

Minutes
Richmond County Board of Commissioners
1401 Fayetteville Road, Conference Room, Rockingham, NC
Virtual - Regular Monthly Meeting
Tuesday, March 2, 2021

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 5:30 P.M. with the following present: Commissioner Don M. Bryant, Commissioner Rick Watkins, Commissioner Toni R. Maples, Commissioner Andy Grooms, and Chairman Jeff Smart - Remotely: Commissioner Tavares Bostic and Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins

ITEM NO. 1 Invocation by Commissioner Rick Watkins

Invocation was given by Commissioner Watkins

ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Agenda - Decision

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

ITEM NO. 3 Consent Agenda - Decision

**A) Approval of Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting on February 2, 2021
as Submitted by the Clerk for Review**

**B) Approval of Draft Minutes of Virtual Meeting on February 4, 2021
as Submitted by the Clerk for Review**

**C) Approval of Tax Releases And Tax Refunds for the Month of
of January 2021**

**D) Approval of North Carolina Vehicle Tax System Refund Report for
the Month of January 2021**

E) Approval of Budget Amendment for Fire Tax Rate

**F) Approval of Budget Amendment for ELC Enhancing Detection
Activities**

By a motion of Commissioner Rick Watkins and seconded Commissioner Andy Grooms
Commissioner Toni Maples yes, Commissioner Don Bryant yes, Commissioner Tavares Bostic
yes, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins, yes Chairman Jeff Smart yes 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 Board Appointment Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision

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

ITEM NO. 6 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Audit Contract for Year Ended June 30, 2021

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

ITEM NO. 7 Monthly Report by County Manager Bryan Land

I like to start out with a brief update on our property tax collection percentage. The Tax and Collection departments continue to be extremely busy. As of the end of February, we are at 94.24%. We ended last February at 93.43%, it is important to note, this was our best February year to date percentage on record. It's always a great trend when you can outpace your previous years collections. We still are cautiously optimistic about achieving our goal of a 97% collection rate through the hard work and dedication of our collections staff. We have a great team in collections!

Staying on the topic of tax and the budget, we are vastly approaching budget season for our next fiscal year. We have sent out budget worksheets to our county department heads and too outside agencies including the schools. The deadline for ALL outside agency and departmental budget request will be March 15th. RCC has advised they will be delayed a few days with submitting their request this year, additionally, they have advised they will be asking for an increase to cover the additional cost associated with the new downtown campus. Richmond County Schools has also advised they would be asking for additional funds as well. It is important to note, both schools have worked very well at holding the line on their budgets for 3 years. We have had a great working relationship with both of the agencies.

A Cost of living raise is also a very high priority of mine as our employees are approaching 4 years without a cola! I will keep the board updated as the budget process progresses. We tentatively have the first week of May slated as a date for a budget meeting with the board.

Our solid waste report is as follows: we picked up 622 bags for a total of approximately 6.6 tons. Additionally, 16 tires were removed; we cleaned up 20 different roadways with Richmond County Staff and DOT forces. Our Solid Waste Enforcement Officer investigated 3 illegal dump sites and issued 2 citations. I continue to urge citizens to join in against the fight of the litter epidemic.

Staying on the litter topic, Bryan Leggett has received some calls and interest pertaining to adopt a highway. He is funneling those calls to Kristen Dunn with the State as that program is sponsored by the state. Anyone interested can certainly call Bryan at 997 8338 to receive information or updates on the program.

Additionally, Jacqueline Welch and Bryan are working on an earth day cleanup event for Saturday, April 24th from 8am -11am. We had a pre planning on February 24th that was highly attended by county representatives and all municipalities as well as representatives from Tedder Trash Solutions. Tedder has offered their equipment free of charge as well as picking up bags across the county after the event is over. We have placed a flyer for the event in your packets and there is additional information about the event on our County website.

I did want to touch on the annual facility compliance inspection we received last week at our animal shelter. The unannounced inspection was performed by State forces on Wednesday, February 24th. We received high marks and a stellar report. Hats off to all of the shelter staff for a job well done and a positive state inspection!

Transitioning to the Health side, Dr. Tommy Jarrell, Cheryl Speight and the entire Health Department staff are continuing the partnership with First Health on handling the day-to-day duties with Covid vaccine clinic. The entire process continues to run very smoothly and Dr. Fauci himself even congratulated First Health as the 1st hospital in the world to enroll a patient into a global trial treatment with anti coronavirus or ITAC. We are cautiously optimistic once the vaccine infiltrates our community 2021 will be brighter than 2020.

Staying on the health topic, as of today our County COVID numbers are as follows: we currently have had 4,196 positive cases for COVID 19. To date we have tested 36,008 and of those 31,812 have come back negative or inconclusive. We currently have 76 active cases. We have had 89 deaths which is 13 additional since our last meeting.

COVID Vaccine Update - RC Health Department working with First Health: Will complete educators at the high school tomorrow (3-3-2021). Again others can still receive vaccine after tomorrow at Health Department/Hospital Clinic site with an appointment. Other essential workers beginning this week. Approximately 7,500 Richmond County residents have received their first dose of the vaccine and approximately 3,500 of the 7,500 who have received their first dose have also received their second dose of the vaccine. There is a 28 day waiting period between first and second dose. We are administering Mederma (2-dose) vaccine at this time. Anyone age 65 and over, healthcare or teacher (pre-school through college) would like a COVID vaccine should call 417-3030 at this time. Other essential workers can call this number later this week.

A reminder, it is not the decision of Richmond County to determine the order of vaccine distribution. The decision of vaccination priority is determined by the state of North Carolina and/or the U.S. Government.

I won't dwell on the Economic Development as much as I typically do as Martie Butler our Economic Developer will be providing a report to the board later and I don't want to steal Martie's thunder. However, I did want to briefly touch on the Global Packaging groundbreaking event that was held last Thursday. It was a nice event that Chairman Smart, Attorney Webb, Martie and Representative Moss all had positive remarks about the project. Global Packaging will be constructing a new 40,000 square foot facility at the entrance to Marks Creek Industrial Park. The ruins of the prior boat manufacturing facility are nothing more than a memory now. Within approximately 180 days, Myrick construction will be completed with the new facility. It will be great to have a tax paying property back on the site as County and City taxes haven't been paid on the parcel in over a decade!

Richmond County Aging services is sponsoring an event on Friday, April 9th at 8pm at our Human Services parking lot on Caroline Street to remember the lives lost from COVID. A flyer for the event is in your packets. Please call Jaqueline Welch at 997 4491 for more details.

One last reminder, our annual household hazardous waste day is scheduled for April 10th from 9 am -1pm at the Richmond County Health Department parking lot at 127 Caroline Street. Some of the items accepted are: oil based paints, aerosols, solvents, degreasers, household cleaners, acids, pool chemicals, batteries, fluorescent light tubes, propane cylinders, and latex paints. All these items aren't typically accepted at our convenient box site locations.

ITEM NO. 8 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Low Bidder for CDBG-CV Grant Administration - Martie T. Butler, Management Analyst/Economic Developer -Decision

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

ITEM NO. 9 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Resolution for Industrial Development Fund (IDF) Grant - Martie T. Butler, Management Analyst/Economic Developer - Decision

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

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

The Global Packaging ground breaking was held on Thursday, February 25th at the Marks Creek Industrial Park. The property was foreclosed by Richmond County but will now be put back on the tax books. I applied for an EPA Brown Field grant to get money to start the cleanup and survey of the property. Also, submitted for a Demo grant to help clean up the property. No County tax dollars were used on the demo of the property. The property tax will benefit both the City of Hamlet and Richmond County. Global Packaging is building a 40k sq ft facility with expansion plans of up to 120ksquare feet on the site.

ITD applied for air permit with DEQ in January 2021. DEQ held a public hearing on Monday, March 1st to allow concerned citizens to be heard. Factful information was given out from ITD and DEQ as it relates to the air permit. The Richmond County Economic Development website has facts, questions and answers. This is a business transaction between CSX and ITD.

ITEM NO.11 Request for Board Consideration of Dates for E & R Board of Appeals Meeting - Vagas Jackson, Tax Administrator - Decision

The board will meet on Tuesday, April 6, 2021 at 1:00PM

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

ITEM NO.12 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.13 Municipalities Joint Statement on Sales Tax Distribution

Statement was read by Hamlet Councilperson Abbie Covington. Additional remarks were made by Dobbin Heights Mayor Antonio Blue and City of Rockingham Mayor Steve Morris.

Commissioner Rick Watkins made a motion to go into Executive Session to discuss pending litigation and converse with the County Attorney and seconded by Commissioner Tavares Bostic

ITEM NO.14 Adjournment - Decision

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

Meeting adjourned at 7:32 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by the Clerk

Dena R. Cook, NCCCC

Clerk to the Board

Richmond County Board of Commissioners