

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
MARCH 22, 2016

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for Goals/Budget Work Session in the Third Floor Conference Room of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administration Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Tuesday, March 22, 2016 at 4:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman J. Leon Inman
Vice Chairman James D. Booth – entered the meeting at 4:15 pm
Commissioner Jimmy Walker
Commissioner Ernest Lankford
Commissioner Ronda Jones

County Personnel in Attendance:
County Manager Richard D. Morris
Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins
Finance Director Julia Edwards

Chairman Inman called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance today.

Chairman Inman noted that Vice Chairman Booth would be about 15 minutes late due to another appointment.

INVOCATION

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

Commissioner Jones delivered the invocation.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT-GOVERNING BODY-PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Chairman Inman invited the citizens in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

Chairman Inman turned the meeting over to County Manager Rick Morris to provide

the Board with an overview of the Environmental Health Proposal provided to the Board at yesterday's work session.

County Manager Rick Morris presented a brief overview of the proposal:

- Have been discussing the backlog for septic permits with Environmental Health Supervisor Leslie Easter
- Problems
 - Septic system application backlog
 - Duplicate visits to sites
 - Customer complaints and frustration
- Background
 - Environmental Health Office responsible for carrying 8 state mandated programs:
 - On-site wastewater disposal
 - Food, lodging, and institutions
 - Private drinking water wells
 - Childcare and school sanitation
 - Public swimming pools
 - Tattoo artists
 - Childhood lead poisoning prevention
 - Migrant housing
 - Meth lab cleanup documentation and follow-up as well as NC Smoking Ban response and enforcement have been added to the list of responsibilities
- Full time Employee Equivalents
 - On-site wastewater = 113%
 - Food, Lodging & inspections = 112%
 - Wells/Water Sampling = 32%
- Data
 - Certain soils (saprolite) in which Environmental Health is prohibited (per state rules) from approving with the use of only hand augers
 - If saprolite is encountered with a hand auger within the top 30" one of the following must occur
 - Require backhoe pits for further evaluation or deny the septic permit for the site
 - From 07-01-15 to 03-08-16, the department has evaluated 99 sites for the purpose of permitting new construction septic systems
 - Of those 99 evaluations, 72 have required backhoe pits (72.2%) which means repeat visits to the site
- Interpretation
 - Problems
 - Small field staff
 - Challenging soils in Stokes County
- Solution
 - Require or allow an incentive for customers to schedule a backhoe for the initial septic evaluation
 - Average price for backhoe pits is \$250-\$300 range

- Current residential soil evaluation (improvement permit) is \$150
- Proposal is to reduce the fee to \$100 if the applicant provides a backhoe and operator for the initial septic evaluation
- If it is made mandatory, the backlog of applications will be drastically reduced to most likely a 10-day turnaround (will also reduce vehicle and fuel expenses, maximize staff time productivity and better service to citizens without additional staff)
- Incentive will allow the citizen to choose when making the initial application
- Reducing the wait time will depend on how many take the new option if it is not mandatory

Chairman Inman opened the floor for discussion.

Chairman Inman commented:

- Our county employees are enforcing state regulations
- Our employees are doing the job they have been asked do
- Even if saprolite is found within the top 30", bringing in a backhoe may eliminate having to turn down the permit
- If saprolite is found, you must bring in a backhoe which may take weeks due to the weather, arranging to get a backhoe, and getting back on the schedule
- One point to keep in mind, if the citizen does take the option, they will get an answer the same day

Commissioner Walker commented:

- Believe giving the citizen an option is the best way go
- This could help someone who is ready to start building
- Like giving the citizen a choice when possible

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- Can go either way regarding an option or making it mandatory
- Believe the department needs to plan visits and do the ones in the same area the same day to be more efficient

Commissioner Jones commented:

- Agree with Commissioner Lankford, all departments should be looking at ways to make their department more efficient
- Would like to give the citizen a choice

The Board discussed the pros and cons of making the option mandatory.

Vice Chairman Booth entered the meeting.

County Manager Morris commented:

- The public will not be satisfied with trying to do the ones in the same area the same day

- Too hard to keep up with making sure you get everyone in the same area – what distance do you look at 1 mile, 5 miles, etc.
- Supervisor Easter has a very efficient process in keeping the permits, repairs, etc. in order

Commissioner Lankford noted it could be explained to the citizen.

The Board discussed getting everyone in the same area at the same time.

Vice Chairman Booth commented:

- Can go either way (option or mandatory)
- Believe this could save time and eliminate putting on another employee

Chairman Inman commented:

- Believe giving the citizen an option is the best way to go especially since the reduced fee is saving only \$50 and a backhoe cost between \$250-\$300
- This can help someone who wants to get the results the same day
- Reducing the wait time will depend on how many take the option

County Manager Morris commented:

- Can run this as a pilot program to see how many take the option

Chairman Inman continued:

- Want our department to make sure everything is done right when evaluating the soil for a permit
- Do not want failing septic system
- Think this is a great option especially giving the citizen a choice

The Board agreed to place the item on the next Agenda due to the start of the construction system and possibly reducing the wait time.

Chairman Inman directed Manager Morris to have a policy for the Board to consider at the next meeting.

Finance Director Julia Edwards provided the Board with the following handouts:

- New sales tax projections including what the municipalities will be getting
- School 4 Cent Tax statistical data – Fund Balance after allocating \$1,243,040 for roofing project at Chestnut Grove Middle School = \$2,373,403
- Walmart Estimates regarding estimated sales tax and property values
- ADM per School System by School
 - Per Department of Public Instruction (FY 2015-16 = 6,440)
 - Per School System (FY 2015-16 = 6,293)

Commissioner Walker noted that he was given information from school administration staff that the student population was 6,100.

Commissioner Walker also commented:

- Staff has done some research and believe the declining student population is due to people leaving Stokes County, not Charter Schools or Home Schools

The Board discussed the declining student population.

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- County population is getting older
- Families not having as many children

Chairman Inman commented:

- Agree there is several reasons other than people leaving the county as mentioned by Commissioner Lankford

Commissioner Walker suggested getting the information regarding the declining student population from the school system and would be a good discussion topic for the joint meeting with the Board of Education.

Stokes Reporter Nick Elmes noted the declining student population was discussed at last night's Board of Education Meeting and the 6,100 is estimated for the start of the 2016-17 school year this fall.

Finance Director Edwards continued:

- Information regarding county funding for current expense and capital from the NCACC for counties our size (also include Forsyth, Rockingham, Surry)

The Board discussed the ADM amounts regarding current expense and capital.

Finance Director Edwards continued:

- Debt Schedule

The Board discussed the Debt Schedule with Finance Director Edwards.

The Board discussed the school debt retiring in FY 2017-18.

Finance Director Edwards continued:

- General Statutes explaining how idle funds can be invested:
 - Fidelity Bonds – GS 159-29
 - Investment of idle funds – GS 159-30

- Selection of depository; deposits to be secured – GS 159-31
- Fund Balance for counties our size as of 2015 = 29.92% per Local Government Commission
- Stokes Fund Balance as of 2015 = 25.10%
- Three months operating = estimated 21% to 22% Fund Balance

Commissioner Walker commented:

- Wanted Commissioner Jones to know that he raised the question yesterday about not putting all the reserve funding in the Fund Balance and use that for marketing the County
- Could possibly get a better investment from that than from the investment rates which are really low right now

Five Year Capital Plan Update

County Manager Morris commented:

- The Five Year Capital Plan was revised on March 8, 2016
- Items are priority ranked by the department head in departmental order
- The fiscal years are separated
- Briefly discussed the items for Fiscal Year 2016-17
- Some items will be moved to another Fiscal Year
- Just received information from EMS Director Collins that the Attorney General Offices is going to start enforcing a ruling that all ambulances have to be fully equipped which could be very expensive (spares are not fully equipped – when used, items have to be transferred to the spare)
 - Understand with this new enforcement, the spares would have to be fully equipped
- Will be talking to Director Collins at his budget meeting

The Board discussed the current EMS fleet – rebounds, box sizes, etc.

Commissioner Walker commented:

- With the closing of the ER in King, ambulances are having to make many more trips to Winston which takes an ambulance out of the county
- Will be on board to equip the units with what is needed due to the distance from hospitals
- Have any idea of cost?

Commissioner Jones questioned if there would be penalties?

Manager Morris noted that he would obtain more information from EMS Director

Collins regarding the new enforcement.

Commissioner Lankford commented:

- Will need to look into this further

The Board discussed items on the FY 2016-17 list with Manager Morris.

Vice Chairman Booth questioned if the County has a schedule of when roofs are potentially due?

Manager Morris noted that he would have Director Delehant put a list together regarding the roofs.

County Manager Morris noted that this would change by the time the recommendation is given to the Board.

Chairman Inman noted the final two work sessions will be April 13th and 26th.

Adjournment

There being no further business to come before the Board, Chairman Inman entertained a motion to adjourn the work session.

Commissioner Lankford moved to adjourn the work session. Vice Chairman Booth seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

J. Leon Inman
Chairman