

February 14, 2024
Regular

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in a Regular meeting on Wednesday, February 14, 2024, 7:00 p.m. in the Superior Courtroom at the Martin County Governmental Center/ Courthouse, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, North Carolina.

ASSEMBLY

Present in the Courtroom: Chairman Dempsey Bond Jr., Vice Chair Emily Biggs, Commissioner Joe R. Ayers, Commissioner Ronnie Smith, and Commissioner David “Skip” Gurganus, Interim County Manager/ County Attorney Benjamin R. Eisner, Clerk to the Board Julia Rease, Finance Officer Cindy Ange, and Sheriff Tim Manning

Others Present: Town of Bear Grass Mayor Charlotte Griffin

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

Chairman Bond Jr. extended a welcome to all in attendance. Chairman Bond Jr. asked that the audience were respectful during public comments.

AGENDA APPROVAL

Chairman Bond Jr. asked that the following were added to the agenda:

- Add the Bertie - Martin Regional Jail Board appointment for Mr. Clifton Thomas Moore Sr. to the consent agenda
- Pull the Tourism Development Interlocal Agreement from the agenda until the budget retreat.
- Remove the Emergency Management items from the agenda, as the Emergency Management Director could not attend.

Commissioner Gurganus asked why the Tourism Development Interlocal Agreement with the County was being pulled from the agenda. Chairman Bond Jr. responded that more information was needed in regards to the matter.

Commissioner Smith made the Motion to Approve the Agenda as stated, with a Second by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was Carried by raise of hands, (4-1).

Ayes: Chairman Dempsey Bond Jr., Vice Chair Emily Biggs, Commissioner Ronnie Smith, Commissioner Joe R. Ayers

Nays: Commissioner David “Skip” Gurganus

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Bond Jr. asked that everyone was respectful in making his or her public comment.

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Ayes: Chairman Dempsey Bond Jr., Vice Chair Emily Biggs, Commissioner Ronnie Smith, Commissioner Joe R. Ayers

Nays: Commissioner David "Skip" Gurganus

PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chairman Bond Jr. asked that everyone was respectful in making his or her public comment. Chairman Bond Jr. stated the public comment procedures were not going to be read aloud because everyone knew them, there would be no one calling names especially due to elections and the court system. Chairman Bond Jr. asked everyone to be respectful as there were people filming and it could run people away from the County that could provide services to the County.

Ms. Martha McDonald - 20770 US Highway 64, Jamesville

Ms. McDonald stated, "Since it is not on the agenda tonight, I will ask that a summary of the NACo Legislative Conference, that Biggs, Bond, and Smith attended, be put on the March Agenda. The summary should include, but not limited to sessions attended and all legislative meetings. Sharing the information learned, how it would benefit the citizens, the economy, taxes, and infrastructure needs to be made public for transparency. I would also propose that a written summary of any future meetings and conferences that are attended by Commissioners and paid for with County dollars, be given to the Clerk of the Board, within 10 working days after returning for immediate publication on the ncgov website. If you felt it was imperative for you to attend using County funds, then it's just as important to share with other Commissioners and the citizens. Sharing this information is vital for an open and transparent Board and rebuilding the trust of the Martin County citizens. I also propose that the Commissioners expenditures be reported openly each month as part of the agenda. A new County travel policy needs to be drafted and discussed in open meetings. This policy would be for employees and Commissioners alike. Just because you are a Commissioner, it does not give you an open ended expense account. Public input of this verbiage is vital. I also recommend that all future travel and hotel arrangements be made by the Clerk to ensure it's being handled in the most economic manner possible. Now, as a citizen, I find

it very disturbing that a City Commissioners wife can, on social media, bully and attack someone for voicing their concern in an open and public meeting forum, telling the citizen's they need to shut their month or they can be sued for slander or harassment and a restraining order issued to keep the citizens from entering a building where government activity is being conducted, is ludacris at best. I find this attach distressing and a personal invasion of my first amendment right.

Chairman Bond Jr. hit his gavel and informed Mrs. McDonald that the 3-minute time frame for the public comment had ended. Mrs. McDonald asked Deputy Drew Robinson to give Chairman Bond Jr. a document.

Mr. Hubert Coltrain – 1031 Scenic Drive Williamston

Mr. Coltrain stated, "On October 14, 2020, then acting Martin County Manager David Bone, contacted Williamston Police Department and reported that there was suspicion of embezzlement by Martin County employees. An investigation was conducted and their findings were forwarded to the District Attorney Seth Edwards. It is my understanding that the suspected crime involved improper use of a credit card. That credit card accessed funds held by the Council on Aging, which is a 501 (c)(3) organization, created by the employees of Martin County Adult and Aging Services Department. It is my understanding that the funds held by this organization primarily came from the efforts of volunteers, such as those volunteers operating a business known as the Bargain Shop. Those funds were intended to be used for projects benefiting our County's senior citizens. Police reports lists that the suspected crime could be as much as \$25,000.00. At the time of the investigation, and I'm going to leave you alone about Adult and Aging, was seized by the Martin County Sheriff's Department and is still being held as evidence. No more than 3 years have passed, I've found no evidence that any charges have been brought against the accused employee, nor has any effort been made to recover any or part of what might have been taken. One might suspect that if the employee is innocent, they would be demanding that their name be cleared of any wrong doing. Also, one might expect, that if there is affect evidence of wrongdoing, our County government would be anxious to see the accused person brought to justice and their efforts are made to recover some or all of the money that those volunteers selflessly raise. Once again, I believe the Martin County citizens deserve some answers. Thank you"

Mrs. Princess Foster - 112 Henderson Street, Williamston

Mrs. Foster stated, "I come to you today to talk about a quorum. A quorum requirement between three County Commissioners can exuberate existing divisions between the Board and hinder effective government in several ways. Deadlock in decision-making. With only three Commissioners, a quorum, a divided Board, may struggle to reach conscientious or key issues. If Commissioners are entrenched in opposing viewpoints, decision-making can become deadlocked, leading to gridlock and the inability to address pressing matters facing the County. Polarization and Partisanship. A simple quorum may amplify political polarization and partisanship within the Board. Commissioners may prioritize party loyalty over the common good, leading in the inability to compromise and collaborate across party lines for the benefit of the County. Lack of checks and balances. A quorum with three Commissioners may lack the necessary checks and balances to prevent unallowed decision making on abuses of power. Without adequate representation and oversight, individual Commissioners may will disappropriated influence; potentially leading to decisions that do not reflect the Boards interests of the County or its residents. Limited diversity of perspectives. With a small quorum and experiences within the Board may be limited; this can

result a narrow range of viewpoints being represented in decision-making process, overlooking the needs and concerns of certain communities, or stakeholders within the community. Perpetuation of division. The ease of achieving a quorum with only three Commissioners may perpetuate divisions within the board by allowing minority actions to obstruct or delay proceedings rather than fostering collaboration and conscientious building, a small quorum requirement may reinforce.

Chairman Bond Jr. hit the gavel and began to state that the three minute time period was complete when members from the audience argued that the time limit was not complete.

Mrs. Foster continued to speak stating, "In conclusion, the quorum requirement between three County Commissioners will not be conducted to effective governments particular in the context where the board is divided. It can exuberate polarization, impeded decision making, eliminate diversity or perpetuate the division within the board, ultimately, hindering the county's ability to address its challenges and serve the needs of the residents. I was told to sit back and hold my voice of concerns, but I will not be silenced in the troubles in our county that have been endured during your reign of trouble will end soon and first of all peoples they're looking for peace in our community."

CONSENT AGENDA

Commissioner Smith made a Motion to Approve the Consent Agenda, with a Second by Vice Chair Biggs. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

1. Minute Approval

- October 5, 2023 Special

2. Financial Report – January 2024

3. Tax Assessor – Tax Refund Request – January 2024 - \$109.39

4. Tax Assessor – Tax Relief Orders – January 2024 -\$21,154.44

| Year Levy | Lname | Fname | Reason | Value | Total |
|-----------|----------|----------------|---|-------------|-------------|
| 2023 | LLC. | Blackacre | Imm. Irreg. Update value | \$2,263,470 | \$18,334.11 |
| 2023 | Co. Inc. | Dail Music | Appeal for Discovery value | \$48,942 | \$532.58 |
| 2023 | Moore | Willie& Ida | Compromise-Discovery Bill less than (105-316k) – Board Approved 2018-2023 | \$0.00 | \$1,467.92 |
| 2023 | Moreno | Jose Magdaleno | Vac. Prop. - Shouldn't have SW1 Charge | \$0.00 | \$195.00 |
| 2023 | Smith | Sandra Faye | Err. In List. - Vehicle Registered in VA | \$0.00 | \$361.51 |

| | | | | | |
|---|-------------|-----------------|---|---------|--------------------|
| 2023 | LLC. | Storage Station | Imm. Irreg. FDR Change DF Value Date | \$2,760 | \$22.36 |
| 2023 | Williamston | Town of | SW Fee Ct. Water Tower- No Landfill fee | \$0.00 | \$195.00 |
| 2023 | LLC. | Zaki Properties | Dble. List – 1998 List DN Acct. 1421601 | \$4,750 | \$45.60 |
| TAX RELIEF ORDER - REAL AND PERSONAL RELEASES TOTAL: | | | | | \$21,154.44 |
| 2024 | Cannon | Richard D. | Adjustment Refund – Appeal | \$44.02 | \$39.62 |
| 2024 | Alligood | Danny S. | Adjustment Refund – Appeal | \$44.00 | \$39.60 |
| 2024 | Schultz | Jacob D. | Adjustment REFUND- Appeal | \$60.34 | \$30.17 |
| TAX RELIEF ORDER – VTS REFUND REQUEST TOTAL | | | | | \$109.39 |
| ALL TOTAL: | | | | | 21, 263.47 |

5. Tax Collector's Report – January 2024

| | Monthly - Jan. 24 | Yearly - Jan 24 - Feb 24 | All Total |
|----------------|-------------------|--------------------------|------------|
| Cat. 20 | 14,154.11 | 91,506.01 | |
| Cat. 25 | 1,534.30 | 32,177.19 | |
| Cat. 30 | 0 | 0 | |
| Totals | 15,688.41 | 123,683.20 | 139,371.61 |

6. Board Appointments/Reappointments

Boards are scheduled for reappointments/appointments each month, unless there is an unexpected vacancy or no vacancies to fill. The Child Fatality Protection Team, Community Child Protection Team, and Council on Aging are scheduled for reappointments in February. The members of the Board of Equalization and Review (ENR) are reappointed/ appointed every year. The members are usually scheduled for reappointments/ appointments in April, but were moved to give more time for oaths to be administered.

a. Board of Equalization and Review (ENR)

The Board of Equalization and Review (ENR) convenes once every year from April –May for hearings related to tax matter. The following were recommended to be reappointed or appointed to the Board of ENR.

Reappointment to terms to end on March 31, 2025

- Hugh Kennedy
- Donald White
- Anita Whitehurst

Appointment of new member terms to end on March 31, 2025

- Timmie Modlin
- William Dwayne Baker

The Board Appointments listed above were Approved by the Board as a Consent Agenda item.

b. Council on Aging

The Council on Aging monitors and regulates the funding of the Council on Aging Senior Center Services. The following members have been reappointed/appointed to the Council on Aging Board:

- Thurman Savage
- Verlon Godard

As of February 10, 2024, the final terms for current Board Members, Jerry McCray and Barney Conway will expire. The above recommended individuals were recommended to be appointed to replace those with expiring terms, their first terms will be effective February 10, 2024 and expire on February 10, 2027, and may be reappointed for a second term that will expire February 10, 2030. The following members were recommended for reappointment for a full 3-year term ending on February 10, 2027.

- Becky Dymek
- Cynthia Peele

Mrs. Dymek's first full term ends on February 10, 2024 and if reappointed her second full term will end February 10, 2027. Mrs. Peele is completing the second term of previous board member, Betty Jones who resigned due to health reasons, which ends on February 10, 2024. Mrs. Peele may be reappointed for two full terms following the completion of the current partial term. If reappointed, Mrs. Peele's first full term would end on February 10, 2027.

The Board Appointments listed above were Approved by the Board as a Consent Agenda item.

c. Community Child Protection Team

The Community Child Protection Team (CCPT) was established by law (General Statue 7B-1406) in May of 1991 as a means for the state and local communities to form a partnership to strengthen child protection. The CCPT is an interdisciplinary group of community representatives who meet regularly to promote a community-wide approach to the problem of child abuse and neglect.

Community Child Protection Team reviews are designed to assist DSS and families in protecting children by identifying barriers in services and collaborating on strategies to remedy the situation. The purpose of these reviews is also to inform county commissioners about actions needed to prevent child abuse, neglect or dependency.

The members of the Community Child Protection Team serve ongoing terms and the Board is consulted for changes in membership every year. A representative of the Board will make a presentation in the March 2023 Regular Board meeting. The following are members of the Community Child Protection Team

- Angela Ellis, Director of Social Services/Transit
- Nancy Conner, Director's Designee and Chair
- Quintina Little, Member of Director's Staff
- Drew Robinson, Martin County Sheriff's Department
- Seth Edward, District Attorney
- Juanita Brown, Board Member
- Gwendolyn Godard, GAL Representative for Martin County
- Vickey Manning, Designee of MTW District Health Department
- Katie Cowan, MTW District Health Department

The above Board members were listed in the Consent Agenda for information purposes only.

7. Martin County Transit - Revised SSP Manual with Revised Title VI Policy (Approved 01/10/24) and Drug & Alcohol Testing Policy

North Carolina refers to the network of coordinated public transportation programs as the Community Transportation Program (CTP). These entities, including Martin County Transit, provide public transportation to the general public and to clients of human services agencies. To be eligible to receive Section 5311 funds, community transportation providers must fulfill several minimum CTP requirements, one being the annual adoption of the revised SSP Manual available from the North Carolina Department of Transportation - Integrated Mobility Division. Martin County Transit is required to keep such current policies in the SSP Manual Notebook in our MCT office. SSP stands for "System Safety Plan". The SSP is the definitive guide for Martin County Transit operational practices. The sections of our SSP Manual include:

A Section - Sections List, Letters, Announcements, Memos, and Previous Signature Pages B
Section - Table of Contents

- (1) Emergency Action Plan
- (2) Fire Prevention Plan
- (3) Preventive Maintenance Plan
- (4) Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy
- (5) Safety and Security Plan
- (6) Continuity of Operations Plan
- (7) Driver and Employee Selection
- (8) Driver and Employee Training Orientation
- (9) Safety Data Acquisition & Analysis Plan - Safety Awareness Program
- (10) Martin County Transit Operational Handbook

A new Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy template was emailed to Martin County Transit in a November 15, 2023 email. Per the instructions of the NCDOT-IMD this template was completed by the Transit administration for consideration of adoption by the Board of Commissioners. The

Board of Commissioners was asked to adopt the proposed revised Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy SSP Manual Section Four. A signature sheet for the Board Chair and Clerk to the Board affirming the adoption of the proposed revised Drug and Alcohol Testing Policy SSP Manual Section Four was included and the manual can be found in the Clerk's Office.

The Board Approved this item as part of the Consent Agenda

8. Clerk Report is included in agenda packet.

INTRODUCTION TO NEW EMPLOYEES

Tynaye Brown was introduced as a new Transit Driver in the Transit sector of the Department of Social Services. Arnetta King was also introduced as a new Transit Driver in the Transit Sector of the Department of Social Services. Ms. King and Ms. Brown were reportedly both residents of the Town of Williamston.

Tammy Padgett and Tiki Cherry were announced as new Income Maintenance Caseworkers in the Department of Social Services, but could not attend.

PRESENTATIONS – NONE

OLD BUSINESS

CADA Board Appointment - Commissioners Appointment

CADA is a private, non-profit organization, a Community Action Agency, whose mission is to assist low income citizens achieve self-sufficiency and a better quality of life. Their purpose is to promote through regional cooperation, the industrial, agricultural, recreational, educational and general economic wellbeing and health and welfare of the citizens of Bertie, Halifax, Hertford and Northampton Counties.

Chairman Bond Jr. made comments regarding CADA. A Commissioner was not voted on take the Board appointment and there were no volunteers.

No action was taken.

NEW BUSINESS

NC State Extension - Memorandum of Agreement Between Martin County and NC State University and Addendum

North Carolina State Extension (NC State Extension) was established as a part of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences of North Carolina State University (NCSU) by federal and state legislation for the specific purpose of "extending" the educational services of the University to the people of the state, on subjects related to agriculture and natural resources, family and consumer sciences, 4-H youth development, and community and rural development. The laws creating the Cooperative Extension service were specifically designed to assure that the findings of research in these areas are communicated to the people of the State.

To assure that educational programs offered by Cooperative Extension meet the needs of the local clientele, it is important that both elected and appointed decision makers at each level of government understand their respective responsibilities and relationships in conducting and funding this work. To this end, a Memorandum of Agreement details the individual relationships and mutually agreed upon responsibilities of NCSU and each county and or tribal community that signs this Memorandum of Agreement. The Martin County Board of Commissioners approved of the Memorandum of Agreement with NC State Extension in the past. An addendum of the agreement has been prepared with a summary of changes outlying the changes made in the agreement for Board review and approval.

Commissioner Smith made the Motion to Approve of the Addendum to the Memorandum of Agreement Between Martin County and NC State, with A Second by Commissioner Gurganus.

Discussion: Commissioner Smith expressed gratitude towards the Cooperative Extension, NC State, and NC A&T State Universities for their partnerships, resources, and services provided. NC Cooperative Extension Director asked if there were any questions about NC A&T State University, this agreement only applied to the NC State University staff. NC Cooperative Extension Director stated that NC A&T State University had a memorandum of agreement each time the hired someone. Fifty percent (50%) of the salary reportedly came from Martin County.

Commissioner Smith made the Motion to Approve of the Addendum to the Memorandum of Agreement Between Martin County and NC State, with A Second by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was Carried unanimously, by raise of hands (5-0).

2023 Portable Radio PSAP Grant Application and Agreement

Martin County 911 Communications Director Jason Steward reported that in August of last year, a grant opportunity was discovered through the North Carolina 911 Board. This grant opportunity was for portable radios for the 911 Center (PSAP). Communications Director Steward informed the Board of the submittal of the grant application. As of last month, Communications Director Steward was notified that the grant was awarded in the amount of \$24,992.67. The grant would provide portable hand held radios for each Telecommunicator in the event that there is a failure in the console radios. A layer of redundancy was added to the phone systems at the Communications Center recently and the portable radios were reported to provide a layer of redundancy to the radio system. The opportunity was a 100% grant, meaning the County was not required to provide funding to match the grant or a financial contribution. The grant application and agreement was included in the agenda packet.

Motion by Commissioner Gurganus to Approve of the PSAP Portable Radio Grant and Agreement, with a Second by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was Carried Unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

Emergency Operations Plan Development Contract

- Pulled from agenda during agenda approval

Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA) Grant Resolution Accepting Award

Martin County was been approved For American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding from the State fiscal Recover) Fund for \$400,000 for an Asset Inventory and Assessment (AIA) study. Projects funded from the tale Fiscal Recovery Funds established in S.L. 2021- 180 / S. L. 2022-74 must meet applicable federal law and guidance for the ARP funds.

An offer-and-acceptance document extending ARP funding for \$400,000.00 was sent to the County Manager's Office. This offer was made by the Division of Water Infrastructure (DWI) and is subject to the assurances and conditions set forth in the enclosed offer-and-acceptance document. Funds will not be disbursed unless this offer is accepted. A resolution accepting the funding was provided. The original resolution in the agenda packet was reported to have a typo in the amount of funding to be received from the State to the County and a revised resolution was placed to the place settings of each Commissioner before the meeting.

RESOLUTION BY GOVERNING BODY OF RECIPIENT

WHEREAS, the American Rescue Plan (ARP) funded from the State Fiscal Recovery Fund was established in S.L. 2021-180 to assist eligible units of government with meeting their water/wastewater infrastructure needs, and

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality has offered American Rescue Plan (ARP) funding in the amount of\$ 40,000.00 to perform an Asset Inventory and Assessment study detailed in the submitted application, and

WHEREAS, the Martin County Board of Commissioners intends to perform said project in accordance with the agreed scope of work,

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF THE MARTIN COUNTY:

That Martin County Board of Commissioners does hereby accept the American Rescue Plan (ARP) offer of \$400,000.00

That the Martin County Board of Commissioners does hereby give assurance to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality that any Conditions or Assurances contained in the Award Offer will be adhered to.

That Dempsey Bond Jr., Chairman, Martin County Board of Commissioners, and successors so titled, is hereby authorized and directed to furnish such information as the appropriate State agency may request in connection with such application or the project; to make the assurances as contained above; and to execute such other documents as may be required by the Division of Water Infrastructure.

Adopted this the 14th day of February, 2024 at Williamston, North Carolina.

Dempsey Bond Jr. Martin County Board of Commissioners

Date

Motion by Commissioner Smith to Accept the American Rescue Plan Grant funding of \$400,000.00 towards the Asset Inventory Assessment (AIA), with a Second by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was Carried Unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

Motion by Commissioner Gurganus to Adopt the Resolution by Governing Body of Recipient for the American Rescue Plan Grant Funding of \$400,000.00, with a Second by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was Carried Unanimously by raise of hands (5-0)

County Attorney/Interim County Manager Eisner asked the Board if he could switch the *GREAT Grant* and *Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Program* agenda items due to the order of the grant timeline.

Growing with Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT)

Great Grant was The American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") provided funding to Martin County, which can be used to promote broadband services. Interim County Manager Eisner reported that a few years ago, a broadband company named CloudWyze initially won the GREAT Grant. In the ensuing years, CloudWyze and the State were resolving some issues wherein the grant money was taken from CloudWyze. CloudWyze was reportedly working on other projects in Martin County through direct State funds, which did not have involve the Board of Commissioners and was not or the GREAT Grant program at this time.

Roanoke Connect Holdings was reportedly a retail provider of communications services including the provision of broadband services to portions of Martin County. Roanoke Connect Holdings applied for a grant under the North Carolina Growing Rural Areas through Access through Technology Act ("GREAT Act") to provide broadband services to identified unserved areas of Martin County and was selected by the North Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Office to receive State Fiscal Recovery Funds for the Martin County project. To support the Martin County project, Martin County will contribute matching funds in the amount of \$500,000.00 from its ARPA revenue replacement funds.

RESOLUTION TO PROVIDE CERTAIN COUNTY FUNDS FROM THE AMERICAN RESCUE PLAN ACT OF 2021 TO PARTNER WITH ROANOKE CONNECT HOLDINGS TO FUND THE CONSTRUCTION OF BROADBAND INFRASTRUCTURE IN CERTAIN AREAS OF MARTIN COUNTY

WHEREAS, broadband service is vital to the progress of communities and economic development of Martin County; and,

WHEREAS, The American Rescue Plan Act ("ARPA") provided funding to Martin County which can be used to promote broadband services;

WHEREAS, Roanoke Connect Holdings is a retail provider of communications services including the provision of broadband services to portions of Martin County;

WHEREAS, Roanoke Connect Holdings has applied for a grant under the North Carolina Growing Rural Areas Through Access Through Technology Act ("GREAT Act") to provide broadband services to identified unserved areas of Martin County;

WHEREAS, Roanoke Connect Holdings has been selected by the North Carolina Broadband Infrastructure Office to receive State Fiscal Recovery Funds for the Martin County project; and,

WHEREAS, to support the Martin County project, Martin County will contribute matching funds in the amount of \$500,000.00 from its ARPA revenue replacement funds.

NOW THEREFORE the Martin County Board of Commissioners hereby resolves as follows:

1. That the GREAT grant application of having been successfully awarded to Roanoke Connect Holdings for the Martin County project, Martin County shall contribute matching funds in the amount of \$500,000.00 from its ARPA revenue replacement funds.

Adopted this ____ day of February 2024.

Martin County Board of Commissioners
Dempsey Bond, Jr., Chairman

ATTEST

Julia S. Rease Clerk to the Board

A contract Between the State Department of Information Technology, the County, and Roanoke Connect Holdings, L.L.C was provided in the agenda packets for approval as well as the resolution as stated above.

Commissioner Gurganus asked if it was correct to understand that CloudWyze initially won the GREAT Grant, were unable to fulfill their obligations, and litigation ensued, the County was getting behind in the project wherein it had to be untangled by NCDIT representative Nate Denny, and the process has to start over with Roanoke Connect. Commissioner Gurganus stated that if this was so, a year of productivity was lost. Commissioner Gurganus stated that this was not at the fault of the County, and asked if the approval of the agenda item would start the process over.

Interim County Manager Eisner agreed. Interim County Manager Eisner reported that his understanding from the State was that the broadband provider with the highest score would be an automatic pick to be awarded the GREAT Grant. CloudWyze was stated to be the Broadband

provider with the highest score. Ultimately, CloudWyze and the State had issues that they had to resolve, which opened the door for an opportunity with other providers. Martin County was reportedly one of the many Counties that were in this situation.

Chairman Bond Jr. asked if there were any matching monies needed to receive the grant. It was reported that a letter of interest was sent from the County about 2 years ago stating that \$500,000.00 was committed to this grant. Therefore, the same amount of funding would be committed to the grant. Interim County Manager Eisner informed the Board that the \$500,000.00 would come from the County American Rescue Plan (ARP) funds.

Motion by Commissioner Smith to Approve the Resolution to Provide Certain County Funds from the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 to Partner with Roanoke Connect Holdings to Fund the Construction of Broadband Infrastructure in Certain Areas of Martin County, with a Second by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0)

Interim County Manager Eisner stated that there was also a free party contract between Martin County, North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT), and Roanoke Connect Holdings.

Motion by Commissioner Smith to Approve of the contract between Martin County, North Carolina Department of Information Technology (NCDIT), and Roanoke Connect Holdings, with a Second by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0)

Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) Program

The North Carolina Department of Information Technology ("NCDIT") is seeking to collaborate with North Carolina counties to fund awards for last-mile broadband projects ("Project" or "Projects") under the Completing Access to Broadband Program ("CAB program"). The purpose of this document is to describe the process for this collaboration and to gather information from each county ("the County") regarding its financial commitment to the Project or Projects.

The CAB program is a competitive bidding program that provides an opportunity for individual North Carolina county governments to collaborate with NCDIT to fund broadband infrastructure projects in unserved and underserved areas of each county. The program is codified in N.C.G.S. § 143B-1373.1, established by S.L. 2021-180, and amended by S.L. 2022-6, S.L. 2022-74, and 2023-134. Counties that participate in the CAB program must provide matching funds for the Projects using ARPA funds or non-restricted general funds as their source of matching funds as outlined in the CAB legislation.

In summary, the County will be responsible for the following steps as part of the CAB program:

- Identifying an "up to" amount in the CAB Commitment Form
- Selecting Evaluation Team members
- Coordinating with NCDIT to review the Scope of Work
- Coordinating with NCDIT mapping staff on prioritization of areas and indicating approval of final areas

- Participating in review of responses (only members of the Evaluation Team).
- Upon issuance of an award by NCDIT, transferring matching funds to NCDIT.

As part of the Completing Access to Broadband (CAB) program, the County would need to contribute in matching funds to the NC. Department of Information Technology for the issuance of a Scope of Work or Scopes of Work soliciting eligible broadband providers to build broadband infrastructure within the geographic boundaries of the County.

Interim County Manager Eisner stated in the process of achieving Broadband for Martin County, the GREAT Grant came first and the CAB Grant program was the “last mile grant” that would finish any broadband projects not completed by the GREAT Grant. The CAB Grant program that required ARP funding, wherein the County was asked to commit to an “up to” amount of ARP funding to match the CAB grant. The commitment amount was needed before moving forward.

Commissioner Gurganus stated that he reached out to Dr. Reddick in Halifax County that was a sponsor and conducted a lot of good work with broadband. Commissioner Gurganus stated that Dr. Reddick expressed a need for the County to at least make a commitment of funding. Commissioner Gurganus stated that he also spoke with Nate Denny with NCDIT and Mr. Denny agreed that the money needed to be committed. Commissioner Gurganus stated that the commitment only stated that the County was willing to pay up to a certain amount and did not mean that the County had to spend the entire amount. The GREAT Grant would cover some households, the ARDOLF Grant (Charter, Spectrum, and Mediacom) would cover some more households, but there would be pockets of areas uncovered by broadband services. Commissioner Gurganus informed the public that the Board did not decide where broadband would be installed, but the State and Federal levels of government did. To some degree, the Board would reportedly have input with the CAB Grant program. Another program, BEAD, was reportedly a new and possible opportunity to provide broadband to the rest of the County. The rules for the BEAD program were not complete as of yet. Commissioner Gurganus explained that the submittal of the financial commitment would put Martin County in a pool of others that were interested in the program, NCDIT would send a team to Martin County to help the Board understand the maps and areas that had been untouched by Broadband services, NCDIT would put together a proposal to send out, then they would meet back with the County with Bids. Commissioner Gurganus stated that the broadband project thus far was an estimated \$4 million and the County’s portion was 10%, which was why \$400,000.00 was suggested as a commitment. Commissioner Gurganus stated that if the \$ 4million project completed services throughout the County, the County would have only spent ARP grant funding instead of tax dollars.

Commissioner Smith reported on Broadband an ARP Funds. At the National Association of Counties (NACo) Conference that recently past, Commissioner Smith stated that it was discussed that each of the broadband programs/opportunities had a hard deadline. Commissioner Smith reported that there were issues on a national level. It was stated that the County had issues with CloudWyze, but other counties were having a hard time with their Broadband providers meeting deadlines due to logistics, needed parts, and more. As a Country, it was reported that all 3,069 counties came together to put together a policy to send to the legislatures that the broadband providers were having issues meeting deadlines. Commissioner Smith stated that it was also discussed that if policies were not changed

Commissioner Gurganus stated to Commissioner Smith's point, the faster the County submitted the commitment form, the faster the services could be implemented.

Motion was made by Commissioner Gurganus to commit \$400,000 to the CAB program and that a letter is sent to NCDIT, with a Second by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was Carried Unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

Martin County and Travel and Tourism Interlocal Agreement

Pulled from the agenda during agenda approval.

Martin County Budget Schedule 2024

Interim County Manager Eisner reported that the County had a Budget Retreat in the past. A proposed budget schedule was created and included initial workshops for department heads that would staff with the County Manager's Office and Finance. The proposed schedule is as follows:

Staffing's with County Manager's Office and Finance – No Board Meeting

- March 5 - Department Head meetings
- March 6 - Department Head meetings
- March 13 - Department Head meetings
- March 14 - Department Head meetings - none scheduled for this day at this time.

Presentations to the Board

- March 20 - Department presentations to the Board
- March 21 - Agency presentations to the Board
- April - TBD - Joint meeting with the Board of Education April or Early May - Budget workshop
- June 12 - Adopt budget

Interim County Manager Eisner reported that March 20-21, 2024 would be dates that presentations could be made to the Board from department heads and outer agencies.

Commissioner Gurganus asked that the meetings involving the Board were at a good time for the Commissioners that had to work during the day. Interim County Manager Eisner agreed.

Chairman Bond Jr. asked Interim County Manager Eisner to clarify the schedule and Interim County Manager Eisner reiterated the dates.

Commissioner Smith made the Motion to Approve of the budget schedule with a Second by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

Martin County Board Procedures Review and Update

Interim County Manager Eisner reported that the Board adopted Board procedures in May 2011 with three amendments since then. The most recent amendments to the Board Procedures were reportedly due to COVID 19. A redlined draft of the Board Procedures was included in the agenda packet for review.

Interim County Manager stated that the main changes in the procedures were in regards to Section 5 - Public Address to the Board, clarifying the difference between an "Appointment Before the Board" and "Public Comments". Interim County Manager Eisner added that the redlined draft Board procedures was more streamlined and the Board procedures were adopted from another County that did not have a lot of clarity.

Commissioner Smith made the Motion to Adopt the proposed Board Procedures, with a Second by Commissioner Biggs. The Motion was Carried by raise of hands (5-0).

Budget Amendments

Budget Amendment #36

The Martin County ABC Board awarded \$4,500 in fiscal year 2022-2023 to the Sheriffs Office for the DARE program. Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) is an education program that seeks to prevent the use of controlled drugs, membership in gangs, and violent behavior. Students who enter the program sign a pledge not to use drugs or join gangs and are instructed by a Martin County deputy using an interactive in-school curriculum which lasts 12 weeks. The Sheriffs office did not expend all the funds in fiscal year 2022-2023 so the funds flowed to fund balance. This budget amendment re-appropriates the unspent funds of \$4,100 to the Sheriffs office to spend on the DARE program.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-36

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, 2024.

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

| | Increase | Decrease |
|---------------|----------|----------|
| Public Safety | | |
| Sheriff | \$4,100 | |

This will result in an increase of \$4,100 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 \$4,100

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 Gurganus and seconded by Commissioner Biggs to adopt the above budget ordinance amendment this 14th day of February 2024. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

Budget Amendment #37

The NC Judicial Branch is transitioning Martin County to ECourts on February 5, 2024. ECourts is a package of new software applications and technology improvements that will transition our court system from paper to digital. Currently there are four NC counties using this system, and Martin County is one of 12 counties transitioning in February.

This transition will affect the Sheriff's office and the computers used by each officer. From February 5 forward all tickets will be digital. Currently all deputies do not have the technology to allow them to do digital tickets. Therefore, each officer without this technology will have to call another officer to issue the ticket. Some of the laptop computers currently used by deputies are 14 years old, will not support an upgrade to Windows 11, and are at end of life. The Sheriff's office is currently working to sell cars with an estimated total sale price of \$50,000 to \$60,000. The County budgeted \$20,000 in the sale of assets revenue line. The difference in the proceeds from the sale and the budgeted amount could be used to pay for these upgrades, but the Sheriff needs to proceed to have the upgrades done in a timely manner. Therefore, the sale of the assets will be used to replenish fund balance.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-37

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, 2024.

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

| | Increase | Decrease |
|---------------|----------|----------|
| Public Safety | | |
| Sheriff | \$40,740 | |

This will result in an increase of \$40,740 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 | \$40,740 |
|------------------------------|----------|

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 Smith and seconded by Commissioner Gurganus to adopt the above budget ordinance amendment this 14th day of February 2024. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

Budget Amendment #38

Martin County was awarded a 2021 Essential Single-Family Rehabilitation Loan Pool Award. There has been a funding award modification, which increases this grant by 11,400.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-38

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, 2024.

Section 1. To amend the SSH CDBG fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows.

| | Increase | Decrease |
|-------------------|----------|----------|
| 2021 ESFRLP Grant | | |
| Rehabilitation | \$11,400 | |

This will result in an increase of \$11,400 in the expenditures of the SSH CDBG Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

| | |
|------------------------------|----------|
| Restricted Intergovernmental | \$11,400 |
|------------------------------|----------|

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 Smith and seconded by Commissioner Gurganus to adopt the above budget ordinance amendment this 14th day of February 2024. Motion was Carried unanimously (5-0).

Budget Amendment #39

In the current year budget, the office supply line of the Register of Deeds office was inadvertently removed from the budget. Last year the budget for office supplies was \$2,400. Staff is requesting the \$2,400 be added to the Register of Deeds budget.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-39

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, 2024.

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

| | Increase | Decrease |
|--------------------|----------|----------|
| General Government | | |
| Register of Deeds | \$2,400 | |

This will result in an increase of \$2,400 in the expenditures of the General Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

| | |
|--------------|---------|
| Fund Balance | \$2,400 |
|--------------|---------|

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 Smith and seconded by Commissioner Gurganus budget ordinance amendment this 14th day of February 2024 to adopt the above. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

Budget Amendment #40

Several departments had employees retire this year who are eligible for retiree insurance that was not budgeted in the original budget. Also Medicare supplement rates increased in January from the prior year above what was budgeted.

BUDGET ORDINANCE AMENDMENT-40

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, 2024.

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

| | Increase | Decrease |
|--------------------------|----------|----------|
| General Government | | |
| County Managers Office | \$240 | |
| Finance | \$11,264 | |
| Elections | \$38 | |
| Public Safety | | |
| Sheriff Communications | \$1,580 | |
| Environmental Protection | | |
| Landfill | \$609 | |
| Human Services | | |
| DSS | \$611 | |
| VA | \$246 | |
| Adult and Aging | \$1944 | |

This will result in an increase of \$26,733 in the expenditures of the General Fund. To provide an increase in the revenues for the above, the following revenues will be changed.

| | |
|--------------|----------|
| Fund Balance | \$26,733 |
|--------------|----------|

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 Biggs to adopt budget ordinance amendment and seconded by Commissioner Smith this 14th day of February 2024. Motion was Carried

CLOSED SESSION(S) 1. N.C.G.S. §143-318.11. (a)(3) Attorney/Client Privilege and 2.N.C.G.S. §143- 318.11(a)(6) Personnel

At: 7:54 p.m. Commissioner Biggs made the Motion to Enter Closed Session(s) 1.N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3)Attorney-Client Privilege and 2. N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel, with a Second by Commissioner Smith. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

At: 8:30 p.m. Commissioner Gurganus made the Motion to Enter Closed Session(s) 1.N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(3)Attorney-Client Privilege and 2. N.C.G.S. §143-318.11(a)(6) Personnel, with a Second by Commissioner Biggs. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

OPEN SESSION

Tax Appeal Legal Counsel

Interim County Manager Eisner stated that there was an appeal before the Tax Commission that was scheduled to take place in March. The appeal was in regards to a County employee whom was the executor of an estate. In this matter, the Tax Assessor's Office deemed the Present Use Value (PUV) application for the estate to be a late filed application. The Board reportedly upheld the Tax Assessor's decision that the PUV application was late. The County employee appealed the decision to be reviewed by the Tax Commission for a series of events that continued until December 2023. Interim County Manager Eisner recommended that the Board seek counsel since he was serving in a dual capacity and was considered the manager/supervisor for the County employee that the matter involved. Interim County recommended Mr. David Mills and reported on Mr. Mills experience as legal counsel. If Mr. Mills was hired as limited legal counsel, the cost would be \$250.00/hour.

Commissioner Gurganus made the Motion to hire David Mills as suggested by Interim County Manager Eisner, with a Second by Commissioner Ayers. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

Interim County Manager Monthly Statement

Next, Interim County Manager Eisner asked for approval of his monthly statement. The total compensation for the month of January 2024 totaled to \$5,120.50 with mileage reimbursement of \$627.76, for a total of \$5,756.26. The statement was reportedly audited by the Finance Office and Human Resources. Interim County Manager Eisner asked if there were any questions and or comments and there were none.

Commissioner Smith made the Motion to Approve of Interim County Manager Eisner's monthly statement for January 2024, with a Second by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).

BOARD REPORTS

Commissioner Gurganus discussed his first experience in attending a Legislative Breakfast that occurred in Martin County and was hosted by Economic Development Council. Commissioner Gurganus stated that there was representation from the Federal and State Legislatures. It was reported that the needs of Martin County were discussed such as Martin General Hospital, Economic Development, and Education. Commissioner Gurganus stated that he gave an update on Martin General Hospital and at the end of his dissertation; he informed the group that an update

would be given by Ascendient Health Consultant Dawn Carter. Commissioner Gurganus reported that NC Representative Shelly Willingham and Town of Bear Grass Mayor Charlotte Griffin attended and provided great information. The event was reportedly very informative, supportive, and that it was good to know that the legislatures were aware and ready to provide assistance.

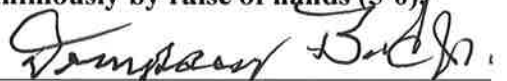
Commissioner Ayers stated that there were many trash containers that were torn apart and unusable. Commissioner Ayers reported that the trash company was at least 30 days behind on requests in putting trashcans out. Commissioner Ayers stated that he had a business owner to contact him for assistance in getting a new trashcan since the business owner waited 3 weeks for a new can and had not received it. Commissioner Ayers stated that the business owner had a trashcan that was torn apart by the arm from the trash service truck. It was stated that this was expected sometimes. The business owner reportedly had to put his damaged trashcan in his personal truck and take it to the trash service office to get a replacement. Commissioner Ayers stated that this was not acceptable and reiterated that the company was 30 days behind. Commissioner Ayers suggested a call through County Manager's Office would help. Commissioner Ayers reported that it was a travesty of terrible service that the County was receiving from the company. Commissioner Ayers stated that people had to wait for a month to get their trash replaced after the company's truck damaged it. It was requested that these issues were addressed as well as the company not answering the phone.


Commissioner Gurganus stated that the manager of the trash company seemed to be a fine fellow and was trying to fix things. To Commissioner Ayers point, Commissioner Gurganus gave an example of issues with trash services. Commissioner Gurganus stated that there was an elder man in his driveway waiting for him to get home so he could assist the 86 year old with his trash bin. The trash bin was reportedly missing wheels, had holes, and did not have a lid. The elder reportedly dragged his trash bin to the road every day and had just left the Town of Williamston in search for a new one to no success. Commissioner Gurganus stated that he gave the elder one of his trash bins and took the damaged can from the elder. Commissioner Gurganus stated that he made three trips to the company site and did not have success in trading out the damaged trash bin for a new one. Commissioner Gurganus stated that this happened about a year ago, but it was becoming a problem to get a new trash bin.

There were no further comments, questions, and or reports from the Board.

Adjournment:

At: 8:40 p.m., Commissioner Smith made the Motion to Adjourn the meeting, with a Second by Commissioner Gurganus. Motion was Carried unanimously by raise of hands (5-0).


Dempsey Bond Jr, Chairman
Martin County Board of Commissioners


Julia S. Rease
Clerk to the Board