

**STATE OF NORTH  
CAROLINA  
COUNTY OF STOKES**

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**OFFICE OF THE  
COMMISSIONERS  
STOKES COUNTY  
GOVERNMENT  
DANBURY, NORTH  
CAROLINA  
MONDAY OCTOBER 14, 2019**

The Board of Commissioners of the County of Stokes, State of North Carolina, met for a regular session in the Commissioners' Chambers of the Ronald Wilson Reagan Memorial Building (Administration Building) located in Danbury, North Carolina on Monday October 14, 2019 at 6:00 pm with the following members present:

Board of Commissioners Present: Chairman Andy Nickelston, Vice Chairman Jimmy Walker, Commissioner Ronnie Mendenhall, and Commissioner Rick Morris

Absent: Commissioner Yontz

County Administration Present: County Manager Jake Oakley, Assistant County Manager/Clerk to the Board Shannon Shaver, Finance Director Julia Edwards, and County Attorney Ty Browder

### **CALL TO ORDER**

Chairman Nickelston called the Regular Meeting of the Board of Commissioners to order.

### **INVOCATION**

Commissioner Morris delivered the Invocation.

### **PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE**

Chairman Nickelston lead the Board in the Pledge of Allegiance and invited those in attendance to join.

### **APPROVAL OF AGENDA**

Chairman Nickelston noted that there was an item requested to add to the agenda concerning county employees being allowed to use their county ID for voter ID. This item was received today and is due back to the State Board of Elections by October 26th. Commissioner Mendenhall moved to to approve the amended agenda.

Commissioner Morris seconded the motion. The motion Passed.

Absent: Yontz

### **COMMENTS - Managers/Commissioners**

Commissioner Morris welcomed those in attendance and those watching at home through

YouTube.

Vice Chairman Walker welcomed those in attendance and those watching at home and noted that there was a variety of folks in the audience tonight and is interested to hear why everyone is here. He noted he attended a meeting recently concerning the opioid crisis and received some valuable information.

Commissioner Mendenhall welcomed those in attendance and those watching at home and noted that he always likes to see people participate in local government. He noted that it was good to see a full house and looked forward to a good meeting.

Chairman Nickelston welcomed those in attendance and those watching at home. He asked that everyone keep Commissioner Yontz and his wife in their prayers as they have the flu.

County Manager Oakley welcomed those in attendance and those watching at home.

## **PUBLIC COMMENTS**

Chairman Nickelston noted that there were three individual signed up for public comments. Public Comments began at 6:15 pm and concluded at 6:26 pm.

The following individuals spoke during public comments:

Ellen Peric  
1095 Wheeler Smith Road  
Lawsonville, NC 27022

RE: Arts Update

### **Apple Gallery - October**

The Stokes County Arts Council is featuring the artwork of Kitty Ray Brown at The Apple Gallery in Danbury. Her exhibit, on display throughout October, features Impressionist Landscape Paintings, Oils and Archival Photography.

Brown worked in the Art Department at Pembroke University and spent decades designing fine jewelry using precious stones and metals. After retirement, she became a professional photographer, taught by Jesse Moore. More recently, Brown has studied Impressionist Landscape Art under Craig Richards.

She has won several awards from contests sponsored by the Spencer-Penn Centre in Virginia and has had her flower photographs made into woven tapestries for hotels and resorts around the world.

“I have owned and used a camera since my early teens. I carry it constantly and make pictures every day. Now that I create Impressionist Landscape Paintings, I use my photographs as inspiration,” said Brown.

. Reception was held Oct 11<sup>th</sup> .

Classes

Beginning Wheel Throwing – Begins Oct 15<sup>th</sup> to Nov 19<sup>th</sup>

Join us for Beginner Wheel Throwing at The Arts Place. This six week course meets every Tuesday beginning Tuesday, October 15th and runs through Tuesday, November 19. In this class you will learn how to prepare the clay, center the clay on the wheel, create cylinders, bowls, mugs, and plates. Instructor Anne-Gaillard Duddy has an MFA in Ceramics and has been creating beautiful, award-winning pottery for over a decade. Registration is \$150 and includes all materials.

Intermediate Wheel Throwing – begins Oct 17<sup>th</sup> to Nov 21

Join us for Intermediate Wheel Throwing at The Arts Place. This six week course meets every Thursday beginning October 17th and runs through Thursday, November 21. In this class we will focus on making lids to fit jars and teapots with knobs for each as well. You will also learn how to make sets of wares. Instructor Anne-Gaillard Duddy has an MFA in Ceramics and has been creating beautiful, award-winning pottery for over a decade. Registration is \$150 and includes all materials.

Opening Reception – Tony Brown Homecoming Celebration

This October, North Carolina is rolling out the red carpet for one of its own: legendary country music producer, Tony Brown. The Stokes County Arts Council, in tandem with the North Carolina Arts Councils 2019 state-wide campaign: Come Hear NC, are celebrating Brown's accomplishments with a 4-day Homecoming Celebration from October 17 to October 20. Born and raised in Walkertown, Brown got his start playing keys for Elvis before becoming President of MCA Records Nashville. During that time, MCA Nashville was awarded Label of the Year for 10 years straight. Brown went on to produce over 100 number one singles for the most well-known names in country music: George Strait, Reba, Trisha Yearwood, Lyle Lovett and countless others. Tony Brown's Homecoming Celebration will kick-off on Thursday, October 17 with a reception at Moore's Springs Manor, 1229 Hall Road, Westfield. Tickets are \$30 general admission, \$25 for Stokes Arts Members. Opening reception festivities include an appearance and interview with Tony Brown, book signing, video and images from his career, light hors d'oeuvres, and a cash bar.

Singers, Songs and Stories – Tony Brown Homecoming Celebration

Friday, October 18, 2019 join us for "Singers, Songs, and Stories" with Tony Brown at The Arts Place of Stokes, 502 Main Street, Danbury. This presentation of songs produced by Tony Brown and performed by local musicians with commentary from Tony. Songs by George Strait, Reba McEntire, Vince Gill, Trisha Yearwood, Marty Stuart, Patty Loveless, Lyle Lovett, and Nanci Griffith.

Tickets are \$30 general admission, \$25 for Stokes Arts Members

Tony Brown Homecoming Finale

The Homecoming Celebration concludes with a NC Music Hall of Fame presentation and homecoming finale on Sunday, October 20th at the Walkertown High School Auditorium, 5240 Sullivantown Road, Walkertown. The finale features a concert by EmiSunshine, special guests and more. Tickets are \$15 General Admission, \$5 Ages 18 & Under. All Opening Reception and "Singers, Songs, and Stories" ticketholders/attendees receive free admission to the Sunday event!

Mask Workshop – Day of the Dead – Oct 26<sup>th</sup> – 10am to 1pm                      The Arts Place

Each year people in Latin America celebrate on October 31st and November 1st, Day of the Dead, a festival filled of colors, music, dance and food to honor their loved ones who have passed on.

This celebration is very spiritual and meaningful to Latin Americans and very different from Halloween. In this workshop we will learn a bit about the history of the Day of the Dead, the meaning of using different colors, flowers and designs to create the images. After the intro and short discussion everybody will create their own colorful "Day of the Dead" mask. Absolutely No experience necessary Instructor: Martina Moore \$ 35.00 all material included

Portable Art Sit In – October 26<sup>th</sup> 10am to 12 noon

Bring your art with you and join others for an Art Sit In. This past

\*We enjoyed celebrating Ben Vernon's 90<sup>th</sup> Birthday last week at The Arts Place. Through the Apple Foundation, Ben has improved the lives of lots of Stokes Folks.

Spread the Word: Soup in a Bowl- November 23rd

Janis Henderson-Hunsucker  
1140 Sterling Pointe Drive  
King, NC 27021

RE: Resolution in support of approving the state budget

Good Evening,

I am here today to talk with you about how we are all in this together. I am also the Vice President of Stokes County Association of Educators. I am here to encourage you to pass a resolution to ask the General Assembly leadership to pass a budget with increased school funding and Medicaid. I have two versions to pass out, one is a long version and the other is a short version with data included. It is hard for the schools to make plans without a state budget. There are two sticking points in getting this budget to pass which are increased school funding and Medicaid expansion. We have a great opportunity to intervene. Local County Commissioners have a shared interest in having a finalized state budget. Recently the Graham County Commissioners wrote Phil Berger to ask for the state to expand Medicaid. It seems there is a divide among Republicans on this and rural counties such as ours suffer greatly due to school funding and health care. Berger is stating he would like to close the session by Halloween and so we need to act quickly. If there is not enough time for you to pass a resolution perhaps some of you who are friends with Phil Berger could give him a call and encourage him to help to get the budget passed. Some statistics I would like to read related to if NC participated in Medicaid expansion are:

77 jobs would be created by 2022  
2,577 more individuals would be covered by 2022

Now lets talk about money:

11.1 million dollars would come in to our county  
Over \$549,000 generated in tax revenue

Let me reiterate why I am here. Please send a message to the General Assembly that we are all in this together and we need your help.

Andy Stevens  
157 Old Garner Road  
King, NC 27021

RE: Sales Tax Referendum

I am here tonight to speak on behalf of those County Residents who say, "We Are Taxed Enough". I am here to ask on their behalf, "Why do you wish to tax us even more"?

For years, previous Board of Commissioners have been able to live within their means and fund and operate the County and the Schools without a need or a call to raise taxes. Even better, these previous Boards of Commissioners prudently invested and sequestered away a reserve for truly rainy days and called it the County Fund Balance.

This Board in one fell swoop, has drained this fund down to the bare minimum this Board, at least yet, dares not draw down any further. But what will the next year bring? A rationalization that because the Local Government Commission tolerates a fund Balance of only Eight Percent our County's balance, accrued over many years be sucked down to that dangerous level or below? Today, only one member of this current Board was seated in those dire days when the County risked default. Will this new Board repeat the sins of the past?

Please remember that all taxation is theft, legalized government theft. Please remember it has real consequences. For example, just look at our current state of tax delinquencies. The tax compliance rate of Stokes County is far behind those of counties all around us. Raising taxes even higher will throw even more of our fellow citizens off their land and out of their homes. However, to be fair to those who DO pay the taxes you impose, it's time for the Tax Department to become ruthless in its collection efforts. If you tax, you MUST collect.

Tonight, perhaps you're going to tell us of the dire straits we are in. You're going to tell us your profligate spending requires additional funds to support. You're going to tell us your taking of valuable, tax paying commercial property off the tax rolls is going to need additional tax receipts to make up. Isn't that, by the way, the very opposite of the economic development we seek in Stokes County? You're going to tell us double funding the school supplement this last year was an honest mistake, but we'll double down and do it again next year. Basically, tonight you're going to tell us, either "we're not as good or as prudent as Boards in the past" or, "the Boards in the past were negligent and dangerously underfunded the level of government we have determined it is necessary to provide." You are going to tell us "We are the new team, the A-Team and we're on a mission to spend, spend, and spend". Have you all at least agreed on a common storyline to sell us tonight? I'll wait and see. However, before you tell us it's for the Schools and the kids and safety, please remember, our School system is easily between six to nine schools too many for our declining student population and throwing good money after bad while refusing to address this issue or force the hand of the School Board to act is yet an additional shortcoming in your collective oversight. Seriously, if you wanted to really address the school security issue, you'd resolve to petition the legislature to allow willing teachers and staff to arm themselves to protect themselves and their charges, and it wouldn't cost a penny of taxpayer receipts.

The aggregate spending you've accumulated in your tenure to date and seems likely you'll continue in the future will most definitely drive a property tax rate increase, perhaps slyly buried in a rate adjustment when property revaluation takes place in two years' time. Surely, you're scheming for it already.

I'll close tonight by asking this Board to change its course immediately and do the right thing. Protect the taxpayers who have been taxed enough already. Allow them to keep their homes instead of forcing the Sheriff to auction it off on the courthouse steps. Stop this flood of red ink spending you seem bent on pursuing. Stop growing government just to see how big and fast you can make it grow. Live within our means and start doing so tonight.

Thank you.

## **CONSENT AGENDA**

All attachments presented on the Agenda are available in the attachments of the Agenda on the County Website and are available upon request from the Clerk, with the exception of the minutes approved which are located on the County Website under the minutes tab.

Minutes

Budget Amendments

Moratock Grist Mill Stone Site

Solid Waste Holiday Hours

Commissioner Morris moved to to approve the Consent Agenda as presented.

Commissioner Mendenhall seconded the motion. The motion Passed.

## **INFORMATION AGENDA**

### **Register of Deeds - Update**

Register of Deeds Brandon Hooker provided the Board with an update on the Register of Deeds office.

## **DISCUSSION AGENDA**

### **Water Committee Recommendation**

Public Works Director Mark Delehant presented a recommendation from the Water Project Committee that LKC engineering be selected to work on the water project in the Meadows Community. He requested that prior to approval of LKC that the company attend the next regular meeting of the Commissioners to answer any questions or concerns. There was a request from Commissioner Morris for the Water Project Committee to evaluate the water project design that was part of the previous water and sewer project at South Stokes Fire Department. The Board gave consensus for LKC to be at the next meeting on October 28th.

### **Stokes County Water and Sewer Authority-Appointment Request**

County Manager Oakley presented the Board with information on an application received for the Water and Sewer Authority. Adam Stewart submitted an application to serve on the Stokes County Water and Sewer Authority. The Stokes County Water and Sewer Authority has indicated they are in favor of Mr. Stewart being on the Board.

Chairman Nickelston opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Mendenhall motioned to close the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Morris seconded.

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

With no further discussion and full consensus of the Board this item was moved to the Action Agenda at the next meeting.

### **Friends of Stokes Shelter**

Dr. Cowan with the Friends of Stokes Shelter presented the Board with a request for financial assistance from the Friends of Stokes Shelter. There was much discussion among the Board and with full consensus of the Board this item was moved to the next meetings Action Agenda.

(Chairman Nickelston called for a 10 minute recess at 7:45 pm)

### **Solar Farm Policy**

(Chairman Nickelston called the meeting back to order at 8:00 pm)

Commissioner Morris noted that he requested this item be on the agenda as a result of the recent approval of the first Level 3 commercial solar farm in Stokes County. There was discussion among the Board and the consensus was to work with the county staff to develop a comprehensive solar farm policy during the next 18 months.

### **Sales Tax Referendum**

Finance Director Julia Edwards presented the Board with information on the Sales Tax Referendum, There was much discussion among the Board and this item was placed back onto the Discussion Agenda at the next meeting on October 28th. There was a request from the Board of Commissioners for the Board of Education to submit a letter before the next meeting with their input for the use of the quarter cent sales tax.

### **Fire Commission Vacancies**

County Manager Oakley presented the Board with 4 applications related to the Fire Service Commission.

Layn Wagoner submitted an application to serve in a full time position for a civilian membership vacancy.

Steve Fagg submitted an application to finish out the term of an existing member for a civilian membership vacancy.

Donnie Mabe submitted an application to serve in a fire service member position.

Brad Mitchell submitted an application to serve in a fire service member position.

Chairman Nickelston opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Mendenhall motioned to close the floor for nominations.

Vice Chairman Walker seconded.

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

With no further discussion and full consensus of the Board this item was moved to the Action Agenda at the next meeting.

### **Walnut Cove Senior Center Advisory Council Appointment Request**

County Manager Oakley presented the Board with an application for the Walnut Cove Senior Center Advisory Council. Amanda Dodson has applied to serve and the Walnut Cove Senior Center Advisory Council would be happy to have Amanda Dodson serve.

Chairman Nickelston opened the floor for nominations.

Commissioner Mendenhall motioned to close the floor for nominations.

Vice Chairman Walker seconded.

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

With no further discussion and full consensus of the Board this item was moved to the Action Agenda at the next meeting.

### **Tax Administration Monthly Report**

Tax Administrator Richard Brim presented the Board with the monthly tax update with a request for the following items to be moved to the Consent Agenda at the next meeting:

#### **Items for Approval on October 28, 2019.**

1. Real and Personal Releases more than \$100.00.
2. Real and Personal Refunds more than \$100.00.

There was some discussion among the Board and the items requested were moved to the next meetings Consent Agenda with full consensus of the Board.

### **Voter ID**

County Manager Oakley presented the Board with information on a request from the State Board of Elections regarding the new voter ID requirement. The Board has the option to approve county employees being able to use their county ID for voter ID. County Manager Oakley noted that this item would need to be approved tonight due to the October 26th application deadline if the Board elects to allow county ID's to be used as voter ID's.

Chairman Nickelston entertained a motion on the item presented.



Commissioner Mendenhall motioned to move the item presented to the Action Agenda at tonight's meeting.

Commissioner Morris seconded.

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

After some discussion by the Board this item was moved to the Consent Agenda at tonight's meeting.

(Commissioner Yontz was absent)

Absent: Yontz

## **ACTION AGENDA**

### **Surplus Property and Upset Bid Procedure**

Chairman Nickelston entertained a motion on the item presented.  
Commissioner Morris moved to to approve the sell of surplus property presented.

Vice Chairman Walker seconded the motion. The motion Passed.  
Absent: Yontz

### **Fire Marshal Office Space**

Chairman Nickelston entertained a motion on the item presented.  
Commissioner Mendenhall moved to to approve the relocating of the Fire Marshal's office to Autumn Square and Budget Amendment # 33.

Vice Chairman Walker seconded the motion. The motion Passed.  
Absent: Yontz

### **Voter ID**

Chairman Nickelston entertained a motion on the item presented.  
Commissioner Mendenhall moved to to approve for the application to be submitted allowing county employees to use thier county ID as voter ID.

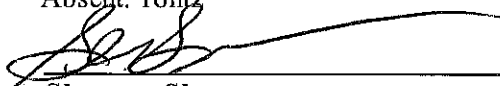
Vice Chairman Walker seconded the motion. The motion Passed.  
Absent: Yontz

### **Adjournment**

Commissioner Mendenhall moved to to adjourn the meeting at 9:30 pm.

Commissioner Morris seconded the motion. The motion Passed.

Absent: Yontz



Shannon Shaver  
Clerk to the Board



Andy Nickelston  
Chairman