

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting
August 17, 2020 - 7:00 PM
R. Jay Foster Hall of Justice Womack Building Columbus, NC
Columbus, NC
MINUTES

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

1. Call to Order - Chairman Yoder.
2. Invocation - Vice-Chairman Melton.
3. Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Moore.
4. Approval of Agenda
 - A. Vice-Chairman Melton moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.
5. Consent Agenda
 - A. August 3, 2020 Public Hearing & Regular meeting minutes.
 - B. Tax refund requests through August 11, 2020 in the amount of \$37,973.30.
 - C. Vaya Quarterly Report for the period ending June 30, 2020.
 - D. Public School Building Capital Fund North Carolina Education Lottery - To approve the application to use \$92,130 of lottery funds to pay for multi-site roof resurfacing and sealing.

Commissioner Moore moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.
6. Citizen Comment(s) - Citizens may submit their comments to the Clerk to the Board by email - ahigh@polknc.org, or phone - 828-894-3301 ext. 221, by 5:00 pm August 17, 2020 to be read during the meeting.

There were no citizen comments.
7. Polk County Schools COVID-19 & Remote Learning Discussion.

Aaron Greene, Superintendent, came before the Board requesting consideration to repurpose the use of existing funds originally designated for

the after school program. He explained the school received a federal grant after the county budget was approved that will cover the cost of that program. Mr. Greene asked the Board to allow flexibility in the use of the funds allocated for the after school for other purposes since he cannot anticipate the exact needs of the students and staff as school is set to begin next week. He reiterated, the change would not increase taxes, nor would it change the planned after school program.

Vice Chairman Melton moved to approve the use of \$100,000 designated for the after school program to be used by the school system for other purposes, seconded by Commissioner Moore.

Commissioner Gasperson asked for discussion concerning the amount set aside in the line for the after school program. Manager Pittman said it was almost three hundred thousand dollars. Vice-Chairman Melton stated he was in favor of designating the entire amount and would amend his motion, Commissioner Moore agreed.

Vice-Chairman Melton amended his motion to approve the use of all of the funds designated for the after school program to be used by the school system for other purposes, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moore asked Mr. Greene about the State school system going down the first day many schools started classes virtually. Mr. Greene said there were some issues with the system, and it showed waiting to open a different time than most was a prudent move. He said flexibility is going to be key for everyone, and he is hopeful the bugs will be worked out by the time Polk County Schools start operating.

8. Modification of the North Carolina Pandemic Recovery Office Coronavirus Relief Fund (CRF/CARES) Budget.

Manager Pittman said round two of the CFR-CARES Grant funding has been received, and as before, twenty-five percent must be distributed to the municipalities within the County. Sandra Hughes, Finance Director, said the amount of this round was \$402,210. Manager Pittman presented draft interlocal agreements for the Board to review. He said if they approve the agreements tonight, each town will be sent their agreement to receive approval from their governing body.

Commissioner Moore moved to approve the interlocal agreements between Polk County and Columbus, Tryon, and Saluda regarding their acceptance of the 25% of the CRF-CARES Grant funds, seconded by Chairman Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moore moved to accept round two funds, and amend the CFR-CARES grant project budget ordinance designating 25% to municipalities, seconded by Vice-Chairman Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Broadband Discussion.

Commissioner Gasperson requested this item be added to the agenda, he introduced Tucker Cox, a Polk County resident who told him about what had happened in his community outside Tryon, and he invited him to come to the meeting. Mr. Cox explained most of his neighborhood of twenty-two homes has limited, to poor internet service. They contacted Charter Spectrum to see what it would take to get their broadband services, and originally they were told \$15,000, but since so many agreed to connect, Charter is now waiving that fee. The Commissioners commended Mr. Cox and his neighborhood for being proactive and working together to seek a resolution.

Michael E. Tanck, Director of Government Affairs, Charter Communications, was present, and thanked the Board for allowing him to come to the meeting. He said the project for Mr. Cox's neighborhood has been approved, and should be completed by Thanksgiving 2020. He said the process was expedited due to the efforts of the citizens before he became involved. Chairman Yoder asked if this same thing could be done in other areas of Polk County? Commissioner Gasperson asked, as word gets out, and others are interested, who should they contact? Mr. Tanck said for other communities to be considered they must meet Charters business model criteria which involves the distance from existing Charter service areas, and the number of new connecting customers. He would suggest any interested citizen to contact the County Manager's office and they can forward him the information.

Mr. Tanck said he has talked to Manager Pittman about the service needs of the county, and will be researching other opportunities to expand. In closing, he shared another program they offer called the Charter Spectrum Internet Assist Program which provides qualifying families affordable internet service to new subscribers. He stated there is information about the program on Charter's website, and Mr. Greene said there is also a link on the Polk County school's website.

10. Volunteer Board Application(s)

- A. Commissioner Moore moved to appoint Tommy Melton as the replacement member for Bill Miller to the Isothermal Community College Board of Trustees to fill the vacancy caused by his resignation, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Commissioner Comment(s)

Vice-Chairman Melton thanked everyone for all they are doing during COVID-19. Commissioner Beiler thanked everyone who joined the meeting remotely. He said he hears citizen frustrations about the cellular coverage throughout the county, and asked Attorney Berg if the new tower on Landrum Road is active. Ms. Berg stated the suit has been settled and if its not active, it will be soon. Commissioner Moore thanked everyone for their hard work, and thanked Mr. Cox and the citizens who worked together to get internet brought to their neighborhood. Commissioner Gasperson thanked Joshua Kennedy and the Public Health staff, and all the workers who deal with the COVID-19 cases. He gave an update from the last meeting, and said the comment about the false

911 calls has been resolved, and they are working to help fix other issues in the county. Chairman Yoder thanked Commissioner Gasperson for adding the broadband discussion on the agenda. He said everyone is concerned about schools starting back, and complimented the citizens for being patient, and courteous. He asked everyone to encourage each other, and to remember we are all going through it together, and together we will get through it.

12. Closed Session

A. Commissioner Moore moved to go into closed session for the purposes of attorney client privilege and property acquisition, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

B. Commissioner Moore moved to return to open session, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Beiler moved to direct the County Manager to be duly diligent investigating the acquisition of a two acre portion of parcel C2-D2 on Park Street in Columbus, including surveying the property, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moore moved to approve the budget amendment of \$27,400 increasing the professional services expenditure line using appropriated fund balance of the Solid Waste Enterprise Fund to pay for it, seconded by Vice-Chairman Melton and the motion carried unanimously.

Vice-Chairman Melton moved to approve the contract with Quible & Associates for design, permitting, bid management, and the construction phase assistance (as described in the scope of services in the agreement) to update the Soil Erosion & Sedimentation Control Plan (SESC) with Stormwater Control Measures (SCMs) for the subject drainage area at the Route 9 Landfill, Solid Waste Section (SWS) under Permit No. 75-02, for the estimated not to exceed amount of \$27,400, seconded by Chairman Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Moore moved to approve a lease agreement between Sunny View Fire and Rescue (SVFR) and the County of Polk to place a wireless telecommunication tower on a portion of the SVFR's property located on N NC Hwy 9 in Cooper's Gap Township to begin the first day of September 2020 and terminate on the thirty-first day of August 2030. The County will pay a sum of one dollar per year for the ten year lease, and in exchange the SVFR may colocate on the tower with the County's approval, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Gasperson moved to direct Attorney Berg to prepare a Quit Claim Deed to correct a scrivener's error made during the transfer of 330 Carolina Drive/parcel T12-E20, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Adjournment

Commissioner Moore moved to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS

Ange High
Clerk to the Board

Myron Yoder
Chairman