

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Budget Work Session; Budget Public Hearing; and Regular Meeting
June 7, 2021 - 5:00 PM
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice Womack Building Columbus, NC
Columbus, NC
MINUTES

PRESENT: Chairman Melton, Vice-Chairman Beiler, Commissioner Moore, Commissioner Overholt, and Commissioner Yoder. Also in attendance were County Manager Pittman, County Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board High, media, and citizens.

1. Budget Work Session

- A. Call to Order the Budget Work Session - Chairman Melton.
- B. Update on additional Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Positions, and tax rate increase to fund, and any other changes.

Manager Pittman said the tax rate included in his recommended budget was .5038; due to changes in valuation from the appeal process, the rate has moved to .5039.

Manager Pittman continued by stating to include the EMS positions the Board asked for at the May 17, 2021, Budget Work Session; at this time, the adjusted tax rate would be .5143. He said this rate covers the increased revenue needed for a third ambulance twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week as requested by the Board. He said staff determined the goal could be met with six additional positions bringing the total new EMS position included in the FY 2021/22 Budget to eight.

- C. Commissioner Moore moved to adjourn the budget work session, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Public Hearing on the Proposed Fiscal Year 2021 - 2022 Budget

- A. Chairman Melton called the budget public hearing to order. The purpose of the public hearing was to receive public comment on the proposed FY 2021/22 budget. The public hearing was properly advertised as required. A copy of the County Manager's recommended budget for FY 21/22 was available for review on the County website, www.polknc.org, or in the County Manager's Office located at 40 Courthouse St., Columbus.
- B. There were no citizen comments on the budget public hearing.
- C. Commissioner Moore moved to adjourn the budget public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

3. Call to Order the Regular Meeting - Chairman Melton.

4. Invocation - Reverend Billy Staley.

5. Pledge of Allegiance - Vice-Chairman Beiler.

6. Chairman and Commissioner Comments

Chairman Melton thanked Reverend Staley for attending the meeting to give the invocation. He said he is proud of Polk County and its citizens and thanked the Sheriff, staff, and everyone in attendance for coming out to the meeting. Commissioner Moore said he would also like to recognize all the Emergency Management workers in the County. He said he got to see them in action firsthand as he was stuck in traffic on the interstate. He said they all did a tremendous job and thanked them for the hard work they do every day. All the Commissioners echoed these sentiments.

7. Approval of Agenda - Motion needed to approve or amend the agenda.

Chairman Melton requested to move the Sheriff Award Presentation up on the agenda to immediately following Citizen Comments on Agenda Items. Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to to approve the agenda as amended, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

8. Consent Agenda - Motion needed to approve or amend the consent agenda.

Commissioner Moore moved to to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

A. May 3, 2021 public hearings and regular meetings; May 10, 2021 special meeting; and May 17, 2021 budget work session minutes.

B. Schedule a public hearing for proposed new road names to be considered on Monday, June 21, 2021 at 5:00 pm in the R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice.

C. Tax refund requests through May 31, 2021 in the amount of \$735.20.

D. Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) County Fund Plan for FY 2021/22 including membership.

9. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

There were no citizen comments on agenda items.

10. Sheriff Award Presentation.

Sheriff Wright presented Deputy Clay Price with a framed copy of his North Carolina Region C Law Enforcement Advisory Council Award he received for his diligence in locating and apprehending a breaking and entering suspect still inside a residence while conducting house checks. The Sheriff then presented Deputy Jonathon Luchek a framed copy of his North Carolina Region C Law Enforcement Advisory Council Award received for his bravery and courage in pulling two occupants out of a burning vehicle after a lengthy high-speed chase. Sheriff Wright then said Detective Sergeant Pam Cannon joins a select group of North Carolina Law Enforcement professionals who have obtained the necessary education, training, and experience requirements to be recognized by the North Carolina Sheriff's Training and Standards Commission with the prestigious Advanced Law Enforcement Certification Award. He then presented Det. Sgt. Cannon with a framed copy of her award.

11. Sediment Removal and Maintenance for the Laughter Pond Forebay located in Mill Spring, North Carolina.

Joel Lenk, Engineer, Quible & Associates, P.C explained the forebay is used to keep sediment from the pond and is currently overflowing due to beaver dams and needing to be dredged. He presented an opinion of cost based on an estimate he received to remove the sediment from the forebay from a contractor he regularly uses. Manager Pittman said when the project is ready to begin, the County will follow an informal bidding process. He also said he had contacted the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission regarding the beaver dams. Chairman Melton asked if these repairs will prevent the need for future projects. Mr. Lenk said other solutions might be necessary to ensure this is not a reoccurring issue. Manager Pittman said the Board could consider starting a capital project fund to set aside resources each year for those potential needs; however, the current dredging project is still necessary.

Commissioner Yoder moved to approve the budget amendment to appropriate fund balance for \$119,550 for the forebay sediment removal and maintenance project at Laughter Pond, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moore moved to adopt the Capital Project Budget Ordinance for \$119,550 for the forebay sediment removal and maintenance project at Laughter Pond, seconded by Commissioner Overholt, and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Polk County Public Libraries Strategic Plan (July 2021-June 2026).

Marcie Dowling, Library Director, explained that Polk County Public Libraries received a planning grant in June 2020 made possible by funding from the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act (LSTA) as administered by the State Library of North Carolina, a division of the Department of Natural Resources (IMLS grant number LS-246155-OLS-20). Funds for the grant helped cover the cost of hiring a strategic planning consultant, Dr. Anthony Chow, to guide the libraries through the planning process and conduct the community needs report from an unbiased perspective.

The Polk County Public Libraries' community needs assessment took place over a six-month period from August 2020 to January 2021. She said a steering committee of thirteen members from different backgrounds and perspectives helped create a strategic plan that included the entire Polk County community. During the assessment period, the steering committee conducted nine interviews, four focus groups, and two surveys. A total of 687 survey responses were received and calculated. In addition, they analyzed ten years of performance data were from 2011-2020.

Mrs. Dowling said from January to March 2021, library staff and the steering committee shaped a strategic plan that addressed community needs identified in the assessment. Then, through drafting sessions and an all-day strategic planning retreat, staff and steering committee members created goals designed to best position the libraries to support Polk County. She said the focus was on technology access and instruction, fostering unique educational experiences for all ages, creating safe and engaging physical spaces, and reaching out to welcome all members of our community. She said the new five-year strategic plan presented to the Board would ensure that Polk County Public Libraries continue to create connections and ignite the imagination. She said the Library Board of Trustees has already reviewed and approved the plan.

Commissioner Yoder moved to adopt the Polk County Public Libraries Strategic Plan, seconded by Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Library Children's Area Capital Improvement.

Marcie Dowling, Library Director, said in July of 2020, the Friends of the Libraries received an unexpected and generous donation from the Marye Jane Priddy estate. She told the Board Ms. Priddy had dedicated her life to early education and literacy in particular, teaching second and third-grade children for 30 years. After retirement, Ms. Priddy settled in Tryon. When she passed away, she generously bequeathed part of her estate to the Friends of the Polk County Public Libraries to enhance their mission of supporting the libraries through funding programming and special projects. Mrs. Dowling said the bequest

would help ensure that the libraries will continue to enrich our community for years to come and is a major reason that the strategic plan just approved was so ambitious.

Mrs. Dowling said the renovation of the Columbus Library children's area was identified as one of the top priorities in the plan. She said it seemed a fitting tribute that Columbus's children's library area would be the first initiative supported with funds from Ms. Priddy. She said the renovation of the space would include new carpet, furniture, and décor and the new addition of museum quality, hands-on literacy learning tools spread throughout the space, and in the children's area at the Saluda Library. Mrs. Dowling said the project is to redesign existing space only and does not involve construction, and is unanimously supported by both the Friends of the Libraries Board and the Library Board of Trustees. Mrs. Dowling said if the project is approved, they will begin immediately and hope to complete the installation by November of this year.

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to adopt the Capital Project Budget Ordinance in the amount of \$110,905 to renovate the children's area within the Columbus Library completely funded with donations from the Friends of the Library, seconded by Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

14. YMCA Lease Agreement.

Attorney Berg presented the YMCA lease agreement. She said there is one additional modification in section four - *The YMCA will maintain the facility's interior, and the County will be responsible for the exterior, HVAC, plumbing, and filtration systems.* She said the effective date of the lease should correlate with the terms in the Memorandum of Understanding with the YMCA previously approved. Manager Pittmans said he would verify the effective date.

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to approve the lease agreement as amended between Polk County and the YMCA of Greater Spartanburg, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

15. American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Grant.

Manager Pittman said Polk County was awarded \$4,025,394 from the federal government as part of the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA). He said fifty percent, or \$2,012,697, was received on May 24, 2021, and the remaining fifty percent will be received in one year, on May 24, 2022. He said tonight the Board would accept the funds and adopt the grant project ordinance, and then the special budget will be broken down into details as further guidance is received.

Commissioner Moore moved to accept the Polk County Federal grant award in the amount of \$4,025,394, and adopt the Grant Project Ordinance, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

16. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items

Three citizens spoke during citizen comments on non-agenda items.

17. Closed Session

- A. Commissioner Moore moved to go into closed session for the purpose of attorney client privilege, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.
- B. Commissioner Moore moved to return to open session, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

18. Adjournment

Commissioner Overholt moved to to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

Ange High
Clerk to the Board

Tommy W. Melton
Chairman