

Minutes
Richmond County Board of Commissioners
105 W. Franklin Street, Courtroom C, Rockingham, NC
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, March 7, 2023

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for a Regular Monthly Meeting on Tuesday, March 7, 2023, at 5:30 P.M. with the following in attendance: Commissioner Jason Gainey, Commissioner Andy Grooms, Commissioner Toni Maples, Commissioner Robin Roberts, Commissioner Rick Watkins, Vice Chairperson Justin Dawkins and Chairperson Jeff Smart

ITEM NO. 1 Invocation by Pastor John Gould

Invocation was given by Pastor John Gould of Marston 1st Baptist Church

ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Agenda - Decision

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

ITEM NO. 3 Consent Agenda - Decision

A) Approval of Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting on February 7, as Submitted by the Clerk for Review

B) Approval of Tax Releases And Tax Refunds for Month of January, 2023

C) Approval of North Carolina Vehicle Tax System Refund Report for the Month of January 2023

D) Approval of Budget Amendment for BCCCP Cancer Program

E) Approval of Appointment to the SEDC Board of Directors

F) Approval of Proclamation for Child Abuse Prevention Month

G) Approval of Amended and Restated Municipal Solid Waste Disposal and Recycling Processing Agreement

By a motion of Commissioner Grooms, seconded by Commissioner Gainey 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 Presented Audit

for FY 2022 - Alan Thompson, Thompson, Price, Scott, Adams & Company, PA - Decision

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

ITEM NO. 6 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Resolution to Direct the Expenditure of Opioid Settlement Funds - Robby Hall, Social Services Director - Decision

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

ITEM NO. 7 Monthly Report by County Manager Bryan Land

This afternoon, I will veer away from my typical monthly report outline and piggyback off of Alan Thompsons audit presentation as well as highlight a few bright spots in our County's finances as well as industrial & commercial growth

After reviewing Mr. Thompsons formal audit presentation, I felt compelled to touch on a few of the financial highlights from 2022 that I am extremely proud of. As you know the audit is considered my annual report card. Additionally, I am equally proud of how our team of department heads and our team in finance. They continue to handle the economic challenges we face daily and carryover from Covid. Enduring the highest inflation figures our country has ever seen as well as the transition phase that we have gone through over the last two years with personnel changes. As you know Mac Steagall retired in July of 2021, Mac was our Finance Director for over fifteen years. Additionally, Sheila Trotter was our deputy finance director since 2008, Sheila has seg-wayed into the role of HR Director last year and the team consisting of herself and Amy Greene are doing an excellent job. Additionally, we had Susan Tibbs another long-term finance employee retire a few months ago. Needless to say we have had some major voids to fill over the last two years. Cary Garner was hired in March of 2021 as our Finance director , Cary and his team consisting of , Missy Kelly, Belinda Soto, and Megan Williams have also done an outstanding job carrying the torch and getting us through the transition phase. I did want to give those ladies and gentleman a huge thank you for their contributions in making these transitions & the audit process almost seamless.

As Alan mentioned earlier, we were able to increase our fund balance by over 2.7 million , after a strong increase of 26% last year and a solid 21% increase in 2020., we are definitely trending in the upward trajectory as we would like to see. I still have a goal of reaching 35% , as that is the historic State average and Treasures office recommendation for Counties in our peer group of similar size.

This year, we achieved our highest tax collection rate ever @ 97.43% excluding vehicles,

Over the last five years, We have netted over 900 thousand dollars and placed 200 dormant properties back on our tax books through surplus property auctions through Ironhorse Auction, gov deals and through court ordered auctions hosted by Zacchaeus Tax Service. Later this month Ironhorse Auction will be conducting another surplus sale for us with over thirty-five properties to be sold to the highest bidder.

All of our departments heads, outside agencies, and our finance department deserve a huge pat on the back for this audit. They are the ones that have made considerable sacrifices over the last five years to turn our financial state from a low of 5.03% in FB to a current level nearing 25%!! During the same timeframe we have been able to slash our debt burden from 44 million to less than 28 million. Within the next 120 days, or by June 30th, we will be below 25 million.

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 and department heads are an amazing asset that we all should be extremely proud of.

Next, I do have a few quick pictures and stats on current Economic Development projects I would like to highlight.

You will hear Martie and I mention almost monthly our Economic Development activity and our current project list. These projects are truly the bread and butter for our County and are undoubtedly one of our main focuses as we try to grow our industrial tax base in our County. Another good barometer we like to track is our building permit volume which has increased this year by almost 30%. Don't get me wrong, being a rural tier 1 county in NC certainly has its challenges but in Richmond County our future is bright and we have a tremendous amount to be proud of.

The first site is American Woodmark at our Hwy 74 industrial park outside of Hamlet. This project has a value of 40 million in investment, consist of a 250k sf expansion and 130 new jobs associated with it. Governor Cooper was in town a few weeks ago to highlight this project and celebrate with a ground breaking

Next we have our Impact South Project which is located at their facility on County Home Road . It has a project value of 15 million, consist of a 50k sf expansion and adds ten new jobs.

Next up Is CAI ink in our Rockingham West Industrial Park, CAI is taking a phased approach for their project with the 1st stage consisting of a new tank farm and a loading station. CAI hasn't released projected job and investment figures yet but we feel confident the expansion will breach 3 million.

Lastly, we had two specialized projects with the Dragway and speedway upgrades. The Dragway received 485k in funding to resurface the track, upgrade their timing system. The speedway repaved the track as well as many other upgrades to the facility. The two facilities combined will invest well over six million into the tracks.

I purposefully didn't mention Direct Pack and our 40k sf shell building as neither of those projects have broken ground yet. However, both will add substantially to our tax base with Direct Pack adding 250k sf and over 100 new jobs, as well as investment over 15 million.

Additionally, I didn't mention the considerable amount of commercial development along the Hwy 74 corridor we have witnessed over the last year. Hwy 55, IHOP, Goshen Medical Clinic, Hampton Inn, Starbucks, Jersey Mikes, T Mobile, and the Rockingham storage complex to name a few.

We should all be excited about the future of Richmond County!

ITEM NO. 8 Adjournment - Decision

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:16 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