee composed of representatives from the City of Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County, the Committee of 100, College of the Albemarle, and Elizabeth City State University. Additional stakeholder feedback was solicited via small group meetings and a public input session. He said the document represents a vision by all involved to take the necessary steps that will grow our community and provide opportunity for our citizens.

Mr. Lockamy introduced project partners Carl Rees from Electricities of North Carolina and Penny Whiteheart from Creative Consulting. Mr. Rees extended greetings from Electricities and thanked the Board and Council for the opportunity. Ms. Whiteheart provided an overview of the recommendations and conclusions of the strategic plan. She said the next step will be to develop a work plan for the EDC. She is excited to see the opportunity and momentum here in Elizabeth City/Pasquotank County.

3. CONSIDERATION – AWARD OF BID FOR NEW SENIOR CENTER REMODELING:

City Manager Rich Olson stated that earlier this year the City and County purchased the former Daily Advance Building to use as a senior center. Prior to purchasing the building, the City entered into an Interlocal Agreement with the County. The agreement required the City to issue the \$1,500,000 for the purchase and remodeling of the facility. The County would pay annually one half of the debt cost. At the present time, the property is titled in the City's name. After 10 years, when the debt is paid off, the property will be titled in both the City and the County names. Since the City closed on the building, the City has hired JKF Architecture to facilitate the bid process and manage the remodeling project. The building was purchased for \$1,155,900, which is \$155,900 over the initial budget.

Bids were solicited for the project. After the bid opening, AR Chesson Construction Company, Inc. was the low bidder. The initial bid was \$438,160. John Farkas, President of JKF Architecture initiated some potential cost reductions and negotiated these with the contractor, which resulted in a reduction of \$31,821. This brought the remodel cost down to \$407,339.

Mr. Olson provided the following tables:

Expenses	
Remodel Cost (AR Chesson Bid)	\$407,339.00
JKF – Architectural Fees	\$64,000
5% Contingency	\$20,367.00
Estimated Cost	\$491,706.00

Revenues	
Funds Available for Remodeling	\$344,100.00
Daily Advance Rent Payment	\$24,776.50
Salary Savings from Operating Budget	\$70,060.50
Total Revenue	\$438,937.00

Shortfall	
Remodel Cost	\$491,706.00
Funds Available	\$438,937.00
Anticipated Shortfall	\$52,769.00

Share of Shortfall	
City Share	\$26,384.50
County Share	\$26,384.50
Total	\$52,769.00

Mr. Olson continued by saying the cost to furnish and equip the facility with new workout equipment, pool tables, chairs, tables, and kitchen appliances is estimated to cost \$200,000 - \$250,000. To take care of this, staff believes we need to start a Capital campaign to raise funds to help defer the cost. He said staff has already had conversations with a number of individuals who said they are willing to give money to help equip the inside of the building. We could recognize individuals or groups who donate at certain levels, as well as explore selling the naming rights to the building.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Barry Overman to approve the county's share of the increase in the remodeling cost (\$26,384.50) in order to move forward with the project.

Commissioner Meads said he feels we should name the building Elizabeth City's Fort Knox. He said he had an appraiser look at it and was told it is worth \$750,000. He feels it is one of the most dangerous places to put a senior citizens center in Elizabeth City. He suggested the City use the building for office space or as a motel. He went on to say that the Weeksville Lions Club built their building for less than \$100,000.

Commissioner Lavin said he is concerned about the walkway in between the parking lot and the new building. He said this came up several times in discussions with residents, and he does not want the Boards to lose sight of that requirement for this project. He asked if the walkway has been taken out of the project. Mr. Olson noted that it has been taken out because it is not part of the remodel. The City applied for a \$10,000 AARP grant in April and received notice in June that the grant was denied. He noted that the City has the capability of painting crosswalks. He said we can look at adding an elevated crosswalk with lighting, but it will be very expensive.

The motion carried 4 to 3, with Commissioners Meads, Lavin, and Perry voting against the motion.

The City Council voted to award bid to AR Chesson for remodeling the Senior Center in the amount of \$407,339. The motion carried 6 to 2.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Sean Lavin to move forward with the concept of a capital campaign to raise funds to defer the cost of furnishing and equipping the facility with new workout equipment, pool tables, chairs, tables and kitchen appliances. The motion carried 6 to 1, with Commission Meads voting against the motion.

The City and County Managers will explore the best way to move forward with the campaign, as well as explore selling the naming rights to the building.

Commissioner Jordan asked for clarification on the crosswalk. Mr. Olson said there will be a crosswalk installed. Whether or not it is a raised crosswalk, with embedded lights, is something that will still need to be explored.

4. VISIT ELIZABETH CITY VISITOR PROFILE RESEARCH STUDY PRESENTATION:

Corrina Ferguson, Executive Director of the Elizabeth City – Pasquotank County Tourism Development Authority stated that the Authority’s mission is to promote overnight visitation that drives economic impact to destination marketing and enhancement of the visitor experience to Elizabeth City and Pasquotank County.

Ms. Ferguson said they just completed their first strategic plan and one of the elements of their strategic plan was to launch a visitor profile research study. Visit Elizabeth City worked together with SIR to develop three 17-minute online surveys among past visitors, non-leisure visitors, and prospective visitors. Survey respondents were gathered using a list of 11,452 potential contacts provided by Visit Elizabeth City and a national survey sample provider.

Ms. Ferguson reviewed the six key findings from the study, which included: 1) Elizabeth City has a positive perception – most notably as a small quaint destination; 2) There is an opportunity to improve levels of familiarity with Elizabeth City and all the destination has to offer; 3) Visit Elizabeth City should strongly consider creating a local tourism ambassador program to equip residents with strategies to convey all there is to see and do, showcase the best spots, and encourage friends and family to visit; 4) Lodging, dining, and having a variety of activities are key areas of focus for Elizabeth City to better meet the expectations of visitors; 5) Focus on building messages around the many attributes that are strongly correlated to visitation intent. In addition, these respondents look to friends and family the most for information. This further points to the need to create a local tourism ambassador program; and 6) Focus on food and activities! When it comes to potential new product development, respondents across the board are interested in dining options and experiences near the waterfront.

5. YMCA AT THE PINES GOLF COURSE FUNDING REQUEST:

Dean Mattox, District Vice President for the YMCA of South Hampton Roads introduced Anthony Walters, Upcoming YMCA CEO, Bill Zazynski, Chief Operating Officer, Travis Burke, Corporate I YMCA board member, COA Board member, COA Foundation, and George Bright, Athletic Director at ECSU.

Mr. Mattox stated that the YMCA at the Pines is an essential community asset. He asked where else would a community college, a university and a YMCA come together. He said the YMCA at the Pines is so much more than a golf course. Psychologists tell us that the most pinnacle moments in our lives are called keystone moments. These are the moments that are seared into our brains throughout our lives, such as weddings, reunions, or senior proms. If you’ve been around Elizabeth City very long, you or someone you know has celebrated a “keystone” moment at the YMCA at the Pines.

Mr. Mattox said the YMCA at the Pines hosts over 120 non-golf events a year. They have over 20,000 visits a year and local non-profits have raised over \$100,000 yearly to support their local causes. The YMCA at the Pines just recently launched their youth First Tee Program, which is an international youth development program that helps shape the lives of young people from all walks of life by reinforcing values, integrity, respect, and perseverance through the game of golf and it is making a difference. He said they are not only making better golfers, but they are making better people. It is a place that makes us put down our cell phones, and just talk to those most important to us, about the most important things in our lives.

Mr. Walters noted that that in September 2017, he was part of the team that acquired the YMCA at the Pines. He said as a team member he had the opportunity to watch and see what happens there. He has seen people come, connect, and engage. He has seen people from all types of life, all demographics, all ages, all races, and ethnicities come together at this golf course. For him, this is an asset that we must keep. He said the YMCA is all in at the \$900,000 level a year. He said he wants ECSU, the County, and the City to be all in as well.

Mr. Burke said they would like to offer all City and County employees \$15 rates for chosen nights, as well as \$125 membership fees. This amount includes the YMCA, as well as the Pines, which is about a \$40 savings.

Mr. Bright said he has been at ECSU for about a year. About two months after his start, he noticed that his golf team was traveling about 45 minutes to practice, which concerned him. He reached out to Mr. Mattox and they had a challenging, but thoughtful discussion to ask themselves why ECSU was not using the Pines facility. They both decided it was time to let the past be the past, and move forward. He said he is excited about this partnership and opportunity. He said it is a beautiful place. As a new member of the community and the Director of Athletics at ECSU, he thinks the Pines is where his golf team needs to be.

Ms. Ferguson was asked if tourism funds could be used to fund the request. Ms. Ferguson said it would obviously have to go to the tourism board for final decision. She noted that operational expenses and operational gaps are not covered with tourism funding. Tourism funding is to be used for new projects and to increase overnight visitation. She said she heard talk of a tournament, which does not exist now, and that could be a potential discussion item.

6. NORTH EAST ACADEMY OF AEROSPACE AND ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES (NEAAAT) PRESENTATION

Andrew Harris, Chief Executive Officer of the North East Academy of Aerospace and Advanced Technologies, shared information regarding the economic impact of NEAAAT.

Mr. Harris stated that the NEAAAT School came to be as a result of the strategic planning initiative from the City of Elizabeth City many years ago. The City residents were asked what they considered to be the biggest economic development success factors and in particular what are the priorities for improvement over the next five years. Overall, the #1 priority was to improve K-12 education.

Currently, the school is a regional school, which is located on the campus of Elizabeth City State University. It has been on that location since it opened four and a half years ago. They began with 123 students in the eighth and ninth grade from five counties. Currently, they have almost 600 students from eight counties across eastern North Carolina in grades six through twelve. He stated that the initiative started with a couple of central goals. The first goal was to canalize educational innovation and improvement across the region. Secondly, was to create a pipeline for businesses and industries.

Mr. Harris stated that every time a student opts for homeschool or private school, there are state dollars that would have funded that student's education gone from the region. He said they have been able to recapture quite a bit of those dollars back into our local economy. They wanted to create a school that would attract outside investment and outside awareness of the great things we have here in Elizabeth City.

Four and half years in to this, they have already seen some movement with educational innovation and improvement. One of the things that NEAAAT pioneered was something called remote learning protocol. They actually have days during the school year where their students attend school from home by remote.

Mr. Harris stated that their students' academic scores have outperformed the state average every year since they opened. Three years ago they became a national model school, one of thirteen in the United States, for Aircraft Owners and Pilots Association Aviation's You Can Fly Curriculum. It meshes with their partners at College of the Albemarle and Elizabeth City State University. Students from all across the northeast can begin taking these classes in ninth grade and by the time they graduate from high school, they can graduate with certifications to go directly into jobs. A third of their first senior class left with a full two-year degree from COA, and at least two thirds have one year completed at COA at the time of their graduation. Over half have completed over 160 hours of internships with local employers. All of their graduates have contributed at least 200 hours of service to the community.

Mr. Harris stated that to date NEAAAT has recaptured \$2.9 million in state funding back into our local community that would be gone, due to home school and private school students coming to their school. He said by 2024, they will recoup \$1.2 million a year in state funding to

Pasquotank County, which translates to sixteen or seventeen jobs. Since they opened, they brought \$2 million into the county in grant funds. They have contributed \$664,000 by the end of this school year to ECSU, through tuition and rent. Additionally, they purchase books from the book store and the food on campus.

Mr. Harris said they recently embarked on a professional strategic planning initiative. Three goals emerged, which included 1) become a center of community and place where everybody feels welcome; 2) graduate all students ready for the real world of work; and 3) ensure NEAAAT's long term sustainability.

Vice-Chairman Griffin invited everyone to attend the Coast Guard Aviation Appreciation Day on Saturday at 9:00 AM.

Chairman Dixon asked if there was any further business to come before the Board. There being no further business;

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Charles Jordan to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:57 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD