

Minutes
Richmond County Board of Commissioners
105 W Franklin Street, Courtroom C, Rockingham, NC
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, January 07, 2020 5:30PM

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 7, 2020 at 5:30 P.M. with the following present: Chairman Kenneth R. Robinette; Vice-Chairman John B. Garner; Commissioners Don M. Bryant, Jimmy L. Capps, Ben T. Moss, Jr., Tavares Bostic and Rick Watkins.

The meeting was called to order by Chairman Robinette at 5:30 P.M.

ITEM NO. 1 Invocation by Pastor Steve Gilmer

Invocation was given by Pastor Steve Gilmer of Church of God of Prophecy, Rockingham, NC

ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Agenda - Decision

By a motion of Commissioner, seconded by Commissioner Capps and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 3 Open Forum for Public Comments - 5:30 - 6:00 PM

Larry McKenzie spoke to board about remarks made at the November 5, 2019 Board of Commissioners meeting.

ITEM NO. 4 Recognition of Fred Morris with the Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustment - Tracy Parris, Planning Director - Discussion

Mr. Fred Morris was recognized for his years of service with the Richmond County Planning and Zoning Board of Adjustments. Mr. Morris has been an active member for over thirteen years.

ITEM NO. 5 Presentation in Response to the Allegations Brought Against the Richmond County Animal Shelter - Ben Moss, Commissioner

Please click on link below to view the presentation from Commissioner Ben Moss on the allegations against the Richmond County Animal Shelter.

<http://pegtv.richmondnc.com/CablecastPublicSite/show/310?channel=2>

ITEM NO. 6 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Proclamation to Designate January 20, 2020 as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision

By a motion of Commissioner Moss, seconded by Commissioner Garner and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 7 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Proclamation to Declare January as National Radon Action Month- Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision

Radon is the leading environmental cause of lung cancer in North Carolina.

By a motion of Commissioner Capps, seconded by Commissioner Moss and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 8 Request for Board Consideration of Approval to Accept the Bid for the Prior Richmond County Administrative Building - Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision

Highest bid of \$107,500.00 was submitted by Samuel Garcia. Mr. Garcia has paid in an earnest money deposit of \$23,900.00 to Iron Horse Auction Co., Inc.

By a motion of Commissioner Bryant, seconded by Commissioner Moss and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 9 Monthly Report by County Manager Bryan Land

Well we have made it through the holiday season. I hope everyone enjoyed their time with friends and family. January is always a time to restart our batteries & roll up our sleeves with a fresh start. As we mentioned earlier with our moment of silence, all of our hearts were heavy on Christmas Eve when we lost a coworker, Chuck Bowden to a tragic motorcycle accident. A very sad day for all of us....

On a positive note, our annual employee appreciation dinner was an enormous success. Attendance breached 500 and we were served a delicious meal by Seaboard Station Restaurant. In addition, we were able to raffle off numerous gift cards and prizes for our employees.

December and January are always extremely busy months for us in the collections department. The tax and collections departments have been very busy for the last 45 days. I would like to remind everyone that yesterday was the last day to pay your 2019 property taxes without incurring a 2% penalty. Mr. Jackson and Mrs. Holden from the tax department and myself feel highly confident that we will be able to achieve our goal of a 97% collection rate.

As a reminder, our Old Cheraw Waterline went active for residents on November 21, 2019 and this starts the 90 day countdown for our reduced tap fee. February 19th is the last day for residents to take advantage of the \$500 discount. A final 30 day notice will be sent out to those residents that have yet to pay for a tap installation notifying them of the exact deadline. There will be no extension for this \$500 discount. To receive this discount payment must be received in full by 4:30pm on February 19, 2020. Final notifications will be mailed out the week of January 13, 2020.

The US 1 widening project near the racetrack is progressing along on time and within schedule. We are entering the rainy season which will impact production on the project. Lowering of the roadway near the intersection of Cognac Road is almost complete. The paving phase will become more sporadic through the winter months. Bulk Grading, final utility work, erosion control and fine grading will continue on at a steady pace as weather permits. Additionally, the intersection at Hwy 177 and US 1 is in the process of being reconfigured, traffic will continue to be detoured down Cognac Road for approximately 75-90 more days. Final Project completion is slated for October 2020

Construction for the I73/74 pump station is slated to begin in the next two weeks . NCDOT's portion of the waterline relocation is slated to begin early 2020 as well. The waterline relocation and the pump station project are scheduled to be completed by August of 2020. The final portion of the waterline project which will require our raw water line to be lowered is projected to take place in early 2022.

Our solid waste report is as follows: even though we were in the middle of the holiday season, the litter in our County didn't slow. We picked up 200 bags for a total of approximately 3.5 tons. Additionally, 6 tires were removed; we cleaned up 20 different roadways with Richmond County Staff and DOT forces. Our Solid Waste Enforcement Officer investigated 1 illegal dump site and issued 1 citation. I continue to urge citizens to join in against the fight of the litter epidemic.

The clearing and fencing project at the airport is progressing well, the clearing and grubbing phase is completed and the new 8' fence is currently being installed. The fence installation phase of the project will take approximately six weeks. This project was \$279,125 from S & L Contracting out of Anson County. 90% of grant funded and only a 10% County match is required

Transitioning to our shell building project and Economic Development-work has ramped back up at shell building #5, plans and specs for the requested tenant changes have been reviewed and released. The contractor is beginning to complete the grading, paving, dock installation, final concrete work and a few miscellaneous items in the interior office space. Weather permitting, we are anticipating tenant occupancy by late February 2020.

Vulcan Materials which has been an economic engine in Richmond County for over 50 years. They announced a plant expansion that will add jobs and investment to the facility off of Galestown Road. Exact numbers have not been released yet but I have a scheduled meeting with plant management tomorrow and should have additional information at that point.

A reminder that we are hosting the Sandhills Military Hiring Event on January 29th and 30th. This isn't a typical job fair, we are targeting individuals exiting the military. The event starts at 6:30pm on the Wednesday, January 29th. Participants will need to pre-register at [Eventbrite.com](https://www.eventbrite.com) or contact the NC Works Center in Richmond Or Moore Country for assistance with registering.

Our surplus vehicle auction came to a close yesterday, it was a great success we are still waiting on final numbers to be tallied but I feel confident we will net north of \$70,000 from the sale.

Allen Thompson from Thompson, Price Scott & Adams will be presenting our formal audit in a few minutes. I definitely don't want to steal Allen's thunder but I felt compelled to touch on a few of the highlights from 2019 that I am extremely proud of. We were able to increase our fund balance by 36% from 11.82% to 16.07%. We achieved our highest tax collection rate ever at 96.62% excluding vehicles. We netted over 500 thousand dollars and placed 90 dormant properties back on our tax books through a surplus property auction through Ironhorse Auction. This was the first sale of this kind in twelve years. This was the first time since 2005 that Fund balance wasn't utilized to balance our budget.

We announced three new or expanding industries to Richmond County. Novipax, Vaughn Buckley and Impact South. Adding over 200 jobs and 40 million in investment. Additionally, Enviva began operations in the summer adding an additional 80 jobs and 140 million in investment. Enviva is now the #2 tax payer in Richmond County, only behind Duke Energy!

Our water department added over 9 miles of new lines throughout Richmond County.

Even though Area Richmond Transit isn't a standalone County Department. We do have a vested interest in the organization. Three years ago ART had a Fund Balance of zero, today they boast a 25% Fund Balance and a capital reserve account for the purchase of new buses. And last but definitely not least, Emergency Services was able to spearhead the 911 consolidation with the Sheriff's Office, Rockingham Police Department and Hamlet Police Department.

These few items I mentioned are just the tip of the iceberg, our employees and department heads are working daily on cost cutting measures, operating more efficiently and effectively. Discovering innovative ways to strive to be good stewards of our taxpayer's dollar. Our employees are an amazing asset that we all should be extremely proud of.

ITEM NO.10 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Presented Audit for FY 2019 - Alan Thompson, Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Company, PA - Decision

Mr. Thompson stated that is was a good clean report.

By a motion of Commissioner Garner, seconded by Commissioner Moss and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO.11 Presentation of First Health EMS Annual Report - Buddy Williams Director, First Health EMS Richmond - Discussion

Buddy Williams, EMT-P, Director of FirstHealth of the Carolinas Richmond EMS presented the past year operations within the county.

ITEM NO.12 Consent Agenda - Decision

A) Approval of Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting December 3, 2019 as Submitted by the Clerk for Review

B) Approval of Draft Minutes of Board of Health Meeting on

December 3, 2019 as Submitted by the Clerk for Review

C) Approval of Tax Releases And Tax Refunds for Month of November, 2019

D) Approval of North Carolina Vehicle Tax System Refund Report For The Month of November 2019

E) Approval of Budget Amendment for Additional JCPC Raise the Age Expansion Funding for FY 2019-20

By a motion of Commissioner Garner, seconded by Commissioner Moss and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO.13 Adjournment - Decision

By a motion of Commissioner Moss, seconded by Commissioner Bryant and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:40 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by the Clerk

Dena R. Cook, NCCCC

Clerk to the Board

Richmond County Board of Commissioners