

January 13, 2021

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular Session on Wednesday, January 13, 2021, 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Boardroom at the Martin County Governmental Center, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, North Carolina.

ASSEMBLY

Present in the Boardroom: Vice Chairman Dempsey Bond, Jr., Commissioner Joe R. Ayers, Commissioner Emily Biggs, Commissioner David “Skip” Gurganus, Interim County Manager Cindy Ange, Clerk to the Board Jessica Godard, County Attorney Nate James and Sheriff Tim Manning.

Present via Cisco WebEx: Chairman Ronnie Smith and Lead for North Carolina Fellow Elizabeth Mitchell.

Vice Chairman Bond called the meeting to order at 7:00 p.m. Vice Chairman Bond led the Pledge of Allegiance, and Commissioner Gurganus provided the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chairman Smith requested Budget Amendment #19 be tabled and discussed at a later date. Commissioner Smith made a MOTION to approve the agenda as revised, with a SECOND by Commissioner Biggs. The Board unanimously APPROVED the motion via roll call vote.

PUBLIC COMMENTS

There were no written comments submitted to the Clerk prior to the meeting. In order to maintain transparency, a brief moment was observed to allow anyone watching Facebook live to provide comments. No comments were offered on the Facebook live stream.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Gurganus made a MOTION to approve the consent agenda as presented, with a SECOND by Commissioner Biggs. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously via a roll call vote.

- 1. Minutes** for December 4th, 2020 Regular Meeting and December 14th, 2020 Regular and Closed Sessions
- 2. Financial Report** for November 2020
- 3. Tax Assessor – Tax Refund Requests – December 2020 2020 -- None**
- 4. Tax Assessor – Tax Relief Orders –October 2020**

Year Levy	Lname	Fname	Reason	Value	Total
2020	Barber	Mayo A Heirs	Senior Citizen Exempt		1,086.50
2020	Boyd	Rebecca H	Sold Vehicle		22.36
2020	Hardison	Jeffrey Kent	Double Billed		255.20
2020	Land	Mary Little	Sold Vehicle		4.40
2020	Land	Mary Little	Sold Vehicle		4.40
2020	Owens	Paula Stephanie	Double Billed		84.32
2020	Rogers	James Wilbur Heirs	Correction		168.31
			<i>Total Real & Personal Releases</i>		\$1,625.49
2020	Andrews	Montrell Tyrone	Duplication		96.53
			<i>Total VTS Refund Requests</i>		\$ 96.53

5. Tax Assessor – Resolution Appointing Review Officers

NC General Statute § 47-30.2 requires the Board of Commissioners in each county, by resolution, to appoint one or more persons experienced in mapping or land records management as Review Officer to review each plat before it is recorded and certify that it meets the statutory requirements for recording. Appointment of Review Officers allows Martin County to insure an expeditious review of all maps and plats as required by NC G. S. § 47-30.2 before they are presented to the Register of Deeds for recording.

Tax Assessor Elisha Hardison recommended the appointment of Elisha Hardison, Joshua Hollis, Paulette Bullock, Erica Davis and Hilton Edmondson to perform all the responsibilities as required for Review Officers. Furthermore, she request the Board of Commissioners officially remove Tracy Moore as she is no longer employed with Martin County. This action can be completed by adoption of the attached resolution.

Through adoption of the attached resolution, the Board of Commissioners was asked to appoint Elisha Hardison, Joshua, Paulette Bullock, Erica Davis and Hilton Edmondson as Review Officers and remove former employee Tracy Moore as Review Officer.

The resolution was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

RESOLUTION APPOINTING REVIEW OFFICERS

WHEREAS, S. L. 1997-309 (Senate Bill 875) makes a number of significant changes in the procedures for recording maps and plats; and

WHEREAS, the NC G.S. 47-30.2 requires the Board of Commissioners in each county, by resolution, to appoint one or more persons experienced in mapping or land records management as Review Officer to review each plat before it is recorded and certify that it meets the statutory requirements for recording; and

WHEREAS, it is the desire of the Martin County Board of Commissioners to insure an expeditious review of all maps and plats as required by NC G. S. 47-30.2 before they are presented to the Register of Deeds for recording.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Martin County Board of Commissioners hereby appoint Elisha Hardison, Tax Assessor, Joshua Hollis, Paulette Bullock, Erica Davis, and Hilton Edmondson to perform all the responsibilities as required for Review Officer.

FURTHERMORE, the Martin County Board of Commissioners hereby removes Tracy Moore. She is no longer employed with Martin County.

AND BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that a copy of this Resolution designating the Review Officers be recorded in the Martin County Register of Deeds Office and indexed in the names of the Review Officers in accordance with NC G. S. 47-30.2, and that this Resolution shall become effective on the date of adoption.

Adopted this the 13th day of July, 2021.

6. Tax Assessor – Request for Records Purge/Destruction

Tax Assessor Elisha Hardison requested permission to shred records in the Tax Assessor’s office in accordance with the Amended Records Retention and Disposition Schedule provided by the NC Department of Cultural Resources dated April 17, 2013.

This request was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

7. Tax Collector’s Report –December 2020

	Category	Dec-20	Dec-20 Y-T-D
Real Property	20	\$2,872,466.42	Report
Personal Property	25	<u>3,413,596.68</u>	Not
Total		\$6,286,063.10	Available
Motor Vehicle	30	<u>39.10</u>	
Total MV		\$39.10	
All Total		\$6,286,102.20	

8. ABC Board Requests Approval to Adopt Martin County’s Travel Policy

NC General Statute states that travel on official business by the members and employees of the local ABC boards shall be reimbursed pursuant to G.S. 138-6 unless the local ABC board adopts a travel policy that conforms to the travel policy of the appointing authority and such policy is approved by the appointing authority...” [NC General Statute 18-B-700 (g)(2)].

The statute requires annual approval by the appointing authority, if the local ABC Board chooses to adopt the appointing authority's travel policy.

The Martin County ABC Board requested approval by the Martin County Board of Commissioners to adopt the Martin County Travel Policy as its own.

This request was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

9. FY 2021-22 Community Services Block Grant Program – Choanoke Area Development Association, Inc.

Choanoke Area Development Association (CADA) of North Carolina, Inc. was designated the Community Action Agency for Martin County in 2016. CADA's Community Action Agency service area includes Bertie, Halifax, Hertford, Martin and Northampton Counties. Also, CADA has been overseeing the NC Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) in Martin and Edgecombe Counties since 2014.

The North Carolina Administrative Code [10A NCAC 97C.0111 (b) (1) (A)] requires each Community Services Block Grant Program (CSBG) grant recipient to submit its Community Anti-Poverty Plan (grant application) to the Board of Commissioners in each of the counties it serves. The grant application is due to the OEO by January 15, 2021.

For FY 2021-22, the grant total amount requested is \$359,038 from the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services for all counties in the CADA service area.

A presentation is not mandatory. The Board of Commissioners was presented a copy of the Draft FY 2021-22 CSBG Program Application for Funding. This was presented to the Board on December 15, 2020.

10. Board Appointments/Reappointments

Airport Commission

The term for Mr. Veo Bunting was set to expire on January 31, 2021.

Chairman Buck Davis recommended the reappointment of Mr. Veo Bunting to the Airport Commission for an additional 4-year term, which would expire January 31, 2025.

The reappointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Transportation Advisory Board

The Martin County Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) shall be composed of the following representatives. One voting representative from each of the following agencies:

- Martin County Department of Social Services (Core Agency)
- Martin Enterprises (Core Agency)
- Martin County Board of Commissioners or its designee
- Martin-Washington-Tyrrell District Health Department (Core Agency)

- Martin County Department of Aging (Core Agency)
- Trillium Health Resources
- One voting representative from the following user groups: Martin County Community Action Head Start, Martin Community College, Martin County Schools, Martin County Emergency Management, consumers and transportation vendors.
- NC Works Career Center
- Church Leader
- Business/Industry

The TAB asked the Board to appoint/reappoint the following TAB members for two-year terms as specified below. Terms would expire January 31, 2023.

Member	Agency	Term	Term Expiration
Cindy Ange	Interim County Manager	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Jody Griffin	Martin Co. Emergency Management	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Lisa Edmonds	Martin Co. Adult and Aging Services	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Judy Jennette	Martin Community College	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Yvonne Knott	Martin Co. DSS	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Frank Halsey	Martin Co. DSS/Transit	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Angela Ellis	Martin Co. DSS Director (Effective Feb. 2021)	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Roy Moore	CADA Representative	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Marinda Brown	Martin Co. Transit	2 yr.	01/31/2023
Dempsey Bond, Jr.	Martin County Commissioners	2 yr.	01/31/2023

The above individuals were APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Board of Equalization and Review

In 2009, Martin County adopted a Resolution appointing a special Board of Equalization and Review to review tax lists and to hear taxpayer appeals. Each year, board members are to be approved and appointed by the County's Board of Commissioners for a one (1) year term.

As per NC General Statute 105-322 (e), Tax Assessor Elisha Hardison would like to start the Board of Equalization and Review this year on Monday, April 12, 2021 and adjourn on Monday April 19, 2021. There will also be a scheduled meeting held on December 6, 2021 to hear any late application appeals and discovery appeals only. Meetings will be held in the Martin County Commissioner's boardroom at 5:00 p.m. The following five (5) Martin County taxpayers have been contacted and agree to serve, if appointed:

1. Jennie Rawls
2. Hugh Kennedy
3. Anita Whitehurst
4. Donald White
5. William Griffin

The Board of Commissioners was asked to appoint the above-listed Board of Equalization and Review members to serve for the 2021 tax year.

Furthermore, it was Tax Assessor Elisha Hardison's recommendation to appoint Hugh Kennedy to serve as chairman and Donald White serve as vice-chairman for the 2021 tax year.

The above individuals were APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Martin County Council on Aging

The Martin County Council on Aging Board has a vacancy due to the Commissioner term ending for Mr. Elmo "Butch" Lilley. Chairman Ronnie Smith recommends the appointment of Commissioner David "Skip" Gurganus to serve on the Martin County Council on Aging Board for an on-going term.

Staff requested the approval of the appointment of Commissioner Gurganus.

The above appointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Economic Development Corporation

Chairman Ronnie Smith has recommended the appointment of Commissioner David "Skip" Gurganus to the Economic Development Board. The would be to fulfill the unexpired term of previous Commissioner Lilley. This term would expire June 30, 2022.

Staff recommended the approval of the appointment of Commissioner Gurganus.

The above appointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Home & Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee

Chairman Ronnie Smith has recommended the appointment of Commissioner David "Skip" Gurganus to the Home & Community Care Block Grant Advisory Committee. The would be to fulfill the unexpired term of previous Commissioner Lilley. This term would expire June 30, 2021.

Staff recommended the approval of the appointment of Commissioner Gurganus.

The above appointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Tourism Development Authority Board

Chairman Ronnie Smith has recommended the appointment of Commissioner David "Skip" Gurganus to the Tourism Development Authority Board. This would be to fulfill the unexpired term of previous Commissioner Lilley. This term would expire June 30, 2021.

Staff recommended the approval of the appointment of Commissioner Gurganus.

The above appointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Martin County Women's Council

Chairman Ronnie Smith recommended the appointment of Commissioner Emily Biggs to the Martin County Women's Council to fill the unexpired term of former Commissioner Bowen. The term would expire June 30, 2022.

The Board was asked to approve the appointment of Ms. Biggs to the Women's Council.

The above appointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Martin County Social Services Board

Chairman Ronnie Smith recommended the appointment of Commissioner Emily Biggs to the Martin County Social Services Board to fill the unexpired term of former Commissioner Bowen. The term would expire June 30, 2022.

The Board was asked to approve the appointment of Ms. Biggs to the Social Services Board.

The above appointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

Martin Community College Board of Trustees

Chairman Ronnie Smith recommended the appointment of Commissioner Emily Biggs to the Martin Community College Board of Trustees.

This appointment would fill the unexpired term of former Commissioner Bowen, and would expire June 30, 2021.

The Board was asked to approve the appointment of Commissioner Biggs to the Martin Community College Board of Trustees. This appointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

MCRWASA

Chairman Ronnie Smith recommended the appointment of Commissioner Dempsey Bond, Jr. to the Martin County Regional Water and Sewer Authority as the Alternate Delegate for Martin County.

This appointment would fill the unexpired term of former Commissioner Bowen, and would expire November 30, 2022.

The Board was asked to approve the appointment of Commissioner Bond as the alternate on the Martin County Regional Water and Sewer Authority. The appointment was APPROVED as part of the consent agenda.

11. Clerk Report included for informational purposes.

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEE(S) -- None

PRESENTATIONS

COVID-19 Update

MTW Health Director Wes Gray was present via Cisco Webex to provide the monthly COVID-19 update to the Board of Commissioners. Director Gray provided the total number of cases, deaths, and recoveries for North Carolina, in the United States, and globally. Next, Director Gray reported the total positive cases, recoveries, deaths, and active cases in the MTW District.

Director Gray then showed a county map by number of cases and a line graph of total case county by county in the MTW district. Next, Director Gray provided a testing update for North Carolina and in the counties of the MTW district.

Director Gray discussed two ongoing outbreaks in the district: Roanoke River Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Martin County and Roanoke Landing Nursing and Rehabilitation Center in Washington County. Director Gray also briefly listed the closest schools and childcare centers with active outbreaks. Director Gray went on to review the COVID-19 demographics and mortality Martin County, and discussed the NC Metrics and the NC County Alert System.

Next, Director Gray discussed the current COVID-19 vaccination plan. MTW was following the state guidelines. The district was currently in phase 1a, which included health care workers and long-term care staff and residents. Phase 1b included adults 75 and older and frontline essential workers. Phase two included adults at high risk for exposure and at increased risk for severe illness. Phase three included students, and phase 4 included everyone who wanted a safe and effective COVID-19 vaccination.

The CDC recommended opening up vaccinations to anyone 65 and older recently. Health Departments in NC were still following state guidelines. There was still a very limited supply of vaccine, with 200-300 doses per week being received in Martin County. MTW was registering citizens to receive the vaccines as they become available. All vaccines were being given to the 1a and 1b groups, with some gaps being filled by group 2 citizens when possible.

Director Gray reported drive thru testing would continue at the two sites in Martin County through the end of January 2021. The current focus was to shift the Health Department operations to vaccinations, encouraging citizens to utilize the drive thru testing sites for COVID testing.

Commissioner Joe Ayers asked about the vaccines being given to the 1a and 1b group, stating many EMT/Firefighters had not been properly notified about vaccinations. Commissioner Ayers stated many workers had been on many calls transporting COVID positive patients. Commissioner Ayers stated “we need to bump these people on up”, and asked what the Health Department would do to rectify this situation and get the EMS/Firefighters vaccinated. Director Gray stated he had worked with Michael Bryant and had reached out to the various Fire Departments throughout the county. Some fire stations only had one email address to send the registration links. Director Gray stated health department staff would reach out to those stations by phone to get their workers registered for the vaccine.

With no further questions or comments, Vice Chairman thanked Director Gray for the update.

Audit Presentation

Ms. Madonna Stafford with Carr, Riggs & Ingram was present via Webex. Ms. Stafford served as the partner in the charge of the County's audit this year since Chris Burton retired in October 2020. Ms. Stafford presented the results of the County's June 30, 2020 audit. Ms. Stafford stated Carr, Riggs & Ingram issued an unqualified opinion this year on the financial statements, which basically meant staff found nothing materially wrong. In addition, staff performed single audit testing over two major Federal programs, which were Medical Assistance and Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) programs and also two major state programs, which were the NC E-911 project funds and NC Housing Finance Agency grant funds (Essential Single Family Rehabilitation Loan) this year. Staff found no material noncompliance or any questioned costs on any of these programs that we were required to report or investigate further. All four programs met the compliance requirements and grant agreement requirements without any deficiencies noted.

Next, Ms. Stafford pointed out a few financial highlights to recap the year. Net position for the County in total for both governmental and business-type activities increased approximately \$1,733,000 and ended the year at \$24,907,040. This information could be found on Exhibit 2 (page 32) of the audit report. Also of importance was the General Fund balance, which increased approximately \$377,000 for the year. This information could be found on Exhibit 4 (page 35) of the audit report. Since the General Fund is the primary operating fund of the County, Ms. Stafford stated it was also important to look at the ratio of available fund balance to total expenditures since this was closely monitored by the LGC. The unassigned fund balance at year end was \$8,010,686 and represented 26.8% of General Fund expenditures. The County's fund balance policy requires available fund balance to be at least 20% of budgeted expenditures for the year. Ms. Stafford stated the County was in good shape with this ratio and continued to make progress in building reserves.

Ms. Stafford continued, stating business-type activities net position overall increased approximately \$55,000 for the year between water districts #1 and #2. This information could be found on Exhibit 8 (page 39) of the audit report. The increase was primarily due to a grant received from the NC Water Infrastructure Grant for a capital project in Water District #1. The 2020 results were a little bit better than previous years, but Ms. Stafford wanted to point out that both of the Water Districts were still losing money every year and were not financially independent. This was an ongoing problem that the Commissioners were all well aware of and had been discussed for years, but Ms. Stafford wanted to point it out again this year to keep in the forefront of staff's minds. The LGC does monitor these proprietary funds closely and may contact the county for more information.

Ms. Stafford stated other than that, staff did not note any other concerns or internal control deficiencies for the year. Ms. Stafford reported the audit ran very smooth this year despite many hurdles caused by the pandemic and government shutdowns. Ms. Stafford thanked Ms. Cindy Ange and the Finance office staff, and DSS for their help during the process.

Chairman Smith expressed thanks to everyone involved during the audit process, stating it was not easy to find auditors throughout the state. He further stated he hoped to continue with this partnership for years to come.

Vice Chairman Bond expressed thanks to Ms. Ange and the Finance department for their hard work. Commissioner Ayers echoed Vice Chairman Bond's remarks. Ms. Ange expressed thanks to Carr, Riggs & Ingram for their hard work.

Update on Child Support Collection Services – Young Williams

Ms. Tammy Pearson from YoungWilliams was available via Webex to provide an update on the Child Support Collections office in Martin County. Ms. Pearson provided some information about YoungWilliams, including their mission and history.

Ms. Pearson highlighted several graphs related to several performance areas. Those performance areas discussed included collections, cases under order, paternity, current support, and arrears. Next, Ms. Pearson shared a graph showing the current caseload for the Martin County office (total cases – 1908). The next graph Ms. Pearson showed discussed self-assessment standards for Martin County.

Ms. Pearson then discussed performance improvement measures, including monthly data analysis, individual performance reviews, special projects, and ongoing and target training. Next, Ms. Pearson showed several pictures of the child support office and workspace, and invited the Commissioners to go see the office in person.

Ms. Pearson stated there was a virtual state conference held this year, and during that conference, Martin County received three awards (Outstanding Achievement and Overall Improvement of Self-Assessment Measures – second out of all 100 counties, Outstanding Achievement and Overall Improvement of Incentive Measures – third out of all 100 counties, and Largest Increase in Establishment Self-Assessment –highest in the state).

Vice Chairman Bond thanked Ms. Pearson for her presentation.

Agricultural Report – Lance Grimes, Extension Agent

Martin County Extension Agent Lance Grimes was present via Webex to provide an update and agricultural report for Martin County.

Mr. Grimes began his presentation with reviewing Martin County data, including total acres in the county, the number of harvested cropland acres, number of farm operators and other tenants, tract owners (farmland), and the average age of farmers. Next, Mr. Grimes highlighted several main crops, total cash receipts and total acreage from 2018, 2019, and 2020.

Mr. Grimes then highlighted his main responsibilities, which included tobacco, peanuts, cotton, grains, and pesticide education (including education on pesticide disposal and recycling). Mr. Grimes stated he collected soil, plant tissue and nematode samples in crop fields, helped farmers navigate many different types of weather, peanut pod blasting, and pesticide recertification. In addition, Mr. Grimes was responsible for production meetings and on-farm testing.

Mr. Grimes discussed the 2020 crop year, noting a cool and wet spring with a late start, with a dry period during July and August 2020. Mr. Grimes highlighted the average yields for cotton, tobacco, peanuts, soybeans, corn, and wheat. Mr. Grimes provided an outlook for 2021 and things to expect. This included production meetings, on-farm tests (cotton, corn, soybean), and on-farm visits. He then discussed the importance of county agriculture as it related to land rent, employers, seed/chemical/fertilizer companies, and agricultural dealers/machine shops.

Mr. Grimes expressed his thanks to the County for their partnership with Cooperative Extension.

Vice Chairman Bond thanked Mr. Grimes for his work and appreciation for the programs and workshops made available for the farmers in Martin County.

OLD BUSINESS -- None

NEW BUSINESS

Broadband Incentive RFP Update

Martin County EDC President Jason Semple was available to summarize the broadband incentive progress. President Semple stated back in October of 2020, after identifying many unserved areas in Martin County, an RFP was issued as an incentive to any internet service provider that would go in to provide service to those unserved areas. The deadline for that RFP was November 20, 2020. Only one response was received, which was from Cloudwyze. After that, according to the RFP, the county had 60 days to enter into a contract or agreement, but that had not happened yet.

President Semple stated Cloudwyze was not ready to define the scope of the project yet, and were still working to get the funds worked out to carry out the project (as outlined in the materials presented to the Commissioners). President Semple stated the 60 days would expire on January 19, 2021. At that time, county staff could re-group, or issue an RFP again. County Attorney Nate James had been working closely with staff to review information and contracts.

President Semple stated Chairman Smith had mentioned having some workshops to regroup and continue to work on this issue. President Semple acknowledged the importance of the issue of broadband in the community, and wanted to make sure the Board and the public were aware of the status of this project.

Chairman Smith thanked President Semple on keeping the Commissioners informed. Chairman Smith did acknowledge a work session with the Commissioners might be needed to brainstorm, finding a way to best address the broadband needs in Martin County.

Commissioner Ayers asked if there were any other companies anywhere that were interested, and whether there would be any other options. President Semple stated there were other possibilities, but it was hard to tell if those would turn into any viable options. President Semple explained there was a reason the unserved areas already did not have internet and it was hard to create a business proposal for the internet providers. There was one provider that would potentially be able to help with the western part of the county. It was about fiber and being able to get the fiber spread throughout the county. Commissioner Ayers stated it was a huge challenge to get private companies to rural areas. He stated there was a line of fiber that was laid down in the western part of the county but it did not get used as planned.

Chairman Smith echoed Commissioner Ayers' comments, agreeing that it was important for the Board to have a work session to explore any other options for broadband service. Chairman Smith stated there were ways of supporting providers in this area.

Commissioner Gurganus discussed the challenges that came along with trying to get broadband service in rural areas. He spoke of his personal efforts in doing research regarding broadband availability in Martin County. Commissioner Biggs stated being able to expand access to

broadband would be greatly beneficial, especially for students in Martin County. Commissioner Gurganus stated it would take lots of work, data and information to get support behind the broadband expansion effort. Commissioner Smith felt the Board could work together to come up with ideas to help expand broadband access for the citizens of Martin County.

Consideration of Resolution in Support of NCACC Presidential Initiative to Promote Food System Resiliency

Vice Chairman Bond asked Clerk Godard to read the proposed resolution aloud.

RESOLUTION in Support of NCACC Presidential Initiative to Promote Food System Resiliency

WHEREAS, access to food is a basic human need and is vital to the well-being of a community;

WHEREAS, all 100 North Carolina counties are committed to ensuring the needs of their citizens are met;

WHEREAS, food security, defined as reliable access to quality, affordable food, is vital to a thriving community and food insecurity threatens the fabric of a healthy society.

WHEREAS, According to Feeding America's annual Map the Meal Gap study, conducted to improve our understanding of food insecurity and food costs at the local level, the average food insecurity rate across North Carolina's counties is 14 percent. And Feeding America projects that the rate will rise to 19.3 percent due to the pandemic.

WHEREAS, Martin County has a food insecurity rate of 26 percent;

WHEREAS, the current pandemic is only further exacerbating the issue of food insecurity and families are facing difficult decisions about how to make ends meet, including whether they can afford the food they need;

WHEREAS, it is projected that the food insecurity rate in North Carolina will rise to 19.3 percent due to the pandemic and the child food insecurity rate is projected to rise from 19.3 percent to 28.6 percent;

WHEREAS, according to state officials, agriculture and agribusiness account for 17% of all jobs in the state and an annual economic impact of \$91.8 billion and is a vital aspect of the economy in North Carolina;

WHEREAS, county commissioners have a responsibility to ensure the basic needs of our citizens are met;

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC), under the direction of President Ronnie Smith will be leading a task force to address food system resiliency to help counties take actions to ensure the resources we have are getting to the people in need;

WHEREAS, the NCACC Task Force will be meeting to examine the various issues that go into creating and sustaining a resilient food system for our residents;

WHEREAS, by supporting our farmers, supply chains, agribusiness, food industry, and hungry families, we can build resilient communities.

NOW, THEREFORE, LET IT BE RESOLVED, THAT THE Board of Martin County Commissioners, do hereby resolve to support the work of the NCACC task force and will commit to examining the food system in Martin County and take steps to help strengthen the system in the service of sustaining a thriving community.

Adopted this 13th day of January, 2021.

Chairman Smith stated he was blessed with a vision early on in the pandemic regarding food system resiliency. The resolution was being approved across the state of North Carolina. Chairman Smith stated the issue had always been an issue, not only with access to food but to healthy food. Chairman Smith stated many programs were available to assist citizens with food. Chairman Smith reported the support for this program from many elected officials. Chairman Smith reported the high unemployment and underemployment numbers related to the current pandemic. He further reported that 40% of people utilizing food banks had never done so before. The program was to make sure that everyone had access to healthy and nutritious food.

Commissioner Gurganus made a MOTION to approve the Resolution in Support of NCACC Presidential Initiative to Promote Food System Resiliency, with a SECOND from Commissioner Biggs. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously via roll call vote.

Consideration of Amendment to Rules of Procedures – Remote Participation in Closed Session

The Martin County Rules of Procedures was adopted by the Board of Commissioners on May 11, 2011 and amended on October 12, 2016. The 2016 amendment dealt with remote participation, namely (1) establishment of a quorum and (2) casting votes.

On March 27, 2020, NC Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order No. 121, which directed people to stay home except to visit essential businesses, to exercise outdoors, or to help a family member. Specifically, the order banned gatherings of more than 10 people and directed everyone to physically stay at least six feet apart from others.

The Office of NC Attorney General Josh Stein certified that local governments have the authority to hold remote meetings in a memo dated March 26, 2020 (attached).

Session Law 2020-3, which took effect May 4, 2020, provided additional guidelines for local governments and others in regards to “remote”, public meetings. Section 4.31 of Session Law 2020-3 addresses electronic meetings held during a State of Emergency declared by the Governor or General Assembly. “Remote meetings” are permitted as long as there is a State of Emergency.

The new law (G.S. 166A-19.24), allows public bodies to meet in closed session as authorized in GS 143-318.11, and makes it clear that a public body is not required to provide access to the remote meeting while it is in closed session. The public body must comply with all of the requirements in the new law and the open meetings law.

The Martin County Board of Commissioners amended the Rules of Procedures on June 10, 2020 to allow for a quorum and closed session in remote meetings during a County-issued State of Emergency.

The resolution would amend the Rules of Procedures to allow for the remote participation in a Closed Session during a County or Statewide State of Emergency.

Chairman Smith stated it was definitely needed during these times. The pandemic had opened doors for opportunities to change the way things were done during emergencies.

Commissioner Smith made a MOTION to adopt the resolution amending the Rules of Procedure, with a SECOND from Commissioner Biggs. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously via roll call vote.

RESOLUTION
AMENDING RULES OF PROCEDURES

WHEREAS, the Martin County Board of Commissioners has the power to adopt its own Rules of Procedure and has in fact adopted (May 11, 2011) and amended (October 12, 2016, June 10, 2020) and operated under rules based upon Roberts' Rules of Order; and

WHEREAS, Roberts' Rules (10th Edition) states "the Bylaws may authorize a Board or Committee to meet by video conference or teleconference, If they do, such meeting must be conducted by a technology that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time. The opportunity for simultaneous communication is central to the deliberative character of the meeting, and is what distinguishes it from attempts to do business by postal or electronic mail or by fax. It is advisable to adopt special rules of order and standing rules, as appropriate, to specify precisely how recognition is to be sought and that the floor obtained during videoconferences and teleconferences."; and

WHEREAS, the Martin County Board of Commissioners desires its Rules of Procedure to specifically permit regular, special and emergency Board meetings to take place electronically or telephonically to accommodate Board members who cannot attend a meeting due to circumstances beyond their control; and

WHEREAS, the Martin County Board of Commissioners desires its Rules of Procedure to allow remote participation in both open and closed session whenever there is a County or Statewide State of Emergency that makes in-person meeting inadvisable.

NOW, THEREFORE, based upon the foregoing the Martin County Board of Commissioners amends its Rules of Order as follows:

1. The Board affirms the use of Roberts' Rules of Order as the basis for the Rules of Procedure which govern regular, special and emergency meetings of the Martin County Board of Commissioners.
2. Further, the Board amends its existing Rules of Procedure to adopt, authorize and permit the use of telephone and/or video conference technology to accommodate the needs of members who cannot attend meetings due to circumstances beyond their control. Such telephone and/or video conference technology shall only be permitted at meetings where a means of technology is available that allows all persons participating to hear each other at the same time, thereby offering the opportunity for simultaneous communication and deliberation.

3. Board Members participating electronically via videoconference or telephone will address the Board Chair when seeking to obtain the floor and shall wait until the Board Chair recognizes them before asserting control of the floor.
4. General discussion among Board members present and those connected electronically via telephone and/or video conference technology shall be of an informal nature as if the remote Board member was present.
5. A Board member participating by telephone and/or video conference technology means shall be counted for voting purposes but not for purposes of establishing a quorum, unless the County or State is under a State of Emergency that makes an in-person meeting unadvisable. A voice vote by telephone, which can be heard and recorded, shall satisfy the basic voting requirements; in cases of written ballots, a fax, email or text messages shall be considered as a written ballot; electronics signatures (generally now accepted as binding in other circumstances) shall be accepted.
6. A Board member participating by telephone and/or video conference technology means shall explicitly notify the board when the remote participant will be leaving the meeting or rejoining the meeting by terminating or restarting the electronic connection, and will not be considered present if the connection is lost unintentionally, due to technical problems.
7. A Board member participating by telephone and/or video conference technology means shall not participate in closed sessions or quasi-judicial hearings discussions, unless the County or State is under a State of Emergency that makes an in-person meeting unadvisable. Any Board Member participating in a closed session remotely shall ensure they are in a private room with no other unauthorized person. Further, they shall take all reasonable measures to ensure that any confidential information is not disclosed to an unauthorized person.

Adopted this is the 13th day of January 2021.

Budget Amendment(s)

Budget Amendment #17

The horse trail project included the construction of trailhead facilities via upgrades to the USDA-Agricultural Service Center and Public Works Maintenance facility and parking areas. Approximately 3-5 miles of new equine trails would be constructed beginning at this trailhead and connecting to the Martin Community College Equine facilities. The addition of a cross-country training field was planned to offer additional equine exercise opportunities.

Martin County received a \$10,000 grant from the NC Horse Council. This funding would be used to help complete lighting, handicap accessibility to restrooms, water troughs, and water spigots.

Staff recommended approval of Budget Amendment #17.

Commissioner Ayers made a MOTION to approve Budget Amendment #17, with a SECOND from Chairman Smith. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously via roll call vote.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-17

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Martin County, North Carolina, that the following amendments be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

Section 1. To amend the Program Grant Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows.

	Increase	Decrease
Construction	\$ 10,000	

This will result in an increase of \$10,000 in the expenditures of General Fund.. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

Horse Council Grant	\$ 10,000	
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Section 2. Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board and to the Finance Officer for their direction.

Budget Amendment #18

The NC State Board of Elections received a \$2,284,800 grant from the Center for Tech and Civic Life (CTCL) for one-stop worker bonus pay for the November election. Each County submitted their data and the funds were divided by days and number of workers.

Martin County Board of Elections received an approximately \$4,343 grant through this process. These funds would provide a \$19.56 per day bonus to one-stop poll workers in the November election.

The staff recommended approval of Budget Amendment #18.

Commissioner Biggs made a MOTION to approve Budget Amendment #18, with a SECOND from Commissioner Gurganus. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously via roll call vote.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-18

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Martin County, North Carolina, that the following amendments be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows.

	Increase	Decrease
General Government		

Elections \$ 4,343

This will result in an increase of \$4,343 in the expenditures of the General Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

Restricted Revenue \$ 4,343

Section 2. Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board and to the Finance Officer for their direction.

Budget Amendment #19 – Tabled until a later date

Budget Amendment #20

The Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act was signed into law on March 27, 2020. This law directed \$150 billion to states and territories via the Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF) to be used for expenses related to addressing the COVID-19 pandemic. NC received a total of \$4.066 billion, but approximately \$481M went directly to local governments with populations greater than 500,000.

Session Law 2020-4 placed \$300 million in a local government CRF reserve fund and appropriated \$150 million of those funds to be distributed to counties across NC who were not eligible for direct funding. The allocation percentages are determined in S.L. 2020-4. The allocation includes:

- Base allocation of \$250,000, and
- Additional pro-rata allocation based on county population according to 2019 Vintage Year Census Bureau estimates (leaving out Guilford, Mecklenburg, and Wake as they received funds directly from U.S. Treasury).

Martin County received \$615,106 on May 26, 2020. The county submitted a spending plan to the state on May 27, 2020. The state is now asking for FEMA dollars be used before the CARES funds are used. The state will provide the match for the FEMA dollars.

Session Law 2020-80 appropriated the remaining \$150 million. Martin County is allocated an additional \$435,514.

Eligible spending must be directly related to expenditures incurred to address the COVID-19 pandemic. The funds must be used for expenditures incurred between March 1, 2020 and December 30, 2020. Money from the Coronavirus Relief Fund cannot be used for revenue replacement purposes. The broad categories of eligible funding include:

- Medical expenses including the COVID-19 related expenses of public hospitals and clinics, establishment of temporary medical facilities, COVID-19 testing, and public telemedicine capabilities.
- Public health expenses such as the acquisition of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies, disinfection of public areas and other facilities such as nursing homes, and expenses for public safety measures, including expenses for quarantining.

- Payroll expenses for public safety or healthcare employees and other employees whose services are substantially dedicated to responding to the COVID-19 emergency.
- Expenses of actions that facilitate compliance with COVID-19 related public health measures such as teleworking, distance learning, food delivery paid sick and family and medical leave for public employees, expenses for maintaining prisons, and expenses for protecting the homeless population.
- Expenses associated with the provision of economic support in connection with the COVID-19 public health emergency.

Interest earned on CARES funds are required to also be spent these COVID-19 specific categories. Budget amendment #20 appropriates the interest earned.

The staff recommended approval of Budget Amendment #20.

Commissioner Ayers made a MOTION to approve Budget Amendment #20, with a SECOND from Commissioner Gurganus. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously via roll call vote.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-20

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Martin County, North Carolina, that the following amendments be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

Section 1. To amend the Coronavirus Relief Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows.

	Increase	Decrease
Public Safety		
Coronavirus Relief Fund	\$ 110	

This will result in an increase of \$150 in the expenditures of the General Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

Investment Earnings	\$ 110
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Section 2. Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board and to the Finance Officer for their direction.

Budget Amendment #21

The NC General Assembly passed Session Law 2020-4, the 2020 COVID-19 Recovery Act, which appropriated federal CARES Act funding to include \$8.3 million allocated to county DSS agencies to support additional Adult Protective Services/Child Protective Services. These funds are made available through December 30, 2020.

Martin County DSS has received \$33,589 of CARES funds for the CPS/APS and foster care programs. These funds can be used to medical and protective supplies, to improve teleworking capabilities, and expenses related to distance learning.

The staff recommended approval of Budget Amendment #21.

Chairman Smith made a MOTION to approve Budget Amendment #21, with a SECOND from Commissioner Biggs. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously via a roll call vote.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-21

BE IT ORDAINED by the Board of Commissioners of Martin County, North Carolina, that the following amendments be made to the annual budget ordinance for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2021.

Section 1. To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows.

	Increase	Decrease
Human Services		
Social Services	\$ 33,589	

This will result in an increase of \$33,289 in the expenditures of the General Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

Restricted Intergovernmental	\$ 33,589
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Section 2. Copies of this budget amendment shall be furnished to the Clerk to the Governing Board and to the Finance Officer for their direction.

BOARD REPORTS / COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Chairman Smith spoke about the legislative goals process that was ongoing. Chairman Smith stated this was a very important process in regards to advocating for Counties. He encouraged each Commissioner to follow along in the process and be aware of what the legislative goals were.

ADJOURNMENT

With no further business to discuss, Commissioner Gurganus made a MOTION to adjourn the meeting, with a SECOND from Commissioner Biggs. Chairman Smith adjourned the meeting at 8:46 p.m. The next regular meeting would be held on Wednesday, February 10, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. in the Commissioners Boardroom.

Ronnie Smith, Chairman

Jessica Godard, Clerk to the Board