

December 5, 2022

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in Regular Session on Monday, December 5, 2022 at 7:00 p.m. in the Martin County Governmental Center, Commissioners' Boardroom at 305 East Main Street, Williamston, North Carolina.

ASSEMBLY

Those in attendance in person: Chairman Ronnie Smith, Vice Chairman Dempsey Bond, Jr., Commissioner Joe R. Ayers, Commissioner Emily Biggs, and Commissioner David "Skip" Gurganus. County Manager U. James Bennett, Clerk to the Board Julia S. Rease, County Attorney Benjamin Eisner, and Finance Officer Cindy Ange were in attendance.

Present via Cisco Webex: None

Others in attendance: Bear Grass Mayor Charlotte Griffin

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

Chairman Smith sent a welcome to all attending the meeting. Chairman Smith stated Item #9. New Road Name Request - Thurman Griffin Road under the Consent Agenda was not regarding change to Thurman Griffin Road. Chairman Smith explained that Thurman Griffin Road was used a reference point for the new road that needed a name, which was announced as Gurkin Farm Lane.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Commissioner Gurganus made a **Motion** to approve the agenda with the amendment to item #9 of the Consent Agenda, with a **Second** by Commissioner Ayers. The motion was **Carried** unanimously.

SWEARING-IN CEREMONY

Honorable Chief District Court Judge Regina Parker administered the oath of office to Commissioner Ronnie Smith and Commissioner Joe R. Ayers. Each Commissioner would serve a four-year term.

BOARD REORGANIZATION

Election of Chairman

County Manager Bennett called for nominations for the Board Chair. Commissioner Biggs nominated Commissioner Ronnie Smith.

Commissioner Bond Jr. made a **Motion** to nominate Commissioner Ronnie Smith for Chairman with a **Second** by Commissioner Biggs. The Motion was Carried (3-2). **Yays:** Commissioner Bond Jr., Commissioner Biggs, and Commissioner Smith. **Nays:** Commissioner Ayers and Commissioner Gurganus

Election of Vice Chairman

County Manager Bennett turned the meeting over to Chairman Smith who called for Vice Chairman nominations. Commissioner Biggs nominated Commissioner Bond Jr. for the position of Vice Chairman. Commissioner Gurganus nominated Commissioner Ayers for the position of Vice Chairman.

Chairman Smith stated each nomination would be voted on. Chairman Smith stated another nomination and Second for Commissioner Bond Jr was needed. Commissioner Biggs nominated Commissioner Bond Jr. with a **Second** by Commissioner Bond Jr. Chairman Smith asked who all was in favor, then asked if this could be shown by raise of hands. **Those in favor:** Chairman Smith, Commissioner Biggs, and Commissioner Bond Jr. **Those not in favor:** Commissioner Gurganus and Commissioner Ayers. Vote was **Carried** (3-2).

Chairman Smith then asked for a second regarding the Vice Chairman nomination for Commissioner Ayers made by Commissioner Gurganus. Commissioner Ayers **Seconded** the nomination made by Commissioner Gurganus. Chairman Smith asked who was in favor of the nomination by show of hands. **Those in favor:** Commissioner Gurganus and Commissioner Ayers. **Those not in favor:** Chairman Smith, Commissioner Biggs, and Commissioner Bond Jr. Vote was not Carried (2-3).

Chairman Smith announced Commissioner Bond Jr. was Vice Chair.

Appointment of Clerk to the Board

Commissioner Biggs made the **Motion** to nominate Julia Rease as Clerk to the Board, with a **Second** by Commissioner Ayers. Motion was **Carried** unanimously (5-0).

Appointment of County Attorney

Commissioner Biggs made the **Motion** to appoint Attorney Benjamin Eisner as the County Attorney, with a **Second** by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was **Carried** unanimously (5-0).

Approval of 2023 Meeting Schedule

Commissioner Gurganus made the **Motion** to approve the 2023 Martin County Commissioners' meeting schedule as shown below, with a **Second** from Commissioner Ayers. The motion was **Carried** unanimously (5-0).

MARTIN COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS' 2023 MEETING SCHEDULE			
Date of Meeting	Time	Type Meeting	Date Backup Needed Due by 12:00 Noon
January 11, 2023	7 p.m.	Regular Meeting	January 4, 2023
February 8, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	February 1, 2023
March 8, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	March 1, 2023
March 15, 2023	7p.m.	Departmental Budget Presentations	
March 16, 2023	7p.m.	Departmental Budget Presentations (if needed)	
March 22, 2023	7 p.m.	Agency Budget Presentations/Budget Workshop	March 15, 2023
April 12, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	April 5, 2023
April 26, 2023 (Tentative)		Joint Budget Meeting with Board of Education	
May 10, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	May 3, 2023
To Be Announced		Budget Workshop (s) (After Receipt of Bd of Ed Budget)	
June 14, 2023	7p.m.	Budget Public Hearing	
June 14, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	June 7, 2023
June 14, 2023	7p.m.	Adopt Budget	
June 28, 2023	7p.m.	Year End Budget Ordinance Amendments	If Needed
July 12, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	July 5, 2023
August 9, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	August 2, 2023
September 13, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	September 6, 2023
October 11, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	October 11, 2023
November 8, 2023	7p.m.	Regular Meeting	November 1, 2023
December 13, 2023	9a.m.	Regular Meeting	December 6, 2023

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Smith stated there was a public comment listed, invited anyone to sign up to make a public comment if they desired, and called upon the individuals listed on the public comment sheet.

Crisp Road Property Development

Ms. Stephanie Butler made a public comment on the behalf of numerous neighbors that were also present in the meeting. Ms. Butler stated her public comment was in regards to a property development on Crisp Road in Robersonville, NC. Ms. Butler stated several weeks ago, a 4 acre tract of property was purchased by an LLC for mobile home use. Ms. Butler explained the LLC planned to place 8-10 mobile homes on the property. Ms. Butler stated the neighborhood was quiet and there was concern that a mobile home park could bring. Such concerns were regarding possible increase in crime, noise, and traffic. Ms. Butler reported Martin County did not have current Zoning Ordinances, but did have a Comprehensive Land Use Plan. Ms. Butler explained that the plan recommended what future land use should look like and included maps. Ms. Butler asked the Board if she could pass out the maps from the Comprehensive Land Use Plan that included Crisp Road and the property being developed. Ms. Butler stated the plan listed Crisp Road as agriculture mix use and conservation usage, but did not state mobile home use. Ms. Butler recommended that the Board could implement zoning and acknowledged the other concerned homeowners in the audience.

Chairman Smith asked if the road was in city limits of Robersonville and Ms. Butler stated the neighborhood was 2 miles outside of the city limits. Chairman Smith stated the neighborhood would not be listed in the Robersonville Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) Zone and Ms. Butler agreed that this was correct.

Neighbors in the audience asked if the Clerk could send alerts to them about any updates or future meetings regarding this matter. Chairman Smith stated the Clerk could contact Ms. Butler as a representative of the group and she could inform them. The neighbors were satisfied with this outcome.

Dog Hunting on Property

Mr. Dennis Cannon on Canon Road in Robersonville stated he was having issues with a hunting club “running” their dogs on his property. Mr. Cannon was supported by Mr. Jeffrey Grubbs of Canon Road who spoke at previous meetings regarding the same issue. Mr. Cannon stated he hunts in his stand and a hunting club releases their hunting dogs on his property. Mr. Cannon stated that this issues causes the game to run away, preventing him from hunting. Mr. Canon stated that his property was near Everson Road and the hunting club did not have any hunting property in that area.

Chairman Smith stated that Mr. Cannon would be contacted and County Manager Bennett listed efforts that were made to help Mr. Grubbs.

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Gurganus made the **Motion** to Approve the Consent Agenda with the amendment to #9 New Road Name Request, with a **Second** by Commissioners Biggs. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

1. **Minutes** - September 21, 2022 Closed Session
 October 12, 2022 Regular & Closed Sessions
 November 21, 2022 Regular Session
2. **Financial Report** for November 2022 included for informational purposes.
4. **Tax Assessor – Tax Refund Requests – November 2022 – NONE**
5. **Tax Assessor – Tax Relief Orders – November 2022 – None**

Year Levy	Lname	Fname	Reason	Value	Total
<i>Real and Personal Releases</i>					
2022	-----	Biomerieux	Error in Listing	\$1,516	\$13.51
2020	Cumbee	Delmas B Jr.	Out of County	\$14,746	\$129.02
2021	Cumbee	Delmas B Jr.	Out of County	\$14,156	\$123.86
2022	Cumbee	Delmas B Jr.	Out of County	\$14,156	\$123.86
2020	Griffin	Marquel Luweat	Sold Vehicle	\$10,184	\$90.74
2021	Griffin	Marquel Luweat	Sold Vehicle	\$9,777	\$162.39
2022	Griffin	Marque Luweat	Sold Vehicle	\$9,777	\$162.39
2022	Repair Service	Rawls Tractor &	Clerk Error	\$0.00	\$63.29
2022	Stalls	James Jeffrey	Error in Listing	\$609.00	\$5.01
2022	Taylor	Holden Chase	Sold Vehicle	\$18,500	\$181.12
Total Real & Personal Releases					\$1,055.19
<i>VTS Refund Requests</i>					
-----	-----	-----	-----	\$0.00	\$0.00
Total VTS Refunds					\$ 0.00
Total Tax Relief Orders					\$1,055.19

6. Tax Collector's Report – November 2022

	Category	November	11-21 Y-T-D
Real Property	20	\$9,606.70	\$49,623.10
Personal Property	25	\$168.17	\$7,001.09
Total		<u>\$9,774.87</u>	<u>\$56,624.19</u>
Motor Vehicle	30	\$0.00	\$78.66
Total MV		<u>\$0.00</u>	<u>\$78.66</u>
All Total		<u>\$9,774.87</u>	<u>\$56,702.85</u>

7. Southern Albemarle Association Executive Committee

The Southern Albemarle Association submitted listings for the 2022 Executive Committee listing, Past Martin County SAA Presidents, as well as a projects for calendar year 2023.

2022 SAA Executive Committee

- Carolyn Harrell - Vice President
- Charlotte Griffin - Roads and Bridges
- Beulah Bennett - Airports
- Milton Bennett - Ferries and Waterways
- Lula Council - Publicity
- Janie Grady - Finance
- Jerry Harrell - Roadsides and Parks
- Don Grady - Ferries and Waterways
- Tonya Leggett - History
- Joe Ayers - Airports
- Chase Conner - Rules

Past SAA Presidents from Martin County:

- Charlotte Griffin Bowen
- Dempsey Bond
- Carolyn Harrell

2023 Transportation Projects List- Martin County, North Carolina Southern Albemarle Association

- US Hwy 1-87 construction along existing US Hwy 64 corridor from Raleigh to Rocky Mount to Williamston to Elizabeth City into Hampton Roads-Norfolk, Virginia area.
- Hwy 17 construction of four lanes from Beaufort County to the existing four lanes in Martin County. Completion of all four lanes sections on US 17 corridor within North Carolina to the border.

- Install lighting at the exit ramp off US Hwy 17 at Williamston.
- Complete the upgrade of Prison Camp Road so NC Hwy 125 designation can be extended to NC Hwy 903.
- Install lighting at entrance and exit ramps onto US Hwy 64 from NC Hwy 125.
- US Hwy 64 construct exit ramp at Dixon Road to facilitate access to the town of Parmele.
- Construct a connecting road from Twin Bridges Road SR 1405 to Airport Road SR 1404 to provide a second form of ingress and egress for the Martin County Regional Industrial Park.
- Widen SR 1159 (3rd Street Extension) Robersonville Products Road from US Hwy 64 to NC 903. We are asking to widen the road from 20 to 28 feet and to strengthen the pavement to better accommodate trucks.
- Install sidewalks and curb ramps along the west side of Washington Street between the drainage ditch and easement limits (from Garrett Road to Peele Road}.
- Highway 11 improvements from Bethel to the Roanoke River.
- New road and properties from the Martin County Airport to the Industrial Park. Hwy 17 and Main Street intersection safety upgrades.
- Repair and resurfacing of State Road 1336 - David Brown Road.
- Repair and resurfacing of State Road 1002 - Commerce Street - 1 /8 of mile.

No action was taken on this item as it was added to the Consent Agenda as Information

8. Creating Outside Recreational Experiences (CORE) Memorandum of Understanding and Resolution

Martin County Economic Development Council CEO and President Jason Semple presented the Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) Program in October's regular meeting. The NC Department of Commerce's Main Street & Rural Planning Center offers a technical assistance program offering Outdoor Recreation Economy Strategic Planning and Asset Development services.

The program, Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE) will offer planning and asset development to leverage the abundant outdoor recreation resources available across the state of North Carolina to bolster local economic vitality. This will be accomplished through focusing on activities communities can do to:

- Increase tourism;
- Encourage small business development;
- Position communities to attract outdoor gear manufacturing industries;
- Plan for outdoor recreation asset and infrastructure development; and
- Enhance quality of life improvements for residents. The program was approved by the Board at that time.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining a plan of work for Martin County and a Resolution Assistance with Outdoor Recreation Planning from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center, and Rural Planning Program was received for approval.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

N.C. Department of Commerce
Rural Economic Development Division
NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center
Rural Planning Program
November 14, 2022

Assistance to Martin County, NC: Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (CORE)

As part of the North Carolina Department of Commerce, the state's lead agency for promoting economic development and prosperity, the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center ("Center") provides services and assistance to add value to local community economic development efforts.

Through the Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation program, the US Economic Development Administration focused resources to accelerate the recovery of communities that rely on the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors. This includes a non-competitive 'State Tourism Grant' to help states quickly invest in marketing, infrastructure, workforce and other projects to rejuvenate safe leisure, business and international travel.

To achieve these goals the Center developed a technical assistance program offering Outdoor Recreation Economy Strategic Planning and Asset Development services to North Carolina communities. The program, Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies ("CORE"), will offer planning and asset development to leverage the abundant outdoor recreation assets available across the state of North Carolina to bolster local economic vitality.

To supplement Martin County's resolution requesting CORE services from the Center, below is an outline of the project and services provided, roles and responsibilities of those involved, and several conditions pertaining to the services. Please review, sign, and return, as indicated below, to signify agreement.

1. The primary services for the CORE project include the following:

A. Community Assessment

The Center will facilitate one or more assessment meeting(s) with a local work group that will include:

- 1) Presentation of local economic data relative to the current situation, outdoor recreation assets, and related information.
- 2) Discussion of the impacts of COVID-19 on the local economy, identification of economic assets and drivers, and a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis; and
- 3) Development of an Outdoor Recreation Vision.

B. Development of Outdoor Recreation Plan

Following the Community Assessment, the Center will prepare an Outdoor Recreation Plan with guidance from county staff and the local work group. Plan development meeting(s) will include the presentation of findings from the presentation and discussion of local economic data, the

identification and prioritization of action items from the Community Assessment, and the development of strategies to help the local outdoor economy grow and prosper.

C. Delivery of Implementation Services

Following the drafting of the Outdoor Recreation Plan, the Center will work with county staff, the local work group, and other partners (if applicable) to determine which implementation services and resources will be most beneficial for the community's outdoor recreation economy efforts and within what timeframe(s) they should be pursued.

2. The mission of the Center is to work in regions, counties, cities, towns, downtown districts, and designated North Carolina Main Street communities to inspire place making through building asset-based economic development strategies that achieve measurable results such as investment, business growth, and jobs. To further that mission, the Center may share successful "best practices" with other communities when appropriate. In this context, relevant materials produced from the project and economic outcomes may be shared with other communities, as needed.

3. If this project (or part of) needs to be conducted virtually, the County (the client) will be responsible for assuring all participants of the project have access to internet capabilities as needed. Interviews, meetings, and other project needs can be conducted via online platform or by phone. The client will also share agendas, relevant maps, documents, and plans electronically to the Center and all participants.

4. For assistance with the CORE, the County will be responsible for assembling a local work group to participate in the project. The local work group may include, but is not limited to, elected officials, municipal or county staff, local business owners/operators, representatives of civic organizations with an interest in the community, and/or active residents.

5. The Center currently has a staff with various skill sets in economic and community development planning and is responsible for delivering services throughout the state.

When the Center accepts a project, its goal is to complete the project in a timely and responsible manner. In the event of staff turnover, budget reductions, or other unforeseeable events, however, the Center may be compelled to place a project in an indefinite "hold" status until replacement staff resources can be secured. In rare cases, where very specialized staff skills are unable to be replaced, the project commitment may be terminated. Projects may also be re-prioritized consistent with department or division policies.

The CORE project is planned to begin in January 2023 to be completed by May 2023. The Center staff member assigned to lead the project will be Lee Padrick, Community Economic Development Planner for the Northeast Region, with assistance from other staff as needed.

I have reviewed this Memorandum of Understanding regarding the Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies project services to be provided to Martin County by the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center and accept its terms and conditions.

Signed: _____

James Bennett, Martin County Manager

Resolution Requesting Assistance with Outdoor Recreation Planning from the North Carolina Department of Commerce, Rural Economic Development Division, NC Main Street & Rural Planning Center, Rural Planning Program

WHEREAS, through the Travel, Tourism & Outdoor Recreation program, the US Economic Development Administration focused resources to accelerate the recovery of communities that rely on the travel, tourism, and outdoor recreation sectors. These resources aim to help states quickly invest in marketing, infrastructure, workforce and other projects to rejuvenate safe leisure, business and international travel; and

WHEREAS, to achieve these goals, the NC Main Street and Rural Planning Center (“Program”) developed a technical assistance program offering Outdoor Recreation Economy Strategic Planning and Asset Development services to North Carolina communities. The program, Creating Outdoor Recreation Economies (“CORE”), will offer planning and asset development to leverage the abundant outdoor recreation assets available across the state of North Carolina to bolster local economic vitality; and

WHEREAS, the County Commissioners of Martin County, NC (“Board”), would like to participate in the CORE (“Project”); and

WHEREAS, the Board would like assistance with the Project from the Program; and

WHEREAS, the Board and the Program have reached a mutually agreeable scope of work for the Project (Memorandum of Understanding attached), which outlines the tasks to be performed by the Program and those to be performed by Martin County and/or by other Project partners (if applicable), as well as the projected timeframe within which the Project will be completed.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the Board hereby requests that the Program assist Martin County with the Project and expresses its commitment to the planning process and the implementation of the Project when work is completed.

Adopted this ____ day of _____, 2022.

9

Chair of Martin County, NC Commissioners

ATTEST:

County Clerk, Martin County, NC

The CORE Resolution and MOA were **Approved** by the Board as part of the Consent Agenda

9. Resolution in Support of the Local Government Federal Credit Union Remaining Part of State Employees Credit Union

A resolution was made in support of the Local Government Federal Credit Union (LGFCU) remaining part of the State Employees Credit Union (SECU). The codependence began in 1981, when the North Carolina Supreme Court ruling on a joint appeal from both the North Carolina Savings and Loan League and the North Carolina Banker Association, chose to overturn the North Carolina Credit Union Commission's 1978 decision that allowed SECU to serve local government employees.

Martin County Resolution in Support of the Local Government Federal Credit Union Remaining Part of State Employees Credit Union

WHEREAS, the County of Martin wishes to support the Local Government Federal Credit Union (LGFCU) remaining a part of State Employees Credit Union (SECU).

WHEREAS, the Local Government Federal Credit Union has provided opportunities for government employees and their families to qualify for home mortgages, business loans, and automobile loans that may not have met qualifications with other financial institutions; and

WHEREAS, not all customers possess the acumen that would allow them to transact business using a computer or without the personal attention afforded by the Local Government Federal Credit Union;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Martin that we do hereby support the Local Government Federal Credit Union remaining a part of State Employees Credit Union;

FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution will be located and filed in the County Manager's Office, that this resolution shall become effective on the date of adoption, and that this resolution shall be recorded in to the official minutes.

ADOPTED, this the ___ day of _____, 20__.

Ronnie Smith, Chairman
Martin County Board of Commissioners

Clerk to the Board

This Item was **Approved** by the Board as part of the Consent Agenda

9. New Road Name Request – Gurkin Farm Lane

The Tax Assessor's Office submitted a new road name request for property in the area of Thurman Griffin Road. The new road name would be Gurkin Farm Lane. All Emergency Services checks were required and the conducted Emergency Services checks are attached to the request.

This Item was **Approved** by the Board as part of the Consent Agenda.

10. Board Appointments/Reappointments

a. Bertie Martin Regional Jail Commission

The Bertie Martin Regional Commission had one board reappointment for the month of December. Contact was made with the Board regarding recommendations and to make contact with Mr. MacDonald for his response on the reappointment. Staff recommended reappointing Mr. John MacDonald for another 2 year term ending on 12/31/24.

The Board **Approved** of the board appointment(s) as stated, as part of the Consent Agenda.

b. Chamber of Commerce

Contact was made with the Board regarding recommendations for the Chamber of Commerce. Ms. Keisha Masen was recommended as a new Board member.

The Board **Approved** of the board appointment(s) as stated, as part of the Consent Agenda.

c. Fireman's Relief Fund Trustees

Fire Chiefs for the various local fire departments made recommendations to the Board of Commissioners to appoint / reappoint the following persons as Fireman's Relief Fund Trustees for two (2) year terms each, which would expire December 31, 2024. Those individuals recommended for appointment/reappointment are:

Mr. JD Woolard
Mr. Andy Griffin
Mr. Travis Scott
Mr. Randy Gardner
Mr. Richard Cannon
Mr. David Jenkins
Mr. Bill Jones

The Board **Approved** of the board appointment(s) as stated, as part of the Consent Agenda.

d. Juvenile Crime Prevention Council

The Juvenile Crime Prevention Board recommended that the Board of Commissioners appoint/reappoint the following members for two (2) year terms each. The following individuals were recommended for reappointment/ appointment to the Board:

Gregory Monroe Julia Rease
Seth Edwards Vickie Manning
James Ward Sheila Godard
Chinita Vaughn Lucas Denny
Angela Ellis Christine Manning

Clarence Goss

The Board **Approved** of the board appointment(s) as stated, as part of the Consent Agenda.

10. Clerk Report (included for informational purposes)

INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEE (S) –

Human Resources Director Donna Zube stated there were new hires in the Department of Social Services, Transit, and the Sheriff's Department. HR Director Zube reported the Sheriff's Department had another event to attend, but would be introduced at a future Board meeting. HR Director Zube asked Department of Social Services Director Angela Ellis to introduce her new employees. DSS Director Ellis introduced the new employees as follows:

Ms. Shakedia Williams of Beaufort County began her employment as an Adult Medicaid caseworker in the Income Maintenance Unit.

Ms. Tonavis Sessoms of Bertie County began her employment as a Transit Driver with Transit.

Mr. William Freeman of Bertie County began his employment as a Transit Driver with Transit.

Ms. JoAnn Goddard began her employment as a Family Medicaid caseworker in the Income Maintenance Unit.

Chell'le Craig of Bertie County began her employment as a Social Worker in the Child Protective Services / Child Welfare Unit.

PRESENTATIONS

Jones Street Consulting/Marketing – President and Lobbyist Jackson Stancel

A presentation was made by the Jones Street Marketing Group President and Lobbyist Jackson Stancel regarding services that could be beneficial to Martin County. Their services included Marketing & Advertising Strategy Development, Media Planning & Management, Creative Services, Public Relations, Website Development & Digital Marketing, and Social Media Marketing. Mr. Stancel stated he had 15 years of experience with NC House of Representatives, wherein he received knowledge regarding state and local government operations. Mr. Stancel reported he began lobbying 6 years ago and was ranked in the top 25 of 700 lobbyist. Mr. Stancel stated he lived on his family farm, therefore understood the needs of rural North Carolina. Mr. Stancel stated his strengths were his relationship with the House and the Senate and his connection to needs in Rural North Carolina.

Mr. Stancel explained his vision of a business plan to the Board. Mr. Stancel reported the past NC Senator, Bob Steinburg, would work with clients "on a ground level" as he lived in Edenton, NC. Mr. Stancel stated he lived close to his Raleigh office and could work with his clients from a higher level. Areas were listed as issues for Rural North Carolina such as broadband, water infrastructure, and infrastructure as a whole. Mr. Stancel stated he would like Martin County to

hire him as he saw the opportunity as a way to help Eastern, N.C. and Martin County for the long run. Mr. Stancil put emphasis on his desire to work in this capacity for a long time.

Commissioner Gurganus asked if County Manager Bennett had all information regarding Mr. Stancil and his business. Manager Bennett agreed. Mr. Stancel stated the Board could visit his website or call him from the business cards provided for more information regarding services.

Vice Chairman Bond Jr. asked how many former county commissioners were in the Legislative body. Mr. Stancil stated that he was not sure of the exact number and estimated around 15-20 County Commissioners that were in the Legislature. Mr. Stancel reported county commissioners were the best representatives and senators. Chairman Smith gave information regarding the county commissioner's caucus wherein representatives were invited to the Legislative Goals Conference.

Mr. Stancel stated he wanted to find funding for Martin County. Manager Bennett asked if Mr. Stancel would give information on the counties he has worked with. Mr. Stancil stated there were clients that he did not have contracts written with. Mr. Stancel also reported working with Pamlico and Pasquotank County, before the opportunity to join NC Senator Steinburg.

Commissioner Ayers asked Mr. Stancil if he had clients outside of servicing counties. Mr. Stancil agreed with majority of his clients being in the fields of agriculture and finances. Commissioner Ayers asked if Mr. Stancil had a wide array of experience. Mr. Stancil agreed and stated that he has worked in the areas of business, agriculture, county government, and some education.

Mr. Stancil was thanked for his presentation and was thankful for the opportunity to present.

Plaque of Appreciation for Martin County Economic Development Council President and CEO Jason Semple - MC EDC Chairman Larry Biggs

County Manager Bennett stated Martin County lost a good employee in Economic Development and was recruiting for the position. Manager Bennett stated a presentation was planned for Mr. Jason Semple, former CEO and President of Martin County Economic Development Council (MC EDC), who was hired in another county. Manager Bennett stated Mr. Semple could not attend this Board meeting due to a Board meeting in his new county of employment.

Chairman Smith recollected memories of Mr. Semple as a young employee who worked his way to the position as the Economic Development Council President. Chairman Smith gave remarks on the behalf of Mr. Semple as an employee and as a person. Chairman Smith read the plaque of appreciation that stated "Jason Semple, thank you for your hard work and dedication to Martin County". The plaque of appreciation was received by MC EDC Vice Chairman Larry Biggs on the behalf of Mr. Semple.

MC EDC Vice Chairman Biggs gave comments on the behalf of Mr. Semple that were written. "First of all, I share my regrets for not being there in person. I am attending the Brunswick County Commissioners meeting today on behalf of Brunswick, Business and Industry Development. I would like to thank the Commissioners and the Martin County Economic Development Board for entrusting me with the economic development leadership reigns for the past seven years. It

has been truly an honor to serve the people of Martin County where so much of my personal history is invested. It is the place I brought my son after his birth and the place I discovered my passion for economic development. As I look back over the past seven years I am proud of what we have accomplished together in partnership with other key organizations. We sold a Shell building, we built a rail spur we had millions of dollars of infrastructure investment in the North Carolina Commerce Park, we jointly created the RISE 29 program, we created a state of the art Innovation Campus at Martin County Schools; and we assisted many companies with expansions relocations, and operational needs. Of course, I owe a debt of gratitude to the county department heads and staff who made my job much easier. Whenever I had a need, no matter what it was, my fellow servant leaders were always quick to lend me a hand. I cannot thank them enough for their dedicated work ethic and service with a smile. Finally, I thank my assistants', past and present; Gay Perry, Kerry Ange, and Sheila Holiday, for their dedication and willingness to put up with my craziness over the years. Thank you for honoring me this evening. I am humbled by this public recognition, which I accept on behalf of those who work tirelessly in Martin County to further its prosperity. With its location, quality of life, and growing infrastructure; I truly believe Martin County is poised for long term prosperity. I look forward to hearing about and celebrating future success with you. Warmest regards, Jason, thank you."

OLD BUSINESS

Martin - Tyrell - Washington (MTW) Board of Health

Manager Bennett reported the MTW Health Board was under leadership of MTW Health Department Wes Gray. Manager Bennett stated each county (Tyrell, Washington, and Martin) had representation on this Board. At the last MTW Health Board meeting, Manager Bennett was asked to recommend someone to represent the Board of County Commissioners to the MTW Health Board. Manager Bennett reported if there was no one on the Board of County Commissioner's willing to accept the appointment, he would continue attending the MTW Health Board meetings. Manager Bennett explained he attended the meetings and the bylaws stated a County Commissioner for each county involved in the MTW health Board would have a vote. Manager Bennett stated if the Board so approved of the County Manager being appointed to the Board, the bylaws would change to reflect that the County Manager would have a vote in further meetings.

Manager Bennett reported Martin County funded 60%, Washington County funded 30%, and Tyrrell County funded 10% of monies operating the MTW Health Department. Manager Bennett explained there were a few Martin County appointees on this Board. Manager Bennett reiterated that a vote was needed to appoint a County Commissioner or the County Manager (in the capacity of a County Commissioner) to the Board. If the County Manager was appointed by the Board, the bylaws would be rewritten to allow the County Manager to have a vote.

Chairman Smith asked for a motion approving the amendment of any board by- laws and or policy, wherein the County Commissioners serve, to include the County Manager to serve in the capacity of the County Commissioners.

Vice Chairman stated he wanted to review the bylaws of the MTW Health Board. Vice Chairman Bond Jr. stated he wanted to know if the bylaws stated that each county had to have County Commissioner to serve on the Board or if the County Commissioner could designate someone to

serve on the Board. Chairman Smith responded that the bylaws did state that the County Commissioners could designate someone to serve on the MTW Health Board. Chairman Smith reported the bylaws also stated the person appointed was to be of a certain position. Further, Chairman Smith explained that the MTW Health Board was willing to change these bylaws. Chairman Smith stated other boards that appointed County Commissioners to serve may have to be reviewed. Lastly, Chairman Smith reported that the Commissioners served on many boards and a representative was needed if there was a conflict in schedules.

Vice Chairman Bond Jr. asked if Chairman Smith was asking to appoint County Manager Bennett to the MTW Health Board. Chairman Smith stated he was asking permission to change the Martin County bylaws regarding the MTW Health Board and if approved, the MTW Health Board could change their bylaws in return. Chairman Smith reported the MTW Health Board could not change their bylaws regarding Martin County appointee's without Martin County changing its bylaws first.

Commissioner Gurganus asked if the change in bylaws was just for the MTW Health Board. Commissioner Gurganus stated his understanding that Chairman Smith wanted to change all by laws wherein Commissioners served. Chairman Smith stated the amendment of by laws would be regarding the MTW Health Board as of now. Commissioner Gurganus asked for clarification on the motion and stated his understanding of what was being asked for approval. Chairman Smith stated the motion would approve an amendment in the MTW Health Board by laws to state all counties (Martin, Tyrell, and Washington) would be able to designate their County Manager to serve in the capacity of their Commissioners. Commissioner Gurganus stated he could agree with the motion if this was what the MTW Health Board was requesting as it related to Martin County.

Commissioner Gurganus made the Motion to **Approve** of the amendment to the MTW Health Board bylaws as stated, with a **Second** by Commissioner Ayers. The Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Zacchaeus Legal Services Update

In previous meetings, the Zacchaeus Legal Services was discussed as the Law firm representing the Town of Williamston in foreclosure matters. Manager Bennett recalled that he informed the Board of his discussion with the Town of Williamston Administrator, Eric Pearson. Manager Bennett reiterated that the Williamston Town Administrator, Eric Pearson, shared information with him in regards to the services provided by Zacchaeus Law Firm and cost. Manager Bennett reported there was a problem that was beneficial to the Town of Williamston, but caused issues with Martin County. Manager Bennett explained Martin County was not receiving monies due to this. Manager Bennett stated Tax Assessor Mellissa Phillips was able to attend a conference and had an opportunity to speak with Zacchaeus Law Firm representatives. Manager Bennett reported Tax Assessor Phillips shared information from her discussion with the law firm.

County Attorney Benjamin Eisner reported speaking with Attorney Mark Bardill and Senior Attorney Mark Barrows with Zacchaeus Law Firm. County Attorney Eisner reported having a lengthy discussion last week regarding Zacchaeus' practices as it related to the foreclosures in the Town of Williamston. Attorney Eisner reported learning that Zacchaeus was a comprehensive tax foreclosure law firm that would start from the beginning of a case, to a sale.

Beaufort, Tyrell, Washington, and Gates were listed as counties that have been served amongst others. County Attorney Eisner shared information regarding the foreclosure cases for the Town of Williamston. County Attorney Eisner stated the Town of Williamston was listed as a plaintiff, leaving Martin County as a necessary defendant in foreclosure cases. County Attorney Eisner explained the law firm's past county program raised some tax collection rates by as high as 4-5%. Zacchaeus was reported to receive their fees in two ways; one was a reasonable fee established by the court at the end of a lawsuit, and then a commission for conducting a sale. The Commission would not be earned until the counties or municipalities are made whole; or there's enough money from a sale to pay the taxes and legal fees before commission "kicks in". County Attorney Eisner stated there were situations where the county is made a defendant and are left out of the judgement amount, wherein people pay taxes before it gets into the lawsuit leaving the county unpaid.

County Attorney Eisner recommended if the Town of Williamston were to continue the practice of filing a lawsuit to foreclose taxes, the county may want to consider becoming a co-plaintiff. County Attorney Eisner stated there was a discussion regarding fee splitting or fee sharing between the local municipality and the county splitting the fees mentioned. County Attorney Eisner stated that this was a policy decision for the Board to make, but legally it would save some legal fees on the county side. County Attorney Eisner stated there was a scenario wherein, the Town and the County would be responsible for their share of the legal fees if a property was not sold for enough money to recoup the taxes and the fees. County Attorney Eisner reiterated that Zacchaeus recommended the countywide program, but this could be discussed in a future meeting.

Commissioner Gurganus asked what the risk was compared to the reward. County Attorney Eisner recommended that the County needed to respond in some way if named in a lawsuit. County Attorney Eisner stated that this would incur some legal fees. The risk were foreseen to be the cost and public relations aspects as the County had not undertaken foreclosures in a number of years. County Attorney Eisner mentioned the recovery of taxes in the midst of the delinquent tax base would probably outweigh the legal costs. Also, County Attorney Eisner mentioned there were scenarios wherein no one would bid at a foreclosure sale, in which case the plaintiff entity would become the owner of the property. Commissioner Gurganus stated he was thinking in terms of the fiduciary responsibility to use tax payer monies wisely and it would be best to follow the recommendation to become a co-plaintiff.

A lengthy discussion continued regarding this matter to find the less costly and risky option.

Manager Bennett recalled speaking with the Board in a previous meeting regarding County Attorney Eisner's job description, wherein the legal services needed in this matter were not listed. Manager Bennett stated that the work conducted by County Attorney Eisner would need to be compensated in some way. County Attorney mentioned his legal fees could be compensated in some cases depending on the outcome of the case.

Commissioner Ayers made the **Motion** to Partner with Zacchaeus Law Firm and the Town of Williamston as Co-plaintiffs and that County Attorney Eisner would be compensated for legal services in this matter. Commissioner Gurganus **Seconded** the Motion. The Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

NEW BUSINESS

PUV Late Applications (4) - Tax Assessor Melissa Phillips

Tax Assessor Melissa Phillips discussed four late Present Use Value (PUV) applications to the Board for approval. Tax Assessor Phillips stated that these were properties that were purchased by the taxpayer who did not make a timely application within 60 days of getting the property. Some taxpayers were present in the Board meeting and Tax Assessor Phillips began with their applications first. Tax Assessor Phillips stated Mr. Revels brought property on June 7th, 2022 wherein an application was not submitted to the Tax Assessors Office within the required 60 days. Tax Assessor Phillips reported the Mr. Revels explanation in his letter to the Tax Office was that there was failure to submit the application. Tax Assessor Phillips stated the property was already removed from the PUV program and the property owner(s) were billed the deferred taxes. Lastly Tax Assessor Phillips stated if the Board approved of the late PUV application, the Tax Assessor's Office would have to release the rollback bills and refund any monies if they were paid by the taxpayer.

Commissioner Gurganus asked what the refund amount was and Tax Assessor Phillips stated the amount was \$1,351.20 when it was billed in October. Tax Assessor Phillips stated there would be interest fees added for the month of November and December. Commissioner Gurganus asked if the taxpayers were present and if so they not knew to file the application. Tax Assessor Phillips reported sending a letter to the home on July 26, 2022 informing the property owners that they purchased property and needed to submit an application within 60 days. Then, Tax Assessor Phillips reported a letter was sent to the home on September 14, 2022 informing the property owners that they did not file a timely application. Tax Assessor Phillips stated this letter also had the deferred estimate on what was going to be billed. 30 days were given to the property owners due to a 30 day grace period to appeal anything the Tax Assessor's office sent out. Tax Assessor Phillips stated no response was made, the rollback bills were created, and they sent out to the taxpayer.

Commissioner Ayers reported the Board receiving late PUV Applications in almost every meeting for the last few months. Commissioner Ayers stated a remedy was made wherein attorneys would instruct their clients of these forms and tax payments before closing the purchase of property. Commissioner Ayers stated he would be lenient due to this case happening before the solution to this issue was resolved. Mr. Revels stated he did not know where the letters were and did not pay attention to this. Mr. Revels stated his attorney did inform him to look for letters regarding this matter and Mr. Revels must have misplaced the letters.

Chairman Smith asked when property is transferred in the future, all taxes would be paid up before stamping for finalization. Tax Assessor Phillips stated that this was correct, but the late application for Mr. Revels happened before the new procedures were approved by the Board in November 2022. Chairman Smith agreed with being lenient with this case due to this. Chairman Smith stated going into the next year, 2023, the new procedure would in effect and the Board would act more firmly.

Commissioner Gurganus asked if there was anything else needed to make sure people who handle the transactions of land know about this program. Chairman Smith responded the new

procedure would prevent any issues in the future because land would not be able to be sold unless taxes are paid up.

Chairman Smith asked if the Board was ok with looking at any property transferred in 2023 and to approve the late applications brought to the Board today.

Commissioner Gurganus made a **Motion** to make an exception to approve of the Late PUV applications from this meeting with a **Second** by Commissioner Ayers. The Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Public School Building Capital Fund Application Regarding North Carolina Education Lottery

An application was received from the Martin County Schools regarding the Jamesville Elementary School Awning Project. The application stated according to North Carolina General Statutes, Chapter 18 C, and a portion of the proceeds of the North Carolina State Lottery Fund be transferred to the Public Building Capital Fund in accordance with G.S. 115C-546.2. Manager Bennett referred to the application that was submitted in the agenda packet. Manager Bennett stated the school system needed the Board to approve of the application to receive monies from the lottery fund for repairs at Jamesville Elementary School. Manager Bennett stated the request was for \$54,000.

Chairman Smith explained the lottery fund was set up with an oversight, wherein the school system could not receive funding without the Board approving the application.

Commissioner Gurganus asked if the funding was going towards building an overhead shelter to prevent children from walking in inclement weather. Chairman Smith agreed and Commissioner Gurganus stated that this was a good cause.

Commissioner Gurganus made the **Motion** to approve of the Public Building Capital Fund Application for Jamesville Elementary School, with a **Second** by Commissioner Biggs. The Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

BUDGET AMENDMENT(S)

Budget Amendment #11

Finance Director Cindy Ange reported the Martin County Airport received several grants for ongoing projects. Finance Director Ange stated remaining Non-Priority Entitlement Block Grant Program (NPE) funds from 2020 were being used for the AWOS installation and the grant funds required no local match.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-8

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, 2023.

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

	Increase	Decrease
Transportation	\$116,195	

This will result in an increase of \$116,195 in the expenditures of the Airport Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

Intergovernmental Revenue	\$116,195
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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.

Motion by Commissioner Ayers and **Seconded** by Commissioner Gurganus to adopt the above budget ordinance amendment this 5th day of December 2022.

BOARD REPORTS / COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS

Commissioner Gurganus stated there was discussion of a GREAT Grant and asked what the status on it was. Manager Bennett responded the grant was worth \$14 million and required a \$4 million match from the county. Manager Bennett stated the match could not be obtained, but an extension was given to find the match. Commissioner Gurganus stated he remembered there being discussion of something or someone being able to provide the matching funding. Manager Bennett stated there was a Neighborhood Program that was seen as an opportunity to obtain the \$4 million, but this was unsuccessful due to the program offering resources and not funding. Chairman Smith commented that the issue with grant funding was guidelines that could not be deviated from. Chairman Smith stated even if obtained, the \$14 million could only be spent on what the guidelines stated it should be used for. Chairman Smith reported the \$4 million match could be utilized in many ways. Manager Bennett added that he spoke with Finance manager regarding the \$4 million county match and the finance manager stated the county would not be able to provide the match at this time.

Manager Bennett reminded the Board of upcoming events: The Commissioner's Dinner on December 18, 2022 and the Martin County Luncheon on December 22, 2022. Manager Bennett also reminded the Board to return any agenda binders to save on the cost of buying new ones for the Board meetings. Lastly, Manager Bennett expressed appreciation for Austin Keel and Jeb Gardner of the IT Department for their latest method of technology. Manager Bennett stated more than one commissioner could be viewed and the camera would follow those who were speaking.

Chairman Smith spoke on the Legislative Goals meeting wherein Vice Chairman Bond Jr. attended as well. Chairman Smith reported representatives from all 100 counties submitted issues that they felt were important to present to the Legislators. Chairman Smith explained that 47 goals were submitted and the meeting ended with 5 state and federal goals. 80 counties were represented and Chairman Smith stated every vote was worth 2/3 of a vote.

Manager Bennett stated the public needed to know about the Boards' efforts regarding Martin General Hospital. Manager Bennett stated a timeline would be submitted on the Martin County website and Facebook page. Manager Bennett stated the timeline would list events and

conversations with consultants, the Attorney General's Office, and the Attorney hired for consultation regarding the hospital. Manager Bennett stated he would provide paper copies to the public if they did not have computer access. Commissioner Gurganus stated that it was important to keep the public updated as much as possible.

ADJOURNMENT

Commissioner Gurganus made the **Motion** to adjourn at 9:00 p.m., with a **Second** by Commissioner Biggs. The Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Ronnie Smith, Chairman
Martin County Board of Commissioner's

Julia S. Rease
Clerk to the Board