

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
JANUARY 23, 2017**

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, January 23, 2017 at 6:00 pm with the following members present:

Chairman Jimmy Walker
Vice Chairman Ernest Lankford
Commissioner James D. Booth
Commissioner Ronda Jones – arrived at 6:05 pm
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

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

County Manager Morris noted that Commissioner Jones was running a little late for tonight's meeting.

INVOCATION

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

Chairman Walker 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 January 23, 2017

Agenda.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to approve the January 23rd Agenda as presented.

Commissioner Booth seconded and the motion carried (4-0) with Commissioner Jones absent.

Commissioner Jones entered the meeting at 6:05 pm.

COMMENTS - Manager/Commissioners

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

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Would like to thank everyone for coming out tonight
- As each meeting comes forward, we wish that our Board always looks for wisdom as we go through the decision making process
- As our country has a new leader, I wish the leadership at the national level to be strong
- I also hope that the Senate, the House, and the President will all work together and that great things will happen over the next four years

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Would also like to welcome everyone here tonight

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- Ethics for Life – “Trouble sharpens your wit, improves your skill, and transforms your spine into steel. Don’t run from it, face it head on, and rejoice at the opportunity to become an overcomer.” John Hagee

Commissioner Jones commented:

- Extended apologies for being a little late for tonight’s meeting
- Just want to say that adversity is good for you if it has not killed you in the process; we all know that it can make or break you
- Welcome everyone tonight

Chairman Walker commented:

- Good to see everyone here for whatever reason brought you to tonight’s meeting

County Manager Morris had commented:

- The Board of Commissioners will not have a Planning Meeting on February 7th
- Public Information Meeting at the Petree Facility in Pine Hall has been scheduled for Tuesday, February 7th at 6:30 pm
 - Explained the purpose of the meeting is to introduce the community to the new facility
 - Will provide a tour of the facility for the community

- Mr. Petree is also wanting ideas from the community regarding potential future projects on the property

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.

The following spoke during Public Comments:

Sri Ananda Sarvasri

1060 Tyler Road
Walnut Cove, NC

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

Mr. Sarvasri presented the following comments:

- So far, I have presented eleven (11) scientific methods to improve behavior and health
- These methods even reduce recidivism by 75% to 90%
- These methods work by enhancing our biochemistry
- All of our physical, mental, emotional, behavioral, and social problems are due to the biochemical impact of our destructive lifestyles
- Now, I am introducing another technology
- Psycho-acoustic medicine is the science of how sound enhances neurochemistry
- Like the Biblical story of David playing his harp to soothe King Saul, sound and music affects us emotionally and can reduce negativity
- Now, it is a science
- We know the exact frequencies to create peace and harmony
- We simply listen to binaural beat frequencies
- 200Hz in one ear and 190Hz in the other ear creates a 10Hz beat frequency
- The brain synchronizes to it; it is called brainwave entrainment
- The alpha state, 8-14 Hz, produces serotonin, the “feel-good” chemical that reduces pain and increases feelings of happiness and satisfaction, the opposite of addiction
- This is a breakthrough
- Now, anyone at home, school, or work can enhance their neurochemistry by listening to a binaural beats soundtrack
- Use any computer, mp3 player, or smart phone with headphones or earbuds, just like listening to music
- With alpha, students can learn up to five times more, in less time, and with greater long-term retention
- Theta waves, 4-8 Hz, release catecholamines, essential for learning and memory
- Theta waves dramatically increase left and right brain communication, improving cognitive function
- Alpha and Theta also eliminate addiction
- Neither drugs nor counseling have reversed addiction
- Brainwave entrainment is scientifically proven
- For example, the University of Southern Colorado compared two groups of alcoholics

- One group received the 12-step AA Program; the other group received no counseling and only had (15) 20-minute binaural beats listening sessions
- Thirteen months later, the AA group had no change in depression and an 80% relapse into alcoholism, but the binaural beats group only relapsed 20% and depression levels improved to equal non-alcoholics – an amazing achievement with only 15 listening session
- This reinforces my contention that the best way to create a happy, healthy population is to change biochemistry and neurochemistry
- We now have 12 ways to do it
- We don't need larger prisons or hospitals
- We only need happy, healthy, people
- Mr. Sarvasri also provided an additional handout to the Board of County Commissioners

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 those that are unfit for governance
- Anyone who does not know the Natural Foundation of Right and Wrong, with its highest form of morality –virtue, is unfit for governance
- Without that Natural Foundation for guidance mental instability is the outcome
- The most obvious mental instability is revealed by gender confusion, men thinking they are women and vice versa; and by those that support that confusion
- Mental help is necessary for both, since their minds are persuaded to accept that mental contradiction, despite the physical reality
- God made His Natural Foundation of Right and Wrong clear throughout the Bible's Holy Scriptures, and specifically addressed His verdict in Roman's 1 – "...Professing to be wise, they became fools... And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a debased mind, to do those things which are not fitting..."
- There are no acceptable excuses for our newly elected Governor to continue pushing for the repeal of HB2 – which prohibits men, who claim they are a woman, from using the women's bathrooms, locker rooms, and showers
- Have minds degenerated so much that they cannot understand their error, even when a woman's safety and morals are at stake?
- Who should know better than the Creator of Life – what is a debased mind?
- Who should know better than our Creator – who is unfit for governance – when He instituted government?
- Have we been so educated into imbecility, that we do not know what is good or fit governance?
- Therefore, we need to seriously consider what shall be done, because our Democrat Attorney General most likely will not enforce HB2, just like the former Democrat Attorney General – now Governor, would not enforce HB2
- Inaction against unfit governance can bring on God's judgement – such as with Sodom and Gomorrah's complete destruction because of their sodomy and immorality
- Will you take a stand against unfit governance and against those unfit for governance?

Ramona Timm

PO Box 573

Walnut Cove, NC

RE: **Gatewood to Better Education**

Ms. Timm presented the following comments:

- Thank you for the opportunity to speak
- Would like to inform the Board about two upcoming seminars
 - February 3rd (Friday night) and 4th (Saturday morning)
 - First seminar on Friday night is for parents, grandparents, and volunteers regarding “Keeping Their Faith in Public School: How to help your children graduate with their faith and values intact”
 - A recent study discovered that 89% of young people who left the church say their doubts about Christianity were questioned during the middle and high schools years
 - As Warren Nord from the University of Chapel Hill wrote: “Public Schools clearly and forcefully discourage students from thinking about the world in religious ways”
 - This seminar equips parents to counter these negative affects
 - The second seminar on Saturday morning is for educators
 - Both seminars will be held at the Westover Church in Greensboro
 - Only ask a modest donation as I have been told
 - Addressing the Judeo Christian tradition without mixing church and state
 - Professional, development seminar for public schools
 - This is not about an educational theory
 - Will learn practical ways to appropriately and lawfully include teaching about the Bible and Christian history, culture, and values across the curriculum
 - Teachers will receive the latest updates on federal and state religious liberty issues affecting student and teachers
 - As one educator said, “the most liberating seminar an educator will ever experience”
- Provided the Board with a brochure regarding the seminars
- Please let other people know about these important seminars
- Senator Shirley Randleman stated in a meeting the other day that when children from the first to the third grade are not successful in those first three years of school, you can count on building that many beds in prison for those children that failed in those first three years of school

Three-minute time limit was called.

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 January 17, 2017 - Regular Meeting

Sheriff's Department - Budget Amendment #51

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #51.

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

Account Number	Account Description	Current Budgeted Amount	Increase (Decrease)	As Amended
	Sheriff's Department			
100.4310.351	Maint. & Repairs – Auto	<u>\$199,567.00</u>	<u>\$3,673.00</u>	<u>\$203,240.00</u>
	Totals	\$199,567.00	\$3,673.00	\$203,240.00

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To appropriate insurance claim funds for repairs to vehicle.

This will result in a **net increase** of **\$3,673.00** 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>\$52,710.00</u>	<u>\$3,673.00</u>	<u>\$56,383.00</u>
	Totals	\$52,710.00	\$3,673.00	\$56,383.00

Governing Body & Contingency - Budget Amendment #52

Finance Director Julia Edwards submitted Budget Amendment #52.

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

Account Number	Account Description	Current Budgeted Amount	Increase (Decrease)	As Amended
	Governing Body			
100.4110.450	Insurance & Bonds	\$569,746.00	\$38,249.00	\$607,995.00
	Contingency			
100.9910.000	Contingency	<u>\$58,240.00</u>	<u>\$(38,249.00)</u>	<u>\$19,991.00</u>
	Totals	\$627,986.00	\$00.00	\$627,986.00

This budget amendment is justified as follows:

To transfer funds from Contingency for Worker's Compensation insurance per Worker's Compensation Audit.

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 – December 2016

Releases More Than \$100 – Real and Personal Property

Tax Administrator Jake Oakley presented the following Releases more than \$100 – Real and Personal Property (December 2016) at the January 17th meeting for the Board's review with consideration at the January 23rd meeting:

Releases More Than \$100	Real/Personal	Property	
Name	Bill Number	Amount	Reason
William Hampton Green	851471-2016-2016	\$170.73	Boat Listed in Rockingham County
	851471-2015-2015	\$128.46	
	851471-2014-2014	\$166.25	
	851471-2013-2013	\$209.50	
	851471-2012-2012	\$257.09	
	851471-2011-2011	\$309.08	
Charles Martin & Others	310270-2016-2016	\$383.67	Rollback Bill Reversal Due to Delay in Closing
	310270-2016-2015	\$420.12	
	310270-2016-2014	\$438.85	
	310270-2016-2013	\$471.98	
	Total Amount	\$2,955.73	

Refunds More Than \$100 – Real and Personal Property

Tax Administrator Jake Oakley presented the following Refunds more than \$100 – Real and Personal Property (December 2016) at the January 17th meeting for the Board's review with consideration at the January 23rd meeting:

Refunds More Than \$100	Real/Personal	Property	
Name	Bill Number	Amount	Reason
Surry-Yadkin Electric Member Corporation	289741-2015-2015	\$2,087.08	Real Property Double-Billed
	289741-2016-2016	\$2,059.34	Real Property Double-Billed

B&B Septic & Drain Service Inc.	31704059	<u>\$281.56</u>	Vehicle Out of State
	Total Amount	\$4,427.98	

Tax Administration – Personal Property Schedule of Values

Tax Administrator Jake Oakley presented the following Personal Property Schedules of Values at the January 17th meeting for the Board’s review and consideration at the January 23rd meeting:

- 2017 Department of Revenue Cost Index and Depreciation Schedules (Business Personal Property)
- 2017 Pricing Guidelines for Personal Property
- 2017 Single Wide Mobile Home Pricing Guidelines (Schedules Developed from Marshall and Swift)

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Commissioner Jones 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

United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) – Letter of Acceptance – Community College Project

County Manager Rick Morris presented the following proposed USDA – Letter of Acceptance for the Community College Project for the Board’s review and consideration:

January 23, 2017

Joshua J. Carswell
Area Specialist
Rural Development
United States Department of Agriculture
444 Bristol Drive
Statesville, NC 28677

Re: Stokes County – Letter of Acceptance – Community College Project

Dear Mr. Carswell

January 23, 2017

This letter serves as documentation that Stokes County is pleased with the completed community college project and the project is acceptable to the county as it was originally designed.

The Board of County Commissioners unanimously approved this correspondence at the January 23, 2017 Board of Commissioners' meeting.

The Stokes County Board of Commissioners would like to express their appreciation to you for your dedicated commitment to this project.

Sincerely yours,

Jimmy Walker
Chairman
Stokes County Board of County Commissioners

County Manager Morris noted:

- USDA is requiring the County submit a Letter of Acceptance regarding the completion of the Community College Project
- USDA is requiring this letter to close out the loan for the community college project
- Request to move the item to tonight's Action Agenda so that USDA can close out the loan

Chairman Walker opened the floor for discussion.

The Board had no issues with the proposed Letter of Acceptance.

The Board unanimously agreed to move the proposed Letter of Acceptance to tonight's Action Agenda.

Chairman Walker directed the Clerk to the Board to place the item on tonight's Action Agenda.

Joint Meeting – Caswell, Rockingham, & Stokes Counties

Chairman Walker presented the following information regarding a joint meeting with Caswell and Rockingham Counties (Caswell County is hosting the meeting):

- Caswell County would like to have some dates to consider for scheduling the next joint meeting
- Rockingham County has offered March 14th and March 15th (Clerk Bullins will not be available for those dates)
- Board has the option to offer other dates for consideration

The Board discussed possible dates.

The Board unanimously agreed to offer the following dates for consideration:

- March 7th, 8th, 21st and 22nd

Chairman Walker directed the Clerk to notify Caswell County regarding the possible dates.

Forsyth Tech – Proposed Trades Facility - Discussion

Chairman Walker noted the Forsyth Tech Proposed Trades Facility has been placed on tonight's Agenda for further discussion.

Chairman Walker opened the floor for discussion.

Commissioner Jones commented:

- Know there was some disappointment that HVAC was not included in the proposed plan line sketch
- I am supporting the proposed plan line sketch because it does include five trades as opposed to just a couple of trades
- Hopefully we can add HVAC and others down the road
- Need to get as many trades as we can right now
- As previously stated, support the proposed plan line sketch submitted to the Board by Forsyth Tech

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Certainly, we all wish we could have all the trades that were named including HVAC and Carpentry
- It is no doubt that those two trades that are not included (HVAC & Carpentry) do have great job opportunities
- The ones that are on the list are very, very outstanding trades to have
- If I remember correctly, the manager stated with HVAC there could only be one other trade due to space limitations
- Rather have the quantity of what we have on the proposed plan line sketch
- I can support the proposed plan line sketch submitted to the Board by Forsyth Tech

County Manager Morris commented:

- Just want to mention that with HVAC, I am not totally sure there would be only one other trade
- It is certain that HVAC takes a tremendous amount of facilitation and space
- The proposed plan line sketch, which was submitted to Golden LEAF Foundation, can be changed later
- Not sure that Golden LEAF cares about which trades are included
- Not sure if Chairman Walker and Vice Chairman Lankford got the same interpretation from the meeting

Vice Chairman Lankford responded:

- That was my understanding, the proposed plan could be changed and that no final decisions will be made until April which is when the grant determination by Golden LEAF will be made

Commissioner Booth commented:

- Questioned if the Wellness and Physical Education are considered trades?

Chairman Walker responded:

- Understand it will be used for physical education activities and can be used by the community when not in use by the college – some exercise equipment will be in the facility

Commissioner Booth continued:

- Questioned if that particular curriculum has to be in the facility?

County Manager Morris responded:

- Does not have to be included, it is just not funded by the Golden LEAF Foundation
- If the Wellness remains, it has to be funded by the NC Connect Bond funds
- My understanding it was included due to earlier survey information of what was needed and wanted by the citizens
- This will also serve the Early College

Commissioner Booth continued:

- Disappointed that carpentry is not included in the proposed plan
- Feel that carpentry is beneficial for a rural county
- Under carpentry comes blueprint reading, bricklaying, etc. which are high paying jobs
- Really disappointed that HVAC was not being included
- An HVAC helper can start out at \$15.00 an hour
- An HVAC technician can start out at \$25 to \$30 per hour
- Just have questions about some of the trades being left out and others being putting in

Chairman Walker commented:

- Remember the school system having very positive comments at the meeting regarding horticultural and agricultural being included to go along with classes already being taught at the high schools

Commissioner Booth continued:

- Also had some questions regarding the size of the facility
- With \$800,000 from NC Connect Bond and Forsyth Tech (approximately 3,500 sq. ft.), there were only two trades suggested – electrical and welding
- If the Golden LEAF comes through, that adds \$1.5 million; understand we have to get the funding first
- Why could the trades building not be lengthened to accompany the other trades?

- Confirmed with County Manager Morris that Forsyth Tech has been offering welding and plumbing at other locations within the County
- Concerned why, with twice as much money, can only get approximately 7,000 sq. ft., not enough space for the needed trades

County Manager Morris responded:

- Think it is broken down by facilitation of the trade as well as the space needed
- Don't think the space was the only issue regarding HVAC, believe facilitation (cost) of the trade was a big concern
- Could have Forsyth Tech break down the cost per trade

Commissioner Booth responded:

- Can understand the space and cost issue
- Have concerns about how much space/trades proposed with the NC Connect Bond funding of \$800,000 versus what is proposed with the additional \$1.5 million Golden LEAF Grant (if approved)

Chairman Walker responded:

- This is not going to be anywhere near what we will be looking at with the finished product, I think, until it comes back from the architect
- Has just been sent to the architect so they could get started

Vice Chairman Lankford responded:

- Agree with Chairman Walker regarding the finished product

Commissioner Booth continued:

- We have two commissioners and the county manager on the committee, just wanted to voice my concerns

Vice Chairman Lankford commented:

- Just want to make sure that everyone knows that the facility has a 15 ft. hangover shelter which can be used for the specific trades

Commissioner Jones commented:

- The purpose of the discussion is just to say we are okay with moving forward
- There is nothing written in stone
- Ready to move forward

Commissioner Booth responded:

- Understand what Commissioner Jones is saying, but see specific trades being eliminated that may not be put back
- Just venting my concerns
- Would like to see some length added, even if it takes reducing the shelter, to get all the trades we can
- Just want my concerns noted

Chairman Walker directed the Clerk to note Commissioner Booth's concerns for the record which can be addressed if the opportunity happens to present itself in the future.

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

Vice Chairman Lankford responded:

- Do not think the item needs to be back on the Agenda again until after April when the Golden LEAF Grant is decided

Commissioner Booth confirmed with Manager Morris that the proposed plan line sketch has been submitted to the Golden LEAF Foundation for the grant and was really the real reason for the sketch.

Chairman Walker commented:

- Learned at the Legislative Goals Conference that the Golden LEAF Foundation has received an additional \$25 million and the NC Department of Commerce has received an additional \$10 million above what was expected
- Could receive more than what is being expected

Appointment – Forsyth Tech/Stokes County Advisory Council

Chairman Walker noted the following regarding the Forsyth Tech/Stokes County Advisory Council:

- Need to fill former Commissioner Inman's appointment
- Vice Chairman Lankford volunteered at the last meeting to serve on the Council
- Also serve on the Forsyth Tech/Stokes County Advisory Council

Chairman Walker opened the floor for any further volunteers or nominations.

Chairman Walker noted:

- Would like to hear Commissioner Mendenhall's thoughts on the appointment since he has been accepting the ones vacated by former Commissioner Inman

Commissioner Mendenhall responded:

- Already have an array of former Commissioner Inman's appointments that I am willing to serve on
- Have no issues with Vice Chairman Lankford filling the appointment

The Board unanimously agreed to have Vice Chairman Lankford fill former Commissioner Inman's appointment to the Forsyth Tech/Stokes County Advisory Council.

GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – ACTION AGENDA

Stokes County Policy for Fire Service District & Fire Commission & Use of Service District Funds

Chairman Walker entertained a motion to approve the following Stokes County Policy for Fire Services District & Fire Commission & Use of Service District Funds which was presented at the January 17th meeting:

County of Stokes

Policy for Fire Service District and Fire Commission and Use of Service District Funds

I. Purpose and Objectives of Fire Commission

The Stokes County Fire Commission is established for the oversight of revenue generated within the Stokes County Fire Service District and serves as an advisory group for the Stokes County Board of Commissioners on matters pertaining to the fire service district. All decisions made by the Fire Commission shall require final approval by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners. The following shall be the objectives and duties of the Fire Commission:

1. During the annual budget process, the Fire Commission shall review each submitted budget item from each service district agency and make recommendations to the Board of Commissioners as to the final approved amount of each submitted agency budget.
2. During the annual budget process, after meeting with representatives from each service district agency, the Fire Commission shall recommend to the Board of Commissioners any additions or cuts to budget items based on the needs of the specific agencies and the priority of needs. The Fire Commission shall ensure that the total recommended budget does not exceed available service district revenues and that the recommended service district tax rate does not exceed fifteen cents (\$0.15) per \$100 property valuation as specified by North Carolina statute. The Fire Commission shall always be aware of the tax burden that their budget recommendations could place on the taxpayers of the Stokes County Fire Service District and therefore be fiscally responsible in making their budget recommendations. The Board of Commissioners shall evaluate the recommendations from the Fire Commission and make a final decision on the service district budget and tax rate.
3. The Fire Commission shall hear and make recommendations on any emergency requests by a service district agency for funds from the service district fund balance during the budget year. Before approving such emergency requests, the Fire Commission shall consult with the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association and give due consideration to any recommendation received from that organization. After approval from the Fire Commission, the request will be forwarded without delay to the Board of Commissioners for a final decision.
4. Individual Fire Commissioners shall establish communications with each service district agency and work with the agency representatives to maintain a “needs assessment” for the specific agency.

II. Size and Selection of Fire Commission

The Stokes County Fire Commission shall consist of **eight** members with no more than one member affiliated with a single service district agency:

1. ***Three appointed Members Affiliated with a Service District Agency:*** The Stokes County Board of Commissioners shall appoint three individuals who are affiliated with a service district agency to serve on the Fire Commission. In making these appointments, the Board of Commissioners shall give priority consideration to candidates recommended by the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association. Each member shall serve a term of two years without a limit on the number of terms to which he/she can be re-appointed provided that he/she continues to meet the qualifications and duties described in Parts III and IV of this document. During the term in which the member is serving, if the member's status changes and he/she no longer meets the qualifications described in Part III, the member shall resign and the Board of Commissioners shall appoint a successor to complete the remainder of his/her term, following the same process used in making the initial appointment. Each member will have one vote on any item of business that comes before the Fire Commission, except as limited in Part VI of this document.
2. ***Three appointed Civilian Members Not Affiliated with a Service District Agency:*** The Stokes County Board of Commissioners shall appoint three individuals who have *no* affiliation with a service district agency to serve on the Fire Commission. In making these appointments, the Board of Commissioners shall identify possible candidates by using the same recruitment procedures as with other appointed boards, committees, and commissions, but shall specifically invite recommendations from the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association. Each member shall serve a term of two years without a limit on the number of terms to which he/she can be re-appointed provided that he/she continues to meet the qualifications and duties described in Parts III and IV of this document. During the term in which the member is serving, if the member's status changes and he/she no longer meets the qualifications described in Part III, the member shall resign and the Board of Commissioners shall appoint a successor to complete the remainder of his/her term, following the same process used in making the initial appointment. Each member will have one vote on any item of business that comes before the Fire Commission, except as limited in Part VI of this document.
3. ***Stokes County Fire Marshal:*** The Fire Marshal shall serve as an ex-officio, non-voting member of the Fire Commission. This member will advise the Commission as an unbiased member on the needs of the service district agencies and on the constantly changing standards and regulations from the state and federal government. This person will also serve as Secretary of the Fire Commission. The Fire Marshal may designate another member of his/her department to attend any meeting in his/her absence.
4. ***President of the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association.*** The President of the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association shall serve as an ex officio member of the Fire Commission. This member shall provide technical advice to the Fire Commission, serve as a liaison to the Association and its member agencies, and facilitate coordination among the various agencies and the Fire Commission to promote fiscally responsible use of available resources. This member shall not vote except to break a tie among the appointed members.

Note 1 — Geographical Representation: Whenever possible, appointed members shall reside in different geographical locations of the fire service district/county in an effort to give fair representation to each region. The Stokes County Fire Marshal shall assist the

Board of Commissioners in the appointment process by identifying and reporting the geographical residence of Fire Commission members and prospective members.

Note 2 — Staggered Terms: Terms of the six appointed members shall be staggered so that half of the members are appointed every year. During the transition period following approval of this document by the Board of Commissioners, terms of Fire Commissioners shall be structured as follows:

- The Board of Commissioners shall in a timely manner appoint a third civilian member to the Fire Commission in accordance with Part II.2 above to serve a two year term, expiring October 31, 2010.
- The two incumbent Fire Commissioners appointed for two year terms during 2008 shall serve terms expiring October 31, 2010.
- The two incumbent Fire Commissioners appointed for two year terms during 2007 and the one incumbent Fire Commissioner appointed during 2008 to fill the remaining one year of an unexpired term shall serve terms expiring October 31, 2009.
- Beginning in 2009, the Board of Commissioners shall appoint or reappoint three members as provided in Part II above, representing the same categories as those members whose terms expire October 31, 2009, to serve two year terms, effective November 1, 2009.
- In 2010, the Board of Commissioners shall appoint or reappoint three members as provided in Part II above, representing the same categories as those members whose terms expire October 31, 2010, to serve two year terms, effective November 1, 2010.

III. Qualifications of Appointed Fire Commissioners

A. Commissioners Appointed From Service District Agencies

The three appointed members affiliated with a service district agency shall possess the following qualifications:

1. The member shall possess a basic understanding of volunteer fire departments, rescue squads, and rural fire protection within the topography of Stokes County.
2. The member shall be an active member or an active Board member of a fire department and/or rescue squad that serves a response district within the Stokes County Fire Service District.
3. The member shall have a minimum of ten years of fire and/or rescue service experience.
4. The member shall have a basic knowledge of fire/rescue tools and equipment, North Carolina fire protection laws, NFPA Standards, along with other fire/rescue regulations and standards.
5. The member shall be a resident of Stokes County.
6. The member shall not hold any public office while serving as a Fire Commissioner.

B. Commissioners Not Affiliated with Service District Agencies

The three appointed members not affiliated with a service district agency shall possess the following qualifications:

1. The member shall have business management skills and experience.
2. The member shall *not* be an active member or an active Board member of a fire department and/or rescue squad that serves a response district within the Stokes County Fire Service District.
3. The member shall be a resident of Stokes County and reside in a location served by a Fire Service District agency.
4. The member shall not hold any public office while serving as a Fire Commissioner.

IV. Duties of the Members of the Fire Commission

Each member of the Fire Commission shall perform the following duties:

1. The secretary of the Fire Commission shall assign each appointed commissioner a number of specific agencies. A commissioner shall not be assigned to an agency in which the commissioner is an active member. The secretary of the Fire Commission shall have the authority to make any needed changes to the assignments, as he/she thinks necessary.
2. The commissioner shall meet with the representatives of each agency that he/she is assigned at least twice each year, including at least once during the agency's development of its annual budget. The commissioner is responsible for initiating contact with the agency to determine a convenient time for both parties to meet.
3. Each commissioner shall attend the annual service district budget workshop sessions.
4. Each commissioner shall receive a copy of the budget request of each service district agency from the secretary of the Fire Commission prior to the scheduled service district budget workshop sessions.
5. Each commissioner shall attend called emergency sessions of the Fire Commission during the county budget process as needed.
6. After the Fire Commission completes its annual budget duties, the chairperson of the Fire Commission shall present the recommended combined service district budget and recommended service district tax rate to the Board of Commissioners.

Members not performing their duties as described above will be terminated from the Fire Commission by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners. A recommendation for termination may come from a majority vote of a quorum of the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association or be initiated by the Board of Commissioners following consultation with the Association. Members may be excused from their duties because of a *temporary* incapacitation such as a short-term illness, family problem, or occupational priority. Members not performing their duties because of a *long-term* incapacitation shall submit their resignation. Any member who is terminated or submits his/her resignation will be replaced by another member appointed by the Board of Commissioners, following the same process used in making the initial appointment, to serve the remainder of the term.

V. Meetings of the Fire Commission

Meetings of the Fire Commission shall be conducted as follows:

1. The Fire Commission shall observe all requirements of the North Carolina Open Meetings law. The secretary of the Fire Commission shall be responsible for providing to the Clerk of the Board of Commissioners a schedule of the regular meeting dates of the Commission and any changes or additions to the schedule.
2. The appointed members of the Fire Commission shall elect a chairperson and a vice-chairperson from its membership. The chairperson of the Fire Commission shall be responsible for notifying each commissioner of all regularly scheduled meetings and emergency sessions and shall preside over all meetings of the Commission unless excused under the provisions of Section VI below. The vice-chairperson shall assume the duties of the chairperson in the chairperson's absence from the meeting.
3. The chairperson shall maintain an atmosphere conducive for the free exchange of ideas and an orderly and timely flow of business in all meetings.
4. During the annual service district budget workshop process (including appeal hearings) with agency representatives, the only active participants shall be members of the Fire Commission and the service district agency representative(s) for the budget request being considered. This requirement may be waived if both the Fire Commission and the agency agree to hear from or consult with another party. All budget sessions will be open to the public for observation.
5. During Fire Commission meetings in which the proposed service district budget is revised or finalized, the only active participants in the deliberations shall be members of the Fire Commission. This requirement shall not limit the ability of the Commission to seek information from other parties as necessary to make informed decisions. These meetings will be open to the public for observation.
6. The process of developing the final proposed budget and proposed tax rate shall follow these general steps.
 - a) The service district agency will receive its budget package from the Fire Commission secretary. The package will contain instructions on how to prepare its budget. The agency's Fire Commissioner will ensure that the agency has the needed resources for budget preparation. Any agency that does not follow the instructions contained in the package will lose its right to appeal any budgetary disagreements before the Fire Commission and a chance to review their final line-item budget before it is presented to the Board of Commissioners.
 - b) After the agency completes its budget, it will send the budget to the secretary of the Fire Commission. The secretary will distribute copies of each individual agency's budget documents to all members of the Fire Commission.
 - c) After each Fire Commissioner has reviewed each agency's budget, a notice will be sent to each agency containing the date and time in which its representatives are to meet with the Fire Commission for the budget workshop process.
 - d) After meeting with all agencies during the budget workshop process, the Fire Commission will develop a revised budget (if necessary) for each agency showing the line-by-line amount approved by the Fire Commission. The secretary will then send each agency its revised budget for review, provided that the agency followed the instructions in the budget package. The secretary will at the same time notify each eligible agency of the time and date that it may appeal its revised budget.
 - e) If an agency is satisfied with the results of the revised budget, no further meeting will be necessary. If an agency wishes to appeal its budget, it will meet with the Fire Commission at the appropriate time to give its reasons. The Fire Commission shall respond to each appealed item and will either approve or deny the item in the presence of the agency's representatives.

- f) After considering appeals made by the agencies, the Fire Commission will approve a final recommended budget for each agency, a recommended combined budget for the service district, and a recommended service district tax rate. These recommendations will then be submitted to the Board of Commissioners. Each agency that followed the instructions in the budget package shall receive from the secretary of the Fire Commission a copy of the Fire Commission's recommendations to the Board of Commissioners at least one week prior to their submission to the Board.
- g) As part of the total county budget process, the County Budget Officer shall review the recommendations from the Fire Commission and suggest any modifications to the proposed service district budget and service district tax rate. If the Budget Officer proposes any changes to the Fire Commission's recommendations, then the Board of Commissioners shall schedule a meeting with the Fire Commission or its chairman to discuss their recommendations.
- h) If the Board of Commissioners approves a service district tax rate different from that recommended by the Fire Commission, then the Fire Commission will develop a revised budget for each agency as described in Part V.6.d of this document. The process will continue with Parts V.6.e and V.6.f until the Board of Commissioners approves a final service district budget package.
- i) After approval by the Board of Commissioners, the secretary will provide each agency with its line-by-line approved budget.
- j) The Fire Commission's review and approval of agency budgets and allocation of funds on a line-item basis shall not be construed to restrict the authority of an agency's board of directors to modify, adjust, or amend the agency's budget, including transferring funds among line items, during the fiscal year as necessary to best meet the needs of the agency.

VI. Elimination of Potential Conflicts of Interest

The following step shall be taken to eliminate the possibility of conflicts of interest and to maintain the credibility of the Fire Commission:

- During the meetings in which the service district budget is developed, revised, or finalized, any Fire Commissioner who is an active member or board member of the agency being examined shall be excused from consideration and action on that particular budget. Control of the meeting shall be passed to the vice-chairperson should the chairperson need to be excused for this purpose. This action does not prohibit this person from being physically present during the meetings.

VII. Compensation

Fire Commission members, except the Fire Marshal, shall receive monetary compensation for each regularly scheduled or called meeting of an amount determined by the Board of Commissioners; however, this amount will not be less than \$30 per meeting.

Each Fire Commissioner will receive travel compensation from the county for each meeting that he/she attends with their assigned service district agency. Compensation will be at the "per mile" rate that is paid to Stokes County employees for use of their personal vehicles.

Fire Commissioners who receive monetary compensation shall keep an expense report detailing any Fire Commission meetings along with the date attended and a mileage report along with the date while attending meetings with assigned agencies. The Fire Commissioners shall submit annually their expense reports, on the supplied forms, to the secretary of the Fire Commission to be forwarded to the Stokes County Finance Office. These reports shall be submitted at least 30 days prior to the new budget year. These funds shall be budgeted and paid from the appropriate line item of the Stokes County Governing Body budget.

VIII. Use of Service District Funds

A. Valid Use of Service District Funds

Service district funds are collected from the citizens of Stokes County to provide fire suppression and rescue services by service district agencies that operate within the boundaries of Stokes County. *Service District Agency* is defined as a *volunteer* fire or rescue agency that has been approved to receive service district funds by the Stokes County Board of Commissioners. These funds should be limited to costs directly related to operating expenses incurred by these agencies in their provision of contracted services. Examples of these expenses include — but are not limited to — the following:

1. Purchase of apparatus and equipment as determined by the agency using good business practices to assure that the apparatus and equipment will be usable within the vast majority of its response district.
2. Purchase of supplies, equipment, and services necessary for support of fire/rescue/EMS operations such as fire suppression supplies, EMS and rescue supplies, insurance and bonds, fuel, pension fund payments in accordance with the agency's policies, and other items determined by the agency's representatives necessary to support the services available to taxpayers of the service district.
3. Operation and maintenance of apparatus and equipment needed for fire suppression and rescue operations including installation, maintenance, and upkeep of rural water supply sites.
4. Building and grounds expenses (including construction, maintenance, and utilities) to house apparatus and equipment along with providing space for training, department business, and community activities.
5. Debt service payments for buildings and/or equipment that have been financed, provided such debt incurred after July 1, 2007 received prior consent and approval from the Board of Commissioners, following a review by and recommendation from the Fire Commission, if the agency receives more than 50% of its budget from Stokes County tax revenues; prior consent and approval is not required if the agency receives less than 50% of its budget from Stokes County tax revenues.
6. Limited professional services such as nominal fees to contract the services of time consuming administrative activities such as secretary and treasurer, and including fees and other expenses for preparation of the agency's annual audit report.
7. Expenses incurred by the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association, if budgeted in accordance with the Association's constitution and by-laws, that directly support activities of service district agencies, provided that other fire districts within the county contribute **on a pro rata basis if they** benefit from such expenditures. Examples include — but not limited to — training expenses, child-safety trailer expenses, insurance payments, etc.
8. Other equipment that *directly* benefits the service district agencies upon approval of the Stokes County Fire Commission. Examples include — but not limited to — hose testers, air bottles, foam, pump test equipment, spill absorbent products, etc.
9. Equipment purchased and/or personnel employed by the Stokes County Fire Marshal's office that directly support fire suppression activities of service district agencies, provided that other fire districts within the county contribute on a pro rata basis if they benefit from such expenditures.
10. Contingency fund for emergency use by service district agencies to repair or replace equipment that was damaged or destroyed or funds expended through unforeseen circumstances that were not otherwise included in the agency's annual budget.

11. Support of full-time and/or part-time compensated firefighters upon approval from the Stokes County Fire Commission following consultation with the Chiefs Council of the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association.
12. Expenses of the Fire Commission, including stipends and travel for fire commissioners, and supplies and postage needed by the secretary of the Fire Commission to ensure that the agencies receive their budget packages as described in Part V.6 of this document.

B. Improper Use of Service District Funds

Service district tax funds shall be used only to support the volunteer service district agencies serving the Stokes County Fire Service District. Such funds shall *not* be used for expenses incurred by other Stokes County agencies unless specifically allowed under North Carolina law; these other agencies include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. Emergency Medical Services
2. Communications
3. Law Enforcement
4. Tax Administration
(Note 1: Under the *Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act*, costs associated with levying and collecting the service district tax can legally be charged against revenues collected, but it is the policy of the Board of Commissioners not to use service district funds for this purpose)
5. Mapping Office.
6. Fire Marshal – except as provided in Part VIII.A.9

(Note 2 – County Employee Salaries: Service district tax funds shall not be used to directly pay salaries of employees in any Stokes County government agency except as provided in Part VIII.A.9)

IX. Amending This Document

In accordance with state law, the Stokes County Board of Commissioners may modify or amend this document as it deems necessary to properly provide services for the citizens of Stokes County.

1. The Board of Commissioners shall promptly consider requests for changes to this document that are submitted by the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association and which have been developed in accordance with the by-laws of the Association.
2. The Board of Commissioners may on its own initiative propose amendments to this document. Before adopting any changes to this document, the Board shall seek input from the Stokes County Fire and Rescue Association and provide a review and comments period of at least 30 days before enacting such changes.
3. This document is an official policy of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners, and the Board retains final authority to enact any changes or amendments thereto.

X. Renewal of This Document

This document, along with any modifications or amendments made in accordance with Part IX, shall be the policy of the Stokes County Board of Commissioners during the term of the Board that adopted it. To remain in effect, this policy must be renewed by each newly constituted Board within 90 days following the seating of new members on the first Monday in December of every even-numbered year.

Commissioner Jones moved to approve the Policy for Fire Service District and Fire Commission and Use of Service District Funds. Commissioner Mendenhall seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Appointments – Stokes County Aging Planning Committee

Clerk Darlene Bullins 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 Planning Aging Committee
- Stokes County Aging Planning is seeking recommendations for the appointment
- The Committee met yesterday and spent most of the time re-organizing and approving officers
- Senior Services Program Director Vickie East will be discussing the vacancy next week with new Chairman Carolyn Manuel
- 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.

Chairman Walker confirmed that there were no nominations from the Board.

Chairman Walker directed the Clerk to continue to place the appointment on the Action Agenda until a new member is appointed.

USDA - Letter of Acceptance – Community College Project

Chairman Walker entertained a motion regarding the proposed USDA – Letter of Acceptance for the Community College Project which was presented at tonight’s meeting.

Commissioner Booth moved to approve the USDA – Letter of Acceptance for the Community College Project. 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)
- To consider and take action with respect to the position to be taken by the county in negotiating the price or other material terms of an agreement for the acquisition or lease of real property pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5)

Commissioner Booth 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)
- To consider and take action with respect to the position to be taken by the county in negotiating the price or other material terms of an agreement for the acquisition or lease of real property pursuant to G.S. 143-318.11(a)(5)

Vice Chairman Lankford seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

The Board re-entered the open session of the January 23rd meeting.

Social Services

Chairman Walker entertained a motion regarding Social Services.

Commissioner Jones moved to approve two new Social Worker III Foster Care positions and a new Program Manager position for Child Welfare to be more in compliance with state regulations using lapsed salaries with possibly \$2,000.00 additional funding needed to get through FY 2016-17.

Chairman Walker seconded the motion.

Chairman Walker opened the floor for any further discussion.

Commissioner Mendenhall confirmed with Manager Morris that the potential needed

funding above lapsed salaries is \$2,000.00 for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2016-17.

The motion carried (3-2) with Vice Chairman Lankford and Commissioner Booth voting against the motion.

Animal Control

Chairman Walker entertained a motion regarding Animal Control.

Vice Chairman Lankford moved to direct the manager to hire the vacant Animal Control Officer position. Commissioner Mendenhall seconded the motion.

Chairman Walker questioned Vice Chairman Lankford if the upcoming meeting regarding Animal Control needed to be added to the motion in any way.

Vice Chairman Lankford responded no.

The motion carried unanimously.

County Manager Morris confirmed with the Board to try to get the vacancy filled as soon as possible and to keep all the positions filled.

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. Vice Chairman Lankford seconded and the motion carried unanimously.

Darlene M. Bullins
Clerk to the Board

Jimmy Walker
Chairman