

Minutes
Richmond County Board of Commissioners
105 W Franklin Street, Courtroom C, Rockingham, NC
REGULAR MEETING
Tuesday, May 3, 2022 5:30PM

The Richmond County Board of Commissioners met for a Regular Meeting on Tuesday, May 3, 2022, at 5:30 P.M. with the following present: Commissioner Don M. Bryant, Commissioner Rick Watkins, Commissioner Toni R. Maples, Commissioner Andy Grooms, Commissioner Tavares Bostic, Vice Chairman Justin Dawkins, and Chairman Jeff Smart

ITEM NO. 1 Invocation by Pastor Billy Dennis

Invocation was given by Pastor Billy Dennis

ITEM NO. 2 Approval of Agenda - Decision

Amend Agenda to Remove Consent Agenda Item# 3M Duplicate of Item# 3I and Remove Consent Agenda Item# 3D

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

ITEM NO. 3 Consent Agenda - Decision

- A) Approval of Draft Minutes of Regular Meeting on April 5, 2022 as Submitted by the Clerk for Review**
- B) Approval of Tax Releases And Tax Refunds for Month of March, 2022**
- C) Approval of North Carolina Vehicle Tax System Refund Report for the Month of March 2022**
- D) Approval of Budget Amendment for General Fund Year End Adjustments for Departments-Item was removed**
- E) Approval of Budget Amendment for General Fund Year End Adjustments for Other Funds**
- F) Approval of Budget Amendment for Food and Lodging**
- G) Approval of Budget Amendment for General Assistance**

H) Approval of Budget Amendment for Share the Light

I) Approval of Budget Amendment for 2022 Supplemental 5 Nutrition Funding

J) Approval of Funding for DASH Mentoring Program

K) Approval of Adjustments for JCPC Programs End of Year Line Items

L) Approval of FY 2022-2023 Annual JCPC Certification and JCPC Funding

M) Approval of Budget Amendment for 2022 Supplemental 5 Nutrition Funding (HDC5) **Item was removed**

N) Approval of Budget Amendment for LIEAP

O) Approval of 2022 Audit Contract with Thompson, Price, Scott Adams, & Co. P.A.

By a motion of Commissioner Grooms, seconded by Commissioner Maples 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 Update from Sandhills Center - Victoria Whitt, Chief Executive Officer - Discussion

Ms. Whitt told the board that the Sandhills Center Board of Directors decided to not request an increase in County General Funding from Richmond County. This continues our practice of not requesting an increase for the past 18 years.

Funding request for FY 22-23 will be \$132,525 was presented to the board and county manager

ITEM NO. 6 Request for Board Consideration of Proposal to form a Partnership with Charter Communications/Spectrum for Broadband Internet Expansion - Michael E Tanck, Director of Government Affairs for Charter Communications/Spectrum - Decision

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

ITEM NO. 7 Request for Board Consideration of Approval for Budget Work Session - 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 Consideration of Approval of a Proclamation to Honor Richmond County's Veterans - Bryan Land, County Manager -Decision

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

ITEM NO. 9 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of a Proclamation for Peace Officers Memorial Day and National Police Week - Bryan Land, County Manager -Decision

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

ITEM NO.10 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of a Proclamation for Older Americans Month - Bryan Land, County Manager - Decision

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

ITEM NO.11 Request for Board Consideration of Approval to Move the July Board of Commissioners Monthly Meeting - Bryan Land, County Manager, Decision

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

ITEM NO.12 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 96.29% collection rate. For comparison, at the end of May last year we stood at 96.88%, so we do have some work still ahead of us. To close out the month of April, our final collection percentage sat at a 96.28%, one 1/hundredth from our all time April record of 96.29%. Volume in our collections department is starting to tick up slightly as more delinquent tax payers are paying before names are published in the local paper. As a reminder, we have set an internal goal of 97.50% collection rate. Our rate last year was 97.36%.

Additionally our eight year property revaluation process has been underway a little over two months 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, conducting sales analyzations and starting on field work.

Our solid waste report is as follows: We had a very strong month for roadside cleanup, our statistics ramped up considerably. We picked up 610 bags for a total of approximately 7.6 tons. Additionally, 29 tires were removed; we cleaned up 21 different roadways with Richmond County Staff and DOT forces. This month we picked up Seaboard Road, which is down Hwy 177 south of Hamlet and 2.1 tons of trash and debris were picked up on this roadway alone. Obviously a considerable amount of our increase in volume this month can be attributed to this stretch of roadway.. Our Solid Waste Enforcement Officer investigated three illegal dump sites and issued four citations and warnings.. I continue to urge citizens to join in against the fight of the litter epidemic.

A few more updates from our Solid Waste Department.

As always, our Household Hazardous Waste Day held last month was a great success. We were able to fill a tractor trailer with items that typically aren't accepted at the box sites.

Our 2022 Spring Litter Sweep campaign was also a great success! We had an outstanding turn out, I am still waiting on a few statistics to be reported, but I wanted to give the board an update on where we are as of this morning. Total of 19 groups with 213 volunteers-73% of the groups have reported and the totals are 124 bags which is approximately 1,548 lbs. collected.

Thanks again to all of the businesses, industries, and other local groups that participated. Thanks to Jacqueline Welch, Bryan Leggett, and Jerry Austin for spearheading the event.

On the topic of Economic Development, Martie and I continue to be extremely busy with completing RFI's. We are averaging two to three weekly which is the most we have seen in many years. Our active project list continues to grow monthly. The active project which included the sale of the industrial park property that the board approved last month is starting to materialize as we finished clearing the timber off the parcel last week. Additionally, we are hopeful to have an announcement/press release or two to submit soon. Additionally, we are starting to get the ball rolling on shell building #6. We have our two million dollar loan with Pee Dee Electric secured and we have released our engineers to complete a topographic survey for the site. After the topo survey is complete a grading plan will be finalized on the site.

Lastly, our 9.5 million in grants we received for the Speedway and Dragway are starting to materialize. We hope to send these infrastructure projects out to bid by the end of the summer.

Martie Butler, our Economic Developer, Vegas Jackson our Tax Administrator and I had a very fruitful meeting with Habitat for Humanity last week. Habitat has received a substantial grant and they are looking to increase their presence in Richmond County. We discussed many potential available build sites and also discussed many existing county owned parcels that may fit their needs.

As you heard a few minutes ago from Mr. Tanck, from Charter Communications, we are very excited about the possibilities of extending fiber to some of our rural areas in the county that are currently limited on options for internet and cable. This is a project Jimmy Quick, our IT Director and I have been working on for a few months. We both will be thrilled if we are successful with landing the grant and I want to personally thank our board for their commitment to continuing to grow our infrastructure in our county and to approving the required funding match.

Seg- waying to our 22-23 budget. Budget season is progressing well, we have all been extremely busy this week. We aren't balanced yet, but we are progressing in the right direction daily. I am still meeting with various department heads daily and we are continuing to tweak budget request while 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 increases that some of us haven't seen in our lifetime. We are certainly in uncharted territory with the extreme inflationary environment. we are currently in. Just to highlight one small portion of our budget that is witnessing some considerable increases is our water department. We were reviewing chemical increases from our water department last week and the figures were astounding as some chemicals have increased by over 50% in the last two years. With that being said, our department heads should be commended on their efforts during this budget process as most of their budgets are coming in flat or with minimal increases. We all work vigorously to find alternate methods of funding such as grant opportunities when available to lessen the burden on our tax payers. On another note, We have finalized our ambulance contract with FirstHealth which will be presented to the board next month for final approval. I was very pleased with where the negotiations ended up. FirstHealth has always been a great partner for the County and I am looking forward to continuing the great collaboration that we have established.

We also met with the school system a few weeks ago. 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. We are continuing to strive to increase 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 want the board to rest assured Cary and I have the supplement increase plugged into this years draft budget.

And lastly, I did want to briefly remind everyone on the dates and locations for early voting.

Richmond County Cooperative Extension Office
123 Caroline Street, Rockingham

Weekdays - 8:AM until 7:30PM and Saturday, May 14th from 8:00AM until 3:00PM

ITEM NO.13 Request for Board Consideration of Approval an Order to Demolish and Remove - Tracy Parris, Planning Director- Decision

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

ITEM NO.14 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Advertisement of Tax Liens on real Property for Failure to Pay Taxes - Vagas Jackson, Tax Administrator - Decision

Tax lies will be published in the newspaper on June 18, 2022
By a motion of Commissioner Dawkins, seconded by Commissioner Bryant and by unanimous vote. Motion carried

ITEM NO.15 Request for Board Consideration of Approval of Resolution of Private Sale of Real Property - Vagas Jackson , Tax Administrator - Decision

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

ITEM NO.16 Adjournment - Decision

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

Meeting adjourned at 6:25 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted by the Clerk
Dena R. Cook, NCCCC
Clerk to the Board
Richmond County Board of Commissioners