

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
AUGUST 2, 2021**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a regular meeting on Monday, August 2, 2021 in Courtroom C in the Pasquotank County Courthouse.

MEMBERS PRESENT: Lloyd E. Griffin, III, Chairman
Charles H. Jordan, Vice-Chairman
Cecil Perry
Sean Lavin
Barry Overman
William “Bill” Sterritt
Jonathan Meads

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 Lloyd Griffin. Vice-Chairman Jordan gave the invocation and Commissioner Sean Lavin led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag. Chairman Griffin welcomed those in attendance.

1. AMENDMENTS TO THE AGENDA:

Vice-Chairman Jordan requested that the agenda be amended to add the following item recommended by the Finance Committee to the Consent Agenda: 1) Transition to Parks and Recreation Board. County Manager Hammett requested that the agenda be amended to add the following item to New Business: 2) NAACP request to form a Community Review Commission.

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Barry Overman to amend the agenda to add Item #1 to the Consent Agenda, and Item #2 to New Business. The motion carried unanimously.

2. PRESENTATION OF PROCLAMATION FOR CHILD SUPPORT AWARENESS MONTH:

Chairman Griffin called on Alden Miller, Project Manager for YoungWilliams, to accept a proclamation for Child Support Awareness Month. He read and then presented the following proclamation to Mr. Miller:

**State of North Carolina
County of Pasquotank
Proclamation
Child Support Awareness Month
August 2021**

WHEREAS, Pasquotank County is recognizing August as Child Support Awareness Month, and reaffirms its commitment to strengthening Counties families by providing child support services to improve the economic stability and well-being Pasquotank of children; and

WHEREAS, in State Fiscal Year 2020-21, more than \$4.9 million in child support was collected from parents of Pasquotank Counties children, and

WHEREAS, there are nearly 2,221 child support orders in place, working to ensure that more than 2,600 children receive financial support from their parents: and

WHEREAS. Child Support Awareness Month salutes the diligent working parents who spend time with their child and who make regular child support payments, to safeguard their children's future: and

WHEREAS, strengthening individuals and families promotes the safety and well-being of children, provides stability, improves the lives of children, and provides opportunities for families to be able to enhance their children's futures; and

WHEREAS, children who do not receive adequate financial and emotional support from their parents may experience greater difficulty in becoming healthy, happy, and productive citizens; and

WHEREAS, many concerned and dedicated judges, district attorneys, clerks of court, sheriffs' personnel, and child support professionals work to establish and enforce child support orders for Pasquotank County children, one of our counties most vital resources.

NOW, THEREFORE, We, the Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners, do hereby proclaim August 2021, as "CHILD SUPPORT AWARENESS MONTH" in Pasquotank County, and commend its observance to all citizens.

ADOPTED, this 2nd day of August 2021.

Mr. Miller thanked the Board for their support, and said it is an honor to provide excellent child support services to the families of Pasquotank County.

3. PUBLIC COMMENTS:

Chairman Griffin recognized Angela Brothers-Proctor of 533 Weigh Station Road, Hertford to address the Board. She asked why the monument has not been moved. As she understood it, it was going to be removed by last Friday. County Manager Hammett stated that staff is in the process of working with the low bidder to move the monument. He noted that there has never been a definitive date, and the crane company's schedule is very backed up.

Chairman Griffin recognized Sarah Wenninger of 1016 Bateman Drive to address the Board. Ms. Wenninger requested the Sheriff Office be asked to remove a Facebook post they made on July 16, 2021 regarding innocent, young black men that were out in the country shooting weapons. She said they did not commit a crime, but their names and photos are up there for the whole community to know who they are and that they have weapons. The post is still on the Facebook page, and has been shared well beyond the point it needed to be for public safety.

Chairman Griffin recognized Jim Gore, address unknown, to address the Board. Mr. Gore asked if there is an end date for when the monument will be removed. He noted that the eviction moratorium is ending. He asked if the Board will video their meetings in the future if Covid/Delta numbers continue to rise and the meetings are closed to the public.

Chairman Griffin recognized Keith Rivers of P.O. Box 211 to address the Board. Mr. Rivers, President of the Pasquotank County Branch of the NAACP said on April 21, 2021 Andrew Brown, Jr. was executed. What he does know at this point is: the warrant was not signed; the Sheriff went into a residential neighborhood with assault rifles, in a school zone, and there was a bullet that went into a person's home; the autopsy report called it a homicide; the Sheriff's Office violated their own policy on deadly force; the Sheriff has posted people names and addresses that have been marching and protesting; he has issued criminal summons on people who went to him for help because they felt threatened; the Sheriff has used his website to post things that have nothing to do with public safety; and the Sheriff has not come out and addressed the community. He asked how we move forward as a community. He requested a Community Review Commission be formed.

4. APPROVAL OF APPOINTMENTS TO BOARDS AND COMMITTEES:

At the last meeting, the Appointments Committee recommended the appointments of Colbert Respass and Keith Teague to the Airport Authority. Copies of their applications were provided to Board members and no additional applications were received.

Motion was made by Barry Overman, seconded by Sean Lavin to appoint Colbert Respass and Keith Teach to the Airport Authority. He motion carried unanimously.

5. APPROVAL OF CONSENT AGENDA:

The Board considered the following consent agenda:

a. Approval of Minutes of July 12, 2021 Commissioner Meeting

b. Approval of Transition to Park and Recreation Board

On June 7th, the Board approved the amended Parks and Recreation Interlocal Agreement (IA) with Elizabeth City, which extended the agreement for a five-year term from July 1, 2021 until June 30, 2026. The Parks and Recreation IA amended number 7 of the IA titled “Advisory Board” to “Parks and Recreation Board;” changing the composition of the Board; adding the County Manager and City Manager as ex officio members; and strengthening the function/authority of the Board. The City approved the amended IA and we received a copy of the signed agreement. The composition of the new Parks and Recreation Board is as follows:

- Two City Councilors and Two County Commissioners;
- One City Citizen and One County Citizen;
- One Member appointed by City & County (recommended by Parks and Recreation Board); and
- City Manager and County Manager serve as ex officio members.

The new Board adds an additional City Councilor and County Commissioner and reduces the City and County citizen members from two to one each. There is a need to begin the transition to the Parks and Recreation Board to get input/make decisions on important issues such as the proposed lease agreement for the former Elizabeth City Middle School gym. The Finance Committee has recommended that the Board:

- Notify the members of the Recreation Advisory Board that it has been changed to the Parks and Recreation Board, which includes a change in the member composition and a strengthening of the function of the Board;
- Appoint an additional Commissioner to the new Parks and Recreation Board;
- Initiate the application process for the Parks and Recreation Board; and
- Direct the County Manager to work with the City Manager and Parks and Recreation Director to discuss the formation of the new Parks and Recreation Board and schedule an initial meeting.

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

6. NAACP REQUEST FOR THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS TO FORM COMMUNITY REVIEW COMMISSION:

County Manager Hammett explained that he received an email from the Pasquotank NAACP on Thursday after the agenda had been finalized. He said he conducted some preliminary research on this request over the weekend. Some larger cities in NC have Citizen Review Boards for their Police Departments including: Asheville; Charlotte; Durham; Greensboro; and Winston-Salem. Under NC General Statutes, Police Chiefs are appointed by City’s and police officers are employed by municipal government. The key difference is that those Citizen Review Boards are associated with Police Departments that report directly to City Managers and City Councils for oversight.

Mr. Hammett said Sheriff’s Offices are not departments of County government, and NC County Managers and County Boards have no oversight authority over Sheriff’s Offices. The Office of Sheriff is an office provided for by the North Carolina Constitution, and the Sheriff is an elected official. In the “chain of command,” elected officers report solely to the citizens within their jurisdiction, and not to any county employee or governing board.

Based upon the preliminary research and the NC Constitution, the Board does not have the legal nor statutory authority to establish a commission or board to “independently investigate policing and employment practices by the Pasquotank County Sheriff’s Department” as requested by the NAACP. A June 22, 2020 National Association of Counties article indicated that nationally 11 counties nationwide had citizen review committees; however, their authority varied and that authority cannot supersede the individual state statutes.

Mr. Hammett recommended that the Board defer action on the request for the Board of Commissioners to form a Community Review Commission until the August 16th meeting. That will give staff an opportunity to finalize the research on the request, and make a recommendation.

The Board unanimously agreed to defer action on the request until the August 16, 2021 Board of Commissioner meeting to give staff an opportunity to finalize the research on the request.

7. REPORTS FROM COMMISSIONERS:

Commissioner Overman attended the monthly EMS and DSS Board meeting.

Commissioner Meads attended the monthly EMS and Solid Waste/Landfill Committee meetings. He said with all the drug overdoses we have been having, only two cases went and got help. He finds that very disturbing. He spoke at the Home Builder's meeting recently held in Perquimans County.

Commissioner Sterritt said he tried to participate in the monthly Community Relations Commission, but unfortunately his audio did not work properly. He noted that the CRC will be submitting a request for additional funds in the future. Mr. Hammett explained that he spoke with the Chairman of the CRC. They did not submit a budget request, so the Board decreased their funding to match the City (\$1,300). The City subsequently increased their budget to match the County's previous budget (\$2,500). He said he told her to submit a request to the Board, and they could reconsider.

Commissioner Sterritt said he and Mr. Perry attended the League of Women Voters meeting a week ago Saturday at the Cann Memorial Presbyterian Church. He said he is impressed with what they are doing throughout the state to help with redistricting. He thinks it would be a great opportunity to have them present to the Board.

Commissioner Lavin stated that the organizations that he is a part of continue to do great things. The Elizabeth City Chamber of Commerce continues to have growth in its membership, as well as business after hour events, and ribbon cuttings. The Elizabeth City Downtown is finishing up their budget cycle. They have a few very transformative projects in the works that will make a big difference downtown. The Workforce Development Board continues to try to work and meet the needs of the local employers of the area. Funding has been cut from the state level, so they are working to try and reclaim some of that funding. He said he has had several individuals in the community asking where we are with broadband. The recent 5" rainfall reminded people of the drainage concerns within the County. Additionally, he has received calls regarding the condition of Tracie Drive.

Commissioner Perry stated that the Health Department is working hard in an effort to get as many people vaccinated as possible. The Special Projects met today to discuss hunting with dogs in the County. No decision was made regarding making changes. He attended the League to Women Voters regarding redistricting. He asked the County Manager to contact them to present at an upcoming meeting. He noted that he advocates for a lot of things in our community. He said in order for us to heal, we need to move forward together. He voiced concerns regarding the procedure used by the NCACC for District 1 Representative nominations. Usually, the nominations and election are held at the District meeting. He feels it was done prior to the meeting in order to prevent certain individuals from being nominated. He is tired of people not doing things in an open manner.

Vice-Chairman Jordan noted that after the large rain event, it is evident that we have some real problems with drainage. It's not something that can be easily corrected. The Drainage Committee is working very hard on it. Members of the committee have been assigned to ride around and take pictures. He took several pictures of some of the problems areas yesterday. He said it is going to take a lot of work, and it's not going to be done overnight. He attended his first Chamber of Commerce meeting. They are doing more ribbon cuttings. He also attended the Economic Development meeting, Solid Waste/Landfill Committee meeting, and a meeting at NC Works.

Chairman Griffin said the Albemarle Commission is hosting a meeting on the broadband expansion tomorrow. He attended several ribbon cuttings last month. Coast Guard appreciation day is schedule for Wednesday. He said the District 1 Caucus meeting held at 3:00 today. Seven of the ten counties in the district were represented. Three members voted for Anita Grimsley from Terrell County and four members voted for Bob Kirby from Chowan County. Neither county has had a member previously serve as the District 1 Representative. It was suggested that in the future, they rotate counties, so that all the counties have an opportunity to be represented.

There being nothing further to come before the Board;

Motion was made by Charles Jordan, seconded by Sean Lavin to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 6:40 PM.

CHAIRMAN

CLERK TO THE BOARD