

Minutes
Richmond County Board of Commissioners
1401 Fayetteville Road, Conference Room, Rockingham, NC
Virtual - Regular Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, January 5, 2021

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for a Organizational/Regular Meeting on Tuesday, January 5, 2021 at 5:30 P.M. with the following present: Commissioner Don M. Bryant, Commissioner Tavares Bostic, Commissioner Rick Watkins, Commissioner Toni R. Maples, Commissioner Andy Grooms, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins, and Chairman Jeff Smart

ITEM NO. 1 Invocation by Commissioner Tavares Bostic

Invocation was given by Commissioner Bostic

ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Agenda - Decision

Chairman Smart asked the board to vote on amending the consent agenda to remove item# 3F due to we will not have to return the funds.

Board agreed on the amendment and move forward with vote

By a motion of Commissioner Andy Grooms and seconded by Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins. Commissioner Andy Grooms voted yes, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins voted yes, Commissioner Toni Maples voted yes, Chairman Jeff Smart voted yes, Commissioner Tavares Bostic voted yes, Commissioner Rick Watkins voted yes, Commissioner Don Bryant voted yes and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 3 Consent Agenda - Decision

Approval of Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting on December 7, 2020 as

A)Submitted by the Clerk for Review

Approval of Tax Releases And Tax Refunds for the Month of November ,

B)2020

Approval of North Carolina Vehicle Tax System Refund Report for the

C)Month of November 2020

Approval of Draft Minutes from the Board of Health meeting on October

D)28, 2020

Approval of Budget Amendment for Board of Election Center for

E)Technology Grant

F)Approval of Budget Amendment for COVID-19 CARES Activities

Removed from Consent Agenda as requested

G)Approval of Budget Amendment for LIEAP Pandemic

H)Approval of Budget Amendment for Pass Through Demolition Grant

I)Approval of Resolution for the Sale of Real Property to Lynette Rush

J) Approval of Resolution for the Sale of Real Property to Mt. Pilot Holding II, LLC

By a motion of Commissioner Rick Watkins and seconded by Commissioner Tavares Bostic. Commissioner Andy Grooms voted yes, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins voted yes, Commissioner Toni Maples voted yes, Chairman Jeff Smart voted yes, Commissioner Tavares Bostic voted yes, Commissioner Rick Watkins voted yes, Commissioner Don Bryant voted yes and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

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

Jeff Meachum

Dockery Lake Road

Rockingham, NC 28379

Chairman Smart told Mr. Meachum that there was a meeting with NCDOT scheduled for Thursday, January 7th in regards to the request.

ITEM NO. 5 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Presented Audit for FY 2020 - Alan Thompson, Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Company, PA - Decision

Alan Thompson told the Board of Commissioners that it was a very good audit and highlighted several areas

By a motion of Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins and seconded by Commissioner Rick Watkins Commissioner Andy Grooms voted yes, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins voted yes, Commissioner Toni Maples voted yes, Chairman Jeff Smart voted yes, Commissioner Tavares Bostic voted yes, Commissioner Rick Watkins voted yes, Commissioner Don Bryant voted yes and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 6 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Proclamation to Designate January 18, 2021 as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday, Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision

By a motion of Commissioner Tavares Bostic and seconded by Commissioner Andy Grooms. Commissioner Andy Grooms voted yes, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins voted yes, Commissioner Toni Maples voted yes, Chairman Jeff Smart voted yes, Commissioner Tavares Bostic voted yes, Commissioner Rick Watkins voted yes, Commissioner Don Bryant voted yes and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 7 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Board Appointments Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision

By a motion of Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins and seconded by Commissioner Toni Maples Commissioner Andy Grooms voted yes, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins voted yes, Commissioner Toni Maples voted yes, Chairman Jeff Smart voted yes, Commissioner Tavares Bostic voted yes, Commissioner Rick Watkins voted yes, Commissioner Don Bryant voted yes and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO. 8 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. Covid has made this holiday season extremely challenging for everyone. I was very disappointed that we weren't able to host our annual employee appreciation dinner this year due to Covid, it's always a highly attended event with over 500 of our employees and their spouses getting an opportunity to gather for a nice dinner. This would have been our 20th consecutive dinner. hopefully 2021 will allow for a sense of normalcy for events like ours to take place once again.

December and January are always extremely busy months for us in the collections department. The tax and collections departments have been extremely busy for the last 45 days. I am very thankful for the drive thru window that we have to serve our customers, remember back a few years ago when a drive through for collections was only a vision. I would like to remind everyone that today was the last day to pay your 2020 property taxes without incurring a 2% penalty. Our tax administrator Mr. Vegas Jackson and our collector Mrs. Michelle Holden from the tax department and myself feel highly confident that we will be still be able to achieve our goal of a 97% collection rate through the hard work and dedication of our collections staff. Covid has placed a strain on our collections to date, we are off about 5% in comparison to last year's collections.

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. It is typical for roadside waste to increase during the holidays. We picked up 422 bags for a total of approx. 3.2 tons. Additionally, 16 tires were removed; we cleaned up 21 different roadways with Richmond County Staff and DOT forces. Our Solid Waste Enforcement Officer investigated 4 illegal dump sites and issued 2 citations. I also have some year-end tallies on litter pickup, 277 roads picked up, which equates to 52 total tons of litter, 5186 total bags, 344 tires, 20 illegal dumpsites investigated, 31 warnings and citations issued and 18 burning investigations. I continue to urge citizens to join in against the fight of the litter epidemic.

To piggy back off of Allen Thompson from Thompson, Price Scott & Adams formal audit presentation, I felt compelled to touch on a few of the financial highlights from 2020 that I am extremely proud of...As you know the audit is considered my annual report card.

We were able to increase our fund balance by 21% from 16.07 to 19.46 %, we are trending in the upward trajectory as we would like to see. I still have a goal of reaching 33% , as that is the State average and Treasures office recommendation for a County with a budget the size of ours nearing 55million

We achieved our highest tax collection rate ever @ 96.64% excluding vehicles. Over the last three years, we have netted over 700 thousand dollars and place 150 dormant properties back on our tax books through surplus property auctions through Ironhorse Auction and gove deals.

This was the 2nd consecutive year and only the second time since 2005 that Fund balance wasn't utilized to balance our budget

All of our departments heads, outside agencies, and our finance department deserve a huge pat on the back for this audit.

Although it wasn't as stellar of a year as previous years have been with economic development, Martie Butler and I do have a few accomplishments that we were very proud of. We completed shell building #5 which is a 40,000 sf manufacturing facility and have it occupied by Impact South. We also landed a 75 building demo grant to raise the prior Tarlton Boat Facility which has been a blight at the entrance to Marks Creek Industrial Park in Hamlet for decades. Within the next 60 days, Global Packaging will break ground on a new 40,000 sf facility on the site. We landed a building reuse grant for Direct Pak and they were able to add an additional 50,000 sf to their facility off of Airport Rd. And last but not least and probably the announcement that I am most proud of is the landing of 2.5 million in grants (1.5 golden leaf/1 mil IDF) for our new 700 acres Energy Way Industrial Complex. Once completed this park will take us into the next decade and should help make us a major player in Economic Development.

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 and 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.

Transitioning to the Health side, Dr Tommy Jarrell and Cheryl Speight and the entire Health Department staff deserve the largest pat on the back this year as they have done a tremendous job with handling the day-to-day duties with Covid. Everyone is worn down from the event but they always seem to stay positive and do their job. We all are hopeful 2021 will bring a glimmer of hope for everyone!.

Staying on the health topic,

As of today our County Covid numbers are as follows, we currently have had 2,813 positive cases for Covid 19. . . To date we have tested 25,932 and of those 23,119 have come back negative or inconclusive. 2,437 individuals have recovered. We currently have 323 active cases. We have had 53 deaths, 11 additional since our last meeting.

Some additional information on vaccine distribution is as follows.

I did want to briefly touch on our annual energy assistance programs.

I did have 1 additional announcement that CSX submitted, 2 rail crossings in Hamlet will be closed for repairs over the next month.

Bridges Street will be closed on January 27th and Main Street will be closed February 4th, both of the closures will take 3-5 days.

ITEM NO. 9 Adjournment - Decision

By a motion of Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins and seconded by Commissioner Don Bryant Commissioner Andy Grooms voted yes, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins voted yes, Commissioner Toni Maples voted yes, Chairman Jeff Smart voted yes, Commissioner Tavares Bostic voted yes, Commissioner Rick Watkins voted yes, Commissioner Don Bryant voted yes and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

Meeting adjourned at 6:12 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by the Clerk

Dena R. Cook, NCCCC

Clerk to the Board

Richmond County Board of Commissioners