

Minutes
Richmond County Board of Commissioners
105 W. Franklin Street, Courtroom C, Rockingham, NC
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, April 5, 2022 5:30PM

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, April 5, 2022, at 5:30 P.M. with the following present: Commissioner Don M. Bryant, Commissioner Rick Watkins, Commissioner Tavares Bostic, Commissioner Andy Grooms, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins and Chairman Jeff Smart - Remotely: Commissioner Toni Maples

ITEM NO. 1 Invocation by Pastor Robby Stewart

Invocation was given by Pastor Robby Stewart

ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Agenda - Decision

Amend agenda to add Item #7, Item #8 and Item #11

By a motion of Commissioner Dawkins to amend agenda, seconded by Commissioner Bryant and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 3 Consent Agenda - Decision

A) Approval of Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting on March 1, 2022, and Special Meeting on March 9, 2022 as Submitted by the Clerk for Review

B) Approval of Tax Releases And Tax Refunds for Month of February, 2022

C) Approval of North Carolina Vehicle Tax System Refund Report for the Month of February 2022

D) Approval of Budget Amendment for AFDO EH Food & Lodging

E) Approval of the Interlocal Agreement between Richmond County Sheriff Department and the Town of Ellerbe

F) Approval of Budget Amendment for 2021-2022 Home and Community Care Block Grant Budget

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

ITEM NO. 4 Open Forum for Public Comments - 5:30 - 6:00 PM

No one signed up to speak

ITEM NO. 5 **Request for Board Consideration of Approval of the Reappointment to the Richmond County Health & Human Services Advisory Board -Bryan Land, County Manager -Decision**

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

ITEM NO. 6 **Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Contract Between Richmond County and Everett Industrial Park, LLC for Land Purchase - Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision**

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

ITEM NO. 7 **Request for Board Approval of the Financing to Purchase an Air Curtain Burner for Solid Waste Department- Bryan Land, County Manager -Decision**

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

ITEM NO. 8 **Request for Board Approval of Resolution of Private Property Sale - Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision**

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

ITEM NO. 9 **Monthly Report by County Manager Bryan Land**

I will start out this evening with a few updates from our tax department.

Our team in collections continues to do a phenomenal job with tax collections. Our tax collection percentage continues to increase but at a slower pace as expected. As of this morning we stand at a 95.77% collection rate. For comparison, at the end of March last year we stood at 95.56%. It should be noted that we are still breaching records every month!

Volume in our collections department continues to decline which is typical for this time of year. However, the effort the staff is having to exert is as high as ever. Always remember the last 4-5% is always the most challenging to collect.

We are inching towards our goal of a 97.50% collection rate (97.36%) last yr.

Additionally our eight year property revaluation process has been underway a little over a month now. The team from Piner Appraisals have settled into Richmond County and have hit the ground running. Currently the team along with our staff are updating our valuing schedules and field work should begin within the next forty-five days.

Our solid waste report is as follows: we picked up 373 bags for a total of approximately 4.6 tons. Additionally, eleven tires were removed; we cleaned up eighteen different roadways with Richmond County staff and DOT forces. Some roadways were picked up multiple times. This month we picked up Boyd Lake Road outside of Hamlet due to a request from some citizens in that area. We picked up twenty-six bags on that roadway alone. Our Solid Waste Enforcement Officer investigated two illegal dump sites, issued two citations and warnings.. I continue to urge citizens to join in against the fight of the litter epidemic.

Another task that many citizens don't realize that we handle in house the fabrication and installation of missing roadway signs. The same guys that keep our roadways picked up also install our street signs and this month they have eighteen street signs scheduled to replace. Hats off to Allen Hodges, Jackie Knox and Mickey Horne for a job well done!

A few more updates from our Solid Waste Department. Please remember our HHW Collection day is scheduled to be held on Saturday, April 9th from 9:00AM until 1:00PM. The location will be our Richmond County Health and Human Services building parking lot located at 127 Carolina Street, Rockingham.

April 25th thru 30th is dedicated for our Spring Litter Sweep in Richmond County. Any businesses, individual or groups interested in volunteering to pick up a section of roadway please contact Allen Hodges at (910)997-8215 or Bryan Leggett at (910)-997-8338. Richmond County Solid Waste department will provide bags for cleanup. Also, should a group need , safety vests and litter grabbers they will be available for pickup at the Public Works facility located at 191 Walter Kelly Rd. We are confident we will have as great a turnout as we had last year.

WATER DEPARTMENT

Our annual water distribution system flushing began last Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights. If weather permits, we anticipate continuing this Thursday, Friday and Saturday nights which are April 7th, 8th and 9th. Customer may experience reduced pressure and some slight discoloration of their water while the flushing operation is being conducted. These issues should be minimal and isolated. Annual flushing is a necessary practice to keep our water quality at a superior level.

Our Annual contract for water tank maintenance which will involve interior washouts of the Ellerbe, Hylan Park and Hoffman water tanks is scheduled to begin in early May. Our outside contractor Southern Corrosion will be conducting the tank cleanouts and disinfection.

On the topic of Economic Development, Martie will give a more in depth report in a few minutes on our recent activity in the County so I won't steal her thunder. However, I do want to reiterate that we have been extremely busy juggling numerous active projects over the last few months. We have a scheduled site visit later this week. We are hopeful we should have an announcement to present to the board soon.

Budget season is progressing well. We have all been extremely busy this week. We have met with numerous departments and we are continuing to tweak budget request prior to compiling all of the needs and request into the comprehensive budget file. I want to continue to personally thank all of our department heads for the outstanding jobs they have done on meeting the challenges at hand with this years budget. We will continue to strive to operate more efficiently and effectively while having to absorb cost increased that some of us haven't seen in our lifetime as CPI nears 8%. Last week, we met with FirstHealth to discuss contract negotiations for our ambulance contract. Discussions went well with numerous options being presented and discussed. Negotiations are still continuing as we volleyed back with a few additional proposals we would like to see pricing structures for. We hope to this vital contract finalized by mid to late-April. We also had a follow-up meeting with Allegacy Benefits Solutions to discuss health insurance options and review our year to date loss ratios. We still are limited on options for health insurance for our employees due to our five year loss ratio. Numerous providers declined to quote our coverage because of our history. However, on a positive note, after lengthy negotiations we were able to negotiate a solid plan with Blue Cross Blue Shield for a plan that we feel is

more appealing than our previous First Carolina Care plan. We have been with Blue Cross Blue Shield in previous years and have received good coverage.

The final large piece of the budget puzzle will be submitted tomorrow when we are scheduled to meet with Richmond County Schools. As you are aware, the schools are one of the largest sectors of our budget coming in at approximately 11 million or 1/5th of our total annual budget. One of the main topics we plan on discussing is increasing teacher supplements. Teacher supplements have been and will continue to be a priority of our Board to attain and retain the best and brightest staff available. I feel confident we will be able to include teacher supplement increases this year as well.

Transitioning to the Health and Human Services. Even though Covid is finally starting to wain, Cheryl Speight, Robbie Hall and the entire Human Services staff continue to work tirelessly daily.

Cheryl did have a reminder that we started giving the second booster as of Friday last week . It is for individuals 50 and older, and it has to have been at least four months since they received their first booster. Both Moderna and Pfizer boosters are being offered.

And lastly Cheryl also wanted me to remind everyone that this week April 4th-10th is Public Health Week in NC. I encourage everyone to express our gratitude to all our public health professionals in our community as they are the individuals that help to build a better public health system for all.

ITEM NO.10 Bi-Monthly Report - Martie T Butler, Management Analyst/Economic Developer

Richmond County Industrial Park

*parcel besides American Woodmark is being occupied-our large scale sites are dwindling down

*thirty seven acres of flat property across the way has been proposed as the Richmond County Shell Building #6 site

Shell Building

*40k sq. ft similar to previous five building

*located in the Richmond County Industrial Park along 74 corridor

*seeing several RFI's with the ability to have a building completed - inventory in the state is at an all time low

*We have been pre-approved by Pee Dee EMC for a two million dollar loan-the next round of funding will be in the month of June-this will give us an idea on timeframe and when we can get started. Many materials as you all know have extensive lead times-so we are anxious to get the ball rolling on this project

Existing Industries

*Four of our local industries have expansion plans.

*one of which will be announced this month

Employers are still seeing continuing to elevate wages and be creative to lure employees and workers. Several of our plants would expand if they could find workers.

*VBC was acquired by Cavco-currently still working on VBC projects and the full transition would be complete by July of this year. The company still plans on adding twenty-five plus jobs and additional square footage.

*Mount Vernon Mills is currently undergoing their acquisition of Wade Manufacturing

New Industries and Project Leads

*so far within the first quarter of this year, we have had twenty-three leads. Much of this is trickled down from the two major automotive announcements there were announced in Randolph and Chatham counties.

*We have had three sit visits or consultants/developers actually visit the specific site in Richmond County, one of which was this morning.

*most if not all of the leads are requesting a building, the second being having a building built by end of the year.

Over the past year, we have worked with the Rockingham Dragway and the Speedway to submit an official application for the funds which were mentioned allotted to speedways in the budget. The county has to apply and distribute the funding to the speedways. We have completed applications and they were successfully submitted to the NC Commerce. This new territory for our community along with the Department of Commerce. They ask that we along with the track owners be patient as they work their way through this process and funding.

We are beginning our preparations with Raffle at the Rock which coincides with Hoptoberfest. We will be meeting with the Richmond County Chamber and other sponsors within the coming weeks to have a larger raffle. All proceeds go toward the development of our Richmond County Shell Building and Industrial Parks.

NC Works Commissioner has voted to recommend the alignment of Workforce and Economic Development. NC Works Commissioner is a private sector lead with Work Force Development Board in the state. Request by Governor and NC Commerce to streamline and efficiency. Currently twenty-three boards-recommending aligning to eight prosperity zones as utilized by other state agencies.

ITEM NO.11 Request for Board Approval of Proclamation for National Child Abuse Prevention Month - Robby Hall, Director of Social Services - Decision

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

ITEM NO.12 Adjournment - Decision

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:05 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by the Clerk

Dena R. Cook, NCCCC

Clerk to the Board

Richmond County Board of Commissioners

**Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Memorandum of
Opioid Litigation - Bryan Land, Co**