

August 30, 2021

The Martin County Board of Commissioners met in Special Session with the Martin County Board of Education on Monday, August 30, 2021 at 7:00 p.m. at the Martin County Board of Commissioners Board Room, 305 East Main Street, Williamston, NC 27892.

ASSEMBLY

Martin County Board of Commissioners and staff in attendance: Chairman Ronnie Smith, Vice Chairman Dempsey Bond, Jr., Commissioner Joe Ayers, Commissioner Emily Biggs, County Manager James Bennett, Clerk to the Board Julia Rease, Finance Officer Cindy Ange, Water Department Ed Warren, and Sheriff Tim Manning.

Present via Webex: None

Chairman/Commissioner Smith called the Board meeting to order at 7:00pm.

Commissioner Biggs led the pledge of allegiance. Chairman Smith offered the invocation.

AGENDA APPROVAL

County Vice Chairman Bond Jr. made a MOTION to approve the agenda as presented, with a Second by County Commissioner Ayers. The motion was APPROVED unanimously.

PUBLIC COMMENTS – NONE

Water Meter Readings

County Manager Bennett stated that it was found last week that there were water meter readings that were read incorrectly or not read at all. County Manager stated that Ed Warren of the Water Department has been working closely with his department to make a solution and the situation has been handled with disciplinary actions. County Manager Bennett stated that there were a least 300 meters that have not been read or were misread. County Manager asked the board to approve restitutions for those who have been over charged on their water bills. County Manager Bennett stated that it was not fair for Martin County citizens to pay for the misread meters and water bills.

Commissioner Ayers inquired about the number of meters being read and if the meters were under or overcharged. County Manager Bennett stated that there were some people who were undercharged on their water bill as well as overcharged, but the concern is for the citizens that were overcharged. Commissioner Ayers stated that this was an ongoing issue and County Manager Bennett as well as Water Department System Manager, Ed Warren, assured the Board that the issue was being taken care of.

Water Department Systems Manager Ed Warren suggested radio reads that could increase revenue, reduces man power, and paperwork. Ed Warren, Water Systems Manager, stated that in the meantime the current plan is to conduct rereads, monitor data, and set up notifications or alerts for unusual readings.

Commissioner Ayers stated that meters have been unread or misread for years and the former county manager was informed of the situation with no change. Commissioner Ayers agreed to radio readings being a great idea, but stated that they were expensive and that human error needed to be corrected by supervision by the department head or supervisor. Commissioner Ayers stated that it was good a plan was put in place to fix the improper meter readings for the future the Water Systems Manager Ed Warren, has a plan in place to fix the situation, but this has been a problem for years.

Commissioner Biggs **Motioned** to approve the restitutions to county citizens who have been overcharged in water bills due to meter misreads with a **Second** by Commissioner Bonds Jr. Motion was **carried** (3-1) with Commissioner Ayers **Opposing** the approval of the motion.

BOARD DISCUSSION

ADJOURNMENT

With nothing further to discuss, Commissioner Ayers made a MOTION to adjourn at 7:08 p.m., with a SECOND from Commissioner Biggs. The Board APPROVED the motion unanimously.

Ronnie Smith, Chairman

Julia S. Rease
Clerk to the Board