

**October 12, 2022**

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular meeting on Wednesday, October 12, 2022, 7:00 p.m. in the Superior Courtroom 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, and Commissioner David “Skip” Gurganus, County Manager James Bennett, Clerk to the Board Julia Rease, and Finance Officer Cindy Ange.

Others Present: Mayor Charlotte Griffin of Bear Grass and Sheriff Tim Manning

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

Vice Chairman Bond Jr. extended a welcome to all in attendance.

**AGENDA APPROVAL**

Vice Chairman Bond Jr. stated two items needed to be added to the agenda under New Business. These items were submitted after the agenda packet was released. The items added were:

- #3. Non - Primary Entitlement Funding for the Martin County Airport
- #4. Choanoke Area Development Association (CADA) CDBG –CV Funding.

Commissioner Gurganus made a **Motion** to approve the Consent Agenda as stated, with a **Second** by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

**PUBLIC COMMENTS – NONE**

**CONSENT AGENDA**

**Motion** to approve the Consent Agenda made by Commissioner Biggs with a **Second** by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

**1. Minute Approval**

- August 04, 2022 Emergency – Closed
- August 17, 2022 Regular

**2. Financial Report – September 2022**

**3. Tax Assessor – Tax Refund Request – September 2022 - \$0.00**

**4. Tax Assessor – Tax Relief Orders – September 2022 – \$ 576.36**

Year Levy	Lname	Fname	Reason	Value	Total
2022	Brown	Laura V	Error in Listing	500.00	4.38
2018	Buck	Dillon Thomas	Sold Vehicle	500.00	4.74
2019	Buck	Dillon Thomas	Sold Vehicle	500.00	4.85
2020	Buck	Dillon Thomas	Sold Vehicle	500.00	4.85
2021	Buck	Dillon Thomas	Sold Vehicle	500.00	4.85
2022	Buck	Dillon Thomas	Sold Vehicle	500.00	4.85
2022	Everetts	Town of	Error in Landfill FE	0.00	182.00
2022	Jernigan	Brian Keith	Sold Vehicle	3,685	32.80
2022	Jones	David Keith	Out of County	500.00	4.40
2022	Manning	Roger Hoyt	Double Billed	1,382	11.74
2022	Mobley	Ervin E	Error in Landfill FE	0.00	182.00
2019	Moore	George Washington	Double Billed	3,000	46.20
2020	Moore	George Washington	Double Billed	2,880	44.35
2021	Moore	George Washington	Double Billed	2,880	44.35
			<i>Total Real &amp; Personal Releases</i>		\$576.36
			<i>Total VTS Refunds</i>		\$ 0.00
			<i>Total Tax Relief Orders</i>		\$576.36

**5. Tax Collector’s Report – September 2022**

	Category	September	9 -21 Y-T-D
<b>Real Property</b>	20	\$7,276.99	\$31,669.61
<b>Personal Property</b>	25	\$343.57	\$6,216.25
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$7,620.56</b>	<b>\$37,885.86</b>
<b>Motor Vehicle</b>	30	\$0.00	\$67.56
<b>Total MV</b>		<b>\$0.00</b>	<b>\$67.56</b>
<b>All Total</b>		<b>\$7,620.56</b>	<b>\$37,953.42</b>

**6. Board Appointments/Reappointments**

**Animal Control Appeal Board Commissioner Vacancy**

The Animal Control Board follows the Martin County ordinance that calls for the Animal Control Board to hear appeals regarding dogs being declared potentially dangerous, dangerous or vicious.

There was a vacancy on this Board regarding a Commissioner's seat as former Commissioner Tommy Bowen has not been reappointed to the Board.

The Board **Approved** the above reappointments as part of the consent agenda.

### **Airport Commission and Airport Height Restriction Board**

Fire Chiefs for the various local fire departments asked 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, 2023.

Those individuals recommended for appointment/reappointment are:

- |                                 |                      |
|---------------------------------|----------------------|
| • Bear Grass Fire Department    | Mr. James Ward       |
| • Griffin Fire Department       | Mr. Gary Griffin     |
| • Hamilton Fire Department      | Mr. Lin Boyd Jr.     |
| • Jamesville Fire Department    | Mr. Phillip Pierce   |
| • Oak City Fire Department      | Mr. Tim Boddie       |
| • Robersonville Fire Department | Mr. Charlie Gurganus |
| • Williamston Fire Department   | Mr. Thomas Roberson  |

The Board **Approved** the above reappointments as part of the consent agenda.

### **7. Clerk Report- *included for informational purposes***

#### **INTRODUCTION OF NEW EMPLOYEE(S)**

##### **Department of Social Services - Martin County DSS Director Angela Ellis**

The new employees were not able to attend this month's meeting. The new DSS employees are as stated:

1. Shakedia Williams – Income Maintenance – DSS
2. Lisa Bond – Income Maintenance Caseworker I – DSS
3. Tonavis Sessoms – Driver Transit – DSS
4. William Freeman – Driver Transit – DSS

##### **Cooperative Extension – Interim Director Lisa Smith**

Ms. Lisa Smith introduced Mr. Byron Horton as the Small Farms Field Recruiter and Ms. Courtney Denny as the new Support Specialist. Ms. Lisa Smith stated the new employees were both from Martin County.

The Board welcomed the new employees to Martin County.

## **PRESENTATION (S)**

### **North Carolina Forestry Service – NC Forester Dan Glazewski**

The North Carolina Forestry Service was not available at the time to present.

## **OLD BUSINESS – NONE**

## **NEW BUSINESS**

### **Christmas Luncheon and Gift Books**

Martin County would host a Christmas Luncheon in which employees attended every year. The last luncheon took place in 2019 and the tradition was temporarily suspended due to the COVID 19 Pandemic. As of August 2022, Governor lifted the state emergency restrictions regarding Covid 19.

In a previous Board and Department Head meeting, County Manager Bennett mentioned the possibility of having the Christmas Luncheon this year. Manager Bennett stated that with the approval of the Board, the Christmas Luncheon would take place on December 22, 2022 at 12:00 p.m. Manager Bennett also stated that employees would attend the 2 hour luncheon and return to work after the festivities. Manager Bennett asked HR Donna Zube about the type of leave (Comp Time, Annual Leave, and Sick Leave) to be used if an employee did not want to return to work after the luncheon has been concluded. HR Zube responded that annual leave would be used. Manager Bennett stated no county funds would be used for the luncheon, but there was a grant to provide funding. Manager Bennett stated that entertainment would be provided by employees acting as groups such as the Temptations and or the Supremes, Commissioner Gurganus would perform, and that the food would be provided by Shaw's Barbeque. Manager Bennett stated that the Commissioners would sit amongst the other employees as there would not be a head table. HR Zube stated that service awards and retirement plaques would be presented. Manager Bennett added that the service and retirement awards from the past two years would be presented as well.

Last year, employees received gift books for Christmas and Manager Bennett planned to give gift books to the employees this year as well. Manager Bennett stated the gift books would not be a cost to the county.

Vice Chairman Bond Jr. asked if it was being asked of the board to approve a half day for employees to attend the luncheon. HR Zube stated that only 2 hours was being asked to be approved, 1 hour for lunch and one hour for the actual luncheon festivities.

**Motion** to approve of the Christmas Luncheon and Gift Books by Commissioner Gurganus, with a **Second** by Commissioner Ayers. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

## **Creating Outdoor Recreational Economies (CORE) - MC Economic Development CEO and President Jason Semple**

Martin County Economic Development Council CEO and President Jason Semple stated the Department of Commerce received federal funding from the Economic Development Administration to conduct strategic planning for outdoor recreation in communities. MCEDC CEO Semple stated that the program was called “Creating Outdoor Recreational Economies (CORE)” and the program did not require the county to match funds. The process would have a single point of contact from the county which would be him, an online application would be submitted, and a Memorandum of Understanding would be sent back to the county for approval. A work group would be made up of stakeholders to create a strategic plan with planners regarding the outdoor recreation field. MCEDC CEO and President Semple explained that the strategic planning in the outdoor recreation field would focus on tourism, hospitality, quality of life for residents, small business development, fostering an outdoor recreation culture and place making, outdoor recreation infrastructure development, and positioning communities for outdoor recreation geared manufacturing. MCEDC CEO Semple stated this program could development what the county already has.

Commissioner Gurganus asked if the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) could be involved in this program, if not already involved. MC EDC President Semple stated the TDA Director Chase Conner was supposed to present this program to the board as well, but had a conflict. MC EDC CEO Semple stated that he spoke with the TDA Director as well as other stakeholders who are all on board to participate in the program.

**Motion** to approve of the CORE program made by Commissioner Gurganus with a **Second** by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

## **North Carolina Forestry Service**

### Fire Management

NC Forest Ranger Dan Glazewski made a presentation regarding the fiscal year accomplishments. Forester Glazewski reported 76% of land in Martin County was timberland equaling to 222,000 total acres. Forester Glazewski stated the fire unit of the forestry service managed an average of 27 forest fires per year. There were reportedly 47 wild fires that burned 66 acres this past year and 33 warning tickets were issued. Forester Glazewski stated his appreciation for the fire squads of Martin County that help the foresters with forest fires.

### Cost Share Programs

Next, Forester Glazewski informed the Board of cost share programs in Martin County. Forester Glazewski reported the forest service drafted 50 management plans that serviced 2,061 acres for landowners in Martin County. It was reported that the Forest Development Program secured \$21,522 for land owners last year. Forester Glazewski explained the Agricultural Disaster Recovery Program allowed the forest service to fund up to \$2,640 worth of management plans for Martin County landowners as well.

### Water Quality

Then, NC Forester Glazewski updated the Board of the Water Quality unit. NC Forester Glazewski stated the water quality unit inspected 26 active logging sites that covered 1,720 acres. Forester Glazewski explained it was important to have inspections because loggers could break up dirt, increase the sedimentation in the water, and this would contaminate the water supply. Of the 26 sites inspected, Forester Glazewski stated there was one violation and addressed.

### Information and Education

NC Forester Glazewski stated there were programs to inform the public of fire prevention, safety, and forest stewardship. Forester Glazewski reported conducted 19 events last year such as Wright Flight, assisting the Future Farmers of America (FFA) of the Northeast Regional School of Biotechnology and Agriscience (NERSBA), career fairs, and Smokey the Bear appearances.

### Urban and Pest Control

Lastly, Forester Glazewski stated the forest service gave information to landowners regarding the health and care of trees on their land. Additionally they look for the Southern Pine Beetles when in the forests and a few landowners were given assistance on this issue.

NC Forester Glazewski introduced Mr. Jordan Myers as a new hire. Forester Glazewski stated Mr. Myers was from Bear Grass, worked with the Williamston Fire Department, Bear Grass Fire and Rescue, and had a 2 year degree in Forest Management from Wake Community College. Forester Glazewski spoke well of Mr. Myers and his involvement with the emergency services being a great asset.

The Board thanked the Forest Service for attending and their work.

### **Airport Special Called Meeting**

Manager Bennett discussed a Special Called Airport meeting that he and Commissioner Ayers attended. Manager Bennett stated the purpose of the Special Called meeting was due to a Non-Priority Entitlement Block Grant Program (NPE) Fund. Manager Bennett reported around \$200,000 was received from this grant each year without a county match. Manager Bennett explained that \$30,000 could be taken from this funding to pay for a Parallel Runway. The Airport Commission approved this action, but the Board was being asked to approve of the action as well. Manager Bennett stated if so moved, he would inform W.K. Dickson Project Engineer/ Manager Jason Elliott to begin the process.

Commissioner Ayers made the **Motion** to Approve of the \$30,000 from the NPE Funding for the Parallel Runway, with a **Second** by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

### **Community Block Development Grant – Corona Virus (CDBG-CV)**

Manager Bennett reported being made aware 2 weeks ago of the CDBG – CV #20V3504. Choanoke Area Development Association (CADA) was a recipient of \$850,000, in which CADA

used \$170,000. Manager Bennett stated the funds needed to be used within a certain time and he was asked by Wooten Company Katie Fisher if the County could use \$680,000.

**CLOSED SESSION – NC G.S. § 143-318.11. (a)(3) – Client/Attorney Privilege, NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) – Contracts and Agreements, and NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) – Economic Development**

At 8:17 p.m., Commissioner Biggs made a **Motion** to enter Closed Session for NC G.S. § 143-318.11. (a)(3) – Client/Attorney Privilege, NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) – Contracts and Agreements, and NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) – Economic Development, with a **Second** from Vice Chairman Bond Jr. Motion **Carried** unanimously.

At 9:15p.m., Commissioner Biggs made a **Motion** to go out of Closed Session NC G.S. § 143-318.11. (a)(3) – Client/Attorney Privilege, NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) – Contracts and Agreements, and NC G.S. § 143-318.11(a) (4) – Economic Development, with a **Second** from Vice Chairman Bond Jr. Motion **Carried** unanimously.

**OPEN SESSION**

Martin General Proposal Letter

Manager Bennett presented a letter to be sent to the CEO of Vidant Health Care Systems and in the letter would be a proposal for Operation of the Martin General Hospital.

**Motion** to approve the submittal of the proposal letter to the CEO of Vidant Health Care Systems by Commissioner Gurganus with a **Second** by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Martin County Part Time Attorney Position

Manager Bennett also asked for the approval of the advertisement of the Part Time County Attorney position. Chairman Smith stated that Peel and James Attorney at Law resigned as of December 31, 2021 and the resignation was accepted. Chairman Smith stated the advertisement for the position would start from December 9, 2021 and end on January 28, 2022.

**Motion** to approve the submittal of the Martin County Part Time Attorney Position advertisement by Commissioner Gurganus, with a **Second** by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was **Carried** unanimously.

Tideland

County Manager Bennett stated all 10 counties involved in the Tideland Retiree Account are in agreeance that all 10 counties were legally responsible for a payment deemed by attorneys that were involved in the last meeting. Manager Bennett stated \$300,000 was in the account, but this amount would not suffice for the future allocations of these funds. Manager Bennett reported that all counties were to find a solution to this payment and Martin County would pay an annual payment less than \$20,000 for 5 years.

**Motion** that Martin County will pay an annual payment to the Tideland Retiree Account for 5 years made by Commissioner Biggs and **Seconded** by Vice Chairman Bond Jr. Motion **Carried** unanimously.

## **BOARD REPORTS/COMMISSIONERS' COMMENTS- NONE**

### Manager's Report

- **State Health Plan** - Manager Bennett reported that there was a 23 % increase in the Health Insurance that insures the county through the State Health Plan. Manager Bennett stated the total amount to be paid is \$255,000 (\$125,000 per person/ per month). Manager Bennett reported slight increases were anticipated and budgeted for, but an increase of 23% was not. Manager Bennett stated that solutions were being researched. Finance Officer stated that the funds would come from the general budget for this year due to the increase being immediate.
- **Airport Commission Dinner** – Manager Bennett stated that the Martin County Airport Commission invited the Martin County Board of Commissioners to their annual dinner February 8, 2022.
- **Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Director** - Manager Bennett stated that Mr. Barney Conway announced his retirement. Manager Bennett reported that the position for the TDA Director will be advertised until December 31, 2021. Manager Bennett stated that Mr. Conway has done a great job at a job that is not easy. Manager Bennett also stated that Mr. Conway had many talents and served the county in this position since 2013.

## **ADJOURNMENT**

With no further business to discuss, at 9:30 pm, Commissioner Biggs **Motioned** to adjourn and Vice Chairman Bond Jr. **Seconded** the motion. The Board unanimously **Approved** the motion.

The next Regular Board Meeting for the Martin County Board of Commissioners has been scheduled for January 12, 2021.

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Ronnie Smith, Chairman  
Martin County Board of Commissioners

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Julia S. Rease  
Clerk to the Board