

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA )  
 )  
COUNTY OF STOKES )  
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OFFICE OF THE COMMISSIONERS  
STOKES COUNTY GOVERNMENT  
DANBURY, NORTH CAROLINA  
DECEMBER 27, 2016

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 Tuesday, December 27, 2016 at 6:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman Jimmy Walker  
Vice Chairman Ernest Lankford  
Commissioner James D. Booth  
Commissioner Ronda Jones  
Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall

County Personnel in Attendance:  
County Manager Richard D. Morris  
Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins  
County Attorney Tyrone Browder  
Finance Director Julia Edwards  
DSS Director Stacey Elmes  
Social Work Supervisor Marsha Marshall  
Social Work Supervisor Lori Priddy

Chairman Jimmy Walker called the meeting to order and welcomed those in attendance.

#### **INVOCATION**

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

Commissioner Booth delivered the invocation.

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

Chairman Walker invited those in attendance to join the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance.

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

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to approve or amend the December 27, 2016

Agenda.

Commissioner Jones moved to approve the December 27<sup>th</sup> Agenda as presented.

Commissioner Mendenhall seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

**COMMENTS - Manager/Commissioners**

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

Chairman Walker commented:

- Welcome everyone tonight, no matter what your reason is for being here, we are glad you are here
- As one citizen stated before the meeting, this is the way to do your civic duty

Commissioner Jones commented:

- Welcome everyone here tonight
- Have some "food for thought"
- Today as I was looking back through my Agenda, reviewing the foster care issues and some other things regarding the County, I became very disturbed
- I know there is a lot here tonight regarding the animals and I do love animals
- Apparently, there has to be one staff member per 10 animals at the shelter, but for the foster care workers, the state recommends 14-15 cases per worker
- In Stokes, it is actually 15-20 cases per worker plus parents for each foster child
- The disparity between what the states says for taking care of our animals and taking care of our children would give most people the impression that they are putting animals before human beings
- In reading this today, it really upset me
- Do want everyone to know I love animals and want the new shelter
- I do not want anyone to take my comments the wrong way, this is just the facts of numbers that I discovered today
- When I connect the dots, it really upsets me
- We have 107 foster children and a desperate need for foster parents
- So as we look at our legislative goals, I would ask that we request our legislators to look at some of the disparity, it is really not fair

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Would also like to welcome everyone for being here tonight

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Just want to thank everyone here tonight for taking an interest in what is happening and for taking time from your schedule to come
- There are approximately 47,000 people in Stokes County
- I know it takes time to come out to commissioners' meeting, but I truly appreciate those who come out and express whatever is on their heart

- I personally thank each one of you for coming out tonight, when you could have been home relaxing, having dinner, but you have taken your time to come to express your concern

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- Ethics for Life – “Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might.” (Ephesians 6:10)
- Wish everyone a very Happy New Year

Chairman Walker commented:

- Would like for the Board of Commissioners to be thinking about goals for the County, possibly consider scheduling some meeting times
- Battling some allergies tonight, may have to turn the meeting over to Vice Chairman Lankford; just wanted everyone to know in case I turn the meeting over to the Vice Chairman

County Manager Morris had no comments.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Walker noted that the Board of Commissioners will hear Public Comments, but will not respond to Public Comments and that each speaker will be allowed three (3) minutes. Chairman Walker also noted the speaker has the floor exclusively during their three (3) minutes.

The following spoke during Public Comments:

**Sir Ananda Sarvasri**

1060 Tyler Road

Walnut Cove, NC

**Re: Happiest, Healthiest, Greenest County in the Nation**

Mr. Sarvasri presented the following comments:

- Continuing my project to make Stokes County the Happiest, Healthiest, Greenest County in the Country
- Last time, I spoke about the American diet and provided the Board with 8 charts to show what is going on and why we are in so much trouble (physically and emotionally)
- Our typical American diet is responsible for the degeneration of our health (cancer, heart disease, kidney disease, etc.)
- These diseases were not heard of about 100 years ago or nearly so, but now there is an epidemic
- 50% of adults are diabetic or pre-diabetic
- 25% of children are effected with diabetes, pre-diabetic, or hypoglycemic
- The diet today bares no resemblances to our human diet of the past 1,000 years or so
- The brain is the most sensitive organ in the body; therefore, it is most effected by bad diet and bad chemistry

- Because our brain is effected, it is responsible for social problems such as crime, drug-abuse, violence, student learning, and so forth
- All these problems are reversible
- In my report last meeting, the information from the prison law blog showed how recidivism dropped from 95% down to 2-3%
- This was an amazing event
- Spoke with the individual who manages the prison diet and the prison manager for several hours this week; they both confirmed that it is possible to drop recidivism that much
- I think we should have a goal in Stokes County of dropping recidivism by 75%
- If we could drop the recidivism, we could save \$4 million that would otherwise be wasted on new jail expansion
- Today, I have scientific information why this works
- Discussed the charts provided to the Board regarding blood glucose, brain activity, and the enormous consumption of sugar that we have which is about 185 pounds per person per year along with diabetes and hypoglycemia
- One interesting note is that when the blood sugar drops low, higher brain function shuts down – people become irrational and make bad decisions

Three-minute time limit called.

Mr. Sarvasri presented documentation regarding the following:

- Nutrition and Behavior – Scientific Research
- Charts with pre-diabetic, diabetic, and hypoglycemic information
- Symptoms of High and Low Blood Sugar
- Hypoglycemic (Mental Symptoms)
- Hypoglycemic (Physical Symptoms)
- Diagnostic Questionnaires

**E.A. “Buddy” Timm**

PO Box 573

Walnut Cove, NC

RE: **Keeping HB2**

Mr. Timm read and presented the following to the Board of Commissioners:

“My concern is over keeping HB2. Will there be enough public outcry for HB2 and its wholesomeness so that it will be kept, despite the newly elected Democrat Governor’s, Attorney General’s, and Supreme Court Justice’s words or party affiliation’s position to repeal it?

If HB2 is about the safety of women and children in bathrooms, locker-rooms, and showers, since it prohibits men who claim they are transgender or gender-fluid from using those women’s facilities, then we need to keep HB2.

However, news agencies repeatedly reported on the “controversial HB2” that the General Assembly did not repeal. Is the word “controversial” a fake narrative? Is there really a controversy over the

transgender's and gender-fluid's right to use the women's bathroom, locker-room, and shower, versus, the women's right to privacy and safety in, what should be, a private activity?

All just law discriminates against unacceptable behavior in favor of laws the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

"Public Virtue cannot exist in a Nation without private Virtue, and public Virtue is the only Foundation of Republics" – John Adams. A Republic is guaranteed to us in Article IV, Section 4, of the Constitution; and not a representative Democracy.

Thank God we have the General Assembly that upholds the Constitution, and has morals and enough common sense to keep HB2. Do we have the will to keep it?

Thank you for your Resolution in support of HB2.

**Ellen Peric**  
1095 Wheeler Smith Road  
Lawsonville, NC  
Re: **Animal Control**

Ms. Peric presented the following comments:

- I am here to speak about our animal control issue in Stokes County
- In my profession as a real estate agent, I travel the roads of Stokes County more than most people
- I see more and more stray dogs running around in the road and on the sides of the road
- In my network of friends on Facebook, I see animal rescue friends totally overwhelmed by strays
- Folks are dropping strays off at these people's houses because they know where they live
- I have one family that had to take a break during the holidays because they are so worn out from taking care of other people's dogs that are just being dumped out
- There are so many animals every week that I see
- Because I work in Pilot Mountain, I am in contact with Surry County Animal Control
- I think they are actually getting some of our animals because someone has a friend or neighbor that lives in Surry County; Stokes County people are taking the animals into Surry County
- I think people in Stokes County are also taking animals to Rockingham County shelters
- I think people are just putting their animals out because they do not have any place in Stokes County to take their animals
- I think we are putting our county responsibility off on everyone else
- I think more strays roaming mean more rabies
- I think we are probably going to see a spike in the rabies which is never a good thing
- I don't want our dedicated rescue advocates in this County, who are some of the best, to burn out and not be able to continue to help the animals
- I don't know what the answer is, but I would like this group to be aware that we need to step up and take our responsibility for our stray animals

**Candis Loy**  
3384 Flat Shoals Road  
Germanton, NC  
Re: **Animal Shelter**

Ms. Loy presented the following comments:

- I am here tonight to address the policy of no stray or owner surrender being accepted at the Stokes County Animal Shelter
- Also in the room tonight are citizens who have had animals abandoned on their property or rescued animals that have been abandoned on their property
- One of these is a volunteer with Spay Stokes and is also a business owner in Walnut Cove
- She has had her business interrupted almost on a daily basis with calls about stray animals, but steps up and tries to find help for those animals
- In 2014, the Stokes County Humane Society rescued 129 animals
- In 2015, the Stokes County Humane Society rescued 402 animals while the shelter was closed for 6 months
- In 2016, the Stokes County Humane Society rescued 514 animals and has turned down many requests for help for lack of resources
- Spay Stokes has also seen an increase in strays
- Spay Stokes is primarily a spay and neuter resource for the County, but we have taken animals that have had medical conditions or had to be euthanized due to injuries or neglect
- These expenses are taken from funds that are meant for spay and neuter assistance
- Sadly, if this policy continues to be left in place at the shelter, both organizations will be forced to close their doors for lack of funding
- I have lived in Stokes County for 29 years
- During this time, the shelter has had 4 officers, now there has been a position eliminated and shelter inspection reports from 2011, 2012, 2014, and 2015 list the number of employees at the shelter being not acceptable
- Three years ago, the Animal Control Advisory Council requested a part time employee be hired and that request was denied
- I am aware that we are not required to operate an animal shelter in our County and that we are currently operating at the minimal level as required by the state
- Some of you may or may not own a companion animal, regardless, I don't think any of you would want to see any of God's creatures tossed out like a piece of trash with nowhere to go for help
- This is exactly what is happening everyday here in Stokes County
- It is time we stop depending on Forsyth, Surry, Rockingham, and Guilford Counties to solve our stray animal problems
- Continuing to turn your backs on these issues will mean an almost certain failure for the new animal shelter once it does finally open
- We will not be able to keep up with the influx of animals that will be coming through the door
- So as a taxpaying citizen, I am asking that this Board fund the appropriate number of employees that is needed to accept strays and owner surrenders at the shelter
- We need to stop putting animal control at the bottom of the priorities year after year

- Have copies of the animal shelter inspection reports if anyone is interested in reviewing them

**Angela King**

1285 Gatewood Road

Walnut Cove, NC

**Re: Animal Shelter**

Ms. King presented the following comments:

- I am here tonight to speak about the need for owner surrender animal options in this County from a different perspective
- My husband and I have a small farm in Stokes County where we raise show quality wool sheep
- With an increase number of stray dogs, it directly has an economic impact on our sheep
- We use all measures we can to keep predators, including stray dogs which are the biggest threat to sheep in the United States not just Stokes County, from our sheep
- We have a livestock guardian dog
- We have good fencing
- Sheep worrying, which is chasing sheep from the perimeter of the fence, can cause an increase rate in miscarriage and abortion within sheep which can impact the net income to our farm
- We are animal lovers
- We have our own dog
- We have livestock garden
- We have cats
- I sympathize with people who have no other option since they can't drop animals off at the animal shelter
- I am sure they think a stray animal would be welcome on our farm and it would be a wonderful place for them to live
- It won't, it is going to get hit by car, not be welcomed at our house, and it can communicate disease to our animals
- As a farmer, I would like to ask you to consider how we handle stray dogs in the County
- As a parent of two active kids, I am highly invested in animals
- Our daughter fosters puppies and is really into livestock
- When we are dealing with stray animals on our farm and our daughter is very angry, what do you say when I tell her that people have no other option for unwanted animals?
- How do you answer that question?
- I am here to ask you both as a farmer and a parent to give animal owners another option by fully staffing our animal shelter

Chairman Walker, with no other speakers, closed the time for public comments.

**CONSENT AGENDA**

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to approve or amend the following items on the

Consent Agenda:

**Minutes**

- Minutes of December 12, 2016 - Regular Meeting

**Emergency Medical Services - Budget Amendment #42**

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #42.

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>Emergency Medical Services</b>			
100.4370.351	Maint. & Repairs – Auto	<u>\$70,000.00</u>	<u>\$2,932.00</u>	<u>\$72,932.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$70,000.00</b>	<b>\$2,932.00</b>	<b>\$72,932.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To appropriate insurance claim funds for repairs to vehicle.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$2,932.00** 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
100.3839.850	Insurance Claims	<u>\$47,037.00</u>	<u>\$2,932.00</u>	<u>\$49,969.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$47,037.00</b>	<b>\$2,932.00</b>	<b>\$49,969.00</b>

**Sheriff's Department, Animal Control, and Contingency - Budget Amendment #43**

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #43.

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>			
100.4310.000	Salaries & Wages	\$1,733,720.00	\$4,321.00	\$1,738,041.00
	<b>Animal Control</b>			
100.4380.000	Salaries & Wages	\$90,732.00	\$5,560.00	\$96,292.00
	<b>Contingency</b>			



100.9910.100	Leave Cost	<u>\$87,253.00</u>	<u>\$(9,881.00)</u>	<u>\$77,372.00</u>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$1,911,705.00</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>	<b>\$1,911,705.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To transfer funds from Contingency for the payoff of terminated, resigned, retired, dismissed, and compensatory time over limit employees for December. (Holiday = \$848; Vacation = \$5,660; and Compensatory Time = \$3,373.00.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$00.00** 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.

#### **New School/Forsyth Tech Fund - Budget Amendment #44**

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #44.

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>Forsyth Tech</b>				
100.5920.000	Salaries & Wages	\$30,370.00	\$10,710.00	\$41,080.00
100.5920.090	Social Security	\$1,896.00	\$665.00	\$2,561.00
100.5920.091	Medicare Tax	\$444.00	\$160.00	\$604.00
100.5920.100	Retirement	\$2,250.00	\$790.00	\$3,040.00
100.5920.101	401(k)	\$175.00	\$110.00	\$285.00
100.5920.110	Group Insurance	\$7,136.00	\$2,980.00	\$10,116.00
100.5920.111	Dental Insurance	\$400.00	\$170.00	\$570.00
100.5920.130	Unemployment Insurance	\$268.00	\$110.00	\$378.00
100.5920.171	Term Life	<u>\$81.00</u>	<u>\$35.00</u>	<u>\$116.00</u>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$43,020.00</b>	<b>\$15,730.00</b>	<b>\$58,750.00</b>
<b>New School/Forsyth Tech Fund</b>				
211.9100.000	Debt Service Fund Balance	\$390,442.00	\$(15,730.00)	\$374,712.00
211.9820.000	Transfer to General Fund	<u>\$1,933,889.00</u>	<u>\$15,730.00</u>	<u>\$1,949,619.00</u>
<b>Totals</b>		<b>\$2,324,331.00</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>	<b>\$2,324,331.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To appropriate funds from New School/Forsyth Tech Fund to fund one custodian for the Forsyth Tech campus which was approved at the December 12, 2016 meeting by the Board of County Commissioners.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$15,730.00** 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
<b>General Fund</b>				
100.3982.970	Transfer from New School/Forsyth Tech Fund	<u>\$1,933,889.00</u>	<u>\$15,730.00</u>	<u>\$1,949,619.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$1,933,889.00</b>	<b>\$15,730.00</b>	<b>\$1,949,619.00</b>

#### Natural Resources - Budget Amendment #45

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #45.

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>Natural Resources</b>				
100.4960.181	Professional Services – Grants	<u>\$100,000.00</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>	<u>\$150,000.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$100,000.00</b>	<b>\$50,000.00</b>	<b>\$150,000.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To appropriate funding from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund for the Little Snow Creek Stream Restoration Project.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$50,000.00** 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
100.3301.427	Clean Water Management Trust Fund	<u>\$00.00</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>	<u>\$50,000.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>	<b>\$50,000.00</b>	<b>\$50,000.00</b>

#### Legal and Contingency - Budget Amendment #46

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #46.

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>Legal</b>			
100.4150.180	Professional Services	\$100,000.00	\$75,000.00	\$175,000.00
	<b>Contingency</b>			
100.9910.000	Contingency	<u>\$163,240.00</u>	<u>\$(75,000.00)</u>	<u>\$88,240.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$263,240.00</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>	<b>\$263,240.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:  
To transfer funds from Contingency for legal expenses.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$00.00** 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.

#### **Senior Services - Budget Amendment #47**

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #47.

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>Senior Services</b>			
100.5860.330	Utilities	<u>\$4,000.00</u>	<u>\$(522.00)</u>	<u>\$3,478.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$4,000.00</b>	<b>\$(522.00)</b>	<b>\$3,478.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:  
To un-appropriate Piedmont Triad Regional Council (PTRC) General Purpose Funds due to a reduction in grant funds.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$522.00** 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
	<b>General Fund</b>			
100.3301.377	PTRC – General Purpose	<u>\$11,400.00</u>	<u>\$(522.00)</u>	<u>\$10,878.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$11,400.00</b>	<b>\$(522.00)</b>	<b>\$10,878.00</b>

### Jail - Budget Amendment #48

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #48.

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>Jail</b>				
100.4320.000	Salaries & Wages	\$723,565.00	\$(75,000.00)	\$648,565.00
100.4320.010	Salaries & Wages – Overtime	\$3,000.00	\$2,000.00	\$5,000.00
100.4320.020	Salaries & Wages – Part time	<u>\$95,000.00</u>	<u>\$73,000.00</u>	<u>\$168,000.00</u>
	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$821,565.00</b>	<b>\$00.00</b>	<b>\$821,565.00</b>

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To transfer funds for salaries (part time) due to workers' compensation claims.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$00.00** 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.

### Tax Administration Report – November 2016

#### Refunds More Than \$100 – Real and Personal Property

Tax Administrator Jake Oakley presented the following Refunds more than \$100 – Real and Personal Property (November 2016) at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for the Board's review with consideration at the December 27<sup>th</sup> meeting:

Refunds More Than \$100	Real/Personal	Property	
Name	Bill Number	Amount	Reason
Judy W. Goldback	30354373	\$196.47	Vehicle Sold
Mackenzie E. Miller	33557440	<u>\$535.72</u>	Vehicle Sold
	<b>Total Amount</b>	<b>\$732.19</b>	

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Commissioner Mendenhall seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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

Chairman Walker noted that there were no items on tonight's Information Agenda.

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

### **Proposed Strategic Plan for DSS – Foster Care**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following proposed Strategic Plan for DSS – Foster Care which was requested by the Board of County Commissioners at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting:

#### **Strategic Plan Foster Care**

##### **Executive Summary**

It's been said that you can measure the conscience of a society by the manner in which that society takes care of its young people and elderly people. This measure of society clearly applies to local government when it comes to the care provided to children who unfortunately end up in the foster care system. These children are probably the most vulnerable citizens that a local government serves. In Stokes County, the DSS strategic plan for taking care of foster children in their custody is to apply every obtainable resource to their foster children to help them overcome the obstacles that placed them in foster care to begin with. To accomplish this mission, the DSS must be adequately staffed to service the number of children in its foster care program. This translates to a case load of 14 or less per Social Worker and adequate Supervisor / Program Manager ratios and Social Worker assistants to get the job done correctly. At Stokes County DSS, one Community Social Services Assistant is needed to support Social Worker s with transportation and supervision of visits for a caseload of 60 foster children. When the caseload exceeds 60, a second position for this function is required. Otherwise, Social Worker s perform this function, which takes them away from their social work duties.

Stokes County currently has 6 Social Worker positions in Foster Care with two vacancies. Foster children numbers are frequently exceeding 100, which places the individual worker caseloads between 15 and 20 when fully staffed at current approved levels. This is high risk and unacceptable for all involved. Children are not receiving services they need to help them overcome the obstacles that had them removed from their parents. The only logical long term strategic solution is to approve and hire additional Social Worker s into supervisory and worker level positions to manage the exploding numbers of foster children in DSS custody. This is the only means to get the work done and reduce personnel turnover to maintain trained and experienced workers in the foster care positions. Currently, Social Worker turnover in Foster Care is caused by overwhelming workloads plus other factors such as non-competitive pay and is especially detrimental to the foster children due to the personal and private nature of the services being provided by their Social Worker s.

**To give you the strategic planning bottom line up front:** The major strategic initiative for Stokes County DSS Foster Care is to align the number of foster care workers with the number of foster children being served and to modify the supervisory structure of Foster Care to support a reasonable and collaborative decision making process for the critical decisions that must be made on each individual foster care case. Currently, one foster care supervisor must disposition all foster care cases that are on hand, which is near impossible to do. This process must support fluctuations of

foster care numbers as they increase and decrease and not require DSS Director involvement in matters that should be resolved below the director level.

### **Background Statement**

In North Carolina the children who end up in foster care have a specific Bill of Rights which are defined in **North Carolina General Statute 131D-10.1**. The purpose and a list of these rights are below:

(a) It is the policy of this State to strengthen and preserve the family as a unit consistent with a high priority of protecting children's welfare. When a child requires care outside the family unit, it is the duty of the State to assure that the quality of substitute care is as close as possible to the care and nurturing that society expects of a family. However, the State recognizes there are instances when protecting a child's welfare outweighs reunifying the family unit, and as such, the care of residential care facilities providing high quality services that include meeting the children's educational needs as determined by the Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Social Services can satisfy the standard of protecting a child's welfare, regardless of the child's age, particularly when the sibling groups can be kept intact. To that end, the General Assembly promotes the following in the provision of foster care:

- (1) A safe foster home free of violence, abuse, neglect, and danger.
- (2) First priority regarding placement in a home with siblings.
- (3) The ability to communicate with the assigned Social Worker or case worker overseeing the child's case and have calls made to the Social Worker or case worker returned within a reasonable period of time.
- (4) Allowing the child to remain enrolled in the school the child attended before being placed in foster care, if at all possible.
- (5) Having a Social Worker, when a child is removed from the home, to immediately begin conducting an investigation to identify and locate all grandparents, adult siblings, and other adult relatives of the child to provide those persons with specific information and explanation of various options to participate in placement of a child.
- (6) Participation in school extracurricular activities, community events, and religious practices.
- (7) Communication with the biological parents if the child placed in foster care receives any immunizations and whether any additional immunizations are needed if the child will be transitioning back into a home with his or her biological parents.
- (8) Establishing and having access to a bank or savings account in accordance with State laws and federal regulations.
- (9) Obtaining identification and permanent documents, including a birth certificate, social security card, and health records by the age of 16, to the extent allowed by federal and State law.
- (10) The use of appropriate communication measures to maintain contact with siblings if the child placed in foster care is separated from his or her siblings.

- (11) Meaningful participation in a transition plan for those phasing out of foster care, including participation in family team, treatment team, court, and school meetings.

### **Mission Statement**

It is the mission of the Stokes County Department of Social Services (DSS) to ensure that each foster child under the care and custody of DSS receives the services they are due under the Bill of Rights as described in NCGS 131D-10-1. Anything less is a dereliction of the duties that DSS and the local government are charged to provide.

### **Management Board and Staff**

Under the current organizational structure in Stokes County, N.C. the Stokes County Board of Commissioners (BOCC) also serves as the DSS Board and is required by North Carolina Statute to hire the DSS Director, who is then supervised by the County Manager. Under this organizational arrangement, the BOCC ultimately has full authority and responsibility for the budget, staffing and operations of the Department of Social Services.

The DSS Director with the assistance of the County Manager is in charge of day-to-day operations of the department, to include foster care, and is responsible for ensuring the BOCC is aware of funding and personnel needs to successfully operate the department and more specifically the Foster Care Section of DSS.

Foster care Social Workers and other supporting staff who provide transportation, licensing and administrative services collectively perform the following tasks plus other duties as assigned which are not necessarily listed specifically below:

- ☐ assessing children's needs to ensure appropriate placement and services;
- ☐ arranging and monitoring a placement appropriate to the child's needs;
- ☐ involving the kinship network to provide planning, placement and other support for the child and family;
- ☐ developing and arranging community-based services to support the child and family;
- ☐ collaborating with other community service providers working with the family to ensure continuity of services and to prevent duplication of services;
- ☐ referring the child and family to needed services, including clinical treatment;
- ☐ providing treatment services, as appropriate;
- ☐ preparing the child, the child's family, and the foster family for separation and placement, including negotiating and preparing visitation agreements;

- ☐ assessing family strengths and needs to determine the appropriate plan for service;
- ☐ providing ongoing risk assessment to determine risk to the child and to guide the case planning process;
- ☐ working with the family to develop and implement the Out of Home Family Services Agreement;
- ☐ monitoring and updating the Out of Home Family Services Agreement with the family;
- ☐ providing case planning and management;
- ☐ concurrent permanency planning with the family to develop alternative options to provide a permanent home for a child should reunification fail;
- ☐ helping the family meet Out of Home Family Services Agreement objectives by providing information, instruction, guidance and mentoring on parenting skills;
- ☐ provides counseling to the child and family to help the child and family cope with the grief resulting from the separation and placement;
- ☐ arranging medical examinations and other services for the child;
- ☐ supervising foster care facility to ensure that the child receives proper care during placement;
- ☐ maintaining contact with the family and others significant to the case;
- ☐ preparing for and participating in court proceedings;
- ☐ maintaining a close working relationship with the agency attorney for guidance in the legal process;
- ☐ periodically reviews the Out of Home Family Services Agreement;
- ☐ preparing for and facilitating Permanency Planning Action Team meetings;
- ☐ providing transportation for children in foster care when needed and not otherwise available, including visits with parents, siblings, and relatives;
- ☐ providing LINKS services to assist older youth in learning life skills necessary to make a successful transition from foster care to living on his or her own;
- ☐ ensuring that foster care placements across state lines are in compliance with the Interstate Compact on the Placement of Children;
- ☐ recruiting, developing and supervising foster care families and child care facilities;
- ☐ recruiting and assessing relatives and other kin as potential caregivers;



- ☐ assessing and periodically reassessing foster care homes and facilities to determine if the home or facility meets the needs of the children it serves;
- ☐ providing consultation, technical assistance, and training to assist foster families and foster care facilities to expand and improve the quality of care provided;
- ☐ involving foster parents in the planning and decision making for children in foster care;
- ☐ facilitating foster/adopt options for children and preparing foster/adoptive parents;
- ☐ preparing children for adoptive placements and maintaining life books; and
- ☐ maintaining the foster care case record and thorough documentation of case activities.

The transportation requirement for DSS Social Worker s is minimized when an adequate number of Community Social Services Assistants are available to provide transportation to various appointments and supervised visits. The transportation function is a very time consuming one which on some occasions takes the workers out of the state.

### **Organizational Vision**

It is the organizational vision of DSS that staffing and other resources remain adequate to provide the full array of services that is owed to each and every foster child by the department and society at large. This will require agility and flexibility to quickly adapt resource levels to adequately support the number of foster children under the custody of DSS. This must be a responsive process because of the nature of the business and the quickness with which the numbers of foster children change, which is beyond the control of DSS.

### **Specific Strategic Objectives**

- The N.C. Dept. of Health and Human Service's maximum recommended caseload for Foster Care is 15. The Stokes County DSS strategic objective is to keep the foster care case load between 12 and 14 cases. It's almost impossible to properly service our foster care population with a case load above 14 cases per worker. This is due to the increasing complexity of child needs caused by issues related to drug addiction, mental illness, etc.
- Stokes County currently has 6 Social Worker positions in Foster Care with two vacancies. Foster children numbers have frequently exceeded 100, which places the individual worker caseloads between 15 and 20 if current staffing levels are filled. This is high risk and unacceptable for both the county and the foster children. Children and parents are not receiving services they deserve. Strategically an adequate number of Social Worker s and supervisor positions will always be needed to adequately service the current level of foster children that are in custody.
- Ensure the proper number of supervisors / Program Managers, Social Worker s, Community Social Services Assistants and licensing personnel are available to support the case load

numbers stated above. The staffing process should be flexible enough to be increased or decreased quickly to adjust to fluctuations in the number of foster children in custody, which is very unpredictable.

- A long range strategic objective is to continually evaluate compensation levels and to keep pay scales in a competitive range that will minimize personnel turnover.
- It is critical to maintain a stable workforce in foster care because it has a detrimental effect on foster children when the faces of their Social Worker s are currently changing. This is related to the personal and sensitive nature of the work the Social Worker s are performing with their individual foster children and other family and non-family members that are involved with the cases.
- The Foster Care and other child welfare functions are negatively impacted by the lack of a case management system which causes the functions to be performed manually. DSS is in process of gathering additional information on whether N.C. Fast will potentially provide an adequate and timely enough solution in lieu of purchasing a commercial case management system from Northwoods. The acquisition of a case management system is a high priority.

County Manager Morris noted:

- The proposed strategic plan was drafted by myself with review and improvement by DSS Director Stacey Elmes and staff
- DSS currently has 6 Foster Care Social Worker positions with 2 vacancies
- Currently in a desperate situation to look after 107 foster children
- Proposed strategic plan attempts to lay out what a strategic vision that would hopefully be more agile and more able to deal with fluctuations in the number of foster children
- Waiting for the annual budget cycle is not really a good solution
- Foster children numbers vary so much from month to month
- Feel the proposed strategic plan is fairly clear about what we think the strategic vision should be for ensuring that we always keep the risks and services for foster children at an acceptable level
- Provided the Board with a copy of a news article "Rylan Ott: A year later, not enough answers from embattled Moore County DSS" for the Board's review
- Would be happy to answers any questions after DSS Director Elmes has had a chance to speak

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- My main comment would be that I am not an asker for help; I just don't operate that way
- I like to try to make things work to the best of my ability with what I have; I have been raised that way and will always be that way
- We, as a department, need some help
- There is no other way to put it

- I would beg any of you to come, spend some time in our department with our Foster Care Social Workers and/or supervisors to see what they do every day, to see how full their schedules are, to see the tears that they cry because of the things that we have to deal with
- I would be glad to answer any questions

Chairman Walker opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that currently the department has 107 foster children, picking up 4 since the last meeting
- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that there has only been one application for the vacant Social Worker positions

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- An interview has been scheduled for the one applicant for this Thursday (applicant is not qualified and has no experience whatsoever and will come into the position if hired as a trainee)

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- When I looked at this information provided, I did not see this information as a strategic plan – just don't agree with it
- We have a problem and my thinking was that we ask the group to get together and solve a problem and make recommendations
- When you have a problem, you have to deal with it
- I don't have the answers because we are short 2 people; we are advertising
- What I am reading is more of an operational manual for foster care
- It appears it needs to be fixed
- You have got to come with some answers
- You just said you don't ask for help, what are you asking for?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- I am asking for positions

Vice Chairman Lankford continued:

- We have already given you 2 positions, so where does that take us?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- We have more children than we have people to do the work

Vice Chairman Lankford continued:

- We have already given you two positions, is that not right?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- Two positions were given two budgets ago, the numbers have continued to drastically increase since then

Vice Chairman Lankford continued:

- Is it not correct that the Board approved to allow two vacant positions to be advertised externally?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- That is correct, but those two positions have not been filled yet

Vice Chairman Lankford continued:

- We asked for a strategic plan to improve this situation
- You have a problem, how are you going to solve it?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- We can't solve the problem the way we are operating right now

Vice Chairman Lankford continued:

- Guess you need to find ways to get the word out that we need people to interview to hire for the two vacant positions
- Have you thought about job fairs?

County Manager Morris commented:

- Even when the two people are hired, the problem remains the same, too many children for 6 Social Workers
- The reason the vacancies occurred was due to the fact that 6 workers were not being able to get the work done; employees are "abandoning ship"
- We need additional personnel
- We came to the Board in February and stated that we had a problem and told you what we needed
- We came to the Board during the budget cycle and stated that we had a problem; we had twice as many kids as we are staffed to look after
- We are back here again telling you that we have a problem; we have twice as many kids as we are staffed to look after
- Having open positions without being able to attract personnel does not solve the problem

Vice Chairman Lankford continued:

- Going to make my last comment, we have advertised for the positions, but we don't have the personnel yet

Commissioner Jones commented:

- Read the following from the proposed strategic plan:
  - "Stokes County currently has 6 Social Worker positions in Foster Care with two vacancies"
  - Even if those two vacancies were filled, each worker would still have 15-20 foster kids which is over the state's recommendation of 14
- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the request is for 1 additional Social Worker, 1 Social Work Supervisor, 1 Program Manager, and 1 Transportation Aide

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- Just want to clear something up regarding what Commissioner Jones stated - the state recommends 15 foster children per Social Worker

Commissioner Jones continued:

- The proposed strategic objective is to keep the foster care caseload between 12 and 14 cases

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- The objective to keep the foster care caseload between 12 and 14 is due to the nature of the workload and the needs of the children

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Listening to all the comments
- Wondering how the County is going to fill the 2 vacancies
- It would have to be better when there are 2 more employees to help share the work/caseload

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- It would be better, but would not take care of the problem

Commissioner Booth continued:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that there has only been one application with the applicant not being qualified for the position
- If this Board were to give you 4 more positions, how would you fill all those positions?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- Some of those new positions would be filled internal

Commissioner Booth continued:

- That would leave other vacant positions to be filled

Chairman Walker commented:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the county share for these positions would only be 38%
- With every dollar spent by the County, there is \$2 coming into the County from other sources
- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the 2 vacant positions have been posted for 2 weeks
- Questioned DSS Director Elmes or Manager Morris what is needed to fix this issue at this time?

County Manager Rick Morris responded:

- Need another Social Worker to decrease the caseloads

- Need another Social Work Supervisor in order to have a reasonable supervisory ratio
- Need a Program Manager to oversee the Child Welfare Program to help execute the decision making process that now flows up to the Director that should not be flowing up to the Director; that position would then allow the Director to be able to do what is needed for the entire department
- Need a Community Social Services Assistant to help transport the foster children
- If these positions can't be filled, something needs to be done to attract people – increase pay, other incentives, etc.
- Having the positions authorized without being able to fill them provides the department zero help

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- In agreement with Manager Morris' recommendation regarding what is needed to try to fix the problem

Chairman Walker opened the floor for further comments from the Board.

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Understand the state has requirements regarding the pay

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- Allowing the Foster Care Social Workers to receive incentive pay has been greatly appreciated and has helped
- One thing about the incentive is that it does not start until after 6 months
- Regarding the pay, the state does have requirements regarding minimum pay that can be accommodated by the County

Commissioner Booth continued:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the county share for the 4 requested positions for one year would be approximately \$49,586.75
- Noted the proposed strategic plan also recommended a case management system that would be several hundred thousand dollars

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- Still hoping that NCFASST is going to offer some type of case management system that would eliminate the County investing in a system

Commissioner Booth continued:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that there could be a situation if the numbers dropped significantly; then there would be too many employees
- Must keep that in consideration

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- Believe there are ways that could be dealt with such as possibly terminating contract Social Workers

County Manager Morris responded:

- To add to Director Elmes' comments about too many employees, we would not be timid about laying off employees if the need was not there
- The proposed strategic plan speaks to aligning the number of foster care workers with the number of foster children being served

Commissioner Jones questioned DSS Director Elmes what was the retention rate regarding the foster care staff?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- Lead Foster Care Social Worker has been here approximately 16 years
- The other three Foster Care Social Workers have been in their positions less than 2 years
- It is like people say, the County is a training ground for the higher paying counties

Commissioner Jones commented:

- Would like to see that change

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Have only been on the Board for 1 month, trying to catch up on this situation
- Questioned what qualifications does a person applying for the Social Worker position have to have?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- To be qualified as a Social Worker II, you must have a Bachelor-Social Work (BSW) (normally do not get anyone who has a BSW)
- To be qualified as a Social Worker III, you would have to have a BSW and 1 years' experience (those positions being advertised are Social Worker IIIs)
- A person with a Bachelor's Degree in a related field would qualify as a Social Worker I
- A person with a Bachelor's Degree in a non-related field would qualify as a Social Work Trainee
- Trainee takes 1 year to become a Social Worker I
- Social Worker I takes 1 year to become a Social Worker II
- Social Worker II takes 1 year to become a Social Worker III

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the starting pay for a fully qualified Social Worker III is \$31,669 and the starting pay for a Social Worker Trainee is \$25,027
- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the vacant positions have been advertised externally for approximately two weeks

County Manager Morris responded:

- One thing to also keep in mind is that a Trainee ties up valuable Social Worker time

- Provided the Board with information from a Local Support Manager with the North Carolina Division of Social Services who had prepared information for the Board during the budget process (not presented) regarding the need for a Services Program Manager

Commissioner Mendenhall continued:

- Unfortunately, Stokes County is a training ground not only for Social Workers, but for many areas such as teaching positions (go to other counties with higher supplements)
- If anyone has a magical answer to fix this problem, would like to hear it
- Would like to hear comments from Supervisors Marsha Marshall and/or Lori Priddy, who have been with DSS for several years
- Amazed the positions have only attracted 1 candidate

Chairman Walker, with full consensus of the Board, allowed Supervisors Marsha Marshall or Lori Priddy to comment.

Social Work Supervisor Marsha Marshall responded:

- Speaking from the Child Protective Services (CPS) side, the last two vacancies in CPS were hard to fill
- Did not have any applicants at first
- Took about 3 months to fill the positions and then took several months to train
- There could possibly be some graduating in December
- CPS was in the same position several years ago, the Incentive did help greatly
- If you don't have enough workers to do the job, you will lose the ones you already have
- These are stressful jobs that people get burned out even when you have enough workers
- We are responsible for children's lives on a daily basis and meeting the needs of these children

Chairman Walker confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the four requested positions (Social Worker, Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager, and Community Social Services Assistant) would be a recurring county annual cost of approximately \$50,000.00.

Chairman Walker confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the four requested positions (Social Worker, Social Work Supervisor, Program Manager, and Community Social Services Assistant) would be approximately \$22,000.00 county costs for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2016-17.



Chairman Walker confirmed with DSS Director Elmes and County Manager Morris that if there became a situation of too many employees, appropriate action could be taken.

Chairman Walker requested final comments from Board members and then direction on where to go from here.

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that contact has been made with UNC-Chapel Hill for newly graduated folks
- Suggested contacting other colleges within the area about the open positions
- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that a Community Social Services Assistant (transportation aide) would most likely be easier to hire than a Social Worker
- From reading the material provided, believe a Community Social Services Assistant would take a lot of work off the Social Workers
- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that having another Community Social Services Assistant would definitely take work off the Social Workers
- Looking at other options like hiring a Community Social Services Assistant is what we need to be doing until we can get to where we need to be
- I would recommend hiring a transportation position
- Feel this position would be utilized wisely

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the part time transportation aide that was approved by this Board has not been filled yet
- Confirmed with Vice Chairman Lankford that his recommendation would be a full time Community Social Services Assistant (transportation aide)

Vice Chairman Lankford responded:

- The reason for my recommendation is that another transportation aide would take a fair amount of work off the Social Workers

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Confirmed with DSS Director Elmes that the part time transportation aide was filled temporary; worker applied for a full time Income Maintenance Caseworker that became open
- Believe if the 2 Social Worker positions were filled and a new transportation aide approved and filled, it would definitely make an impact on the issue

County Manager Morris commented:

- Just want to make sure that the Board knows that when we first came to the Board about this issue, there were no vacancies in foster care
- Adding the transportation aide will definitely help, but if the numbers remain, the problem will still be there with only 6 Social Workers (need for another Social

Worker) plus the need for an additional Social Work Supervisor and Program Manager

- As we stated in February, we are double the number of kids that we are staffed to handle

Commissioner Jones commented:

- I either read or have been told that the outcome for these children is greatly diminished with the constant changing of Social Workers
- The way I see this is that these children are our future taxpayers
- We just keep running these kids through and not taking care of the issue
- These children are young and impressionable
- I wonder what this is going to mean later down the road when these kids are grown
- To me, it is not just about today, it is about tomorrow, the next year, ten years down the road
- How do you deal with the constant change impacting these children?

DSS Director Elmes responded:

- In response to Commissioner Jones' question, I worry about things like that constantly 24 hours per day
- When you have workers upset and crying about things that you can't do anything about, then you get the supervisors upset, that is a very disturbing situation for employees
- I know you realize how important these jobs are
- The lives of these children is just not something for us to play with, the liability involved here is unreal

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- My heart strings tie to this very heavy with all the years served in education
- Agree with Commissioner Lankford's recommendation about job fairs and contacting the area universities
- Like in the school system, often had to beat the bushes for specific positions
- We had problems with hiring specific teachers
- We have sent staff to job fairs all across North Carolina and also out of state looking for candidates
- Had similar situations with the school system not having qualified teachers for specific courses
- May be a good time to recruit with December graduates
- May be able to get someone who may not have the requirements, but can be trained
- Like I stated before, trying to catch up on this issue
- Listening closely to what my fellow commissioners are saying
- I want a solution to this situation

Chairman Walker requested the pleasure of the Board regarding the Agenda item.

Vice Chairman Lankford responded:

- Would like to see the Board approve a Community Social Services Assistant (transportation aide)
- Work to try to hire the 2 Social Workers
- Would agree to move to tonight's Action Agenda

Commissioner Jones responded:

- Not willing to go with only the Community Social Services Assistant
- Would like to see all 4 requested positions approved

Commissioner Booth responded:

- Requested clarification that Commissioner Lankford's recommendation is to move the approval of 1 full time Community Social Services Assistant to tonight's Action Agenda

Chairman Walker responded:

- At this point, the direction, if consensus by the Board, would be to place the item on tonight's Action Agenda
- This would mean that any Commissioner could make a motion pertaining to the request, not just Commissioner Lankford's recommendation

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- Only want to move the item to tonight's Action Agenda regarding the approval of 1 full time Community Social Services Assistant

Chairman Walker polled the Board regarding moving the item to tonight's Action Agenda.

Commissioner Jones: Tonight's meeting

Commissioner Booth: Tonight's meeting

Commissioner Mendenhall: Tonight's meeting

Chairman Walker: Tonight's meeting

Chairman Walker, with a majority of the Board, directed the Clerk to the Board to place the item on tonight's Action Agenda.

#### **Forsyth Tech – Proposed Trades Facility – Design Update**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following information regarding the proposed

Trades Facility Design Update:

- With passage of NC Connect Bonds, \$809,410 has been allocated for a Trade Shop Facility beside of the new Educational Facility in Stokes County
- Another \$1,500,000.00 may be allocated thru the Golden LEAF Community Grant

- It is estimated that the size of the facility will range from about 3,500 sq. ft. to 7,500 sq. ft. depending upon the approval of the \$1.5 million grant
- A Planning Team met on December 8<sup>th</sup> to consider programs for the new facility and to place them in a priority order
- Chairman Walker and Vice Chairman Lankford attended on behalf of the Board
- Forsyth Tech staff, School Superintendent Brad Rice, Director Ann Watts along with myself were also present at the meeting
- The programs and their priority was chosen as follows:
  - #1 – Welding
  - #2 – Electrical
  - #3 – Plumbing
  - #4 – Wellness/Physical Education
  - #5 – Carpentry
  - #6 - Horticulture/Agriculture
  - #7 – HVAC
- Lot of discussion was done by the Planning Team regarding the priorities

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- No further comments
- Just want to make sure the entire Board had information from the meeting regarding the priorities

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Confirmed with Manager Morris that the HVAC would not be included even if the \$1.5 million is received from Golden LEAF due to the cost
- Would like to see HVAC taught in Stokes County
- HVAC is a very demanding and high paying job

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- HVAC was discussed in length
- The course is already equipped at the Winston Salem campus
- As mentioned, very expensive to implement

Commissioner Booth continued:

- All these are potential jobs for our citizens – very good paying jobs (welding, electrical, plumbing, etc.)
- This is a good thing for Stokes County
- Confirmed with Vice Chairman Lankford and Chairman Walker that HVAC could not be implemented into this budget regardless of whether the \$1.5 million is granted
- Confirmed with Chairman Walker that the reason it is on the list, even though it can't be implemented now, is it is there for the future

Chairman Walker confirmed with fellow members that each member concurred with the priorities being presented at tonight's meeting.

## Legislative Goals for 2017-18

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following information regarding the Legislative Goals for 2017-18 which was discussed at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting:

- Board did not receive information regarding the goals' submission date of September 2016
- The following top five (5) goals were approved at the NCACC Legislative Goals Conference which was held on January 15-16, 2015 in Moore County
  - (1) HH-1: Support continued state funding of Medicaid and support efforts by the state to provide healthcare access for all citizens
  - (2) PE-1: Seek legislation to restore the statutory requirement that 40% of the net lottery proceeds be allocated to counties for school capital needs and increase the annual appropriation of lottery funds until the 40% allocation is restored
  - (3) PE-4: Seek legislation to repeal the statutory authority under N.C. G.S. 115C-431 (c) that allows local school boards to file suit against a county board of commissioners over county appropriations for education
  - (4) GG-1: Oppose any shift of state transportation responsibilities to counties
  - (5) TF-1: Oppose unfunded mandates and shifts of state responsibilities to counties
- Understand the Voting Delegate can submit the County's goals at the conference by the Voting Delegate
- Received information from Dr. Brad Rice, Superintendent
  - Request a legislative goal to restore the previous individual class size exceptions and district wide average allowable for grades K-3 to prevent a negative impact on each district's ability to hire non-core teachers in art, physical education, technology, and other special subjects, who enhance instruction in these early grades
  - If smaller K-3 ratios adopted in the last state budget remain in place without the exceptions being restored, significant increases for additional classrooms and personnel will be required with no additional funding from the state
  - This translates to additional local funding and would be another unfunded mandate from the state
  - The funded class size ratios are:
    - Kindergarten – 1 teacher to 18 students
    - 1<sup>st</sup> Grade – 1 teacher to 16 students
    - 2<sup>nd</sup> Grade – 1 teacher to 17 students
- This goal could definitely have implications on future county budgets

Chairman Walker opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Don't believe the top five goals from 2015-16 have been completed

Commissioner Jones, Vice Chairman Lankford and Commissioner Mendenhall both noted that these goals need to stay on the list.

Chairman Walker commented:

- Recommend the Board consider the current goals, goal from Dr. Rice, and finalize goals at the January 9<sup>th</sup> meeting

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

### **External Posting – Public Buildings**

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following information regarding a request from Director Mark Delehant to post a vacant position externally:

- The new position for Forsyth Tech/Early College has been filled with an internal candidate
- With the placement being a current employee, it leaves a Custodian/Maintenance position vacant
- Request to move the item to tonight's Action Agenda to expedite the hiring if there are no internal candidates as the department already has one position vacant due to worker's compensation

Chairman Walker opened the floor for discussion.

The Board did not have any issues with the request or moving the item to tonight's Action Agenda.

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

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

### **Legislative Goals Conference – Voting Delegate**

Chairman Walker opened the floor for volunteers/nominations for the Voting Delegate Designation for the Legislative Goals Conference.

Commissioner Jones volunteered to serve as the Voting Delegate if no one else wanted to be the Voting Delegate.

Chairman Walker noted that he would be happy to serve as the Voting Delegate if others had conflicts.

Commissioner Jones stated it would be fine and would appreciate Chairman Walker serving as the Voting Delegate.

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

The Board unanimously agreed to have Chairman Walker represent Stokes County as its Voting Delegate at the Legislative Conference in January 2017.

#### **Appointments – Hanging Rock State Park Advisory Committee**

Chairman Walker noted that Commissioner Ronda Jones was nominated at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting to serve on the Hanging Rock State Park Advisory Committee.

Chairman Walker opened the floor for any further nominations.

There were no further nominations.

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

Chairman Walker polled the Board:

Vice Chairman Lankford: Commissioner Jones  
Commissioner Mendenhall: Commissioner Jones  
Commissioner Booth: Commissioner Jones  
Chairman Walker: Commissioner Jones  
Commissioner Jones: Commissioner Jones

Chairman Walker noted that Commissioner Jones was unanimously appointed to serve on the Hanging Rock State Park Advisory Council.

### **Appointments – Triad Community Board – Cardinal Innovations**

Chairman Walker noted that Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall was nominated at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for appointment to the Triad Community Board – Cardinal Innovations.

Chairman Walker opened the floor for nominations.

There were no further nominations.

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

Chairman Walker polled the Board:

Commissioner Jones: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Chairman Walker: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Commissioner Booth: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Commissioner Mendenhall: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Vice Chairman Lankford: Commissioner Mendenhall

Chairman Walker noted that Commissioner Mendenhall was unanimously appointed to serve on the Triad Community Board – Cardinal Innovations.

### **Appointments – CenterPoint Human Services – Board of Directors**

Chairman Walker noted that Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall was nominated at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for appointment to the CenterPoint Human Services – Board of Directors.

Chairman Walker opened the floor for nominations.

There were no further nominations.

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

Chairman Walker polled the Board:

Commissioner Jones: Commissioner Mendenhall



Chairman Walker: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Commissioner Booth: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Commissioner Mendenhall: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Vice Chairman Lankford: Commissioner Mendenhall

Chairman Walker noted that Commissioner Mendenhall was unanimously appointed to serve on the CenterPoint Human Services – Board of Directors.

#### **Appointments - Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (TAC)**

Chairman Walker noted that Vice Chairman Ernest Lankford was nominated at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for re-appointment to the Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization (TAC).

Chairman Walker opened the floor for nominations.

There were no further nominations.

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

Chairman Walker polled the Board:

Commissioner Jones: Vice Chairman Lankford  
Chairman Walker: Vice Chairman Lankford  
Commissioner Booth: Vice Chairman Lankford  
Commissioner Mendenhall: Vice Chairman Lankford  
Vice Chairman Lankford: Vice Chairman Lankford

Chairman Walker noted that Vice Chairman Lankford was unanimously re-appointed to serve on the Northwest Piedmont Rural Planning Organization.

#### **Appointments – Winston Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (TAC)**

Chairman Walker noted that Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall was nominated at the December 12<sup>th</sup> meeting for appointment to the Winston Salem Urban Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (TAC).

Chairman Walker opened the floor for nominations.

There were no further nominations.

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

Chairman Walker polled the Board:

Vice Chairman Lankford: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Commissioner Mendenhall: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Commissioner Booth: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Commissioner Jones: Commissioner Mendenhall  
Chairman Walker: Commissioner Mendenhall

Chairman Walker noted that Commissioner Mendenhall was unanimously appointed to serve on the Winston Salem Urban Metropolitan Planning Organization (TAC).

#### **Appointments – Stokes County Aging Planning Committee**

Chairman Walker presented the following information regarding a vacancy on the Stokes County Aging Planning Committee:

- Erma Perkins submitted her resignation as a member and chairperson on the Stokes County Aging Planning Committee
- Stokes County Aging Planning is seeking recommendations for the appointment, but is not scheduled to meet again until January
- Vacancy will remain on the Action Agenda until an appointment is approved by the Board of County Commissioners

Chairman Walker opened the floor for nominations.

There were no further nominations.

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to close the nominations.

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

Chairman Walker directed the Clerk to continue to place the appointment on the Action

Agenda until a new member is appointed.

### **Proposed Strategic Plan for DSS – Foster Care**

Chairman Walker entertained a motion regarding the proposed Strategic Plan for DSS – Foster Care which was presented at tonight's meeting.

Vice Chairman Lankford moved to approve a new position for DSS – Community Social Services Assistant and that the County would continue to advertise for the two vacant Social Worker positions. Commissioner Booth seconded the motion.

Chairman Walker opened the floor for discussion.

Chairman Walker commented:

- Will have to hold off on voting for this motion
- Would like to see an additional new position – Social Worker

Commissioner Jones commented:

- Want to approve all 4 requested positions
- The need is there for all 4 requested positions

Commissioner Mendenhall requested information about the job duties of the Community Social Services Assistant.

Clerk to the Board Darlene Bullins, at the request of Chairman Walker, responded:

- Employee will transport foster children to all needed and mandated appointments (doctor, dentist, other needed services)
- Employee will observe visits between foster children and parents
- Employee will provide documentation of the visits to Social Worker

Chairman Walker called the question.

The motion carried (3-2) with Chairman Walker and Commissioner Jones voting against the motion.

### **External Posting – Public Buildings**

Chairman Walker entertained a motion regarding Director Delehant's request to externally post a vacant Custodian/Maintenance position which was presented at tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the external posting for the vacant Public Buildings Position - Custodian/Maintenance. Commissioner Jones seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

### **CLOSED SESSION**

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to enter Closed Session for the following:

- To consider the initial employment or appointment of an individual to any office or position, other than a vacancy in the Board of County Commissioners or any other public body, or to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, and fitness of any public officer or employee, other than a member of the Board of Commissioners or of some other public body pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(6)
- To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged pursuant to GS 143-318.11(a)(3)

Commissioner Jones moved to enter Closed Session for the following:

- To consider the initial employment or appointment of an individual to any office or position, other than a vacancy in the Board of County Commissioners or any other public body, or to consider the qualifications, competence, performance, character, and fitness of any public officer or employee, other than a member of the Board of Commissioners or of some other public body pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(6)
- To consult with an attorney employed or retained by the public body in order to preserve the attorney-client privilege between the attorney and the public body, which privilege is hereby acknowledged pursuant to GS 143-318.11(a)(3).

Commissioner Booth seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The Board re-entered the open session of the December 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

### **Adjournment**

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

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to adjourn the meeting. Commissioner Booth seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

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

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**Jimmy Walker**  
**Chairman**