

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  
OCTOBER 26, 2015

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for regular session in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administration Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Monday, October 26, 2015 at 6:00 pm with the following members present:

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

County Personnel in Attendance:  
County Manager Richard D. Morris  
Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins  
Finance Director Julia Edwards  
District Watershed Conservationist Tom Smith  
Services Support Supervisor Danny Stovall

Chairman Jones called the meeting to order.

#### **INVOCATION**

Chairman Jones invited those who wished to join in the invocation to please do so.

Commissioner Lankford delivered the invocation.

#### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Jones opened the meeting by inviting the citizens in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

#### **GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to approve or amend the October 26, 2015 Agenda.

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the October 26<sup>th</sup> Agenda as presented.

Vice Chairman Walker seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**COMMENTS - Manager/Commissioners**

Chairman Jones opened the floor for comments from the Board and the County Manager.

County Manager Rick Morris had no comments.

Commissioner Lankford commented.

- Glad to be back with the Board at tonight's meeting
- Would like to thank my fellow commissioners for the job they are doing
- As we go into this meeting and future meetings, we should always think about the people that we are representing and that is the people of our great county
- Ethics for Life – “Do not strive with a man without cause, if he have done you no harm” Love thy neighbor- faith, hope, and love – with love being the most important”
- Thank everyone for being here

Commissioner Inman commented:

- CenterPoint's Board of Directors, at their last meeting, unanimously approved a merger with Cardinal Innovations only to find out that about a day later the new NC DHHS Secretary Rick Brajer has put all that on hold
  - Secretary Brajer has stated that he is not approving any mergers at this time
  - Caught CenterPoint off guard and do not know right now where we stand
  - CenterPoint is currently in the black and will continue to operate as an independent MCO until further notice

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Did not see that coming with the merger
- Another surprise and a disappointment was the loss of our State Representative Brian Holloway
  - Representative Holloway has served and represented Stokes County well
  - Will certainly miss Representative Holloway
  - Appreciate all he has done for this area during the past 11 years
  - Another thing that we did not see coming
- Glad to see Commissioner Lankford back
- Attended the Forsyth Tech Community College Advisory Committee last week, was very glad to see the framework of the upcoming community college
- Good to have representatives from Pioneer here at the meeting tonight

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Welcome everyone here tonight for our meeting
- Very glad to see an update from Pioneer on the Information Agenda

- Surprised also with the news from Commissioner Inman regarding the CenterPoint merger

Chairman Jones commented:

- Stokes County recently participated with Rockingham and Caswell Counties (Neighbor helping Neighbor) in a water donation for those in need in South Carolina
  - There were approximately 2,475 cases of bottled water donated
  - Stokes County donated approximately 1,000 cases
- In the next year or so, Business Highway #40 will be closed for several years – between Peters Creek Parkway and Highway #52
  - Wondering how that will impact our county, people getting to work, etc.
  - Something to start thinking about
- Glad to see everyone at tonight's meeting
- Also glad to have Commissioner Lankford back

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

The following spoke during public comments:

**Angie Rominger**

1250 Lewis Road

Walnut Cove, NC 27052

Re: **Riverstreet**

Ms. Rominger presented the following comments:

"I am here this evening because I am very passionate about Riverstreet Communications (internet) that is hopefully going to be coming into the county. According to the article that I read in the Stokes News this week, I am a little discouraged. Mr. Morris has provided me a draft of what he will be presenting to you later in the meeting tonight, I do reference some of his comments in my comments to you tonight. I am here to strongly encourage the Commissioners and the Board of Education (BOE) to work together to consider RiverStreet Networks' offer. I realize finances for the BOE are an issue, as they are for everyone in the county; however, I agree with Mr. Morris that the "Big" picture is what we need to look at because RiverStreet is going to offer us more than just a low price. They are willing to reinvest. There are two points/statements in Mr. Morris' comments that I think are extremely important:

1. The ultimate goal of RiverStreet Networks is to provide high-speed fiber optic internet to **ALL** of Stokes County where the demand and budget will allow. That is not saying that everyone is going to get it, where the demand and budget will allow.
2. RiverStreet Networks is committed to the betterment of Stokes County by **reinvesting** revenues gained in this endeavor to further extend its services to residents in the county.

My attempt over the past two years to get internet service at my residence is proof that Time Warner Cable (TWC) and Century Link have no intention of doing either of two that I just mentioned and this is a great dis-service to the residents and children of Stokes County. Internet service this day and time is important to the economic growth of the county and development of the

educational system. So many school activities are technology based today and it's a time of virtual learning.

My Story (brief synopsis) as one of the unserved residents:

- TWC services the first five houses on Lewis Rd. in the Meadows Community. I am 3/10 tenths of a mile from the last house serviced by TWC and they want to charge me \$10,000.00 to run cable to my home and that is not going to happen.
- Century Link provides home phone, but no DSL internet service in my area, and the comment from a Century Link representative was "I can tell you, you will not be getting internet service anytime soon." With that being said, it is really sad because I am 1.5 miles from a Century Link hub at the corner of Hwy 8 and 89 and 1.5 miles from a Hub at the corner of 89 and Power Dam Rd, also there is a Hub on Stewart Rd. that is 1.5 miles or less as well. Three hubs on "top" of me and I still cannot get service. If you are not on Highway #89, you are not going to get service.
- If you have a driveway that go beyond 300 ft from the main road, you are out of luck
- They both have no sympathy

I have filed complaints with the FCC and NC Utilities Commission with no success.

I have a school aged child in the home and two boys in college. The internet is needed to be able to access school related information, websites to help with homework, and the schools are requesting assignments be turned in online. When this happens, we have to go to a grandparents' house to turn in the assignments online. I am definitely not alone, I know there are many others in the County in the same situation I am in. Feel it is very sad.

We as a County are not just standing still anymore with the technology that is available. We are falling behind and fast. I have learned that Surry Telephone is providing customers in the Pinnacle area with fiber optic internet beginning in December. They are moving along while we are still standing still and not really standing still, actually going backward. I agree with Mr. Morris that we need to take advantage of this opportunity that RiverStreet is offering the county because we may not get it anytime soon.

I have firsthand knowledge that RiverStreet is true to their word of wanting to provide to those unserved and underserved. I have been in contact with Brett Yates (sales) and Jody Souther (mapping) in regards to providing internet service to me and my neighbors on Lewis Rd. as they run the "Backbone" to the schools in the Walnut Cove area. Due to my neighbors calling and getting the "demand", Brett spoke with Jody and told me that when they ran cable down Hwy 89 they would go ahead and run it down Lewis Rd. and that it looked like during the summer of 2016 we would have internet. However, if the schools go with TWC this will not happen, and once again I and many others will continue to do without internet service.

**E.A. “Buddy” Timm**  
PO Box 573  
Walnut Cove, NC  
Re: **Prayer**

Mr. Timm read and presented the following comments:

“I would like to address the issue of your opening prayer, that an atheist complained about and wants changed.

As you well know, you are in charge of what you allow at your meeting. I am not for turning the opening prayer over to a circus of atheist participation.

Do we ever think – To whom do atheists pray, since they do not believe in God? Are they praying or talking out loud to someone they say does not exist? What are people like that called?

If the atheists just want to pontificate on the wonders of man’s reason as an invocation, that sounds awful foolish – since atheists don’t know where they came from or where they are going; let alone what is Right and Wrong. Atheists do not have a moral foundation, alone reason planted with both feet in midair, and no moral absolutes to bring about conclusion.

There is a Law of Non-Contradiction, which means if something is contradictory it cannot be true. Therefore, please be able to explain to us the Americans United for Separation of Church and State’s claim that: “delivery of Christian prayers by members of the Council violates the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution,” when the subject and original intent of the First Amendment is a prohibition, alone against the Federal Government’s Congress, who was given legislative law making power. Besides, the Constitution would never have been passed if the States were not given their Bill of Rights – the first ten Amendments to the Constitution. Also, aiding the understanding that the First Amendment is not in conflict with State officials praying Christian prayers is North Carolina’s 1776 Constitutional requirement of being a Christian to hold any office in the State: “That no person who should deny the being of God, or the truth of the Protestant religion, or the divine authority of either the Old or New Testaments, or who shall hold religious principles incompatible with the freedom and safety of the State, shall be capable of holding any office or place of trust or profit, in the civil department within this State.” Only the Christian belief holds that Rights and Freedom come from God; no other belief holds that, and no one should be able to take them away; however, specious their pretext!

American is understood by its founding documents or else it is arbitrary power ruled by lie.

Still today, each session of the Supreme Court is opened with the crier’s words: “God save the United States and the Honorable Court.” Are we being overthrown from within?

Chairman Jones expressed appreciation to those speaking during Public Comments.

## CONSENT AGENDA

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to approve or amend the following items on the Consent Agenda:

- Minutes of October 12, 2015 - Regular Meeting

Chairman Jones requested the following correction to the October 12<sup>th</sup> minutes:

- Page 19 – Change typo “pay gaps are a very big concern to mind” to “pay gaps are a very big concern of mine”

### Sheriff's Department - Budget Amendment #25

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #25.

To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

Account Number	Account Description	Current Budgeted Amount	Increase (Decrease)	As Amended
<b>Sheriff's Department</b>				
100.4310.022	Salaries & Wages SRO Grant	<u>\$00.00</u>	<u>\$84,000.00</u>	<u>\$84,000.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>	<b>\$84,000.00</b>	<b>\$84,000.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To appropriate School Resource Officers Grant Funds for part time SROfficers.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$84,000.00** in the expenditures and other financial use to the County's annual budget. To provide the additional revenue for the above, the following revenues will increase. These revenues have already been received or are verified they will be received this fiscal year.

Account Number	Account Description	Current Budgeted Amount	Increase (Decrease)	As Amended
100.3431.421	SRO Grant	<u>\$00.00</u>	<u>\$84,000.00</u>	<u>\$84,000.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>	<b>\$84,000.00</b>	<b>\$84,000.00</b>

### Sheriff's Department - Budget Amendment #26

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #26.

To amend the General Fund, the expenditures are to be changed as follows:

Account Number	Account Description	Current Budgeted Amount	Increase (Decrease)	As Amended
<b>Sheriff's Department</b>				
100.4310.510	Equipment – Capital	\$164,000.00	\$6,000.00	\$170,000.00
100.4310.511	Equipment – Non Capital	<u>\$26,820.00</u>	<u>\$5,937.00</u>	<u>\$32,757.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$190,820.00</b>	<b>\$11,937.00</b>	<b>\$202,757.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To purchase equipment from grant received – No County Funding

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$11,937.00** in the expenditures and other financial use to the County's annual budget. To provide the additional revenue for the above, the following revenues will increase. These revenues have already been received or are verified they will be received this fiscal year.

Account Number	Account Description	Current Budgeted Amount	Increase (Decrease)	As Amended
100.3301.416	OBJ Grant – Law Enforcement	<u>\$00.00</u>	<u>\$11,937.00</u>	<u>\$11,937.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>	<b>\$11,937.00</b>	<b>\$11,937.00</b>

Commissioner Inman moved to approve the Consent Agenda as amended.

Vice Chairman Walker seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – INFORMATION AGENDA**

### **Pioneer Community Hospital of Stokes Update**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following comments before introducing President/CEO Joe McNulty, Pioneer Health Services, Inc.:

- President/CEO Joe McNulty is here tonight to provide the Board with an update
- Met with CEO McNulty, Paul Gardner-Director of Hospital Operations, Pam Tillman-Pioneer Community Hospital of Stokes, King Mayor Jack Warren, and King Manager Homer Dearmin this morning
- CEO McNulty provided the group with an update regarding marketing and regulatory driven changes that he will be making in King with Pioneer Health Care Services
- These changes are being made to ensure Pioneer remains a viable, long-term healthcare provider in Stokes County
- Although they were not totally pleased with the changes, Mayor Warren and Manager Dearmin appreciated the “heads up” and clearly understood Joe’s rationale for making these changes

- They were also optimistic the changes would work out well for the City of King
- CEO McNulty is here tonight to provide the Board with an update regarding those changes that he discussed with the leadership in King

CEO McNulty commented:

- Appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Board this evening
- Would like to introduce Paul Gardner, Director of Hospital Operations, along with Carter Ilgenfritz, Corporate Director of Pharmacy Programs and Administrator Pam Tillman – Community Hospital of Stokes
- Would like to turn the presentation over to Paul Gardner
- Will be happy to answer any questions after Paul's presentation

Director Paul Gardner commented:

- Appreciate the opportunity to address the Board this evening
- As Joe noted, we met with Mayor Jack Warren this morning regarding the proposed changes
- Critical Access Hospitals, particularly the one here in Danbury, must have an emergency room attached to the hospital which is federal regulations
- You are not required to have two emergency rooms which is the issue that we have been looking at
- Since Pioneer took over the hospital in 2011, there have been a lot of good things that have happened
- Back in 2011, no one could look forward and see where healthcare was going and where it is today (Affordable Care Act, regulations, legislation, etc.)
- You can turn on the news and quickly see a negative story about healthcare and we are no different in Stokes County and what we are facing
- We are trying to be proactive
- We are trying to address issues before they get so bad that we make tragically, bad decisions
- We want to be proactive, address issues, and try to keep healthcare present in Stokes County
- The issue is the emergency room in King
- The emergency room in King is basically about 30% self-pay, private pay in other words
- They don't have to pay anything to come to the emergency room
- Emergency Medical Treatment & Labor Act (EMTALA), federal legislation, states that anyone who presents to an emergency room has to be provided a medical screening examination
- You can't refuse to see them because they don't have a dollar to pay you; you basically have to treat that patient and everyone knows that
- Patients abuse that right – getting prescriptions refilled or narcotics refilled or whatever the case maybe
- We know that there are a lot of individuals who are not able to pay, but there are a lot that abuse this



- Due to the fact that it is 30% self-pay, along with another 27% of the patients who come to the King emergency room have commercial insurance
- In 2011, that person had a \$500 deductible, fast forward to 2016, now they have a \$5,000 deductible
- For most families to incur a \$1,200 emergency room visit, they can't pay it and it ends up in bad debt a lot of the time
- We are proposing to convert the emergency room in King to an urgent care clinic
- An urgent care clinic would run the same hours that the emergency room is currently running now
- It would treat suturing, broken bones, and basic issues with major issues being continued to be transported to another emergency room, preferably to the one in Danbury
- In reviewing the county's EMS records for the past couple of years, (over 6,000 runs per year) only about 10% of those runs are staying in Stokes County anyway
- Out of the 6,000 runs a year – 400 are coming to Danbury and 200 are going to King
- Not a lot of the volume will have to go somewhere else; those coming to Danbury should remain the same and hopefully some of those going to King could come to Danbury
- Some of those coming to King are from the nursing home which could continue to come to the urgent care clinic
- That is the plan – an urgent care clinic
- We think that would accomplish a couple of things
  - Would eliminate this large amount of private pay – giving 30% of the business away
  - Would help to eliminate some of the bad debt element
  - Would have the ability to turn patients away because it would be an urgent care clinic
- Instead of that patient incurring an estimated \$1,200 emergency visit, now it would be a \$100 clinic visit
- People would be more likely to be able to pay the \$100 clinic visit than the \$1,200 emergency room visit
- There are a lot who are not coming to the emergency room and going 15 to 20 miles to an urgent care clinic because there is no urgent care clinic in King
- This will accomplish, we think, a whole new market that is not coming currently to an emergency room
- People are likely to not have to wait as long in an urgent care clinic like they do in an emergency room
- Basically, proposing that the King emergency room will become a King urgent care clinic in an effort to sure up a “gaping hole in the dam” to try to ensure that Pioneer can provide healthcare a long time here in Stokes County
- We can only do that by being proactive and addressing issues
- It is going to be some giving and taking in that process
- Again, back in 2011, there was no way to look in the future to see what is happening today with healthcare
- This is where we are today

- We can sit back and let this continue to multiply over and over to the point that we make a very tragically, horrible decision to close healthcare altogether or turn it back over to the county
- We do not want to see that happen
- But we are a for-profit company and at the end of the day, you have to have two nickels to rub together
- We don't want to lose the sensitivity of taking care of patients
- We know there are patients who are unable to pay; we see that every day and will continue to provide care for those patients
- But there are a lot of people who abuse the system, this would give us the ability to deal with that and enforce them to pay their bill before they are seen in the urgent care clinic
- Sequestration is just another element that we did not see in 2011 that came along in 2013
- Critical Access Hospitals say that for every Medicare patient that you see, per the Medicare utilization, Medicare will pay 101% of your costs
- In the King emergency room, only about 10% are Medicare patients which means you have a 1% profit margin
- Sequestration in 2013 took back 2%, so now you are receiving only 99% which is a 1% loss
- These are just some of the issues that we are battling with
- Trying to be proactive
- This will give us a way to help fix some of the issues to ensure we can provide healthcare for this County for a long time to come

CEO McNulty noted that they would be glad to answer any questions.

Chairman Jones opened the floor for discussion/questions.

Commissioner Inman commented:

- Thank you for being here tonight
- Appreciate the commitment and the investments that you have made in Stokes County
- You have done exactly what you have said you would do
- You have expanded satellite centers
- Brought in specialists, added doctors
- I don't have to go back and review, you have done what you said you would do
- Kind of guessed where you were going with the emergency room situation in King and I was afraid that you were going to say that you were going to close the emergency room
- I think you have come up with a brilliant solution – urgent care
- Questioned what were the current hours of operation for the emergency room and what would be the hours of operation for the urgent care clinic?

CEO McNulty responded:

- Current hours:
  - Monday-Friday (8 am to 12 midnight)
  - Saturday and Sunday (9 am to 12 midnight)
- Stokes Emergency Room will remain 24/7 operation

Director Gardner responded:

- Urgent care clinic will basically have the same hours, but may close an hour earlier in order for the staff to see the patients who are already there and be able to get out at a reasonable time
  - Monday-Friday (8 am to 11 pm)
  - Saturday and Sunday (9 am to 11pm)

Commissioner Inman continued:

- Congratulate you on your decision
- Fully support that
- Want you to continue to be profitable because we want you to stay in Stokes County for a long, long time

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Nice to see Joe still smiling after being here four years
- Meeting with the mayor and manager is an interesting thing, having been the most recent, previous mayor of King, I know how little clout the mayor actually has when it comes to decisions
- Mayors don't even get a vote, sat there many, many times waiting for that 2-2 which rarely ever happens
- Couple of things
  - If my memory is correct and have tracked this pretty closely over the years, JRJones was created to subsidize the facility in Danbury
  - That was one of the original reasons for having JRJones, what has happened?
- If it has gone from the status of being very profitable to the point it was helping to sustain the hospital in Danbury, now there is a question to make it more profitable?
- Having a little bit of a challenge putting the pieces together

CEO McNulty responded:

- Do not know the situation before 2011, do not know the reason why JRJones was brought about
- But in the last five years, the challenges in healthcare have continuously mounted – Medicare, Medicaid, insurance companies, businesses do not want to pay any more money than they absolutely have to for healthcare wanting their employees to pay a bigger share, etc.
- All of those reasons have probably lent itself to cause JRJones and a lot of other hospitals in small rural communities to either struggle, in some cases, close
- Some of the biggest hospitals in this state are closing some of their small hospitals because they either don't want the challenge or don't see any end to the means to make it even break even

- In our situation, because we are small hospital folks and small rural, community people, we feel like there is a need down there and we have just got to make both ends meet in the middle – revenues and expenses
- Surgery might have been profitable many years ago
- We have been working at it very hard
- As time goes forward, good physicians leave and sometimes you do not have an opportunity to replace that physician with someone who has the same type of practice
- We have worked hard at trying to bring in sub specialists to utilize the facility over the last couple of years
- Even brought in our own orthopedic surgeon that worked a short period of time; he decided he needed to go somewhere else
- We are working with some of the orthopedic surgeons out of Winston Salem, in their case, they do not want to do everything up there, because of the way insurances pay them for certain type of services
- It is an assortment of things, with a lot of it being not doing it until you have to – pertaining to surgery, the cuts in reimbursement, etc.
- Can't tell you how big it is with the no pays in the emergency room
- Last year, we were running about 20% to 21% of self-pay
- Self-pay has jumped up to 31% of our revenue and we have to provide the services which include supplies, drugs, and professional staff to do all this
- In most cases, we can't even collect a co-pay or a small amount
- It is just one of those things for the longevity of what we are trying to do here
- We had to cut out some of the big gaping holes and that is one of them

Vice Chairman Walker continued:

- Another thing that could have some bearing on the situation is that for many years there was a King Clinic
- I kept saying that when you close the health clinic, you are going to have a lot of those people showing up for free services at the emergency rooms
- Healthcare clinic in King was closed
- You are getting more people and will continue to because they don't have an easy way to get healthcare
- I called a few days ago to a group of providers (13 providers) regarding getting some services; there was only 1 of the 13 providers taking patients
- I am not for throwing those people under the bus
- There was a stipulation in the contract, that I think you will remember it very well – there was to be no diminishing of services as long as your contract is in place
- Is going from an emergency room to an urgent care, diminishing services?

CEO McNulty responded:

- In my own personal opinion, it is not
- We are still seeing folks, we are still providing services, but just not providing it for free

Vice Chairman Walker continued:

- What if you are that person that doesn't even have a car that is good enough to drive from King to Danbury?
- Where they used to go to a health clinic and would be seen, now it is a different ballgame for them
- I don't want to feel like I have shut the door on people who really need the service to make your company more profitable because you are making money

CEO McNulty responded:

- I will tell you in the last 18 months, we have not made money
- That is one of the reasons why we are doing what we are doing right now
- The 2% sequestration, for our entire company, starting in March 2013 has taken \$6.5 million (cash money) out of our system

Vice Chairman Walker continued:

- I am sympathetic for you regarding that, you did not ask for a lot that is being given to you from the government
- Believe me, as a senior citizen over 70 years old, did not ask to be treated with the "I don't care mode" that I am beginning to sense that is coming as far as certain segments of our population
- Here is what you have with the King City Council, don't know where Mayor Warren is, he is hard for me to read sometimes, but I do know where Dillard Burnette is and some of the others, possibly
- There is the issue that you promised them that they would have 24-hour emergency room care in King
- They insist that you promised them that

CEO McNulty responded:

- Quite frankly, we probably did promise them that
- I will tell you that we did, but over the last four years, a lot has changed since then
- The majority of what we said we would do, we have done
- It is just unfortunate that it has gone from 10% to 15 % no pay to 30% and continuing to go up
- At the end of the day, none of this is free regardless of whether we say it is an emergency room or a federally qualified clinic, someone has to pay for it
- In our situation, there is a whole lot more good that we are doing in the communities
- We are not leaving King
- We are going to continue providing the services at JRJones, but at the end of the day, we are just not going to give it away free and be made to give it away free
- They need to pay something if that want to get healthcare
- We are not going to turn them away if they are a clinic patient, we will figure out something
- They have got to have a little bit of money because I am paying folks to sit there and take care of those of folks and there is nothing free about that

Vice Chairman Walker continued:

- If I were where you are, I would be saying the same thing
- You have a business to run and are trying to do a good job of running that business
- Would like to sum up some things
  - I think the way out of this is to work together and not against each other
  - When there was a health clinic in King, things were working a lot better
  - That would be the salvation of some degree of what we are talking about today
  - Don't mind changes as long as they are the right kind and as long as they are not effecting our population in an adverse way
- One segment of the population that I am most protective of is those who don't need to have their lives complicated anymore than they are; people that are struggling
- We have a lot of people because of the economy and circumstances that are still struggling
- I don't want to make the decision or be involved in the decision that harms that segment of our population
- So if we are going to take something away (free care), I think we may need to be thinking about opening the King Clinic back up to offset that
- That is our challenge
- Whether there are other commissioners on this Board that will support it or not and whether there are other commissioners on this Board that cares as much about these people I am describing as I do; I don't know
- The key to me is to work together
- Would like to see something to some degree that I could look at someone and say we have tried to see the other side as well and have not just shifted everything in one different

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Appreciate the update tonight
- Appreciate everything that Pioneer has done during the past 4 years
- Like Commissioner Inman stated, you have done what you said you would
- Glad that the urgent care clinic is going to be open the same hours
- Overall, how is the Danbury hospital going?

CEO McNulty responded:

- It is tough right now
- It is tough right now across the board
- Healthcare is tough right now
- Constantly making changes – have recently changed the way physicians are being paid (SGR) which will come upon us in 2017
- Half of our community in Stokes is a non rural health clinic; we will have to make those clinics make more money than we spend in expenses – it is a challenge
- It is a challenge everyday
- It is not just in this community
- It is a challenge in every community we have got

- Rural health care is under siege because it is about the volume you need in a particular health system
- It is about the complexity which we do not do
- We take care of the primary care every day
- That is primarily what we are here for including the nursing home folks, swing beds, etc.
- Think we have done pretty good
- We have got doctors here that like the community and have just signed another two year contract
- We have a lot of good things going on
- We want to continue to go in that direction
- It would not happen, if we continue taking a hit in the emergency room in King

Commissioner Booth continued:

- Glad to hear the doctors are signing up for another contract
- Know adjustments have to be made sometimes
- Understand it is making it tough with the things that you have mentioned – Affordable Care Act, no pays, etc.

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- Feel Mr. McNulty has explained his reasoning why the changes must be done very well
- Appreciate the services being offered in our rural county
- Rural areas need healthcare
- Without having someone to take it and go with it, we would be in sad shape

Chairman Jones commented:

- Appreciate you coming tonight to explain what to expect
- Being in business, feel you have done as best as you can to make “lemonade out of lemons” with this situation – changing a cost from an estimated \$1,200 visit for emergency room to a \$100 urgent care visit
- It may ruffle a few people, but most people will be able to handle that change and just the fact that you are going to be out there
- As a rural county, appreciate you being in Stokes County
- Can’t speak for everyone on the Board, but most of us realize that healthcare is evolving, not necessarily in a good way
- It is not just us, I hear a lot of comments from nurses and doctors that work at Baptist and Forsyth hospitals about the cutbacks
- Appreciate you hanging in with us here in Stokes
- Understand where you are going with this and have my full support

CEO McNulty responded:

- Appreciate the opportunity to speak to the Board tonight
- If there is anything you need, please get in touch Manager Morris and he can get in touch with us

- Plan to visit with you in about six months with an update
- Appreciate your support

### **Forsyth Tech Community College - Grant Update**

Director Ann Watts, Stokes County Operations – Forsyth Tech Community College

presented the following comments:

- Sally Elliott, coworker at the Stokes Center, is also in attendance tonight for the meeting
- Just wanted to give you a quick update regarding the grants we had previously spoke to the Board about a few months ago
- Did receive \$50,000 from the Tobacco Trust Fund (had originally requested \$100,000)
- Will not get a hoop house, greenhouse, and fencing as we had hoped
- Will use the funding for a hoop house, fencing, and supplies which will certainly help us as we grow agricultural options in the county for current farmers, prospective farmers, and high school students who are enrolled in agricultural programs
- Discussed the placement behind building #2 which had been approved by the Board at an earlier meeting
- Funding for that grant begins November 1<sup>st</sup>
- Three-year grant
- Will probably start construction of the hoop house and the fencing around the first of year
- Fencing will be use to keep animals that are used in specific programs, for example, goat program
- Keeps students from having to go to farms located in different areas of the county
- Did not receive the USDA Planning Grant
- Will be working with our regional partners – Forsyth, Rockingham and Surry Community Colleges
- Will be resubmitting the grant to focus (as before) on developing a pipeline of students into agricultural related fields and careers of all kinds
  - There is a void currently developing in those areas, not only in producers and farmers, but in agricultural researches, soil scientists, environmental scientists and all those fields that support that industry
  - Developing a pipeline from high school through community college and on to the university if that is a part of what is needed for that degree

Chairman Jones opened the floor discussion.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Commend you for looking in this direction
- You have heard me say many times how important it is for our county to help our farmers, folks who continue to choose to make a living from the land
- Have quite a heritage, quite a tradition in our county for that



- Encourage to hear the success

Chairman Jones requested further information regarding the USDA Grant that was not received.

Director Watts responded:

- The USDA Grant was a planning grant which was designed to pull the regional partners together and to get that solidified
- Dr. Green and the Forsyth Tech Foundation have agreed to put up some funding for that process so that we can get everyone banded together going in the right tract and do what needs to be done to be successful obtaining that \$300,000 USDA Grant

Chairman Jones expressed the Board's appreciation for the update.

### **NCFAST Update**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following comments from DSS Director

Stacey Elmes:

- Continue to be on target with getting reviews and applications completed timely
- The State is very concerned about the timeliness and accuracy rates for Food and Nutrition Services
  - The State is under a corrective action plan and must meet standards so that the state as a whole does not lose over \$7 million in this program
- Food and Nutrition Audit in November
  - Medicaid audit phone call this week to determine date of audit
- NCFAST team is working on implementing child welfare into their system
- Stokes is a pilot county for the audit services social work piece in NCFAST (that work will begin in January)
- Continue to be grateful for the positions allowed in our budget this year
  - Training is still underway, but the help is much appreciated

Chairman Jones opened the floor for discussion.

There were no issues regarding the NCFAST update.

## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – DISCUSSION AGENDA**

### **Voluntary Agricultural District Update**

### **Proposed Amendment – Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance**

### **Appointment – Stokes County Agricultural Advisory Board**

County Manager Rick Morris introduced Manley Stovall, Acting Chairman of the Voluntary

Agricultural Advisory Board.

Acting Chairman Manley Stovall presented the following comments:

- Appreciate the opportunity to be here tonight and for the Board's past support of the Voluntary Agricultural District
- Provided the following statistical information regarding the Voluntary Agricultural District Program
  - Acres enrolled since 05-28-2015 = 633.97
  - Parcels enrolled since 05-28-2015 = 5
  - Applicants since 05-28-2015 = 4
  - Cumulative acres enrolled = 7,839.14
  - Cumulative parcels enrolled = 139
  - Cumulative applicants = 68
  - Goal for 2015 = 1,000 acres
- Provided board members with a Voluntary Agricultural District pamphlet which provided information regarding the following:
  - Your Agricultural Land is a Valuable Asset to the Citizens of Stokes County
  - Voluntary Agricultural Districts Promote the Pride and Tradition of Stokes County Agriculture
  - How Your Farm Can Benefit from Becoming a Voluntary Agricultural District?
  - How Your Farm Can Become A Voluntary Agricultural District?
  - Agricultural District Membership Requires a Voluntary, Non-binding Agreement
  - Membership May Be Revoked at Any Time by Member
  - Why Have Agricultural Districts?
  - What is the Agricultural District Advisory Board?
  - About the Agricultural District Advisory Board
- Had our first 2015 meeting on May 28<sup>th</sup>
- Had not met in quite a while, having issues getting board members to the meetings
- Have obtained members that are willing to serve until July 1, 2016 during which time members or other individuals will be sought to fill the appointments
  - Big Creek Township = Grant Christian
  - Quaker Gap Township = Derrick Joyce
  - Yadkin Township = Jimmy Dalton
  - Snow Creek Township = Manley Stovall
  - Peters Creek/Danbury Township = George Cutchins
  - Meadows/Sauratown Township = David Hartman
  - Beaver Island Township = Reggie Rutledge
- Members are recommended by the follow agencies:
  - Stokes Soil & Water Conservation District
  - Stokes County Farm Bureau
  - Stokes Cooperative Extension Service
  - Stokes Farm Service Agency
- Try to get members from each township, but it is getting very hard to get someone interested from all the townships

- Lot of meetings are held during some of the busiest times for farmers, but they try to get there
  - It is all voluntary
- Also discussed trying to make things better
- Would like to amend the Stokes County Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance – page (3)
  - Meetings – change to: A meeting must be held quarterly instead of every two months
  - Thought it might make it easier to schedule meetings
- Second meeting was September 18<sup>th</sup> with the next meeting scheduled for December
- Have updated the maps and did administrative work at the September 18<sup>th</sup> meeting
- Have \$782.36 in the account with an adequate supply of signs and posts
- Looking at getting some of the older signs, that have faded, refurbished
- Would request the Board of Commissioners appoint the members presented to serve until July 2016 on the Agricultural Advisory Board
- Would like to invite the Board of Commissioners to the upcoming meeting in December

Chairman Jones opened the floor for discussion.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Appreciate the report
- Would like to know more regarding the purpose of the Advisory Board and what is the Voluntary Agricultural District?

Acting Chairman Stovall responded:

- Being in the Stokes County Voluntary Agricultural District is voluntary
- Program enhances the identity of the agricultural community by encouraging the voluntary preservation and protection of farmland from non-farmland development
- Sign will tell passersby that you, the farm owner, are committed to the preservation of the agricultural way of life in Stokes County
- Persons buying land in rural areas will do so with the knowledge that a bona fide agricultural operation exists within one aerial mile
- This is very helpful, especially with more chicken houses probably coming into the County
- As a Board, it is determined that the farm is certified as a Qualifying Farmland and meets all the qualifications to be in the Voluntary Agricultural District

District Watershed Conservationist Tom Smith responded:

- The Ordinance created the framework for the Voluntary Agricultural Advisory Board
- Members on the Advisory Board are recommended by certain agencies
- Members must be appointed by the County Commissioners

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- Confirmed with Acting Chairman Stovall that the only amendment to the ordinance was to change the meeting times from at least every two months to quarterly

Chairman Jones reiterated that the only amendment to the ordinance was to change the meeting times to quarterly in order to schedule meetings so that members can hopefully arrange their schedules to attend.

Commissioner Lankford continued:

- Confirmed with Acting Chairman Stovall that members receive no pay for attending the meetings and that only funding requested from the Board of Commissioners is for signs

Chairman Jones noted the following was being requested:

- Amendment to the ordinance – change meeting times to quarterly
- Appoint the recommended members to serve until July 1, 2016

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- Tobacco buyout is over and will probably have a lot of vacant land that is not in the Voluntary Agricultural District
- Questioned Acting Chairman Stovall if he felt there would be any changes to the Voluntary Agricultural District (either going into the District or coming out of the District)?

Acting Chairman Manley Stovall responded:

- Don't think it would be a major impact on the Voluntary Agricultural District
- The District lets everyone know that there are currently agricultural operations or could possibly be more in the future on this land
- One thing to keep in mind is the possibility of more chicken houses in the county
- District identifies farms, helping that person wanting to build a huge house in the county that farming operations are going on next door or could be in the future

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Want to assure board members that this program is not adding regulations, it is for the protection of the farmers
- My farm is in the Voluntary Agricultural District
- This just lets people know in the community that this land is a farm, it could be chickens, cattle, wheat, corn, tobacco, etc.
- Ordinance was adopted in 2003
- Stokes County was a leader in the development of the Voluntary Agricultural District
- Most of the counties in North Carolina now have a Voluntary Agricultural District
- This protects the farmland in Stokes County

Chairman Jones opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Booth nominated the following:

- Big Creek Township = Grant Christian
- Quaker Gap Township = Derrick Joyce
- Yadkin Township = Jimmy Dalton
- Snow Creek Township = Manley Stovall
- Peters Creek/Danbury Township = George Cutchins
- Meadows/Sauratown Township = David Hartman
- Beaver Island Township = Reggie Rutledge

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Vice Chairman Walker moved to close the nominations. Commissioner Lankford seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Jones expressed the Board's appreciation for the update.

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board, directed the Clerk to place the item on the November 9<sup>th</sup> Action Agenda.

### **Stokes County Human Services Advisory Committee - Update**

County Manager Rick Morris introduced Keith Lawson, Chairman of the Stokes County Human Services Advisory Committee, who would be presenting the update.

County Manager Morris commented:

- The Human Services Advisory Committee was developed when the Board of Commissioners took over the Department of Social Services and the Health Department
- Committee is ready to serve the Board of County Commissioners

HSAC Chairman Lawson presented the following comments:

#### **Background**

- House Bill 438 was enacted in 2012 and allowed County Boards to assume the role of local commissions, boards or agencies.
- Stokes County is the only county so far to assume the role of *Board of Health* and to appoint a *Human Services Advisory Committee (HSAC)*

#### **Stokes County Human Services Advisory Committee**

- Keith Lawson
- Doris Petree

- Commissioner James Booth
- Robert “Buster” Robertson
- Gaye Wood
- Kim Lewis
- Vickie Morrow
- Pam Tillman
- Pam Hooker
- Amy Barnes
- Dwayne Young

**G.S. 153A-77**

- A board of county commissioners that has assumed direct control of a local health board after January 1, 2012, and that does not delegate the powers and duties of that board to a consolidated health service board shall appoint an advisory committee consistent with the membership described in G.S. 130A-35.

**G.S. 130A-35**

The composition of the committee shall reasonably reflect the population makeup of the county and shall include:

- one physician licensed to practice medicine in this State,
- one licensed dentist,
- one licensed optometrist,
- one licensed veterinarian,
- one registered nurse,
- one licensed pharmacist,
- one county commissioner,
- one professional engineer,
- three representatives of the general public

**Stokes County Health Advisory Committee Constituency**

- Keith Lawson: (Optometrist)\* - Chairperson
- Doris Petree: Registered Nurse - Vice-Chair
- Gaye Wood: (Dentist)\* Dental Hygienist
- Buster Robertson: (Engineer)\*
- Pam Tillman: (Veterinarian)\*
- Kim Lewis: Pharmacist
- Vickie Morrow: MD
- James Booth: County Commissioner
- Pam Hooker: Member at large, Social Services
- Amy Barnes: Member at large, Social Services
- Dwayne Young: Member at large, Social Services

**Note:** Social Services is represented by the at large positions.

**Note:** \*Member filling a vacancy unable to be filled by the prescribed profession.

### **Human Services Advisory Committee Facts**

- HSAC has met quarterly since establishment
- The HSAC has not been consulted or given any task to complete
- The HSAC is a “think tank” available to the Board of Commissioners
- The HSAC wants to be more active
- The HSAC would like to be more involved with the interview/hiring process for the Health Director
- The HSAC would like to meet with the County Board of Commissioners quarterly, i.e. report to the Board for updates, assignments, or consultation.

### **The HSAC Bottom Line**

- We want to Work for You!!
- We want a job
- We take our responsibilities seriously and want to help you
- Could possibly help with accreditation
- Bottom line is that we want to work for you

Chairman Jones opened the floor for discussion.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Appreciate what you and the other members are doing
- Personally liked the other arrangement with a Board of Health and a Social Services Board
- The real reality is that things are as they are
- Thought it was good to have a board delegated to a specific department and that things were working very well
- Appreciate the fact that you and the members are wanting to work for us
- Have asked on occasion if certain things have been reviewed by the Human Services Advisory Committee
- Take your role and the other members very seriously
- Feel like you should be involved with things like hiring the health director and the operations of the Health Department
- You should be the ones who deal with issues before they come to the commissioners
- Why have this committee, if you are not going to be given a chance to deal with the issues?
- Don't need a shadow board
- Glad you want to work
- Hopefully, we can provide you information regarding what you need to do and what is expected of you as a board
- I would hope that you would have the first chance to review the applications received for the health director and make a recommendation; doesn't mean that we always have to take your recommendation
- Would appreciate your recommendation
- Many times, ask the manager for a recommendation, because he is closer to an issue than I am

- This committee is certainly closer to the operation of the Health Department than I am
- You are much more focus on the operation of the Health Department than I am
- Welcome your input on a regular basis, at least quarterly
- When certain things come up within the Health Department, as it can happen, would appreciate your recommendation ad hoc on specific issues
- Totally on board with the Advisory Committee being involved in a proactive way and will do my part as a member of the board to bring that about

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- Appreciate your service

HSAC Chairman Lawson responded:

- Feel it is an honor to serve on this board
- All members feel that way

Chairman Jones commented:

- Feel coming tonight is very important
- It is not an intentional on the this Board to not be engaging with the committee
- Coming quarterly would be a good thing

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Questioned Manager Morris if operating parameters were established for this Board?

Manager Morris responded:

- Bylaws were established at the beginning

Vice Chairman Walker continued:

- What can we do to help the request that has been brought to the Board of Commissioners? Guidance, direction, etc.
- Would like to establish some operating procedures for this board so that they will know what is expected of them

HSAC Chairman Lawson responded:

- Bylaws were established – meeting times, operating procedures, etc.
- Pretty much in summary, this committee would be at the Board of County Commissioners' disposal
- Consultation, specific task, etc.
- Previous Board of Health was very active with most everything with eventually coming to the Commissioners

Vice Chairman Walker commented

- Don't understand how this could have happened; this committee being in place with no idea of what to do



Commissioner Lankford commented:

- Feel there needs to be more research before further discussing the issues

Chairman Jones commented:

- Appreciate you being here tonight and bringing this information to the Board
- Agree with Commissioner Lankford
- Want you to understand, we do hear you

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Before we finish this topic this evening, would like to move things along farther
- Would like to request the manager work with HSAC Chairman Lawson to bring operational procedures and clarification of the committee's role back to this Board for discussion

County Manager Morris noted that he would provide the Board with those items discussed at the next meeting.

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board, directed the Clerk to place the item on the November 9<sup>th</sup> Discussion Agenda.

#### **Stokes County Schools – Wide Area Network Solicitation**

County Manager Rick Morris provided the following brief background regarding the information provided in the commissioners' agenda packet:

- Have included a draft letter in your Agenda package to be submitted to the Board of Education (BOE) which can be changed
- Have been working with staff at the school system regarding the proposals that were received by the school system for internet services
- Put together what I thought you would want to ask the Board of Education to do
- Can add, delete, or change items in the draft letter
- Provided an Executive Summary, at the request of Vice Chairman Walker, which can be included in the letter to the Board of Education
- Have been diligently working for the past year with Riverstreet folks to introduce a new provider into the County to provide internet services
- We, all along, realized it would be a competitive process
- Bids were received by the school system
- Riverstreet was underbid on the cost item by Time Warner Cable (TWC), the school system's current provider
- Once the proposals were reviewed, proposal content and written commitments were quite different

- Riversteet's proposal included narrative (included in the draft letter to the BOE) that talks about a rather significant expansion and reinvestment in the county regarding internet service expansion to un-served and underserved residents
- It is extremely important, I think in this day and age, to take advantage of every opportunity that we may have to expand internet coverage
- In addition, there were some other little discrepancies that are described in the letter to the BOE (taxes and fees)
- Think the proposals were kind of different where one proposal offered wide area network services and one offered wide area network services plus expansion
- At this point, I think it is very difficult to compare the proposals
- The point that I would emphasize – we don't get opportunities to expand this kind of service and have infrastructure put in very often
- You can see what TWC has charged in the past and what they are proposing now and it looks like they charged the school system to install their infrastructure for the schools
- Now we have a third provider that is competition for TWC and wants to come and install the infrastructure at their expense – that being a big difference
- Riverstreet's investment for the first three years is approximately \$11 million
- My point –this needs to be an informed decision by the BOE and it is their solicitation – not ours
- Both Boards have the same objective – providing increased connectivity
- Especially for the BOE – providing more opportunities for education
- Can't think of anything this day and time that would move education forward faster, not only have wide area network, but having a lot of students connected that aren't connected right now
- Tried to convey in the proposed letter – don't get focused in on just doing this strictly on cost, there is a value that needs to assigned to that expansion of network services
- If you have to do a re-solicitation to get the information that the BOE needs to make an informed decision, I don't think that is out of the question
- It should be clearly understood that you, this Board and the BOE set the requirements in this county for what we need as far as connectivity; it is not a vendor's job to do that
- We decide what we want and what are needs are, then you go out and solicit to get it
- We definitely do not want to get that function crossed up
- This is a far-reaching decision that the Boards have to get right for the future of this county
- Was driving this week with a Fortune 1,000 President that lives in the County, he stated it pure and simple – “if you don't expand internet, you won't get business”
- I realize it is kind of an unusual situation where this need for expansion has been integrated into the BOE's wide area network solicitation, but this is the business model that our potential new competitor uses
- Hope the letter conveys the importance of taking a “big picture” look at this decision and not get wrapped around the axle about whether the E-rate could be cut off
- Feel the BOCC and BOE have to have concrete answers for all the questions before the BOE makes any decision

- Ms. Rominger's comments tonight was not an isolated case
- Have had lots of calls that have been similar to what Ms. Rominger read tonight
- One of my neighbors received a quote from TWC – to come 1,000 ft. to their house, it would cost the homeowner approximately \$7,000
- Believe if another solicitation is done, the value of expanded connectivity needs to be weighted
- These companies need to be forced to comment on whether they are going to expand internet services
- Don't believe there was anything wrong with the solicitation prepared by Sarah Wood
- The proposals that came back, gives the BOE reason to dig deeper before making any decision
- This is a very important decision for education, economic development
- Feel this is the most important thing that I have been involved while being county manager for Stokes County
- Would request the item be moved to tonight's Action Agenda so that it can reach the BOE in order to be place on their Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup> work session

Subject: Wide Area Network (WAN) Solicitation for the Stokes County School System

Reference "Public Comments" from Rick Morris, Stokes County Manager, to the Board of Education (BOE) on October 19, 2015 where the BOE agreed to consider input from the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) before making a decision on the award of the contract for a WAN provider.

### **Purpose**

The purpose of this letter is to provide Input from the Stokes County BOCC to the Stokes County BOE to assist the BOE in their selection of a provider for the School System's WAN. The BOCC would like to offer its perspective on this choice because the implications of this decision could be far reaching when the question of expanded high speed internet connectivity for un-served and under-served county residents is factored into the decision.

### **Background**

The Stokes County Government has been seeking opportunities to expand high speed internet connectivity to unserved and under-served residents of the County for many years, with very little success. Based on feedback to the county government from county residents, it is arguably the number one local government issue because of the enormous impact it has on educational opportunity and economic development alike. As you are well aware, the BOCC has engaged the BOE directly for assistance in this area during the past year to gain support for the introduction of a new broadband provider, Wilkes Communications (dba RiverStreet Networks Inc.), to both expand internet connectivity and increase competition into a broadband market in the county that is dominated by a few large providers with little competition. Quite frankly, until RiverStreet Networks Inc. came into the picture, the outlook was very bleak for any expansion to low population density areas in Stokes County for the foreseeable future and possibly forever.

### **RiverStreet Networks Inc. Project**

The offer from RiverStreet Networks Inc. to Stokes County was to bring their state-of-the-art broadband rural area connectivity model to our county in much the same manner as was done in Wilkes County, which could be considered the test model for the Stokes project. In Wilkes County the School System is a RiverStreet Networks Inc. customer and feedback from the Wilkes County School System has been very positive. More specifically, the offer to Stokes County was a three phased project over a three to five year timeframe that would first connect anchor institutions such as the School System and businesses to be followed with a large expansion to unserved and underserved residents. The total project cost for the first three phases is estimated at \$11 Million with all of the funding being provided by RiverStreet Networks Inc. at no cost to Stokes County Government. RiverStreet Networks Inc. has followed through with their project as promised with approximately \$2 Million invested in Stokes County to date. Horizontal boring machines and cable plows have been operating in the county for several weeks and RiverStreet Networks Inc. is on schedule to have the Phase I installation completed in plenty of time to provide WAN service to the School System starting July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2016. The Wilkes Communication business model provides that the company engage in full and open competition within the communities they serve to include Stokes County.

### **Stokes County School System WAN Solicitation**

The Stokes County BOE issued a request for proposal (RFP) for the WAN solicitation and bids were evaluated from Wilkes Communications and Time Warner Cable (TWC). A lower price was submitted by TWC however the scoring of the proposals was relatively close using the five evaluation criteria contained in the RFP. This was partially driven by the following commitment that was included in the RiverStreet Networks Inc. Proposal:

*Respondent is Wilkes Communications, Inc., dba RiverStreet Networks and will be referred to as RiverStreet Networks henceforth. The respondent will refer to Stokes County Schools as SCS henceforth. It is the mission and purpose of RiverStreet Networks to provide a secure WAN solution for SCS by providing a fiber backbone throughout Stokes County connecting each SCS location. Upon construction of this fiber backbone, RiverStreet Networks plans to extend fiber facilities to unserved and underserved areas of Stokes. This will enable residents and students to gain access to a state-of-the-art active fiber network. With high-speed access extremely limited in the area, it is the belief of RiverStreet Networks that students with access to fiber will have an extreme advantage in the betterment of their education as the virtualization of learning evolves.*

*The ultimate goal of RiverStreet Networks is to provide high-speed fiber optic internet to all of Stokes County where demand and budget will allow. We estimate passing five hundred residents in the first phase of our build, and an additional two thousand in the second phase. RiverStreet Networks is committed to the betterment of Stokes County by reinvesting revenues gained in this endeavor to further extend its services to residents in the county throughout the phases of the project.*

The TWC proposal included no mention of expanding internet connectivity within Stokes County or reinvesting WAN revenues gained to further extend its services to the residents and students of Stokes County and in fairness to TWC they were not required by the RFP to comment on expansion of internet services to county residents. RiverStreet Networks Inc. has launched a marketing effort in Stokes County to solicit feedback on demand for their services from residents so they can better

define how many customers can be connected during the initial three phases and how many can be connected following the initial phases.

### **Incorporation of Taxes and Fees In The Price Quotes**

The RFP required that bidders include in their pricing applicable taxes and fees. The proposal from RiverStreet included state and local taxes in its pricing. TWC took exception to including taxes and fees in their pricing and therefore did not include these items. This brings into question the responsiveness of their proposal since it leaves the total price open ended and impossible to conclusively compare to the price quoted by RiverStreet Networks. The issue of customer taxes and fees associated with and required for telecommunications projects of this nature is very complex. The BOCC would suggest that confusion exists with the proposals submitted as to what the actual monthly price will be for each vendor.

### **Best Value Analysis for This Solicitation**

A key requirement in evaluating the proposals for this solicitation is to determine what the “best value” is for the School System and the County at large. This is reinforced by wording in the RFP section 4.5 that states “Stokes County Schools reserves the right to select the proposal(s) which in its sole judgment best meets the needs, services and costs of SCS”. From a best value perspective “needs and services” could easily be defined as not only providing WAN connectivity between the schools but connectivity expanded to students homes to allow them to complete their home studies away from the physical structure of the school building. As stated earlier in this letter, the assessment of which proposal provides the best value to the School System and County will likely have far reaching implications both from an educational and economic development prospective in Stokes County. The analysis of the value of E-Rate reimbursement and lowest price should be balanced with the value of expanded connectivity within the county to better serve residents, students and businesses. Especially with lowest price, where long term price level is directly related to the level of competition that is present. A low price today usually last only as long as competition keeps it there. Analysis of best value should not ignore the long-term perspective.

### **Requests / Recommendations from BOCC to BOE**

Since this WAN solicitation has implications beyond a normal WAN solicitation in Stokes County due to the proposed expansion of high speed internet connectivity and increased competition the BOCC would request that the BOE thoroughly consider and resolve the following items before making a final decision on this contract award:

1. There is confusion when analyzing the proposal submissions as to what the total actual prices are because not all proposals included the taxes and fees as required by the RFP. This is further complicated by the fact that it is unclear at this point which taxes and fees are actually required to be billed to the School System when dealing with telecommunications projects which are sometimes different from other commodities and services.
2. There appears to be much concern and speculation over what the Universal Service Administrative Company (USAC) may do with Stokes County’s E-Rate reimbursement if the evaluation criteria that are used select a provider that is not the lowest on price. Recommend that concrete answers be obtained from USAC on what they will do if a “best

value” approach is used compared to a “lowest price” approach in the proposal evaluations.

3. Recommend the BOE give serious consideration to what the greatest value is that can be gained for the county as a whole with this selection. Price for WAN service is very important; however, in evaluating the overall WAN solicitation the fact that RiverStreet Networks Inc. has committed to a three-phase project with an estimated cost of \$11 Million all of which is funded by RiverStreet Networks Inc. at no county expense is also important. An objective comparison of the proposed WAN prices should not ignore this significant investment in the county’s infrastructure at no expense to the county. RiverStreet Networks Inc. also has plans to go beyond the initial three phase project to connect additional customers by reinvesting revenues gained in the initial phases of the project.
4. Given the “taxes and fees” confusion and lack of responsiveness on one or more of the proposals that were received, the BOE should consider re-advertising the WAN solicitation to gain more clarity on the information that was submitted in the initial proposals, and to provide the BOE maximum flexibility in providing the best educational value to the students plus the best economic development value to the county. Actions the BOCC would ask you to consider if the solicitation is re-advertised are listed below:
  - a. Rework the evaluation criteria where the bidder will have to provide specific plans, if they have any, for expanding services to un-served and underserved residents, students and businesses in the county and weight this item appropriately according to the value the BOCC and the BOE assigns to expanded broadband access in the county.
  - b. Ask for one, two and three year price quotes to provide maximum flexibility to the BOE in your selection process and potentially improve the county’s agility to respond to future changes in the telecommunication services environment.
5. The BOCC would request that the BOE remain open to additional information and communication from the BOCC as you move forward toward your final decision. This letter captures our initial thoughts but we will likely have additional thoughts as your decision process moves forward.

### **Summary**

In summary, the BOCC would ask the BOE to take a “big picture” look at this WAN solicitation and its potential impacts on not just the School System but the county as a whole. As mentioned earlier, Section 4.5 of the RFP states that “Stokes County Schools reserves the right to select the proposal(s) which in its sole judgment best meets the needs, services and costs of the Stokes County School System”. This statement reinforces the fact that our two Boards know better than anyone else what this county’s real needs and goals are and that we have the expectations and authority from those who elected us to make those determinations. We also have the responsibility to take advantage of opportunities when they present themselves to better our county’s educational system and economic health. This may be one of those rare opportunities we will get to collectively address the needs and goals of Stokes County as we move into a more virtual environment that impacts most all aspects of our lives, both personal and professional.

**ATTACHMENT:** Bid information provided to the BOE at their last meeting by BOE staff

October 19, 2015

**Public Comments – Board of Education (BOE) Meeting**

I would like to thank the BOE for the opportunity to speak this evening. I am here to make a request concerning the BOE's solicitation for a Wide Area Network (WAN) provider that is on your Discussion Agenda for this meeting. My request is that you do not take any action on this agenda item until I have had an opportunity to analyze the proposals that were received and discuss my analysis with the Board of County Commissioners (BOCC). I would also ask that after I meet with the BOCC on this subject that they be allowed to formally submit information, probably in the form of a letter to the BOE, for you to consider before taking action to select a vendor for your WAN solicitation. I anticipate having this letter to the BOE before your next regular meeting. As further explanation of my request, from my initial review of the information provided to you for this evening's meeting two of the three proposals you received were relatively close on the scoring using the evaluation criteria contained in the request for proposal (RFP). However, the proposal content based on the assignment of points to the two proposals was quite different in the approach that was offered to provide the best value for the Stokes County School System and Stokes County at large. If my request to you is agreed upon, it will allow the BOCC to provide input and assist you in making the critically important determination on what the overall best value is for the School System and the County on this solicitation.

I thank you again for the opportunity to speak and I plan to remain here for the first three topics on your discussion agenda, which are all directly or indirectly related to county local government. I will be pleased to answer any questions you might have of me on any of these agenda items before I depart this evening's meeting.

Thanks.....Rick Morris

**Executive Summary on BOE Wide Area Network Solicitation**

This Executive Summary provides an overview of the information contained in the attached letter from the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners (BOCC) to the Stokes County Board of Education (BOE). The Stokes County BOCC with the support of the Stokes County BOE has been working for some time to introduce a new broadband provider, RiverStreet Networks Inc., to Stokes County. RiverStreet Networks Inc. is a sub-element of Wilkes Communications Inc. located in Wilkes County, N.C. Wilkes Communications Inc. is an established Cooperative and specializes in providing broadband connectivity to rural areas that are un-served or under served. RiverStreet Networks Inc. has a project in process to connect the majority of their un-served and underserved residents in Wilkes County and offered the same type of project to Stokes County at RiverStreet's expense, which is estimated at about \$11 Million for the first three phases of the project, over a three to five year period. An important part of the RiverStreet Networks Inc. project is to provide broadband to the Stokes County School System, which will significantly increase the number of students connected to the internet. To date, RiverStreet Networks Inc. has invested approximately \$2 Million of the \$11 Million needed for the first three phases of the Stokes County project and they are on schedule to meet the July 2016 start date required in the School System's request for proposal.

Bids have now been submitted to School System and the current provider, Time Warner Cable (TWC) Inc. price was lower than the RiverStreet Networks Inc. price, however the RiverStreet

Networks Inc. proposal includes the connection of un-served and underserved customers and the other proposals including TWC did not. There was also confusion in the proposals concerning the taxes and fees that should or should have not been included.

The larger decision for the BOE is whether a vendor should be selected primarily based on the price proposed for the current WAN or should the value of expanded broadband connectivity be more heavily weighted in the decision process, given the large investment RiverStreet Networks Inc. has committed to at no expense to the County. There is a significant additional to a WAN that more students can connect for homework and distance learning classes. There is also a significant economic development value to Stokes County by increasing broadband connectivity. For these reasons the BOE should consider the Requests / Recommendations in the letter to include re-advertising this solicitation and including an evaluation criteria with sufficient weighting that requires bidders to provide their plans for expanding broadband services to un-served and underserved residents of Stokes County.

Chairman Jones opened the floor for discussion.

Chairman Jones noted that due to Commissioner Lankford not feeling so well and the possibility of having to leave early, would request board members to keep comments as short as possible.

Commissioner Inman commented:

- Agree with Manager Morris
- In the 15 years as a commissioner, this is the single most important thing that I have seen brought to the Board of Commissioners
- The future growth of Stokes County depends on this decision that the BOE can make
- We must be bid specific
- Know that this County has bid out a lot of projects with some bids coming back that don't qualify because their bid did not meet the specific bid criteria
- This Board needs to set the specific bid criteria for our vendors
- If we don't, this is what we get
- I am not criticizing Sara Woods, she did her job
- We have to be very bid specific
- We know where TWC and all the other providers are going to be
- Where ever it is profitable, that is where they are going to be
- They are not going to be anywhere else
- It is a travesty
- In 2015, we have people in Stokes County that do not have access to internet
- That is a travesty
- The only way it can be fixed is to do it right this time
- Make the solicitation bid specific for us in Stokes County

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Will agree 100% with what Commissioner Inman just said
- TWC's bid is lower because they are already set up here in the County



- They do not state that they are willing to expand
- In the northern part of this county, article in the paper talked about students going to Piney Grove who don't internet
- In my five years as a commissioner, I have seen no expansion of internet services
- This Board has not even been talked to about expansion of internet services during that five years
- This is the opportunity for un-served and underserved citizens a chance to be offer high speed internet services

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- I thoroughly review Manager Morris' letter
- Thought it was an excellent letter, well written and delivered the message it needed to
- Executive summary is also very thorough with the letter being very detailed
- I am in no hurry, this is so very important
- Quietness is not paramount to importance to me
- When we have an important issue, I sincerely hope our board will take the time to deal with it in an adequate and appropriate manner that does it justice in lieu of how quick we can dispense with it and I am not hearing this on this issue
- Questioned Manager Morris:
  - Is it accurate to determine that Riverstreet is the only provider who submitted a bid that has a history of expanding service has agreed to expand of the three bids that came back?

County Manager Morris responded:

- There was one bid that they did not evaluate and I am not what that proposal stated about expansion
- Of the two that they evaluated, TWC was not forthcoming about expansion
- Riverstreet has already invested a couple of million

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- County has a historically record of how TWC operates their business and what their business model is
- It seems to expand service with it being about \$1,000 for each tenth of a mile
- I agree with some of the statement that Commissioner Inman made – this Board has considered high speed internet an important challenge for our county for many years
- I have gone to training sessions about it
- I have supported it every way I could in every opportunity
- Submitted grants and done everything we could possibly think of to get internet services to the un-served and underserved
- It has been an ongoing challenge for our county and it is critical and crucial for the development of our county in certain ways
- It is a fairness situation, too
- If I am a student or a parent and I have high speed internet, it makes it much better for the student and for the parent to help with homework assignments

- Some teachers are beginning to think in terms that the students that they are teaching have high speed internet
- It fairness issue in that students and families in our county that have high speed internet are better position for learning than those who don't; it is an equity thing
- Also, from what I hear, there are two factors/concerns:
  - One is the cost, the BOE can get a paper savings upfront of about \$100,000 a year
  - The other is something that you mentioned and I am not sure quite how this fits in what we are dealing with – E-Rate

County Manager Morris responded:

- The E-Rate is where the federal government reimburses 80% of the cost with the BOE paying 20%

Vice Chairman Walker continued:

- How does the E-Rate impact what we are dealing with?

County Manager Morris responded:

- Think that the BOE is concerned that if they go with anything other than the lowest bidder, the E-Rate could be effected and federal funding pulled
- I think the BOE has lost the E-Rate one time before for some other reason
- Understand they lost it one time and then got it back
- Probably not been a situation like ours dealing with the E-Rate where there is more than just cost to be weighted here

Vice Chairman Walker questioned when could that answer regarding the E-Rate be pinned down to know more of how significant of a factor that is?

County Manager Morris responded:

- Not sure, think staff is working on trying to get answers to some of those questions
- BOE has a work session scheduled for Tuesday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>
- Would hope that they would have some of those questions answered by then

Chairman Jones requested Vice Chairman Walker to allow another member of the Board to speak.

Vice Chairman Walker noted that he had the floor, had another question and was trying to follow the Board's procedures.

Chairman Jones noted that Commissioner Lankford is feeling ill and might have to leave early and would like to hear his comments.

Chairman Jones noted that he could finish his questions once Commissioner Lankford had expressed his comments.

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- One of things that makes more sense to me is to get a comparable bid
- We need, as a board, and the BOE, to make sure that when the bid is received that we direct the bidder what kind of bid process we want
- If we can do that, I feel that all this could be cleared up

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Think Commissioner Lankford makes a very good point
- It might or it might not be cleared up, bids could come in stacked the same way even if the bids are comparable
- In a conversation with Manager Morris, two or three thousand here and two or three thousand there and we are about \$100,000 difference
- We have the potential of gaining some very significant ground for economic development, for moving our county forward in various ways
- The people in the more rural areas of our county are the ones that are going to benefit most if we can bring this project into fruition
- My question to our manager is: Is there any way given the upward potential of our county to share whatever benefit we could potentially receive from having this high speed in place, could in some way share that with the BOE?

County Manager Morris responded:

- I think that is what my proposed letter attempts to do
- I think what we have to do first is the BOE and this Board (this Board already does and they probably do too) recognize there is a great value to the expansion
- This can't be ignored especially when one of the proposer has already got plows out digging along the road and has committed in their proposal that they will expand
- The next step is to decide what is the value compared to the cost and compared to the other evaluation criteria that are included in the Request for Proposal
- If you did a re-solicitation, my recommendation would be to figure out what it is worth and weight it that way so that when the proposals are evaluated, it has the proper weight assigned to it
- School system is not accustomed to doing proposals with these other factors involved, they normally just do proposals for wide area network
- Do not think there was anything wrong with the Request for Proposal issued and the proposals received other than the fact there are a lot of questions that need to be resolved that would potentially lead you to do a re-solicitation just to get more information and be able to weight these things based on new knowledge gained from the proposals that were received
- Have to remember that we are in control of this, not the vendors

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Because we are in control, we might have options
- BOE can look to see if it benefits the county, make it a level playing field, with benefits to the school system as well

Commissioner Lankford noted the school system would be getting more benefit than anyone.

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Noticed that TWC had a bid of \$217,000
- What were their charges last year?

County Manager Morris responded:

- Don't have the exact figures
- Understand it has been as high as \$400,000

Commissioner Booth noted that their bid did not include any expansion and feel having Riverstreet in the County, it made TWC's bid go down from what they were charging.

County Manager Morris agreed with Commissioner Booth that having Riverstreet in the County has definitely impacted their bid.

The Board unanimously agreed to move the item to tonight's Action Agenda.

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board, directed the Clerk to place the item on tonight's Action Agenda.

Vice Chairman Walker confirmed with the other board members that the executive summary would be included in the letter to the BOE.

County Manager Morris noted that it would be much easier if the Board would authorize him to execute the letter on behalf of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners.

Chairman Jones noted that could be added to the motion along with adding the executive summary to the letter.

### **Proposed Service and Equipment Agreement – Riverstreet Networks, Inc. -Broadband Services**

County Manager Rick Morris provided the following information regarding the Proposed Services and Equipment Agreement with Riverstreet Networks, Inc. for the county's broadband services:

- Proposed Service and Equipment Agreement is between Stokes County and Wilkes Communications dba Riverstreet Networks to provide broadband services to the county
- Have been working with Danny Stovall and Riverstreet for about three months ironing out the details of what the county needs
- Equipment will be rented by Stokes County
- Danny, IT staff and myself visited Wilkes Communications last week to make sure everything is included in the proposed agreement
- Proposed agreement is for 84 months and shall commence on or before May 1, 2016
- Total monthly contract = \$12,564.00
- Proposal is several thousand than what we are paying now and will include rental of new phone agreement
- Would request that the item be moved to tonight's Action Agenda due to the uncertainty created by topic previously discussed
- Need to send something up for Wilkes' next board meeting that shows some commitment from Stokes for his board members as they think about how they are going to react given whatever circumstances we end up with
- Need to have our positive feed forward
- This proposed agreement will be a big step in that direction if approved tonight
- Danny Stovall is in attendance for tonight's meeting for any questions

Chairman Jones opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Inman noted that he was good to go with the request.

The Board unanimously agreed to place the item on tonight's Action Agenda.

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board, directed the Clerk to place the item on tonight's Action Agenda.

### **National Association of Counties (NACO) Membership Renewal – Fiscal Year 2015-16**

County Manager Rick Morris noted the following regarding the NACO Membership Renewal for Fiscal year 2015-16:

- Took this out of the budget this year strictly on an affordability cost issue
- Commissioner Inman brought some additional information to my attention such as the role NACO plays being an advocacy for federal funding
- Would like to turn the item over to Commissioner Inman for further comments

Commissioner Inman commented:

- During the development of the manager's budget, he did exactly what this board asked him to do – be as conservative as possible and to eliminate where possible
- Right now all 100 counties belong to NACO at this point, we would not be renewing our membership starting January 2016 which could be the only county not belonging to NACO
- With all counties belonging to NACO, it gives the NCACC an extra seat on the NACO Board of Directors which gives North Carolina more influence in deciding which county issues to pursue before Congress
- Payment In Lieu of Taxes (PLIT) (Stokes County is not involved) there are counties that this is a key source of revenue for counties that have federal lands in those counties –that is one thing that NACO is involved in
- Waters of US Rules – NACO is involved in that
- NACO has lobbied regarding deferred compensation plan, dental and health discount program just to mention a few
- Bottom line – we are talking about \$949
- Always concerned with saving every dollar you can, I really think we get that much benefit and possibly more from the membership dues
- Would ask to reconsider approving the membership for NACO for Fiscal Year 2015-16

Chairman Jones opened the floor for discussion.

The Board had no issues with placing the item on the November 9<sup>th</sup> Consent Agenda for consideration of approval.

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board, directed the Clerk to place the item on the November 9<sup>th</sup> Consent Agenda.

### **Social Services – External Posting–Social Worker III – Foster Care & Processing Assistant III**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following request from DSS Director Stacey Elmes regarding external posting for a vacant Social Worker III position and a vacant Processing Assistant III position:

- Social Worker III – Foster Care
- Processing Assistant III

- Both positions are currently being posted internally until 10-27-2015
- Request to post externally if no qualified internal applicants
- Both are very critical positions to the agency
- Would request external positing be approved at tonight's meeting in order to expedite the hiring process

Chairman Jones opened the floor for discussion.

The Board had no issues with the request.

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board, directed the Clerk to place the item on tonight's Action Agenda.

#### **Appointments – Stokes County Jury Commission**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following information regarding the appointment to the Stokes County Jury Commission:

- Clerk of Superior Court Jason Tuttle has requested the appointment of one member to serve on the Jury Commission to fill the expired term of Durward Bennett
- Durward Bennett would like to be considered for re-appointment
- Will be advertised and placed on the county website

Chairman Jones opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Lankford nominated Durward Bennett.

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board, directed the Clerk to place the item on the November 9<sup>th</sup> Action Agenda.

#### **Appointments – City of King Planning/Board of Adjustments – ETJ**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following information regarding the appointments to the City of King Planning/board of Adjustments - ETJ:

- The City of King has requested the appointment of one regular member and one alternate member
- Jerry Messick's term as a regular member will expire in December 2015
- Deelaine Mabe's term as an alternate member will expire in December 2015
- Both Jerry Messick and Deelaine Mabe wish to be considered for re-appointment
- Will advertise and place on the county website

Chairman Jones opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Lankford nominated Jerry Messick for the regular member and Deelaine Mabe for the alternate member.

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board, directed the Clerk to place the item on the November 9<sup>th</sup> Action Agenda.

Commissioner Ernest Lankford requested to be excused from the meeting.

The Board had no issues with Commissioner Lankford exiting the meeting.

Commissioner Lankford left the meeting at 8:09 pm.

## **GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – ACTION AGENDA**

### **Social Services – Reclassification – Social Work Supervisor II**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion regarding the reclassification for Social Services – Social Work Supervisor II (Grade 71) to Social Worker Supervisor III (Grade 74) which was presented the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the reclassification of a Social Work Supervisor II (Grade 71) position to Social Worker Supervisor III (Grade 74) in Foster Care. Commissioner Inman seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.



### **Health Department – Reclassification – Office Assistant IV**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion regarding the reclassification for the Health Department – Office Assistant IV (Grade 63) to Medical Tech Lab I (Grade 62) position which was presented the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Commissioner Inman moved to approve the reclassification of an Office Assistant IV (Grade 63) to Medical Tech Lab I (Grade 62) position. Vice Chairman Walker seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

### **Health Department – Accreditation Requirements**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion regarding the following proposed documents required for Accreditation which was presented at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Statement Regarding Adjudications and Adoption of Rules
- Administrative Policy Manual – Board of County Commissioners Adjudication
- Administrative Policy Manual – Observing Public Health and Related Laws
- Administrative Policy Manual – Overall Operation Policy

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the following documents required for Accreditation:

- Statement Regarding Adjudications and Adoption of Rules
- Administrative Policy Manual – Board of County Commissioners Adjudication
- Administrative Policy Manual – Observing Public Health and Related Laws
- Administrative Policy Manual – Overall Operation Policy

Vice Chairman Walker Jones seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

### **Health Department – Proposed SOFIA Lab Fees**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion regarding the following proposed SOFIA Lab Fees which was presented at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Strep A Test - \$10.00
- RSV (Respiratory Virus) - \$18.00
- FLU (A&B) - \$22.00

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the following SOGIA Lab Fees:

- Strep A Test - \$10.00
- RSV (Respiratory Virus) - \$18.00
- FLU (A&B) - \$22.00

Vice Chairman Walker Jones seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

### **Proposed Jail Expansion Project**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following dates for consideration to have a Special Meeting to discuss financing options for a potential jail project:

- Tuesday, November 17, 2015 – either 9:30 am or 3:00 pm
- Thursday, November 19, 2015 – 3:00 pm
- Tuesday, November 24, 2015 either 9:30 am or 3:00 pm

Manager Morris noted that Financial Advisor Doug Carter will be in attendance to discuss all USDA financial options.

The Board unanimously, with Commissioner Lankford absent, agreed to hold the Special Meeting on Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am in the third floor conference room of the Administrative Building.

Chairman Jones, with full consensus of the Board with Commissioner Lankford absent, directed the Clerk to advertise the Special Meeting for Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 9:30 am

### **Proposed Bids – Lease Purchase for Capital Equipment for FY 2015-16 (EMS/Fire Marshal)**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion regarding the following recommendation for purchase Of Capital Equipment for FY 2015-16 for Emergency Medical Services and Fire Marshal which Was presented at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Two (2) 2016 Chevrolet 2500HD trucks with gasoline engines from Modern Chevrolet at a cost of \$34,582.66 each
- 2016 Ford/Horton Ambulance from FESCO Emergency Sales utilizing the HGAC Contract Pricing = \$183,222

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the following capital equipment purchases for FY 2015-16:

- Two (2) 2016 Chevrolet 2500HD trucks with gasoline engines from Modern Chevrolet at a cost of \$34,582.66 each
- 2016 Ford/Horton Ambulance from FESCO Emergency Sales utilizing the HGAC Contract Pricing = \$183,222

Vice Chairman Walker seconded the motion.

Commissioner Booth confirmed with Danny Stovall that the two recommended trucks for EMS and Fire Marshal were under budget and the recommended ambulance was \$2,220 over budget.

The motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

**Appointments – Northwestern Regional Library Board – King Public Library Representative**

Chairman Jones noted that Robert Jones was nominated at the October 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to serve on the on the Northwestern Regional Library Board as the King Public Library

Chairman Jones opened the floor for nominations for the civilian position.

There were no further nominations.

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Commissioner Booth moved to close the nominations. Vice Chairman Walker seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

Chairman Jones polled the Board:

Commissioner Inman: Robert Jones  
Commissioner Booth: Robert Jones  
Chairman Jones: Robert Jones  
Vice Chairman Walker: Robert Jones  
Commissioner Lankford: absent

Chairman Jones noted Robert Jones was appointed to the Northwestern Regional Library Board.

**Appointment – Town of Walnut Cove Planning/Board of Adjustments – ETJ - Alternate**

Chairman Jones noted vacancy for the Town of Walnut Cove Planning/Board of Adjustments – ETJ –Alternate position.

Chairman Jones opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Inman noted that Commissioner Lankford has spoken to Tommy Mabe who has agreed to serve.

Commissioner Inman nominated Tommy Mabe.

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to close the nominations.

Commissioner Booth Inman moved to close the nominations. Commissioner Inman seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

Chairman Jones polled the Board:

Commissioner Inman: Tommy Mabe  
Commissioner Lankford: Tommy Mabe  
Chairman Jones: Tommy Mabe  
Vice Chairman Walker: Tommy Mabe  
Commissioner Lankford: absent

Chairman Jones noted that Christy Bower was appointed to serve on the Stokes County Aging Planning Committee.

**Stokes County Schools – Wide Area Network (WAN) Solicitation**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to approve the information provided by Manager Morris at tonight's meeting to be submitted to the Board of Education to include the Executive Summary and to be executed by the County Manager on behalf of the Stokes County Board of County Commissioners.

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the information provided by Manager Morris at tonight's meeting to be submitted to the Board of Education to include the Executive Summary and to be executed by the County Manager on behalf of the Stokes County Board of County

Commissioners. Vice Chairman Walker seconded the motion.

Vice Chairman Walker questioned Manager Morris if it could prove to be beneficial that we have a joint meeting with the BOE based on the results of this letter, is that a consideration as part of the follow up that we might consider?

County Manager Morris responded:

- I would think so
- One thing to remember is that this is the BOE's solicitation, not the County's solicitation
- It is a matter of influencing what the BOE does
- Certainly sounds a like a very reasonable idea to me if the Board wishes to pursue that
- Would probably be best after the Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> work session
- Will have a better feel if that is a good idea
- Certainly think that is a very good

The motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

**Proposed Service and Equipment Agreement – Riverstreet Networks, Inc. – Broad Band Services**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to approve the proposed Service and Equipment Agreement with Riverstreet Networks, Inc. to provide broadband services to the County which was presented at tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Inman moved to approve Service and Equipment Agreement with Riverstreet Networks, Inc. to provide broadband services to the County. Commissioner Booth seconded the motion.

Vice Chairman Walker confirmed with Danny Stovall that there would be no diminishing of service by approving this Agreement and that there be cost savings and new equipment.

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Very good question by Vice Chairman Walker knowing that it is an improvement all the way

The motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

**Social Services – External Posting – Social Worker III – Foster Care and Processing Assistant III**

Chairman Jones entertained a motion to approve the external posting of a vacant Social Worker III –Child Protective Service position and a vacant Processing Assistant III position which were presented at tonight’s meeting.

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the external posting of the vacant Social Worker III and the vacant Processing Assistant III positions. Vice Chairman Walker seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

**Adjournment**

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

Commissioner Inman moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Booth seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Lankford absent.

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**Darlene M. Bullins**  
**Clerk to the Board**

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**Ronda Jones**  
**Chairman**