

GENERAL GOVERNMENT – GOVERNING BODY – APPROVAL OF AGENDA

Chairman Nickelston entertained a motion to approve or amend the March 15th Agenda.

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to approve the March 15, 2019.

Vice Chairman Walker seconded the motion.

Chairman Nickelston opened the floor for discussion/questions/comments.

With no further discussion the March 15th Agenda was approved 4-0.

Priority Legislative Goals for 2019-20

Chairman Nickelston turned the floor over to Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board Shannon Shaver.

Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board Shannon Shaver presented the following information to the Board and Representative Hall:

I have provided information to you on the following topics for consideration:

- 2019-2020 Legislative Goals
- HB 241
- House Bills and State Bills affecting Stokes County
- NC Recycling Grant Program
- Local Bill that Stokes County has joined along with 14 other counties

2019-2020 Legislative Goals

As Approved by the Legislative Goals Conference

Top Five Priority Goals

- 1) Seek legislation, funding, and other efforts to expand digital infrastructure/broadband capability to the unserved and under-served areas and residents of the state.
- 2) Seek additional revenue sources, including a statewide bond and lottery proceeds, to equitably address statewide public school and community college capital challenges.
- 3) Support efforts to preserve and expand the existing local revenue base of counties and authorize local option revenue sources already given to any other jurisdiction to all counties. Oppose efforts to divert to the state, fees or taxes currently allocated to the counties or to erode existing county revenue streams.

4) Support provision of state resources to ensure county ability to provide essential public health, behavioral health and social services, with specific consideration to the challenges of incarcerated persons, the continued county role in behavioral health governance, and programs addressing substance use disorder, throughout Medicaid transformation.

5) Seek legislation to repeal the statutory authority under N.C. Gen. Stat. 115C-431(c) that allows a local school board to file suit against a county board of commissioners over appropriations to the local board of education's capital outlay fund.

Tax and Finance Goals

TF-1: Support efforts to preserve and expand the existing local revenue base of counties and authorize local option revenue sources already given to any other jurisdiction to all counties. Oppose efforts to divert to the state, fees or taxes currently allocated to the counties or to erode existing county revenue streams.

TF-2: Support legislation to remove inequities and inconsistencies in the current state economic tier system.

TF-3: Support reinstatement of affordable housing tax credits.

TF-4: Seek legislation to maximize remote sales tax collection for counties, including sales tax collection from third-party online sellers.

TF-5: Seek legislation to increase funding for the state's current film grant program and review existing legislation to allow tax incentives and other measures that would encourage expansion of the statewide film industry.

General Government Goals

GG-1: Seek legislation, funding, and other efforts to expand digital infrastructure/broadband capability to the unserved and under-served areas and residents of the state.

GG-2: Support increased state funding for transportation construction and maintenance needs, and support legislation to ensure that the Strategic Transportation Investments (STI) funding formula recognizes that one size does not fit all and that projects in both rural and urban areas are prioritized and funded.

GG-3: Seek legislation to authorize counties to require developers to post maintenance bonds on new construction for subdivision roads

GG-4: Support maintaining county authority and revenue streams associated with the current ABC system, including the flexibility to determine locations of sales and number of outlets.

Health and Human Services Goals

HHS-1: Seek funding to increase access to high quality childcare and early childhood education.

HHS-2: Support legislation and state resources for social service reform efforts as identified by the Social Services Working Group to improve outcomes for individuals, families, and children and to continue the NCACC's opposition to mandated regionalization.

HHS-3: Support provision of state resources to ensure county ability to provide essential public health, behavioral health and social services, with specific consideration to the challenges of incarcerated persons, the continued county role in behavioral health governance, and programs addressing substance use disorder, throughout Medicaid transformation.

HHS-4: Support continued state funding of Medicaid and support legislation and state funding to close the Medicaid coverage gap.

HHS-5: Seek to revise the provision in G.S. 108A-74 requiring counties to enter into annual written agreements for all social services programs other than medical assistance.

Public Education Goals

PE-1: Seek additional revenue sources, including a statewide bond and lottery proceeds, to equitably address statewide public school and community college capital challenges.

PE-2: Support legislation to provide exceptions to the K-3 class size mandate including but not limited to lack of school facility space and availability of qualified teachers.

PE-3: Support legislation providing flexibility to align K-12 and community college calendars.

PE-4: Seek legislation to repeal the statutory authority under N.C. Gen. Stat. 115C-431(c) that allows a local school board to file suit against a county board of commissioners over appropriations to the local board of education's capital outlay fund.

Justice and Public Safety Goals

JPS-1: Seek legislation to reinstate funding for Drug Treatment and Mental Health Courts.

JPS-2: Support legislation and state funding to provide early intervention services for juveniles and fully fund the Juvenile Justice Reinvestment Act.

JPS-3: Support efforts to provide greater flexibility to local governments in expenditure of 911 surcharge funds and ensure adequate funding for next-gen technology.

Agriculture Goals

AG-1: Support state funding and staffing for agricultural research, Cooperative Extension services and other agriculture-related efforts, including Community Conservation Assistance Program, to support the largest economic driver in North Carolina.

AG-2: Support legislation to protect farming operations from nuisance lawsuits including those as defined by the state and small farms in rural counties.

Environment Goals

ENV-1: Seek legislation to restore county authority over solid waste management and oppose any further shift of authority away from local governments.

ENV-2: Support legislation to help improve water quality in the state, including increased funding and resources for state agencies to develop health advisory levels for emerging contaminants, and increased funding for water and wastewater expansion as well as capital projects.

ENV-3: Support additional funding to assist local governments in managing electronics recycling.

Federal Goals

FG-1: Support increased funding for disaster preparation, assistance, and mitigation as well as legislation that expedites and expands county use of federal disaster assistance funds.

FG-2: Support funding for behavioral health programs and services to address the opioid and substance abuse epidemic and support flexibility for counties to use funds for prevention and recovery.

FG-3: Support funding and legislation to expand high speed broadband access.

FG-4: Support measures to reduce the number of people with mental illness in county jails, such as those identified in NACo's Stepping Up Initiative.

FG-5: Support funds for health, human and economic services programs including temporary assistance for needy families, food and nutrition services, and federal block grants.

FG-6: Support funding for payment in lieu of taxes, agricultural, conservation, workforce, economic development and infrastructure programs that help counties meet public needs.

FG-7: Support coordination with state and local governments when a federal agency, such as EPA, seeks to regulate emerging contaminants and other discharges into drinking water sources.

FG-8: Oppose unfunded mandates and changes in eligibility for federal programs that shift costs to counties.

FG-9: Support timely reauthorization of the Older Americans Act, including greater flexibility, and increased funding to fully restore programs to pre-sequestration levels.

Legislative Issues Impacting Stokes County

HB 241

A bill was filed with the State (HB 241) that would create a Statewide GO Referendum to fund public school, community college, and UNC College system construction and renovations. I have attached the bill as filed for your convenience. Public school systems in the State would receive about \$1.5 Billion in total allotments.

The bill has not had a chance to be debated or amended as yet, but currently it lists the allotments that each school system would receive. It looks like they based their decisions of amounts by ADM, Low-Wealth County, ADM Growth and an "Adjustment Factor" (not sure how this is calculated).

Stokes County's allotment is on page 8, and is a round \$10,000,000. This could go a long way for school projects in the County, if enacted. I know there was talk about looking at the school model and making adjustments. This could have a real positive impact.

We will continue to track this bill as it moves through the legislature. Looks like the referendum could occur in November of 2020 - which of course is the presidential election cycle and should have large turnout.

Let us know if you have any questions. As the bill was just filed, we will have to wait and see what the final bill looks like and how it will impact the County and its capital plans.

DSS

DSS Director Stacey Elmes provided a list of House Bills and Senate Bills to support which included:

- HB 320
- HB 291
- HB 335
- HB 342
- SB 223
- HB 292
- HB 234
- HB 124
- SB 199
- SB 175

Public Works

Public Works Director Mark Delehant asked for the continued support of the NC Recycling Grant Program that has been so beneficial to Stokes County.

Local Bill

Local Bill concerning Counties Internet Infrastructure needs support.

Stokes is one of the 14 counties included in the proposed local bill.

The 14 counties are:

1. Person
2. Chatham
3. Harnett
4. Beaufort
5. Alamance
6. Johnston
7. Rockingham
8. Granville
9. Vance
10. Orange
11. Nash
12. Caswell
13. Stokes
14. Wake

- There will be other broadband bills coming from the NC Association of County Commissioners as well so any support of those bills would be appreciated as providing internet service to the unserved and underserved is a top priority.

Chairman Nickelston opened the floor for any discussion/comments/questions.

Discussion

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- What is your thought on the NC Recycling Grant Program?

Representative Hall responded:

- I have not heard anything about this program being cut or changed.
- I would say it is not going to be an issue.

Chairman Nickelston requested that Representative Hall give an update to the Board on what is going on in Raleigh.

Representative Hall commented:

- Things are just now getting geared up.
- We received the Governor's budget last week.

- I just spoke with the City of Mt. Airy due to somehow they were able to get a million dollar appropriation in the budget on the Downtown Spencer's project.
- I told them not to get their hopes up because the Governor's budget means absolutely nothing.
- The Governor's budget is the framework for what he wants to get accomplished.
- The beauty of the Governor's budget is that it doesn't have to balance.
- It did balance this time believe it or not, but it also balanced by using a bond.
- Not exactly a prudent way to balance your budget.
- I Chair the Agriculture Appropriations Committee, and we have heard presentations from the Department of Agriculture, Department of Commerce, BEQ, Cultural Resources, our State Parks, and the Department of Labor.
- There are a lot of non-controversial things in the Governor's Budget that I believe will pass.
- The Governor has made it very clear that he will veto any budget that does not include Medicaid expansion.
- That is a terrible policy not just for the state but also for you all because part of the cost will be pushed down to the county level.
- I don't anticipate that we will have Medicaid expansion but because of his threat to veto any budget without it; my biggest fear is that we will leave town without a budget.
- The long session years typically end in July, but I anticipate being there until October.
- Four years ago the legislature was there until October.
- If we don't have a budget that does not mean that we are like the federal government and that we shut down.
- We run on the recurring items from the last budget cycle.
- The only thing non-recurring would be grants.
- There would be no salary increases for our teachers or state employees.
- That will be an obstacle we will have to overcome.
- That is where we are right now.
- There has not been a lot of legislation moved.
- We have had to deal with two Congressional elections in the 9th and 3rd Districts.
- Primarily the items that we have sent to the Governor concerning the 9th and 3rd Districts is about implementing voter ID.
- The committee that I Chair has three meetings a week right now to hear what issues the departments are having.
- We have been busy with that.
- Of course we cannot start drafting the state budget until April 15th when we know exactly how much money we have to pull from.
- Once we have a spending target we will be able to really get to work.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- There was a referendum of voter ID last year that passed.
- Is that in or out?

Representative Hall responded:

- There was an implementation date.

- We never anticipated having two special elections.
- The DMV will need time to get the voter ID ready.
- We will not have those ready for this year.
- I think it was about 4 weeks ago that a Judge in Wake County ruled voter ID un-Constitutional because we are an un-Constitutional Legislature because of racial gerrymandering, and therefore we didn't have the right to put anything on the ballot for the voters to decide.
- This was the most blatant attempt at judicial activism that anyone has ever seen.
- The irony of this is that Judge's salaries are funded by the state, so for us to be an un-Constitutional racial gerrymandering legislature means that he was never entitled to receive his salary, or his retirement because we make the budget.
- Nor was he even entitled to be elected because we run the elections.
- It will be appealed.
- There is no doubt about it.
- Barbara Jackson who is on the State Supreme Court has been very vocal about how out of line that one Judge was.
- It is one example of how one Judge can ruin everything.
- It is very scary.
- Next election there will be partisan labels beside every judge on the ballot from the State Supreme Court down to the District Court Judge.
- There will also be a primary.

Chairman Nickelston commented:

- One thing that is coming across here is to turn the School Board into a partisan race.
- Is that something that other counties are doing?

Representative Hall responded:

- Rockingham County has partisan elections for School Board.
- In fact they passed theirs through a ballot initiative so the voters decided.
- There are countless counties out there that have partisan School Board races.
- There is a bill out there to make every election partisan which I am not opposed to.
- The voters deserve as much information about a candidate as possible.
- Some voters go in with no information and at least with a partisan label they would be able to pick a candidate within the basic framework they believe in.
- I don't think that bill is going to go anywhere.
- I think the School Board is going to send a resolution and I believe you all are going to send one as well.
- Senator Berger and I are on board once we have those.
- We will get the local bill filed.
- The deadline is the end of this month.
- I spoke with Mike Rogers from the School Board and apparently that is being sent to me on Monday.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Why do you think there is not a chance of the State Bill passing?

- Do people not like partisan elections?

Representative Hall responded:

- This session is going to be like milk toast.
- Republicans do not have the super majority.
- We have a Democratic Governor.
- The appetite is going to be to get as much done as we possibly can without causing much controversy.
- The partisan label for some reason is a controversial item and I am not sure why.
- In our case we won't have an issue if Senator Berger and I have the resolution asking for it.

Commissioner Morris continued:

- Do you or does anyone have the pros or cons of the 2 year versus the 4 year term concerning the lowest vote getter only being elected for a 2 year term?
- Would it automatically go to the 4 year term?

Representative Hall responded:

- I don't know if anyone has a list but I can tell you what I think they are.
- The pros would be that the voters would know exactly what they are voting for.
- I think it is confusing now.
- With the third place finisher only receiving a two year term it does not give them time to get acclimated to being on the School board.
- They don't have enough time to build relationships with their fellow members, or get used to the bylaws of the School Board.
- I know for a fact that running every 2 years is draining.
- I think aligning their schedule with yours is also easier.
- It keeps the 3-2 schedule.
- There would also be a primary.
- I can't really think of any cons.

Commissioner Morris continued:

- It does give the voters the opportunity to vote out the third place finisher if they don't want that person in.
- I am all for the partisan election.
- I was just confused about the terms concerning a 4 year or 2 year for the voters.
- That is the way I look at everything; for the voters.

Representative Hall continued:

- If we passed the bill this year the three seats that would be up on the School Board will be Katie Tedder, Cheryl Knight, and Becky Boles.
- They would run 3 seats in 2020 compared to you all running 2.
- I would like to have gotten it to line up the same but that would be impossible considering the current make up.

Commissioner Morris continued:

- I prefer the resolution be in line with the School Board since they are the ones that will be affected by the change.
- This will save us from having 20 candidates on the ballot come November.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- Want to be sure I have my facts straight.
- Did the ruling come down from the state concerning the lottery on giving back \$792 million dollars back to the counties and the teachers getting a 9.2% increase in salary over the next 2 years?
- There is a bill coming up in the Governor's budget concerning teachers being willing to carry a gun to school and receiving an extra 5% in pay.
- Could you answer those questions for me?

Representative Hall responded:

- There is a lot of information in the last one that you mentioned.
- On television they made it sound like all they needed to do was carry a gun and they would receive an extra 5 % increase in pay.
- They would actually have to go through the same training as police officers; so if they are sworn officers and carry a gun they would receive the extra 5 % in salary.
- That is in the Senate.
- I don't know if Senator Berger would be better to answer that question on whether or not they would hear that bill.
- I don't disagree with that.
- If you have a sworn officer as a teacher why not have that extra person as a deterrent?
- On the 9.2 % raise, there will hopefully be a raise for teachers again this year.
- There is some good news in that we are now 29th in teacher pay in the United States and we were second in the southeast.
- When you compare that with the cost of living here, we are actually a lot higher than 29.
- Obviously we cannot compete with New York and California nor do we want to because that means we are living in an expensive place to live too.
- We are doing something right considering we have gone from 47th to 29th and we are almost at the national average.
- This is something the Governor keeps talking about and he has vetoed budgets that have gotten us to where we are now so it is also hypocritical of him to talk about it.
- We are slowly getting to the national average as best we can.
- We have of course got to be fiscally prudent so if something happens again like 2008, or we have a hurricane, like the two we had last year, that we are ready to respond.
- Since Republicans have been in the majority that is one thing we have always tried to plan for things that could happen so we are not forced to make cuts.
- The rainy day fund was at the highest level in the state's history until the hurricane that we had to respond to.
- I am not aware of the ruling on the state reimbursing the counties concerning the lottery.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Some folks that are talking to me are tired of hearing about teacher pay.
- It seems it has been talked about year after year.
- I have a lot of admiration for teachers.
- It is a hard job and I couldn't do it.
- How long do you see this going on?
- You talked about the national average and we are almost there.
- I try and look for balance.
- Teaching is from the heart.
- I don't think most teachers get into teaching for the money.
- What is the end game?
- Another concern is the unfunded mandates that keep getting passed off to the counties.
- Raleigh is sitting in a lot better situation than us and the fund balance may be good there but at what cost to the counties?

Representative Hall responded:

- Of course we always want to improve teacher pay so we can get the best and the brightest.
- I come from a household where both my parents were teachers and they certainly knew they were not going to make a lot of money.
- The starting teacher pay was \$30,000.00 back when all the discussion first began and that did not attract a lot of people.
- There are other state employees that certainly need to be looked at as well.
- Our State Highway Patrol is 49th in the nation for pay.
- We have the same number of highway patrol as we did in 1997 and N.C. is now the 9th most populous state.
- It is backwards thinking.
- If we can get a budget this time it is a goal to improve state employee pay as well as teacher pay.
- Trooper pay is a big one for me.
- I ride along with the troopers a lot and know all that they have to go through.
- They work 12 months out of the year, including holidays, and nights.
- They go up to a car and they have no clue what is in that car.
- Unfortunately we have seen two highway patrol deaths in the last year.
- They put their lives on the line for us every day.
- It is embarrassing for them to be 49th in the nation in pay.
- With the unfunded mandates; I have never filed a bill to send a mandate to you without money behind it.
- I know what you are talking about and it is no different with how the lottery fund is used.
- I am just 1 out of 170 and just try and do the best that I can.
- I know I am not the only one that thinks we shouldn't send costs down to the county.
- Just like with Medicaid expansion; that will be another unfunded mandate coming down to you.
- There are some things that are warranted when it can be a shared cost.

Commissioner Walker continued:

- The folks in Raleigh need to realize that we cannot keep funding their ideas.
- Does our manager need to budget for Medicaid expansion?

Representative Hall responded:

- No you do not need to budget for Medicaid expansion.
- If we do not get a budget there will be no expansion and since the Governor has made it clear he will veto any budget without it we will as I said most likely not have an approved budget.
- There is something out called Carolina Cares which is basically Medicaid lite and I don't think the Governor will sign off on that either.
- I think the smartest thing for us to do is send him individual budgets.
- We can override budgets if we do it that piece mill way.
- The Democrats will have to come with us when we increase teacher and highway patrol pay because they don't want to be on record otherwise.
- I don't know if they are going to take me up on that or not.

County Manager Oakley commented:

- How much are we talking with Medicaid expansion?
- Is he talking about going back to how it was or expanding it even farther?

Representative Hall responded:

- He wants to expand farther.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- What about broadband?

Representative Hall responded:

- The GREAT Act was passed last year.
- GREAT was an acronym for something.
- This is something you all have already done.
- It was a grant program.
- It was \$10 million for tier one counties to apply for.
- We had \$18 million worth of projects apply for that program so it is going to be successful.
- The problem is that Stokes would not qualify for that because Stokes is tier 2, which does not make any sense.
- I want to get rid of the tier system all together.
- It is not just us; Iredell County is a good example.
- On the southern end of Iredell County is Mooresville.
- Mooresville is definitely a tier 3 area, but the rest of the county is not.
- At best it is a tier 2.
- The tier system is outdated and I am not sure what you replace it with.

- For Surry and Rockingham to be tier 1 and Stokes to be a tier 2 makes absolutely no sense.
- You can't label a whole county as a tier.

Chairman Nickelston commented:

- Where does the even distribution of sales tax between counties stand currently?

Representative Hall responded:

- The Senate was supposed to file a bill.
- That would benefit Stokes County more than anyone.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- The way it was originally presented would have benefited us the most.
- It was changed after that and it would be nice if it could go back to the original plan.
- To echo what has been said here; to me internet is by far the most important issue.
- Everybody wants broadband.
- I handed out that article and it even mentions us in it.
- The article is talking about broadband, wireless and all the options available.
- If anybody can do anything to make it easier to get this I am all for it.
- To me it is more important than water and sewer.
- The direct impact on education is huge.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- Is there any support in Raleigh for internet through wireless towers?
- I agree with Commissioner Morris.
- That is way up the list for our citizens.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Wireless lends itself towards flat country.
- The combination of the two would be great.
- You are not going to maximize broadband with mountains all over the place.

Representative Hall responded:

- The one thing we will be pushing for is to expand that GREAT ACT.
- There has been so much success with this.
- This is for tier 1 only right now.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Make it tier 1 or tier 2.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- One selling point for Stokes County is we have areas that are still totally unserved.

County Manager Oakley commented:

- The local bill that we are joined with 14 other counties on addresses this need.

- This bill has been presented a few times and has been turned down due to it being statewide.
- It is now being presented as a local bill.
- It allows counties to build towers and lease the space for wireless internet.
- They are hoping for it to go through this time based on the fact that it is not statewide and would only affect certain counties.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- Who generated this?

Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board Shaver responded:

- Joanna with the NCACC is working on the language and drafting the bill along with Sybil Tate from Person County.
- We met with them several weeks back and now that Stokes is among the 14 counties on the local bill if it is passed we would at least have the option for this.

Representative Hall commented:

- Do you know who is introducing the bill?

Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board Shaver responded:

- I spoke with Sybil this morning and I am not positive that there is a sponsor yet.
- We had this meeting coming up so I reached out to her so that I could get something for you and Senator Berger to take a look at and consider sponsoring or co-sponsoring.
- I will send a copy to Senator Berger as well.
- There is a possibility it could come through Senator Woodard's office but we would love to have Senator Berger's and your support as well.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- When word gets around that you helped to sponsor a bill of this nature helping Stokes County it would certainly give you a lot of support from the citizens.

Representative Hall responded:

- I will certainly read it.
- I like to read things carefully before I say I will sponsor them.
- Have we heard anything lately on the master plan for Vade Mecum?
- I know they got \$2 million from Connect NC.
- I need to meet with them and see where they are.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- We need to get a copy of that Master Plan.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- I don't guess the increase in infrastructures for transportation construction will affect us?

Representative Hall responded:

- We passed the bond on that and it did not have to be approved by the voters.
- There is money there in the NCDOT and it is based on the need and not where politicians live.

Chairman Nickelston commented:

- We need a four lane highway through the northern end of Stokes County.
- Needs to be right by 704, can have the expressway run 220 from 52, and come off of that to the new bypass in northern Forsyth County.
- We will have it done in four years if the right company gets it and that will build Stokes County.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- It has been talked about and Raleigh has the money to do it.
- If you go down to the Eastern part of the state you will see what money can do with roads.

Economic Development Will Carter commented:

- What do you know on the proposed sewer plant in King?
- King needs that sewer plant.
- Once they get that we can run the line to Pinnacle and open that area up.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- They do but the high rates for sewer are because King has not cut good deals with Winston.
- When I was Mayor of King we could have had an arrangement for Stokes County, King particularly, to have the same rates as the people in Forsyth County.
- It became about control and people wanted to do it themselves rather than just becoming customers of Forsyth County.
- We were really negotiating with the water and they offered us the same rates for the sewer.
- How can you pass up an offer like that?
- We had 2 votes on the Council and needed 2 more.

Representative Hall commented:

- Senator Berger and I are in talks now between the City of King and the Town of Pilot Mountain.
- The Town of Pilot Mountain has the same issues with their sewer system.
- They have one but it is so antiquated that it does not work anymore.
- We are working on this so that everyone's bill goes down.
- There is one developer right now off Mountain View Road that is putting in septic systems for new construction.
- It is a lot easier to sell a house from a real estate point of view because you might as well live in Winston Salem.
- We have the lower tax rate but with the water/sewer rates you are no better off.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- If you are talking with Pilot Mountain you will be going right through Pinnacle which is another really likely area for commercial development.

Chairman Nickelston commented:

- We need to give our Economic Development Director something to work with.

Economic Development Director Will Carter commented:

- We lost the Love's truck stop that was looking at the Pinnacle area due to this.

Representative Hall commented:

- I filed a bill this week called the Community Innovation Fund.
- It is a \$5 million bill.
- It is meant for rural areas.
- This fund will help Stokes County if we can get it passed.
- We have a unique opportunity in Stokes County as we have the most powerful Senator in Raleigh.
- If there are any projects you have in mind we need to know about them before April 15th.

Vice Chairman Walker commented:

- We are fortunate to have him and you.
- The key to a good relationship between us is communication.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- You have heard our questions and I wonder if there is any other information you have that will affect Stokes County.

Representative Hall responded:

- The only other thing I have is that I filed a bill giving Stokes, Surry and Rockingham County Schools calendar flexibility.
- This will allow them to start school at the same time as the local community colleges therefore aligning the early college schedule with the other schools.
- That always gets held up in the Senate so you would have to talk to Senator Berger about that.
- One of the biggest things to remember about a legislator is that one of the most important things we do is play defense in making sure that certain things don't happen, for instance Medicaid Expansion.
- This is going to be the focus of the next two years and making sure that doesn't pass.
- One reason I asked about Vade Mecum is I want to be sure the state parks are sharing funds to help them get that project complete.
- It would be beneficial for this area.

Finance Director Julia Edwards commented:

- Is there any chance of our lottery funds being increased back to what they were?

Representative Hall responded:

- We have talked about that in the past.
- Unfortunately people have novel ideas for education and use the lottery funds towards it.
- This in turn just makes the amount going to the counties smaller and smaller.
- I wish we did not even have the lottery honestly.

Finance Director Julia Edwards commented:

- It is not really an education lottery.
- We get half of what we were getting in the beginning.

Commissioner Mendenhall commented:

- It was a sales pitch just to get it.

Commissioner Morris commented:

- We need water and sewer on 311 through Walnut Cove and the border.
- This area could be developed if we had it.

Representative Hall noted that he would need to leave the meeting due to another scheduled meeting.

Adjournment

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

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to adjourn the meeting.

Commissioner Morris seconded.

Chairman Nickelston opened the floor for any discussion/comments/questions.

With no discussion and full consensus of the Board the motion carried with a 4-0 vote.



Shannon Shaver

Clerk to the Board



Andy Nickelston

Chairman