

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
MAY 6, 2019**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, May 6, 2019 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Jeff Dixon, Chairman
Lloyd E. Griffin, III, Vice-Chairman
Cecil Perry
Frankie Meads
Charles H. Jordan
Sean Lavin
Barry Overman

MEMBERS ABSENT: None

OTHERS PRESENT: Sparty Hammett, County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Lynn Scott, Clerk to the Board

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 PM by Chairman Dixon. Vice-Chairman Griffin gave the invocation and Commissioner Meads led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Dixon welcomed everyone present.

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Chairman Dixon asked if there were any amendments to the agenda.

Finance Committee Chairman Lloyd Griffin requested that the agenda be amended to add the following item recommended by the Finance Committee today to the Consent Agenda: 1) Approval of Starting Salary Above Hiring Rate for Three Full-time EMS Hires, and add a Closed Session at the end of the meeting per NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) Attorney/Client Privilege.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Charles Jordan to amend the agenda to add Item 1 above to the Consent Agenda and add a Closed Session to the end of the meeting per NCGS 143-318.11(a)(3) Attorney/Client Privilege. The motion carried unanimously.

2. SENTARA ALBEMARLE MEDICAL CENTER YEARLY UPDATE:

Chairman Dixon recognized Ms. Coleen Santa Ana, CEO of Sentara Albemarle Medical Center, to present the hospital's annual progress report.

Ms. Santa Ana said typically, she provides an annual report, but this year she will provide a 5-year summary since it is Sentara Albemarle's 5-year anniversary.

An employee shared a safety story regarding an ER nurse. She said the nurse was taking care of a patient who had fallen a couple of days prior to her visit. A head CT was ordered and the reading came back as negative. The nurse took it upon herself to look at the images and she noticed a little, possible spot on one of the images and brought it to the ER physician's attention. The physician in turn reread it as a possible bleed. With the nurse's attention to detail, further studies were ordered. The find potentially saved the patient's life.

Ms. Santa Ana provided a summary of the strategic plan that was implemented five years ago, with help from the County, the Hospital Authority Board, medical staff, and hospital leadership. She stated that her presentation will show how that plan has come to fruition. This year, the medical center will start formulating a plan for the future.

Ms. Santa Ana stated that the lease called for \$40 million in capital investments, and they have exceeded that with \$68.7 million, including \$18 million of technology. Also, the lease asked for five new providers within the first three years. They have increased the medical staff by 66 providers over the last five years. There were a number of community contributions that were asked for in the lease arrangement. In five years, they have contributed \$80,000 to College of the Albemarle, \$2.25 million to EMS, \$1.6 million to the Albemarle Hospital Foundation, and

\$475,000 to Albemarle Regional Health Services. She noted that the lease also called for community relationships. They have a number of their leaders on various boards throughout northeast North Carolina. She said she has landed a seat on the North Carolina Healthcare Association, where she represents not only Sentara Albemarle, but northeast North Carolina and rural hospitals in general.

Ms. Santa Ana reported that the medical center is very active in the community. They provide health screenings, free community education, and many other community activities. Staff received market adjustments. No one in the hospital now earns less than \$12 an hour, and raises are provided on an ongoing basis. The turnover rate at the hospital is at 12.8%, which is far below the national norm.

In 2017, the hospital provided over \$13 million of essentially free care to the citizens of northeast North Carolina. From 2017-18 that number increased by \$3.1 million to \$16.8 million. She noted that the hospital is the 2nd largest employer in the County behind Pasquotank County Board of Education. The total impact of the hospital on the region is \$186.9 million and \$5.6 million on the state. There are 2,345 individuals employed by the hospital.

Ms. Santa Ana stated that there is increasing pressures on rural hospitals. There is a shift from in-patient care to out-patient care. There is more and more ambulatory care being developed. Patients can now go home 24 hours after a joint replacement. There is retailization of healthcare coming our way. She said their competitors are not necessarily another hospital entity, but are Amazon, CVS, or Walmart. There is weakening regulatory protections, such as certificates of need, which could be detrimental in any rural setting. Also, there is a growing shortage of physicians.

Ms. Santa Ana said hospital staff feels they have exceeded the lease requirements. She stated that the core purpose of inviting Sentara to Albemarle Hospital to this region was to focus and improve care. She said their focus has been quality and safety improvement. She said not only are they improving, but they are hitting top level performance. She extended an invitation to Community Day on Saturday, May 11th from 11-2 PM at the hospital. She asked that everyone come out if possible to celebrate the hospital's success in the community. She said everything is essentially free, including food, screenings, and activities for the whole family.

When asked, Ms. Santa Ana said occupancy rate is in the 60's. She noted that there are currently 182 beds. The Emergency Room averages 118 patients per day. That number increases drastically during the winter months. Average time in the ER is under 120 minutes for treat and release patients, which is within the top 10% in performance in the nation.

3. BOARD OF EQUALIZATION AND REVIEW:

Attorney Mike Cox explained that the Board of E&R is required to meet two times per year. He stated that tonight's meeting will be recessed and reconvened at the May 20th meeting.

The Clerk swore in the members of the Board of Commissioners to serve as the Board of Equalization and Review for 2019. Chairman Dixon convened the Board of Equalization and Review and asked if there were any appeals to be heard. Tax Administrator Patrice Stewart reported that she does not have any appeals to come before the Board of E&R at this time. Chairman Dixon asked if anyone from the public has an appeal to bring before the Board of E&R. There being no appeals, Chairman Dixon asked for a motion to recess the meeting until the next regular meeting.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Charles Jordan to recess the Board of Equalization and Review until the next regular meeting on May 20, 2019. The motion carried unanimously.

4. COMMENTS REGARDING PROPOSED NEWLAND FAMILY PARK:

Chairman Dixon recognized Nora May Sanborn of 1125 Millpond Road and Montrose Hinton of 1521 Millpond Road to address the Board. Ms. Hinton stated that she and Ms. Sanborn are here tonight as representatives of the Newland Township. They asked for an update on the proposed Newland Community Park.

County Manager Hammett explained that the Board has reserved \$150,000 towards the land purchase, and he is currently looking for a piece of property. He said he attempted to find some property before the deadline to apply for PARTF grant funding, but was unable to get a piece of property in that timeframe. Now, we are looking at May of 2020 as our next grant cycle. Staff has looked at several pieces of property, but in most cases the owners did not want to sell or the price was too high. He noted that the County would like to purchase a minimum of 15 acres. He said if anyone is aware of a landowner who is interested in selling or donating some property to please let him know. Ms. Sanborn thanked the Board and staff for their efforts.

5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

The Board considered the following consent agenda:

a. Approval of Minutes of April 15, 2019 Commissioner Meeting

b. Approval of Tax Releases and Refunds

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following tax refunds and solid waste fee releases:

Tax Refunds

		County	City
1.	Earl W. & Sharon W. Fairchild	427.12	
2.	Earl W. & Sharon W. Fairchild	427.12	
3.	Earl W. & Sharon W. Fairchild	432.74	
4.	Earl W. & Sharon W. Fairchild	432.74	
5.	Cayden Grooms	195.89	
6.	Cayden Grooms	253.24	

Solid Waste Fee Releases

		Parcel ID #	Reason for Release
1.	Earnest & Darline Cole	50-F-308	Vacant
2.	James R. & Shirley Q. Griffin	62-B-4	Vacant

c. Approval of Budget Amendments

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the following budget amendments:

Finance

Increase	010.0500.4831.00	Interest Earned	2,779.00
Increase	010.4130.5191.00	Audit Fees	2,779.00

To increase Audit fees for the OPEB actuarial study that came in over estimate.

Register of Deeds

Increase	010.0300.4418.03	Recording Fees	6,570.00
Increase	010.4180.5800.00	Automation/Preservation Fund	6,570.00

To increase Automation/Preservation line item for six computers.

Water

Increase	060.0350.4713.00	Sale of Water	8,640.00
Increase	060.7130.5440.00	Contracted Services	7,560.00
Increase	060.7140.5110.00	Contracted Services	1,080.00

To increase contracted services for mowing contracts for the balance of the fiscal year.

Jail/Juvenile Services

Increase	010.0500.4831.00	Interest Earned	37,000.00
Increase	010.4320.5362.00	Juvenile Services/Detention	37,000.00

To appropriate funds for the increase in juvenile detention costs.

d. Approval of Request for Longevity Pay

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of a request by retiring Register of Deeds Joyce Pritchard, to receive early payment of her longevity pay. Ms. Pritchard is due to receive \$2,000 in longevity pay on July 15, 2019 however; she will be retiring on June 1, 2019.

e. Approval of Resolution Opposing Changes in Criteria to Become a Paramedic

The Finance Committee has recommended adoption of the following resolution which addresses proposed changes in the criteria to become a paramedic:

Resolution in Opposition to Future North Carolina Office of EMS

Educational Requirements for Paramedics

WHEREAS, emergency medical services is a vital public service; and

WHEREAS, recruitment and retention of Paramedics and Paramedic Students in Northeastern North Carolina is increasingly difficult; and

WHEREAS, time limitations on those desiring to acquire a Paramedic credential make obtaining an Associate's Degree prohibitive; and

WHEREAS, Tier 1 County Governments would see negative fiscal impacts due to having to substantially raise salaries for current and future Paramedics; and

WHEREAS, County governments could be forced to reduce the level of EMS service in order to keep emergency medicine affordable; and

WHEREAS, an Associate's Degree does not dictate whether or not a person is a competent Paramedic; now

THEREFORE, the Pasquotank County Commissioners hereby resolve not support the North Carolina Office of EMS proposed 2023 change to 10A NCAC 13P .0502 which will require individuals applying for a Paramedic credential to have completed post-secondary level education equal to or exceeding an Associate Degree from a regionally accredited institution.

ADOPTED this 6th day of May 2019.

f. Approval of Starting Salaries above Hiring Rate for Three Full Time EMS Hires

The Finance Committee has recommended approval of the starting salaries for three full time EMS hires due to their verifiable and consecutive external years of services. Paramedic at Grade 19, Step 3 - \$39,134, AEMT at Grade 16, Step 6 - \$37,628, and EMT at Grade 14, Step 2 - \$31,355.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Charles Jordan to approve the Consent Agenda as amended. The motion carried unanimously.

6. COUNTY MANAGER'S REPORTS:

Mr. Hammett explained that the County needed an architectural cost estimate for the Daily Advance renovations to submit to the Local Government Commission. The estimate was received, and came in at \$554,417, which is more than \$200,000 above our budget of \$350,000. However, he noted that the bulk of the overage can be eliminated by installing a catering kitchen instead of a commercial kitchen.

Mr. Hammett also reported that the cost estimate for the former Elizabeth City Middle School Annex Gym Project came in. Initially, the cost estimate came in at \$1.5 million, but after speaking with the architect, the architect revised the cost estimate to \$1 million. This item will be placed on the May 20th agenda for discussion.

7. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Overman attended the DSS Board meeting, Special Projects Committee meeting, and the Community Relations Commission.

Commissioner Jordan said he and Commissioner Lavin attended the Providence VFD monthly meeting. He said they plan to attend an upcoming meeting at the Newland VFD. He also attended the Committee of 100 Luncheon, the Jail Board meeting, the Regional Library Board meeting, the Teacher of the Year Ceremony, and the National Day of Prayer.

Vice-Chairman Griffin attended the Legislative Day in Raleigh and met with Senator Steinburg.

Commissioner Lavin attended the Teacher of the Year Ceremony.

Commissioner Meads stated that the Home Builder's Association is having a training course at COA tomorrow to introduce the new code changes for 2019.

Commissioner Perry attended the Special Projects Committee meeting. He noted that COA's graduation is scheduled for Wednesday.

Chairman Dixon asked fellow Board member to attend the Travel & Tourism Pep Rally scheduled for tomorrow morning if possible. He said the Board should have received an invitation to an open forum for the next COA President on Tuesday, May 14th from 5:00-6:00 PM. He encouraged new commissioners to attend the upcoming County Assembly Day. He said he has been invited to speak at the ECSU graduation commencement ceremony on Saturday.

Motion was made by Lloyd Griffin, seconded by Sean Lavin to enter Closed Session per [NCGS 143-318.11(a)(6)] to discuss personnel matters and [NCGS 143-318.11(a)(1) to prevent the disclosure of privileged information. The motion carried unanimously.

At the end of Closed Session;

Motion was made by Sean Lavin, seconded by Frankie Meads to return to regular session. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Frankie Meads to appoint Clementine White as Interim Register of Deeds upon retirement of current Register of Deeds Joyce Pritchard on June 1, 2019 at Pay Grade 29, Step 6 - \$57,198. The motion carried unanimously.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Sean Lavin to amend County Manager Sparty Hammett's contract to increase his annual leave accrual to 160 hours per year. The motion carried unanimously.

Chairman Dixon asked if there was any further business to come before the Board. There being no further business;

Motion was made by Cecil Perry, seconded by Sean Lavin to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 7:25 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD