

**PASQUOTANK COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
OCTOBER 30, 2012**

The Pasquotank County Board of Commissioners met today in a joint meeting with the City Council of Elizabeth City on Tuesday, October 30, 2012 in the Community Room at the Pasquotank Public Safety Building.

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Lloyd E. Griffin, III, Chairman
Bill Trueblood
Cecil Perry
Dr. William R. Sterritt
Gary G. White
Joseph S. Winslow, Jr.

MEMBERS ABSENT:

Jeff Dixon, Vice-Chairman *(due to illness)*

OTHERS PRESENT:

Randy Keaton, County Manager
Rodney Bunch, Assistant County Manager
R. Michael Cox, County Attorney
Karen Jennings, Clerk to the Board
Patrice Stewart, Tax Administrator

Also present were the Mayor, members of the City Council, the City Manager, City Attorney, Assistant City Clerk, and several city department heads. The meeting was called to order at 6:30 PM by Chairman Lloyd Griffin and Mayor Joe Peel who welcomed everyone. Chairman Griffin gave the invocation and Mayor Peel led in the Pledge of Allegiance to the American Flag.

1. UPDATE ON ONE-QUARTER CENT SALES TAX:

County Manager Randy Keaton referred to a flyer that is being distributed as educational material regarding the one-quarter cent sales tax referendum. He explained that the sales tax must be voted on by the people and is on the November ballot. He listed the items that would be exempt from the tax including groceries and prescription drugs. He said if the referendum is successful, the Board of Commissioners has pledged to dedicate these additional funds for capital needs for the School System and College of The Albemarle although it cannot be earmarked on the ballot. Mr. Keaton listed some of the specific needs of the schools and COA. He said it is estimated that the quarter cent sales tax would generate just under \$1 million per year.

2. RECREATION UPDATE:

Recreation Director Bobbi White provided an update from the Parks & Recreation Department. She explained that the City and County Parks and Recreation Departments have been working together as one department since July 1, 2010. She said under the Interlocal Agreement a Recreation Advisory Board was established which helps direct the programming of activities and sports events and plans for future recreational needs. She stated that the South Park Athletic Facility has been a fine example of how the city and county have come together for the betterment of the community. She explained that the five-field softball and baseball facility has been a big boost to the community and has hosted twelve tournaments so far this year. She said the Tourism Development Authority has advised that on a tournament weekend the city's restaurants, businesses and hotels have seen a significant boost in revenues. She added that it is estimated that South Park has directly or indirectly contributed \$200,000 into the community during the past year. Ms. White said a Little League baseball and softball program began this spring and proved to be very successful. She stated that to assist with operational expenses, the Parks and Recreation Department is selling billboards that are placed on the outfield fences. So far \$7,500 in revenue has been generated from the sale of billboards.

Ms. White explained that Fun Junktion was built by the county in 1999 with PARTF and county funds. This park provides several large ponds for catch and release fishing and boating, basketball courts, a golf driving range, two pavilions with outdoor grills, playgrounds, restroom facilities, volleyball, a walking path, a disk golf course, and a skateboard park. Ms. White said that staffing for Fun Junktion has been restructured so that a staff person responsible for park

maintenance is there every day. All reservations are now handled out of the Knobbs Creek office which has proven to be more efficient.

Ms. White explained that the Parks and Recreation Department has several capital needs including:

- 1) Additional parking at South Park to accommodate large tournaments.
- 2) Build a road through South Park extending to Perkins Road to help with traffic flow.
- 3) Repair the walking path at Fun Junction which is crumbling due to the sides of the lake caving. Estimated cost of the repairs is over \$50,000.
- 4) Construct a skateboard facility inside the city limits (Enfield tennis courts which are no longer used would be an excellent location).
- 5) The northern end of the county is in need of a public park with playground equipment, walking/fitness trails, picnic shelters and restroom facilities. At the current time a location has not been found.
- 6) Upgrade technology for parks and facilities including internet access at Fun Junction, South Park, and River Road Soccer Complex. Offer on-line registration for programs and facilities and debit card payments.
- 7) Construction of a dog park, possibly at Fun Junction or in conjunction with the new SPCA facility.
- 8) Construction of a splash park, playground facilities, and basketball courts at the Police Athletic League facility once the construction along Road and Elizabeth Streets has been completed.
- 9) Upgrade Holmes Field at the Knobbs Creek Park. The facility was built in 1983 and has had very little maintenance since then. It is used by COA's and ECSU's baseball teams and is in dire need of a major overhaul to accommodate college baseball. It is estimated that this overhaul could cost more than \$100,000.

After questions and discussion, the boards thanked Ms. White for her report and commended her on the outstanding job she is doing as Recreation Director.

3. CONSIDERATION OF INTERLOCAL AGREEMENT FOR ANIMAL CONTROL:

County Attorney Mike Cox outlined a proposed Interlocal Agreement for Animal Control services. He explained that the agreement is in the same format as other interlocal agreements between the city and county. He said the proposed agreement is for a three-year term beginning July 1, 2012 and provides the city with the option to extend for two years. The agreement also spells out the 50-50 funding formula. City Manager Rich Olson commented that the proposed agreement simply formalizes the working arrangement the city and county have had for at least 20 years.

4. CONSIDERATION OF MODIFICATIONS TO CENTRAL COMMUNICATIONS AND EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT INTERLOCAL AGREEMENTS:

County Manager Randy Keaton explained that at the last joint city-county meeting both boards approved the Central Communications and Emergency Management Interlocal Agreements. He said when the agreements were sent to Camden County for approval, Camden requested a change in the term of the agreements. It is proposed that the term be reduced from ten years to three years with a two-year renewal. Mr. Keaton said this would be the same as the term of a proposed interlocal agreement with Camden County for EMS services. He added that the Central Communications and Emergency Management Interlocal Agreements are between all three governments, Pasquotank County, the City of Elizabeth City, and Camden County.

5. UPDATE ON REVALUATION:

County Manager Randy Keaton introduced Tax Administrator Patrice Stewart to provide information on the 2014 Pasquotank County Revaluation which is currently underway. Ms. Stewart explained that county staff are getting a lot of questions about the revaluation and she has developed a list of frequently asked questions and answers. She stated that N.C. General Statutes require all counties to reappraise each parcel of real estate at least every eight years. During the revaluation process all real property is reassessed at 100% of market value, which is the price at which the property would change hands between a willing and financially able buyer and a willing seller, neither being under any compulsion to buy or sell. The purpose of

revaluation is to have each property carry its appropriate share of expenses to operate local government. Revaluations ensure that property owners bear a share of the total tax burden that is proportionate to the value of the taxable property they own. The revaluation would become effective January 1, 2014. Ms. Stewart stated that Pearson's Appraisal Service began the revaluation process in April 2012 and has communicated with real estate brokers, bankers, appraisers, city and county building inspectors, planning officials and utility department staff gathering information. Most recently they have been performing market analyses/sales studies. The firm is currently taking digital pictures of all properties in the county and city and is using two Ford vans as mobile offices with cameras with street level imaging mounted in the rear of the vans. The vans are identified by a sign on either side that reads "Pasquotank County Revaluation". Ms. Stewart said over the next year Pearson's Appraisal Service will obtain images of all dwellings and commercial and industrial buildings in the county. This process will be completed during July 2013 and then the firm will present a schedule of values to the Board of Commissioners for approval. She said property values will change throughout the county depending on market conditions and the recent arms length sales in a particular neighborhood. The assessed value may increase, decrease, or remain the same. Ms. Stewart stated that once the revaluation is complete, all taxpayers will be notified of their new property values in September 2013. If a taxpayer has a concern with the property value, he will have an opportunity to request an informal hearing with the appraisal firm prior to the Board of Equalization and Review hearings. Ms. Stewart said so far the revaluation is on schedule and she believes the end result will be a good one.

6. UPDATE ON OLD ELIZABETH CITY MIDDLE SCHOOL PROJECT:

City Manager Rich Olson said he is happy to inform everyone that the N.C. Catalyst Grant has been funded for renovations to the old Elizabeth City Middle School. The grant is in the amount of \$500,000 and the county and city have each approved matching funds in the amount of \$75,000 for a total project amount of \$650,000. Mr. Olson stated that the city and county in April entered into an interlocal agreement which addresses the application process. The improvements will include renovations to the first floor of the building and repairs to the HVAC system. The site will be used to benefit low and moderate income children. The building will remain an asset of Pasquotank County and the county will be the landlord of the former middle school. Mr. Olson said the big unknown at this time is whether or not an environmental assessment of the site will be required. He stated that City Council discussed the grant at its meeting last night and has requested concurrence of the grant agreement and funding approval by the Board of Commissioners. He added that City Council also feels in order to facilitate coordination that there should be a steering committee made up of representatives from PAL, the Boys & Girls Club, the city, and the county to help move this project forward. Mr. Olson stated that realistically this project will not go out to bid until March 2013 due to all of the grant regulations. Chairman Griffin advised that the Board of Commissioners will consider the grant agreement and funding approval at its meeting next Monday.

7. UPDATE FROM COMMUNITY RELATIONS COMMISSION:

Dr. Kurt Hunsberger, Chairman of the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County Community Relations Commission, provided an update on the commission's activities. Dr. Hunsberger reported that the annual Witherspoon-Harris Award Ceremony will be held on December 5. The deadline for submission of nominations is November 9. Another thing the Commission is working on is to develop a plan of action for leadership training in the community. The focus will be on developing leaders among the youth in the community and helping those leaders who are already involved by providing an ongoing training forum. Dr. Hunsberger said another thing the Commission has been working on is the "Stand Up for Children Initiative" where they encourage people in the community to be involved in mentoring and tutoring in the public schools. He stated that their basic goals are to coordinate all of the efforts that are already going on with regard to mentoring and tutoring in the schools and recognize and raise awareness of those programs and to produce new programs. He reported that a Z. Smith Reynolds grant application has been made to conduct a follow-up survey about race relations in the community and they should hear from that application next month. Dr. Hunsberger stated that a conflict resolution/mediator training program was held earlier this year and the people who were involved in that are willing to be involved in any kind of mediation activities the community needs. He said their funding has fallen short and they will not be able to follow through with a repeat of the youth conference that was held last year, but it is hoped it can be held next year.

Commissioner Cecil Perry said he asked at a previous meeting about having the Community Relations Commission discuss restructuring the community. He stated that this issue is important enough to give the Community Relations Commission an opportunity to talk about it. Dr. Hunsberger said some of the members have discussed this briefly, but he believes after the election would be a more appropriate time to talk about it.

8. COMMENTS FROM COUNTY COMMISSIONERS AND CITY COUNCIL MEMBERS:

Councilwoman Jean Baker reported that tourism is alive and well in the area. She said that the Sixteenth Annual Ghost Walk had 1,100 people attend from 23 different states. She added that some people are planning their trips around events in Elizabeth City.

Councilman Johnnie Walton stated that ECSU filled up the hotels in the area a couple of weeks ago for their homecoming. He asked everyone to continue to support ECSU as much as possible. He added that after casting his vote this week, he voted in favor of the quarter cent sales tax and he has encouraged others to vote for it because it will go for education.

Councilman Kem Spence said he would like to applaud the Interim Police Chief on the job he has done for the city. He added that tonight's meeting will probably be the last meeting of Council that the chief will attend.

Commissioner Gary White stated that he would like to thank everyone for coming tonight. He said he would like to thank Tax Administrator Patrice Stewart for her report tonight and commend her on the excellent job she is doing.

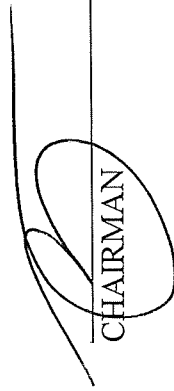
Commissioner Joe Winslow noted that in the list of recommendations made by Recreation Director Bobbi White he would like to point out something on the list that he feels is very important. He said approximately 10,000 people live north of Knobbs Creek which is one-fourth of the county's population, and Ms. White has mentioned that the northern end of Pasquotank County is in need of a public park and recreational facility. Commissioner Winslow stated that he understands there is a problem getting land in this area, but he thinks it is time to move this up in priority for the people of the northern portion of Pasquotank County. He said there is easy access to recreational facilities for those who live within the city and they don't have to drive 15 or 20 miles. He asked those who are on the Recreation Advisory Committee or those who have any influence with the committee to address this issue. He suggested that a survey be conducted of the people who live in the Newland and Providence areas to see what type of facility they would like to see. He added that he thinks the people of these areas deserve a recreational facility.

Mayor Peel noted that there are three schools in the northern portion of the county with lots of land around them that would probably be a great location for a recreational facility. He said he would also like to commend the county on calling a referendum on the quarter cent sales tax. He stated that anytime the people are given an opportunity to vote on something like taxes, it is a good thing. He said the schools certainly have significant needs and one of those needs is technology. He explained that beginning next year every test taken by students will be on computers. He added that the public needs to be aware of this technology need as they cast their votes. Commissioner Bill Trueblood noted that he does not think the public is aware of this electronic testing requirement beginning next year.

Chairman Lloyd Griffin said this weekend the First in Flight Festival was postponed due to Hurricane Sandy. He said it has been rescheduled for next weekend.

Motion was made by Bill Trueblood, seconded by Gary White to adjourn the meeting. The motion carried and the meeting was adjourned at 8:03 PM.


CLERK TO THE BOARD


CHAIRMAN