

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA**  
**FEBRUARY 17, 2014**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, February 17, 2014 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

**MEMBERS PRESENT:**

Jeff Dixon, Chairman  
Lloyd E. Griffin, III  
Cecil Perry  
Dr. William R. Sterritt  
Gary G. White  
Frankie Meads

**MEMBERS ABSENT:**

Joseph S. Winslow, Jr., Vice-Chairman

**OTHERS PRESENT:**

Rodney Bunch, Interim County Manager  
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney  
Karen Jennings, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 7:00 PM by Chairman Jeff Dixon. Commissioner Lloyd Griffin gave the invocation and Commissioner Gary White led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Dixon welcomed everyone present.

**1. COMMENTS FROM GEORGE HAGUE:**

Chairman Dixon recognized Mr. George Hague to address the Board. Mr. Hague stated that he has been attending Board of Election meetings and Board of Commissioner meetings since he retired so he can witness democracy in action. He said he attended a meeting with educators last week and Representative Bob Steinburg was in attendance, but he did not see any County Commissioners there. He stated that he finds this interesting since almost 40% of the county budget goes to local education. He said the Board of Commissioners has spent the better part of a year agonizing on redistricting. He noted that multiple public forums were held on the 2-2-2-1 plan, yet they were designed to possibly hear only one side. Mr. Hague stated that after all the forums and all the articles, last August the Board of Commissioners pulled a bait and switch when it came time to vote on the 2-2-2-1 plan. He said this was possibly because two current members of the Board would have been drawn out of their seats. He noted if the Board had voted on the 2-2-2-1 plan it would have been required to pass a resolution and the law would have required a voter referendum. He said the Board then voted on the 4-2-1 plan, but it cannot implement the 4-2-1 plan because it has a super district and doesn't meet the legal standards. He stated that this allowed the Board to kick the can to the General Assembly and request they enact it without a voter referendum, however the three local legislators felt the people of the county deserved the right to vote on the issue. Mr. Hague stated that the county's population has been decreasing since 2010 which has resulted in a decrease in school student population by about 6%. He said this also means less money for Pasquotank County. He stated that Pasquotank County's bond rating has dropped and it needs to address its debt. Mr. Hague explained that he is a retired civil servant and tomorrow he will file as a Republican candidate for an at-large seat on the Board of Commissioners.

Chairman Dixon stated that he and other Commissioners would have liked to attend the school forum last week, but did not receive a request or an invitation to attend the meeting. He added that he believes the forum was also poorly attended by the School Board.

**2. PRESENTATION ON NC 2-1-1 COMMUNITY SERVICES INFORMATION**  
**LINE:**

Chairman Dixon welcomed Mr. Keith Letchworth from East Carolina Behavioral Health (ECBH) to report on East Carolina Behavioral Health's efforts to implement NC 2-1-1 in Pasquotank County. Mr. Letchworth explained that ECBH is the governmental entity responsible for providing services to individuals with mental health issues, substance abuse concerns, and intellectual and developmental disabilities in a 19 county area of Eastern North Carolina including Pasquotank County. He said in looking at the needs of the individuals they serve, ECBH sees a number of needs these individuals have that cannot be and are not the responsibility of ECBH to meet, however their needs still exist. ECBH has been looking at how to build a database of community resources and found NC 2-1-1. He explained that 2-1-1 is a

national initiative by the United Way. United Way of North Carolina is the principle entity that is behind the effort to implement 2-1-1 across the state. Part of that effort is developing a statewide database of community services and United Way has staff available and has begun the development of that database which is available for ECBH to access. Mr. Letchworth said as they looked at the map of availability of NC 2-1-1 across the state they found that 76 counties had access to NC 2-1-1. Of the 24 counties who did not have access, 17 were in the 19-county ECBH service area. The management of ECBH felt that making NC 2-1-1 available in those 17 counties would be a way of meeting two needs: 1) a need for access to a database so that ECBH could direct the people they serve to the resources they need; and 2) a need for the people of North Carolina to have access to NC 2-1-1 to be able to find out about community resources. Mr. Letchworth explained that ECBH is contracting with United Way of North Carolina to make NC 2-1-1 available in those 17 counties including Pasquotank County. He said there are three ways to access NC 2-1-1: 1) simply by dialing 2-1-1 on the phone (this phone line became active in Pasquotank County on December 31, 2013); 2) via the internet ([www.nc211.org](http://www.nc211.org)); and 3) through mobile apps that can be downloaded to a smart phone or iphone. He stated that ECBH is working throughout the 17 counties to update the information in the statewide database to make sure it is current and to add any services that are not included in the database. He said ECBH plans to maintain this effort for at least three to possibly five years in the counties in which it works, and at some point they will work with local organizations to help them take over the partner responsibility for helping United Way maintain the database. He added that they are working with their local partners through their community collaborative to market NC 2-1-1 so people will know about it. They also have distributed their cards over the 17 counties and will put rack cards at the Department of Social Services, the Health Department, and physician offices, and will place posters at various locations throughout the community. Mr. Letchworth stated that ECBH is excited about the opportunity to make this service available and thinks it is not only good for the people who are directly served by ECBH, but also for the citizens of the county at large.

The Board thanked Mr. Letchworth for the information he provided.

### **3. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:**

Chairman Dixon asked if there were any amendments to the agenda. County Attorney Mike Cox requested that the agenda be amended to include under New Business a letter of interpretation for Thompson Thrift that was discussed at the Finance Committee meeting today.

Commissioner Gary White requested that the agenda be amended to add to New Business a recommendation from the Finance Committee to borrow funds totaling \$870,000 for the Northside Elementary School fire alarm system, the Northeastern High School roof repairs, and the Health & Social Services Building HVAC repairs.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Cecil Perry to amend the agenda to add the items recommended above to New Business. The motion carried.

### **4. APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT TO WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARD:**

The Board considered the appointment of Matt Wood to the Workforce Development Board. The Board had approved his nomination at the last meeting. Chairman Dixon asked if there were any further nominations for the Workforce Development Board. There being none;

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Cecil Perry to approve the appointment of Matt Wood to the Workforce Development Board. The motion carried.

### **5. APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENT TO JOINT RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD:**

The Board considered the appointment of Eddie Spencer as the joint city-county appointee to the Joint Recreation Advisory Board. Mr. Spencer was recommended by the Recreation Advisory Board and his appointment has been approved by the City Council. Chairman Dixon asked if there were any further nominations. There being none;

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Gary White to approve the appointment of Eddie Spencer to the Joint Recreation Advisory Board. The motion carried.

**6. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:**

The Board considered the consent agenda. Commissioner Lloyd Griffin stated that he needs to be recused from considering the consent agenda because of a conflict regarding the tax releases and refunds that are included on the consent agenda.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Cecil Perry to recuse Commissioner Griffin from considering the consent agenda due to a conflict of interest. The motion carried.

The Board then considered the following consent agenda:

- a. Approval of Minutes of February 3, 2014 Commissioner Meeting
- b. Approval of Tax Releases and Refunds and Solid Waste Fee Releases and Refunds
- The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following tax releases and refunds and solid waste fee releases and refunds:

Releases:

		County	City
1.	Richard Eugene Kelley		124.44
2.	Mark Jason Cromer	162.07	
3.	Mark Jason Cromer	247.50	
4.	J&J Cotton	237.64	
5.	Cody Lee Schott	120.52	
6.	Sara Ashley Hilaman	114.82	96.67
7.	Randall Gregory Parks, Jr.	184.14	

Refunds:

1.	Renee Rogerson Harris		115.68
2.	Lenon Francis Madre	117.89	
3.	Delbert Creef	179.01	
4.	Delbert Creef	185.13	
5.	Delbert Creef	189.72	
6.	Delbert Creef	189.72	
7.	Delbert Creef	192.78	

Solid Waste Fee Releases:

Owner's Name	Parcel ID Number	Reason for Release
William H. Figgs	55-A-46	Vacant since 2009
Lloyd E. Griffin Etal	24-B-57	Vacant 2+ years
Terry Meads	P6-21A	Vacant since 2004

Solid Waste Fee Refunds:

LEMH Griffin Family Lmtd.	24-B-58	Vacant 2+ years
Lloyd E. Griffin III	24-B-51A	Vacant 2+ years
Riverside Houses LLC	17-C-4	Vacant 2+ years
Riverside Houses LLC	24-B-49	Vacant 2+ years

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Frankie Meads to approve the Consent Agenda as presented. The motion carried.

**7. ADOPTION OF RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE ADDITION OF INLET DRIVE TO THE STATE SYSTEM FOR MAINTENANCE:**

The Board considered a petition submitted by the property owners on Inlet Drive requesting addition of the road to the state system for maintenance. The road is part of River Forest, Inc. and is .14 mile in length and has ten occupied homes with street frontage. The Board will need to adopt a resolution requesting addition of the road to the state system.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Gary White to adopt a resolution requesting the NC Department of Transportation to add Inlet Drive to the state system for maintenance. The motion carried.

**8. LETTER OF INTERPRETATION FOR THOMPSON THRIFT BUSINESS INVESTMENT PROGRAM GRANT AGREEMENT:**

County Attorney Mike Cox explained that Thompson Thrift has requested a letter of interpretation for the economic development agreement approved by the city and county last year. In the event an "Act of God" causes its improvements to be removed from the county, Thompson Thrift has requested that it be given a 12-month grace period before the county would enforce the strict provisions in the agreement.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Frankie Meads to approve providing a letter of interpretation as outlined above to Thompson Thrift in regard to the economic development agreement. The motion carried.

**9. APPROVAL TO BORROW \$870,000 FOR NORTHSIDE ELEMENTARY FIRE ALARM SYSTEM, NORTHEASTERN HIGH SCHOOL ROOF, AND HEALTH & SOCIAL SERVICES BUILDING HVAC REPAIRS:**

The Finance Committee has recommended that the Board approve borrowing funds for the following projects:

- \$106,130 for a fire alarm system for Northside Elementary School
- \$543,714 for a section of roof at Northeastern High School
- \$225,000 for Health & Social Services Building HVAC repairs

The total cost of the projects is \$874,844. It is recommended that a total of \$870,000 be borrowed. The balance of \$4,844 can be taken from QSCB funds left from last year and applied to the roof project. These are capital improvements that had already been budgeted in the 2013-14 budget, however it has taken until now to get the bids for the projects.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Cecil Perry to borrow \$870,000 for the three projects listed above.

Discussion followed and Commissioner Frankie Meads stated he does not think the county should borrow more than \$870,000 until discussion has been held with the School Board to be sure they are getting the best price for their money on the school projects.

The motion carried by a five to one vote with Commissioner Meads voting against the motion.

**10. REPORT FROM COUNTY ATTORNEY:**

County Attorney Mike Cox reported that he attended the County Attorneys Conference last week and a lot of good topics were covered.

**11. CALENDAR:**

The Clerk reviewed the calendar of upcoming meetings and events.

**12. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:**

Commissioner Frankie Meads noted that members of the Board of Commissioners have a responsibility to do everything they can to try to cut the budget this year and keep the taxes down. He added that the valuation of property is \$448,000,000 less than what it was after the last revaluation and this difference will have to be made up. He said there is a lot of complaining in the community about the high taxes. He stated that his goal is to make sure every year he possibly can that he can find enough flack in the budget to pay the salary that the county pays him. He added that he thinks everyone should have a goal to try to do that so that Commissioners won't be a burden to the county, but rather an asset to the county. Commissioner Meads said the Board has discussed in the past a plan to get out of debt and he would like to see the county work in that area. He stated that things are certainly looking better for the county in the future, however the county needs to lower the \$500,000 in interest it is paying each year.

Commissioner Lloyd Griffin stated that the Albemarle RPO is currently dealing with the ferry tolling issue which has become a very emotional and very political issue. He said meetings are currently being held in the communities that will be impacted by the tolls. He stated that the RPO will be considering three options: 1) voting for a toll; 2) voting for no tolls which would mean the legislature would need to revisit the issue; or 3) taking no action on tolls. Commissioner Griffin said the last two options would impact the fourteen Division One counties because they would all have to compete for limited funds for bike and pedestrian projects,

highway projects, bridges, and ferry replacements for the next 20 years. Commissioner Griffin said he will have a further update after all of the community meetings are held.

Commissioner William Sterritt stated that the Board needs to congratulate the Hospital Due Diligence Committee which includes Chairman Dixon and Commissioner Griffin on successfully negotiating the agreement with Sentara. He added that he thinks this will be a real benefit to the county in the years to come.

Commissioner Sterritt reported that the Recreation Advisory Committee met last week and had an opportunity to tour Charles Creek Park and Waterfront Park. He said the new restrooms and shower facilities for boaters will be a real plus. He stated that all of this was accomplished with grant money that the city was able to obtain. He noted that the showers for boaters will be a big benefit, however they will not be free. Commissioner Sterritt said the committee also toured the area the city plans to develop across from Charles Creek Park to enhance boating in that area. He stated that they took the tour in a new bus that the city-county recreation department has purchased at a cost of close to \$70,000. He said he does not know why they need a bus costing \$70,000 and he did not vote to buy a bus for \$70,000. He stated that it will be of value to senior citizens because it has a ramp with handicap access. He said however as a member of the Recreation Advisory Committee he feels this is a little extreme.

Commissioner Gary White stated that he would like to thank Mr. Letchworth for attending tonight's meeting and presenting his report. He said he will have the Water Superintendents address the Board soon about a proposed pilot program dealing with ammonia at the Weeksville Water Plant. Commissioner White reported that the Board met with the Soil & Water Conservation District Board today and received a report on the drainage and sediment problem along the Little River Basin. He said the Board looks forward to receiving additional information after the end of the fiscal year.

Commissioner Cecil Perry reported that the Appointments Committee did not meet today, so he does not have a committee report. He stated that he will be traveling to Raleigh on Wednesday to be a part of the State Education Committee. He noted that Commissioners have received an invitation to Cornerstone Church's upcoming 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration and he suggested that everyone attend.

Chairman Dixon said he is proud to announce that the lease documents with Sentara have been released for public review. He stated that the Board will meet on February 27 at 1:00 PM to give final approval to the documents to lease Albemarle Hospital to Sentara Healthcare. He reported that hard copies of the documents will be available for viewing in the County Manager's Office, at the W.C. Witherspoon Memorial Library, and on the county's website. He said it was very hard negotiating with a very strong Sentara network, but at the end of the deal the county will end up with \$42 million in lease payments over the next 30 years, \$13 million in additional payments to EMS over a 30 year period, \$10 million upfront which will be placed in an escrow account, and \$40 million in an upgraded healthcare facility for the community. Chairman Dixon said the bottom line is that the community gets to keep the hospital which will be a much stronger hospital that will be part of a huge network that is top-rated in the nation.

Chairman Dixon stated that as mentioned earlier, the Board learned from the Soil & Water Conservation District that there are several issues that need to be addressed and they will be coming back to the Board with solutions on how to deal with them. He said alligator weed is choking streams and rivers and there is no state funding and very little federal funding, so this is something the county will have to fund. He stated that the Knobbs Creek drainage is also another problem that will have to be addressed by the city and the county.

Chairman Dixon asked if there was any further business to come before the Board. There being no further business, he asked for a motion to adjourn the meeting.

Motion was made by Gary White, seconded by Cecil Perry to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:47 PM.

  
CLERK TO THE BOARD

  
CHAIRMAN