

The Sampson County Board of Commissioners convened for their regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, January 8, 2024, in the County Auditorium, 435 Rowan Road in Clinton, North Carolina. Members present: Chairman Jerol Kivett, Vice Chairperson Sue Lee, and Commissioners Thaddeus Godwin, Lethia Lee, and Allen McLamb.

Chairman Jerol Kivett called the meeting to order and turned the meeting over to Vice Chairperson Sue Lee. Commissioner Godwin provided the invocation and Vice Chairperson Sue Lee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

### **Approval of Agenda**

Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Lethia Lee, the Board voted unanimously to approve the amended agenda, adding three Board Appointments to Item 3.

### **Item 1: Planning and Zoning**

R23-03 Rhetson Companies, Inc. Rezoning Chairman Kivett opened a public hearing and called upon Senior Planner Michelle Lance who presented information regarding the rezoning of tax parcels 07017284101 and 0706922901. This rezoning request was reviewed by the Sampson County Planning Board at its December 11, 2023 meeting. Rhetson Companies, Inc. has requested that the 2.01 acres be rezoned from Residential Agricultural (RA) to Conditional Commercial (C)(CZ) for the purpose of a retail variety store. The proposed site is on the corner of Wright Bridge Road and Garland Highway. The Planning Board voted 4-1 to recommend approval of the rezoning request. The recommendation for approval is based on the fact that the conditional rezoning to establish a retail variety store is consistent with the Sampson County Land Use Plan due to the parcel fronting a major thoroughfare and the proposed use will serve and benefit the surrounding community. Chairman Kivett opened the floor for public comments. The following were received:

Priscilla Powell, 12680 Garland Hwy., Garland, NC – Mrs. Powell stated that her property is adjacent to the proposed site. She voiced concerns regarding traffic, drainage issues, property tax values, potential crime and safety, and increased noise/nuisances.

Belinda Faison, 219 Lisbon Bridge Rd., Garland, NC – Mrs. Faison introduced herself as Mrs. Powell's neighbor and stated that she had attempted to purchase the proposed site property for fourteen years. Mrs. Faison also discussed potential drainage issues. She then stated that engineers should be brought in to assess the property and drainage issues that could be caused by digging, construction, and paving. Mrs. Faison questioned the impact of construction and rules enforced by the EPA and FEMA. She urged the Board to think about peoples' lives and homes rather than money.

Rev. Bobby Faison, 219 Lisbon Bridge Rd., Garland, NC – Rev. Faison stated that he and his wife had just moved from the proposed site to Lisbon Bridge Road. He also stated that he and his wife were unable to purchase the property. Rev. Faison voiced concerns about the safety of his neighbors and pets. Finally, Rev. Faison shared that he felt that the proposed retail variety store was an invasion on the neighborhood and would ultimately force residents to move.

Jessica Bowers, Smith Bowers, PLLC, 127 W. Hargett St. Suite 504, Raleigh, NC – Ms. Bowers stated that she is an attorney representing Rhetson Companies, Inc. Ms. Bowers reviewed the information that Senior Planner Michelle Lance presented and shared a desire to address concerns that had been voiced by citizens. She went on to state that the rezoning would have minimum impact on the surrounding properties and that the retail variety store would be convenient for residents and improve quality of life along with increasing the tax base, access to goods, and employment opportunities within the county.

Greg Stewart, Rhetson Companies, Inc., 2075 Juniper Lake Rd., West End, NC – Mr. Stewart introduced himself and stated that his development company serves over thirty clients nationwide. He added that it is not the intent of his company to make any sort of negative impact on a community. Mr. Stewart added that his company intends to serve the community and that the company is required to go through certain permitting processes to ensure that the development will not cause any negative effects to the opposing or adjacent properties.

Scott Brown, 4D Site Solutions, 409 Chicago Dr., Fayetteville, NC – Mr. Brown introduced himself as an engineer for the proposed rezoning. Mr. Brown stated that he grew up in Sampson County and takes great pride in Sampson County. He added that this is not the first proposed Dollar General development that he has been involved in and that these stores are typically seen as an enhancement for communities. Mr. Brown informed the Board that the project team has spoken with DOT and that they have received and approved the plan that is being proposed, adding that there will be some improvements to Garland Hwy. as well. Lastly, Mr. Brown addressed the issue of water drainage and stated that drainage would be redirected in order to have a minimal impact on the surrounding properties.

Chairman Kivett called upon Michelle Lance who clarified information regarding two homes on the property and the Sampson County Land Use Plan.

Michael Vann, 12535 Garland Hwy., Garland, NC – Mr. Vann stated that he has a trucking business and voiced his concerns regarding low visibility in the area and the safety of motorists.

Chairman Kivett closed the public hearing and Vice Chair Sue Lee moved to approve the rezoning and adopt the associated resolution and zoning consistency statement. Following a short discussion, Vice Chair Lee withdrew her motion and upon a motion by Commissioner Lethia Lee and seconded by Commissioner McLamb, the Board voted unanimously to table this issue until the regularly scheduled February 2024 meeting.

**Item 2: Action Items**

Discussion of Disposition of Real Property Chairman Kivett called upon County Attorney Joel Starling who reviewed information from the December 5, 2022 meeting where the Board adopted a resolution directing County staff to informally solicit offers and negotiate with prospective purchasers for the possible sale of the Old Emergency Services Building located at 107 Underwood Street, Clinton, NC using the negotiated offer and upset bid process authorized by G.S. 160A-269. Mr. Starling stated that the Board has since received a considerable amount of input on the Veterans Park located on the property and the need to preserve the park itself and public access to the park. Staff has recommended that the Board instruct the County Finance Department to resume informally soliciting and negotiating offers to purchase the Old Emergency Services Building pursuant to the Board's December 5, 2022 resolution. Staff also recommends that the County obtain a survey that will allow the Veterans Memorial Park to be subdivided from the larger Emergency Services Building parcel, allowing the County to retain ownership of the park and an associated parking area. Upon a motion by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Commissioner Lethia Lee, the Board voted unanimously to adopt a resolution directing staff to resume informally soliciting and negotiating offers on the property, excluding the portion where the Veteran's Memorial Park is located; and further directing staff to report back to the Board regarding any informal offers that are received so that the Board may consider whether to dispose of the property pursuant to N.C. Gen. Stat. § 160A-269.

Consideration of Tax Appeals Chairman Kivett called upon Clerk to the Board Stephanie Shannon who reviewed tax penalty adjustment requests from Michael L. Godwin Farms, Inc. (total penalty \$12,972.26) and Sessoms Southern Swine LLC (total penalty \$3,797.66). These penalties were applied due to failure to timely list business personal property. Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to reduce both penalties by one-half.

**Item 3: Board Appointments**

Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Chairman Kivett, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Commissioner Lethia Lee to the Health Department Advisory Committee, to reappoint Chairman Kivett to the Fire Commission, to appoint Commissioner Godwin to the Mid Carolina Workforce Development Board, and to appoint Commissioner McLamb to the Aging Advisory Board.

**Item 4: Consent Agenda**

Upon a motion made by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Commissioner McLamb, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Consent Agenda as follows:

- a. Approved the minutes of the December 4, 2023 meeting (Copies filed in Inc. Minute Book \_\_\_\_\_, Page \_\_\_\_\_.)
- b. Authorized the execution of a funding application for the 2024 Child and Adult Care Food Program for the Department of Aging
- c. Authorized the execution of an agreement between Sampson County Department of Social Services and Allies 4 Outcomes for Social Work Training

- d. Declared 119 Sig Sauer 9mm pistols as surplus and authorized the Sampson County Sheriff's Office to trade them in for credit on the purchase of new weapons
- e. Declared the service weapons used by Doyle Grady and Lawrence Fennell (Sig Sauer 9mm pistols, serial numbers 47A065131 and 47A065136) as surplus and allowed them to be transferred to the retiring employees
- f. Approved late disabled veterans tax exclusion requests for Luvonne Nadine Holloway and Ronald Kenneth Powell, Jr
- g. Approved tax refunds and releases as submitted

#10354	Jennifer Marie Greene	\$194.71
#10366	Linwood Earl Reynolds	\$121.29
#10356	Danny Ray Murphy	\$153.72
#10355	Chasie Shane Jacobs	\$174.07
#10352	Blackmans Grove PFWB Church	\$456.96
#10353	Humberto Reyes	\$313.58
#10335	Carrie Faulkner	\$335.31
#10327	Brandon Rheel	\$411.75
#10337	Kenneth Cabral	\$171.18
#10343	David Junior Locklear	\$594.41
#10326	James Yarnell Becton	\$411.75
#10334	Horrell Swine & Poultry LLC	\$165.94
#10347	William Jason Utley	\$292.98
#10351	Donnie Ray Bradsher Jr.	\$129.49
Tax Release	Adam Troy Brinkley	\$327.04
Tax Release	Larry Lee Abbott, III	\$629.00
Tax Release	Jennifer Marie Greene	\$194.71
Tax Release	Joshua T. Goodson	\$128.02
Tax Release	Tanya Kimiko Foderingham	\$388.15
Tax Release	Rudolfo Amador Boza	\$226.63

- h. Approved Clinton City Schools budget amendments as submitted

Capital Outlay Budget Amendment 1, Federal Budget Amendment 1

- i. Approved budget amendments as submitted

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		Health		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12551250	523900	Medical Supplies	\$200.	
<b>REVENUE</b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12535125	408900	Misc. Revenue	\$200.	

<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		Health		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12551560	519300	Medical Services	\$2,500.	
<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12535156	408401	Donations	\$2,500.	
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		Soil & Water		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
28349610	526200	Departmental Supplies	\$2,500.	
<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
28334961	409909	Fund Balance Appropriated State	\$2,500.	
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		Social Services		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
NEW ACCOUNT		Alcohol Prevention/Support	\$59,907.	
<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
NEW ACCOUNT		Alcohol Prevention/Support	\$59,907.	
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		Social Services		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
13553330	529900	APS Essential Funds	\$6,302.	
<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
13535310	403319	APS Essential Funds	\$6,302.	
<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		Library		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11761100	544000	Contracted Services	\$2,000.	
11761100	526200	Dept Supplies	\$15,000.	
11761100	544200	Cultural Programs	\$6,000.	
11761100	529900	Misc Expenses	\$1,000.	
11761100	556100	Capital Outlay	\$5,930.	
<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11036110	403624	State Based Grant	\$29,930.	

<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		Health - COVID		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12551240	512100	Salaries	\$23,140.	
12551240	518100	FICA	\$1,435.	
12551240	518120	Medicare FICA	\$336.00	
12551240	518200	Retirement	\$2,916.	
12551240	518300	Group Insurance	\$5,700.	
12551240	518400	Dental Insurance	\$180.	
12551240	518901	401K	\$1,736.	
12551240	526201	Departmental Supplies – Equipment	\$6,500.	
12551240	543000	Rental Equipment	\$2,000.	
12551240	526200	Departmental Supplies	\$4,003.	
12551240	544000	Contract Services	\$25,000.	

<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
12535125	404000	State Allocation		\$72,946.

<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		Cooperative Extension		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
04549520	512600	Salaries	\$4,300.	
04549520	518100	FICA	\$220.	
04549520	518120	Medicare FICA	\$55.	
04549520	518200	Retirement	\$1,425.	
04549520	526200	Dept Supplies	\$9,008.	
04549520	526201	Dept Supplies – Equipment	\$2,200.	
04549520	531100	Travel	\$3,320.	
04549520	537000	Advertising	\$5,000.	
04549520	539500	Employee Training	\$2,200.	
04549520	544000	Contract Services	\$11,840.	

<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
04034952	403601	Grant – Eastpointe	\$39,568.	

<b><u>EXPENDITURE</u></b>		Contribution to Mental Health		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11552100	506800	Contribution to Mental Health Admin	\$63,000.	
11999000	509700	Contingency		\$63,000.

<b><u>REVENUE</u></b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>

<b>EXPENDITURE</b>		Sheriff		
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Description (Object of Expenditure)</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11243100	555000	Capital Outlay Equipment	\$15,000.	
11243100	554000	Capital Outlay Vehicles	\$92,004.	
11243100	526200	Dept. Supplies	\$23,777.	
11243100	526201	Dept. Supplies CD	\$156,477.	
11243100	526202	Dept. Supplies Grant		\$25,281.
11243100	526230	Equip. Grant		\$178.
11243100	555001	Capital Outlay Grant		\$9,250.
<b>REVENUE</b>				
<u>Code Number</u>		<u>Source of Revenue</u>	<u>Increase</u>	<u>Decrease</u>
11034310	403631	State Substance Abuse Tax	\$70,000.	
11011100	402603	Federal Asset Account	\$182,545.	

**Item 5: County Manager’s Report**

No report given.

**Item 6: Public Comment Period**

Following a brief overview of Public Comment Policies and Procedures by Clerk to the Board Stephanie Shannon, Chairman Kivett reviewed standards of conduct and decorum and then opened the floor for public comments. The following were received:

Elaine F. Hunt, 7171 Old Warsaw Road, Turkey, NC – “Good evening. First, I would like to applaud you all for approving the request regarding the Hobbton school. I want to applaud you for having the integrity to rescind the \$80 cost regarding the trash dumping, and I thought, ‘How can I present my concern in a creative way?’ But the more I thought about it the more I came to the conclusion that there is no creative way. As the word says, there is nothing new under the sun, so I come to you just as I am, crying and singing the same song I’ve been singing since March 2022. We are no longer asking and saying that we desire county water. We are saying that we need county water. Water is a necessity to live and for the better part we love living, so we desire, and we want, and we need and we deserve county water. We’re tired of taking our clothes to the laundromat. All of my white clothes are now brown. You know, we have to purchase our drinking water. We have people in the neighborhood on fixed income who can’t afford to just go out and buy cases and cases and gallons and gallons of water. We deserve to have clean water like others. We are not requesting that you give us a handout. As always, I say that we are asking for a helping hand. No one seems to care about our situation and our concern except we who live in the neighborhood. In 2024, we are seeking more. More than we got in 2022, more than we got in 2023. I am a firm believer that this is a possible task. I have watched and I have seen what you all have done and can do and probably will do in the future. This is what we are seeking this year. We ask that you help us to make it happen. Please help us to get county water in the vicinity of 7171 Old Warsaw Road. Where there is a will, I’ve learned there is a way. Thank you.”

Anthony Monds, 6248 Autry Mill Road, Godwin, NC - "I'm not in the habit of repeating myself, especially when it comes to grown people. I expect to do that with my grandchildren, but not with grown people. Last month I came and gave my number and asked that you all get in touch with me. No one chose to, so that's unacceptable. I am a taxpaying citizen. I'm one that can articulate very well what I would like to be heard. I expect for those of you who are in elected positions to adhere to what your constituents are conveying to you, so once again I am here for the same purpose and that is to let you know that your DSS system is corrupt and I got up here last month and shared just a brief intel as to what we would like to happen, a forum, as I said before for the record no one has gotten in touch with me from this board. So, once again, I'm saying it, I won't say it again, but I would expect for someone to get in touch with me and sit down with those who have been affected by your DSS system. And so after last month's meeting I was instructed that I shot the Human Resources department in the foot because of my comments, which I didn't think they were going to do anything anyway so it just goes to show once again as I stated in previous times when I was here of the unscrupulous egregious acts that the department and the government here exhibits and so I'm drawing attention to it once again. I'm easy to reach. 910-286-6604. You can call me, email me, smoke screen me, whatever. You can go to my website. I have an international ministry. GracePlusNothing.org. You can gain contact with me through there. I'm not hard to find. You can call the Cumberland County Sheriff's Department. I'm a chaplain down there. I can be found if you want to find me. So, I'm not hard to find and so I would appreciate once again if we would address these issues because those who allow injustices to happen are just as guilty as those who are doing them so there's blood on your hands. There's blood on your hands because you have allowed this to happen and continue to allow it to happen. Thank you. Y'all have a blessed evening."

David Brown, 3030 Fleet Cooper Road, Roseboro, NC - "Good evening ladies and gentlemen. There's a lot I'd like to say about that convenience fee. I've heard a lot of things, but I haven't had time to investigate them so I'm not going to worry about them until I have some firm information. What I am here tonight to discuss is money. Three things that most constituents, taxpayers, whatever that you'd like to call us out there that you do don't mess with. Our church, our children, and our money. If we take a conservative number that there were 20,000 letters mailed out or notices for tax. I don't know how many you mailed. It's \$0.60 a piece unless of course the county has a bulk mailing permit which you might have. It would substantially reduce that cost. I don't know what the percentage would be. It could be anywhere from \$0.30 all the way down to \$0.15. I'm a retired postal employee. So that cost doesn't include envelopes, paper, the printing cost, and the labor involved in getting those notices out. That's \$12,000. Then you had to mail the checks back. Now based upon the information that I read, I believe it was in a news release, I think the expected compliance rate was about 67% I think is what the County Manger said, I'm not sure. But I said okay lets just say that half of that number got to be mailed back because not everybody complied. That's 10,000 letters at \$0.60 a piece that's \$6,000. That's a total of \$18,000 just in postage that was spent and wasted because you're not going to get any return on that. If I'm making \$10 an hour it takes me 1,800 hours to make that much money. That's a whole week's worth of work. One whole week I work for free to pay for this wasted money. That's not acceptable. If I make \$20 an hour, and I don't think there are a great many people in Sampson County that make \$20 an hour, it takes me 900 hours which is a half a week. That's still a lot of money. I sat here in the September meeting, and I heard that we are short money within the county. I didn't think that. I didn't think we'd lost any residents but when I researched the census, we lost 7,000 residents.



That's a pretty good number to lose right there. And if I'm not mistaken, I believe you talked about changing the property revaluation from eight years to four years. So you're taking more money. Governments don't have any money. Your bank account is zero. Stop taking my money and wasting it."

### **Adjournment**

Upon a motion made by Commissioner McLamb and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

/signed copy on file in Clerk's Office

R. Jerol Kivett, Chairman

/signed copy on file in Clerk's Office

Stephanie P. Shannon, Clerk to the Board