

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA)
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COUNTY OF STOKES)
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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA
DECEMBER 6, 2010

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for an organizational session in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administrative Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Monday, December 6, 2010 at 10:30 am with the following members present:

Commissioner James D. Booth
Commissioner J. Leon Inman
Commissioner Ronda Jones
Commissioner Ernest Lankford
Commissioner Jimmy Walker

County Personnel in Attendance:
County Manager K. Bryan Steen
Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins
Finance Director Julia Edwards
County Attorney Edward Powell

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins called the organizational meeting to order.

Commissioner Walker delivered the invocation.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins opened the meeting by inviting the citizens in attendance to join the Board with the Pledge of Allegiance.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – INTRODUCTION

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins introduced the newly elected members of the Board – Commissioner Ronda Jones and Commissioner James Booth.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins opened the floor for nominations for Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Booth noted that during his campaign citizens expressed comments regarding this nation, this state, and this county to be more conservative which is also my goal. Commissioner Booth also noted that with the challenges ahead, this Board will need to be more conservative.

Commissioner Booth nominated Commissioner Ernest Lankford to serve as Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Inman noted that this county, this country and this nation are entering a very difficult time and there are a lot of significant things facing this Board and County – a new county manager, the need for critical care access in the northern part of the County, and the current Stokes Reynolds Hospital which has taken over \$900,000 from the County’s Fund Balance since March of 2010. Commissioner Inman also noted that he feels it is very important to maintain as much continuity as possible and agrees with Commissioner Booth regarding the conservative philosophy. Commissioner Inman stated that he feels this conservative philosophy has been in effective during the past 8 years which has built the County’s Fund Balance to over 21%.

Commissioner Inman nominated Commissioner Jimmy Walker to serve as Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

With no further nominations, Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Commissioner Booth moved to close the nominations. Commissioner Jones seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Clerk Darlene Bullins polled the Board regarding Chairman of the Board of Commissioners:

Commissioner Booth - Commissioner Lankford
Commissioner Lankford - Commissioner Lankford
Commissioner Walker - Commissioner Walker
Commissioner Inman - Commissioner Walker
Commissioner Jones – Commissioner Lankford

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins turned the meeting over to Chairman Lankford.

Chairman Lankford expressed his appreciation to his fellow Board members and stated he would be proud and honored to serve as Chairman.

Chairman Lankford noted the following:

- The many challenges that face this Board
- The recent recession
- Carefully look at the revenues and expenditures
- Willing to work hard as Chair to make things hopefully happen as far as the continuity of the Board
- Will work with this Board as a team

GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – ELECTION OF VICE CHAIRMAN

Chairman Lankford opened the floor for nominations for Vice Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Inman nominated Commissioner Ronda Jones to serve as Vice Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

Commissioner Walker nominated Commissioner Leon Inman to serves as Vice Chairman of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

With no further nominations, Chairman Lankford entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Commissioner Inman moved to close the nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Lankford polled the Board regarding Vice Chairman of the Board of Commissioners:

Commissioner Booth - Commissioner Jones
Commissioner Lankford - Commissioner Inman
Commissioner Walker - Commissioner Inman
Commissioner Inman - Commissioner Jones
Commissioner Jones – Commissioner Inman

Chairman Lankford stated that Commissioner Inman will serve as Vice Chairman for the Board of Commissioners.

Vice Chairman Inman expressed his appreciation for the nomination and stated he would be honored to serve as Vice Chairman.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – BOARD APPOINTMENTS

Board of Health

Chairman Lankford opened the floor for nominations for appointment to the Board of Health.

Chairman Lankford nominated Commissioner James Booth to serve on the Board of Health.

Vice Chairman Inman nominated Commissioner Ronda Jones to serve on the Board of Health.

With no further nominations, Chairman Lankford entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Vice Chairman Inman moved to close the nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Lankford polled the Board regarding the appointment to the Stokes County Board of Health:

Commissioner Jones - Commissioner Jones
Vice Chairman Inman - Commissioner Jones
Commissioner Walker – Commissioner Booth
Chairman Lankford - Commissioner Booth
Commissioner Booth – Commissioner Booth

Chairman Lankford stated that Commissioner Booth will serve on the Board of Health.

Regional Tourism Initiative (RTI)

Chairman Lankford opened the floor for nominations for appointment to the Regional Tourism Initiative.

Commissioner Walker nominated Commissioner Ronda Jones to serve on the Regional Tourism Initiative.

With no further nominations, Chairman Lankford entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Vice Chairman Inman moved to close the nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

The motion for Commissioner Jones to serve on the RTI carried unanimously.

Chairman Lankford stated that Commissioner Jones will serve on the Regional Tourism Initiative.

Community Child Protection Team (CCPT)

Chairman Lankford opened the floor for nominations for appointment to the Community Child Protection Team.

Vice Chairman Inman nominated Ronda Jones to serve on the Community Child Protection Team.

With no further nominations, Chairman Lankford entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Vice Chairman Inman moved to close the nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

The motion for Commissioner Jones to serve on the CCPT carried unanimously.

Chairman Lankford stated that Commissioner Jones will serve on the Community Child Protection Team.

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC)

Chairman Lankford opened the floor for nominations for appointment to the

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

Commissioner Walker nominated Commissioner James Booth to serve on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

Commissioner Booth nominated Commissioner Ronda Jones to serve on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

With no further nominations, Chairman Lankford entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Vice Chairman Inman moved to close the nominations. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Lankford polled the Board regarding the appointment to the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council:

Vice Chairman Inman - Commissioner Booth
Commissioner Walker - Commissioner Booth
Commissioner Jones - Commissioner Booth
Chairman Lankford - Commissioner Booth
Commissioner Booth - Commissioner Booth

Chairman Lankford stated that Commissioner Booth will serve on the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council.

Comments

Chairman Lankford opened the floor for comments.

Vice Chairman Inman noted the following comments:

- Strongly believe that when a Board makes a decision, it needs to be everybody's decision
- When the Board, as a political body, makes a decision, I own that decision
- Will work diligently as Vice Chairman with Chairman Lankford for the best interest of Stokes County
- No personal or hidden Agenda
- Welcomes Commissioner Booth and Commissioner Jones to the Stokes County Board of Commissioners

Commissioner Jones noted the following comments:

- Very pleased to serve as a Commissioner for the citizens of Stokes County
- No hidden or personal Agenda
- Just want to do what is best for Stokes County
- The Board must work together to get through this recession

Commissioner Walker noted the following comments:

- Has been an interesting past year
- This Board has made a lot of progress in this county in various ways
- Been good spirit on the Board – good spirit of cooperation, not always in total agreement, but for the most part, when a decision was made, the Board would move forward to the next item

- Looking forward and not backwards seems to always work the best
- Chairman Lankford will need the support of this Board with the challenges such as Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital (thousands of dollars being currently invested each day to keep the hospital in its current status)
- Will need to find what will work for the hospital and the county
- The County will have a very tight budget for the upcoming year with the State's predicted shortfall
- Chairman Lankford will have my support
- When it comes to supporting another commissioner or the Board versus the people of Stokes County, my support will be to the people of Stokes County to the greatest extent possible
- Will continue to talk to the people of Stokes County
- Hope this Board will continue to stay in touch with the citizens of Stokes County and conduct ourselves appropriately based on how to best represent the people in Stokes County

Commissioner Booth noted the following comments:

- Very grateful and blessed to be serving on this Board
- Look forward to serving with each member of the Board
- Have been attending commissioner meetings, along with Commissioner Jones, since the primary (personally attended approximately 24 meetings along with budget work sessions)
- Have attended Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital's Board of Trustees meetings
- Recently learned that there is approximately 300 individuals employed by Stokes Reynolds Memorial Hospital in Danbury and King
- National unemployment rate is increasing (currently 9.8%)
- Definitely don't want to see employees in Stokes County lose their jobs
- Want to see these problems at Stokes Reynolds taken care of, jobs saved, and a hospital be in the center of the County
- Concerns with funding taken from the Fund Balance - the \$900,000 taken out for the hospital operation and the \$1.5 million dollars for the proposed \$26.5 million dollars recently approved for school construction/community college
- County currently owes \$36 million dollars in debt service besides the recently approved \$26.5 million dollars
- Will have a very tight budget for fiscal year 2011-12
- No tax increase was given when the \$26.5 million dollars was approved for school construction/community college, this will be this Board's responsibility to balance the budget
- Not for a tax increase, feels this is not the right time for a tax increase especially in this difficult economic time in this nation, in our state, and in our county
- Feels with the recent election, the people have said (federal, state, and local) that we must turn it back around, we must quit spending, quit borrowing, quit raising taxes and be more conservative
- Would like to commend the county employees, department heads, finance director, and county manager for their conservative efforts to increase the Fund Balance
- Feels the quarterly reviews started by former County Manager Rick Morris and continued by Manager Steen was an excellent way to return dollars to increase the County's Fund Balance
- Looking forward to serving the citizens of Stokes County

Chairman Lankford noted the following comments:

- Expressed appreciation to Commissioner Walker for his leadership while serving as Chairman this past year
- Will be accountable to the citizens of Stokes County

- Looking forward to working as Chairman with the county employees, administration and each member of the Board

Vice Chairman Inman requested clarification from Commissioner Booth regarding the statement concerning \$1.5 million taken out of Fund Balance. Vice Chairman Inman stated that no funding had been taken from the Fund Balance and that there is approximately \$3.2 million dollars in the County's Capital Lottery Fund in an account in Raleigh.

Commissioner Booth stated that his understanding in a recent meeting that the model being used would take \$1.5 million from Fund Balance. Vice Chairman Inman stated that the \$1.5 million would be coming from Capital Lottery Funding.

Commissioner Walker noted the following comments:

- Has received many favorable comments and much support from Stokes County citizens regarding the recent approval for funding for addressing the very much needed school construction
- Stated that before he voted for the funding, he clarified with the Finance Director that no funding had been taken from the Fund Balance and that there was some flexibility with the model
- Confirmed with Clerk that the minutes reflected that Commissioner Carroll had stated before his motion that an additional \$650,000 would be needed to fund the debt service
- Have worked very hard with county staff and fellow Board members to increase the Fund Balance in order to be able to start school construction and build a community college
- Taking a chance, could see adverse effects if the economy goes "South" drastically, but every step of the way, this Board can look at options and make adjustments

Commissioner Jones stated that the following:

- Would like the audience to know that this Board is looking at a \$4 billion dollar shortfall at the State level
- This will cause some serious trickling down effect to the County
- Would like everyone to educate individuals who want to criticize the leadership regarding decisions that have to be made, explain to the citizens why this Board may have to make some very difficult and painful decisions
- It is going to be a very painful time during budget time
- Let the people know that this Board is trying to do the best it can and trying to be fiscally responsible

Commissioner Booth stated that he wanted it to be known that he is for schools, higher education, quality teachers, etc., but feels that the citizens of this County should have a chance to speak about going into debt for \$26.5 million dollars by allowing them to vote in a bond referendum.

Chairman Lankford thanked those who were in attendance for the organizational meeting.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Lankford entertained a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Vice Chairman Inman moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Booth seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

Ernest Lankford
Chairman