

The Sampson County Board of Commissioners reconvened in the Administrative Board Room, 406 County Complex Road, in Clinton, North Carolina on Monday, May 6, 2024 at 4:30 p.m. Members present: Chairman Jerol Kivett, Vice Chairperson Sue Lee, and Commissioners Thaddeus Godwin and Lethia Lee. Members absent: Commissioner Allen McLamb.

Web Development Presentation

Chairman Kivett called the meeting to order and turned the meeting over to the Web Development Team. The team, comprised of Brandon Wiggins, Katie Daugherty, Jean Ko, and Chris Rayner, then presented the Board with information regarding the overhaul of the County website and their rebranding efforts. Upon a motion made and duly seconded, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn.

Regular Meeting

The Sampson County Board of Commissioners convened for their regular meeting at 6:00 p.m. on Monday, May 6, 2024, in the County Auditorium, 435 Rowan Road in Clinton, North Carolina. Members present: Chairperson Sue Lee, Vice Chairperson Jerol Kivett, 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 Lethia Lee provided the invocation and Vice Chairperson Sue Lee led the Pledge of Allegiance.

Approval of Agenda

Upon a motion by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Commissioner Lethia Lee, the Board voted unanimously to approve the agenda with the following amendments:

- Moved Item 6 (Closed Session) to the end of the meeting, making it Item 8.

Item 1: Reports & Presentations

Employee Recognition – Jean Ko Chairman Kivett called upon Projects and Communications Specialist/Public Information Officer Jean Ko and presented her with a certificate of completion for the UNC School of Government’s Municipal and County Administration Course. This comprehensive application-based program takes place over eight months to complete and major subject areas include local government law, organization and management, finance and budgeting, public employment law, planning and regulation development, and municipal and county services. Ms. Ko spent several weeks at the UNC School of Government and seamlessly completed her regular duties while working away from the office and attending seminars and lectures. Chairman Kivett congratulated Ms. Ko for her dedication, outstanding performance, and successful completion of this program.

NCDOT Update Chairman Kivett called upon NCDOT Engineer Daniel Jones who provided an update on current and ongoing projects within the County. Mr. Jones also introduced Lance Eason who serves as the Highway Maintenance Engineer for Division 3. Mr. Eason expressed his excitement about working with the Board and making Sampson County a better place.

Trillium Health Resources Annual Report Chairman Kivett called upon Victoria Jackson, Regional Vice President of Trillium Health Resources. Ms. Jackson provided an update on services offered and rendered in Sampson County. Trillium Health Resources is a Managed Care Organization (MCO) that manages serious mental health, substance use, traumatic brain injury, and intellectual/developmental disability services in North Carolina.

Update on Sale of County Property and Upset Bid Process Chairman Kivett called upon Finance Officer David Clack who informed the Board that the County received 7 eligible bids for the property located at 107 Underwood Street. Mr. Clack added that the highest of those bids was \$50,000 and the County has advertised the new minimum bid of \$53,550 with a bid opening date of May 7. Mr. Clack also stated that two bids have been received thus far.

Item 2: Planning & Zoning

Delmore Acres Section II Preliminary Plan Approval Chairman Kivett called upon Senior Planner Michelle Lance who presented the Preliminary Plan for Delmore Acres Section II which proposes 12 single family lots being created. The Planning Board voted unanimously at its April 9, 2024 meeting to recommend approval of the preliminary plan. Staff recommends approval of the preliminary plan due to its compliance with the Sampson County Subdivision Ordinance. Upon a motion by Commissioner McLamb and seconded by Commissioner Godwin the Board voted unanimously to approve the plan as recommended by the Planning Board.

Trinity Place Preliminary Plan Approval Ms. Lance also presented the Preliminary Plan for Trinity Place which proposes 22 single family lots being created. The Planning Board voted unanimously at its April 9, 2024 meeting to recommend approval of the preliminary plan. Staff recommends approval of the preliminary plan due to its compliance with the Sampson County Subdivision Ordinance. Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin the Board voted unanimously to approve the plan as recommended by the Planning Board.

Item 3: Action Items

Scheduling of Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Presentation Chairman Kivett called upon County Manager Ed Causey who recommended that the Board schedule the annual Budget Presentation for Monday, May 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. Upon a motion by Chairman Kivett and seconded by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee the Board voted unanimously to hold the Fiscal Year 2024-2025 Budget Presentation on Monday, May 20, 2024 at 6:00 p.m. in the County Auditorium.

Newton Grove EMS Building Lease/Transfer Chairman Kivett called upon County Manager Ed Causey who explained that the Newton Grove Rescue Squad was dissolved several years ago and that the building was given to the town. The town has expressed that it would

like for the County to continue to provide Rescue and EMS Services while utilizing the existing building. Mr. Causey presented a lease with a twenty-year term and a stipulation that the County make certain improvements to the property at a cost of \$150,000. Upon a motion by Commissioner McLamb and seconded by Commissioner Godwin, the Board voted unanimously to authorize the execution of a Lease Agreement and all related documents between Sampson County and the Town of Newton Grove with the understanding that there will be a \$150,000 expenditure of funds for repairs and improvements of the property. (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book _____, Page _____.)

Roseboro Rescue Lease and Contract for Dive Rescue and Recovery Services Chairman Kivett called on County Manager Ed Causey who explained that negotiations have been made between Sampson County and Roseboro Rescue & EMS regarding the lease of a portion of County owned land, and in consideration of leasing the property, Roseboro Rescue has agreed to maintain a fully operational Dive (Rescue & Recovery) Team that provides specific services to Sampson County and its citizens. North Carolina General Statute § 160A-272 authorizes the County to enter into leases of up to 10 years upon resolution of the Board of Commissioners adopted at a regular meeting after thirty days' public notice. A Notice of Intent to Lease was published in the Saturday, April 27, 2024 edition of the Sampson Independent. Upon a motion by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Commissioner Lethia Lee the Board voted unanimously to adopt a Resolution Authorizing the County Manager to Execute a Dive Rescue and Recovery Services Contract with Roseboro Rescue and EMS and to approve the \$200,000 expenditure for building improvements and tentatively approve the Lease Agreement with the understanding that it will be formally approved at the June 3, 2024 meeting due to notice requirements. (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book _____, Page _____.)

Item 4: Board Appointments

CVB Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin the Board voted unanimously to appoint Wally Bashlor, Dana Horne, and Wendy Dorman to serve on the Convention and Visitors Bureau and to appoint Wally Bashlor as the Board Chair for fiscal year 2024-2025.

Library Board Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Chairman Kivett the Board voted unanimously to appoint Jessica Martin to serve on the Library Board.

Item 5: Consent Agenda

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

- a. Approved the minutes of the April 8, 2024 meeting (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book _____, Page _____.)
- b. Approved revisions to the 2023-2024 Home and Community Care Block Grant funding plan

- c. Adopted a Resolution Authorizing the Sale Via Sealed Bid and Moving of the Old Animal Shelter Office Building pursuant to the procedures outlined in G.S. § 160A-268 (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)
- d. Authorized the execution of a Contract for Veterinary Services between Sampson County and William C. Oglesby, Jr., D.V.M. (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)
- e. Authorized the execution of a Contract for The Runway 6-24 Rehabilitation Project at the Clinton-Sampson County Airport between Sampson County/The City of Clinton and AVCON Engineers & Planners, Inc. (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)
- f. Adopted a Resolution authorizing the lease of county property between Sampson County and James Dennis Lee and Terry M. Raynor and further approving the associated Lease Agreement and authorizing the County Manager to execute the Lease Agreement (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)
- g. Adopted a Resolution authorizing the lease of county property between Sampson County and Lynn S. Carr and further approving the associated Lease Agreement and authorizing the County Manager to execute the Lease Agreement (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)
- h. Adopted a Proclamation Recognizing May 2024 as Small Business Month (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)
- i. Adopted a Resolution Declaring Items as Surplus and Directing Staff to Dispose of Them at Auction (Copy filed in Inc. Minute Book ____, Page ____.)
- j. Approved a late property tax exemption request for Iglesia Casa Del Alfarero CDA, Inc.
- k. Approved budget amendments as submitted
- l. Approved tax refunds and releases as submitted

Item 6: County Manager's Report

Chairman Kivett called upon County Manager Ed Causey who discussed the vacant County Attorney position and the opportunity to hire a full-time County Attorney. Mr. Causey discussed the option of having County Staff screen applicants before a full-board interview. Upon a motion by Commissioner McLamb and seconded by Commissioner Godwin the Board voted unanimously to hire a full-time County Attorney. Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin the Board voted unanimously to direct County Staff to screen applicants and make recommendations on the most qualified and suitable candidates before a full-board interview.

Item 7: Public Comment Period

Chairman Kivett opened the floor for public comments. The following were received:

Elaine F.Hunt - "Good evening. My name is Elaine F. Hunt. I reside at 7171 Old Warsaw Road, Turkey, North Carolina and I've been coming before you for now over two years. Last month we left a little more relieved because I felt like you did hear me when I've been speaking, but since last month up until this month I haven't received any comments for a follow-up and I've gotten in touch with some. But we want to know, we want to stay abreast of what's happening with the water on Old Warsaw Road. I received a call and someone asked and I wasn't for sure did you all...and I know you can't answer questions...we're thinking you said Old Warsaw Road was next in line for County Water. (Mr. Causey then explained that special funding has been requested for this area from Senator Jackson's office.) That's why I'm here tonight. To get an update and I probably will return next month and next month and next month after until we have the end result of County Water. I appreciate what you're doing, but just look forward if God allows me to come back next month to get another update. Thank you."

Sandra Carroll - "Thank you, I've just got something briefly that I want to say. I want to thank you for still having prayer before you have your meetings and thank you for saying the pledge to this flag. These are two freedoms we hope will never be taken away from us. Now, stay seated, I'm here just to thank you. Not to complain about a thing. I'm an elected official. I can count on these fingers right here how many times somebody has thanked me. You work 24/7, and I don't care what anybody says, you work 24/7 and we do too on education. I just want to thank you for all you do. I want to thank you for what you do for Sampson County Schools and I'd also like to thank you for what you do for Sampson Community College. And again, I thank every one of you. And, Joel Starling, we're going to miss you. Thank you."

Anthony Monds - "Good evening. I'm back. Well, mine not be as gracious but it's still in the same vein. I don't, um, I know what I want to say but I've got to be tactful about this. I don't, um, I don't know if this elected board, as it currently sits, really understand the vein of what's really going on with its constituents. It's a shame that people have to come and beg and plead every month for the same thing and just to get an answer saying you're on the list. So, my thing is this, is that we constituents have made things personal. You, as a board, since I've been coming, you have taken things personally. There's a difference. The difference is this: when I make something personal, it's personal to me as it has affected me. Such as buzzards eating people's roofs. Such as dirty water. People on dialysis catching cancer and so on and so forth. Me with my issue, and I'm not going to discuss it but you know what it is. So when people bring things to you they have made it personal because it has affected them. And in turn when they bring those issues to you, you as a board have taken it personal therefore you have jumped in your feelings and in your flesh and you oftentimes retaliate, or you become numb or callous or cold and do not do anything. Now, one thing I can do as the lady that just left here, I do thank you for this. I do thank you as a board of bringing the citizens of Sampson County together regardless of our socioeconomic status, our ethnicity, our religious beliefs, our political affiliations or what have you. You have successfully united us as one for a common goal and that is to hold you all accountable, to hold you all to what you said you would do, could do and reinforcing the fact of what you said that you would do. We as your constituents have voted you in. We expect results. If those results do not come to fruition as a democracy, we can and

we will vote you out. And so don't take this personal. I've made this personal because there's things that have affected me. Others have made things personal because it has affected them. So do not take this personal. If you take it personal you do not need to be serving in the capacity in which you are serving. So, going forward, prayerfully, hopefully the next sitting board will be more astute as to what we as the constituents of Sampson County need. Y'all definitely have a blessed night. It's been a pleasure."

Patrick Blanchard - "Good evening. My name is Patrick Blanchard. I'm the president of Mingo Grange. I have a few members from the grange behind me in the crowd tonight and we have voted on and approved the following resolution regarding the tax revaluation:

'Whereas the state of North Carolina has mandated a new cycle of property reevaluation to every four years;
Whereas the County of Sampson has proposed its new property values to the citizenry;
Whereas the rates in many cases have nearly doubled;
Whereas the citizens will face an indirect increase in tax burden without the raising of the tax rate;
Whereas our taxes almost never go down and the quality of services to the townships never seems to truly improve; now, therefore, be it resolved, that the Mingo Grange:

1. Let it be known, that we, the members of the Mingo Grange have a love for our homes and our rural way of life. That we have made choices and sacrifices to remain in the home of our grandfathers and furthermore, wish to preserve our homes and hearths for future generations of our families;
2. The Grange urges the Board of Commissioners to seriously consider the reduction of the tax rate to help offset the burden of rural property owners who no longer actively farm their ancestral lands but in an effort to maintain these heirlooms must rent out to produce funds for payment of said taxes and insurance;
3. We urge the Commissioners to seek ways to provide the basic infrastructure that is necessary for public health and safety and at the same time cut from the budget all items that do not improve the situation of all citizens;
4. We urge the Commissioners to work in harmony with the citizens of this county in order to find solutions to the issues we face and in that regard we offer whatever assistance we can provide to help make our home better;
5. We urge the Commissioners to make hard decisions in order to help us keep our farms and forests, whilst remembering that the government that governs least, governs best. People seek to move here to escape the urban and suburban landscapes that have become unbearable elsewhere and we simply ask for an opportunity to maintain the rural and simple lifestyle we were taught to love.'

Thank you."

Chief Ken Jackson - "Good evening. Thank you for the recognition while ago. My name is Ken Jackson. I represent the Sampson County Fire Association. I'm also the fire chief at Plain View Volunteer Fire Department. We know it's budget year. We all deal with this every year. With this budget year has come the valuations and there has been some talk with the County Manager between Jim and myself and the possibility of cutting our fire taxes has been mentioned. Every guy standing on this wall tonight is representative of every fire department in Sampson County. They're here tonight to request that you do not cut our fire tax. Every fire district in Sampson County's tax is set up by the people in that district. It's not by us. It's voted on by them, it's carried to our Board of Directors, and then it's brought to you for okay. Some of us are at \$0.10, some of us are at \$0.07, some of us are \$0.075. We can't take a tax, we can't cut our tax rate. We've worked hard to get it. I understand the valuation made a difference. But these tax rates, some of us have come before the fire commission for these tax rates in order to man our stations so that the folks in Sampson County will get adequate fire protection twenty-four hours a day. Volunteers do it at night, those guys that we pay to do it, do it during the day. There's equipment

needs. We still have departments that are struggling. If we cut their tax rate we're going to end up right back in this process again asking for that money back because we don't have an evaluation every year. So, we're asking as an association, for the Commissioners, for the County Manager to come up with a plan not to cut our tax rate for this budget year. Thank you."

Bruce McLamb - "Every one of you is new except Mrs. Lee. I know her. I'm a retired volunteer fire department employee. Worked over twenty years with the fire department. I now draw \$170 a month from that, but the day of volunteer fire departments is over. We cannot maintain our status to have our homeowners have lower house insurance by not having all volunteer because people work. You just can't do it. You're going to have to go part time at least to have a response time that's satisfactory to the state to keep our homeowners low. If you ask in your district, each one of you, ask if they want to have, say ours, Taylor's Bridge is \$0.10. Ask the man does he want to pay that same \$0.10 on the increase to keep his house rates down. Every one of them is going to tell you yes. So you don't need to mess with that rate. You need to keep it the same because cost of the fire department equipment in the twenty years that I've been in there, most of it's doubled. Some of it's tripled. To get a fire truck now...\$850,000. People don't even make that much and it takes three years to get it. So you don't need to cut that \$0.10. Thank you."

Chief Alan Williams - "I'm Chief Alan Williams representing Taylor's Bridge Fire Department and I'm also the County Fire Chief. I echo what Chief Jackson said. That's why we're all here tonight. I had asked Mr. Causey at a Fire Commission meeting why our proposed budget this year the revenue didn't increase but only 3%, he said, 'well we'll just cut the fire tax and make it match.' Well, since that time the term 'revenue neutral', I believe that's the term we're using now. It will not work. You see all these volunteers standing around back here? There's less than 1% of the population of Sampson County serves as volunteer firefighters. Less than 1%. If you didn't have the volunteer firefighters, it would cost this county somewhere between \$13 million - \$19 million a year just in payroll. You'd have to hire 176 new County Employees to do what we do, all of us for free. We don't mind that. Taylor's Bridge responded to six calls Saturday afternoon. We came to a house fire in Clinton, left there and went to a woods fire over off Bass Lake Road, had three motor vehicle accidents that night and provided a lift assist with EMS. All for free. All we're asking is leave the fire tax where it is. We came before you, it was approved by our township, they're in support of it, our Board of Commissioners is in support of it. There's a thirty-three-year-old truck sitting right outside if you want to go look at it after the meeting. That truck runs from Halls to Ivanhoe. That is our first out mutual aid engine. It hauls two firefighters. We don't want to throw that truck away. We want to repurpose that truck. We want to move it down towards Delway, maybe pick up part of Duplin County in the process to serve those citizens down there that are still outside of a district, but it's going to cost \$850,000 to replace that truck and put a new one in there. We got a 0% interest loan. Ten-year loan. We're just asking you to leave our fire tax alone. Thank you."

Item 7: Closed Session - G.S. § 143-318.11(a)(3)&(a)(6)

Upon a motion by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee and seconded by Commissioner Godwin the Board voted unanimously to enter into Closed Session. Upon a motion by Commissioner Godwin and seconded by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee the Board voted unanimously to come out of Closed Session.

Recess to Reconvene

Upon a motion made by Commissioner McLamb and seconded by Vice Chairperson Sue Lee, the Board voted unanimously to Recess to Reconvene on Monday, May 20, 2023 at 6:00 p.m. in the County Auditorium.

/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