

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Public Hearings and Regular Meeting
March 1, 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, Attorney Berg, Clerk to the Board High, media and citizens. Clerk High participated remotely.

1. Public Hearings

- A. Call to Order the first Public Hearing Regarding an Installment Financing Agreement at the Polk County High School - Chairman Melton called the first public hearing to order. The purpose of the public hearing was to take public comments on an installment financing agreement for the HVAC and other improvements project at the Polk County High School (PCHS) in the principal amount not to exceed \$6,200,000, plus interest thereon. The public hearing was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin.

Dave Scherping, Polk County Schools Assistant Superintendent gave a presentation explaining the PCHS HVAC project, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes.

- B. Citizen Comments.

Pat Linnon spoke thanking all parties involved for considering the funding of this project, and recognizing its importance to the children of the community.

- C. Commissioner Comments.

Commissioner Yoder asked if the energy efficiency would save the school money in their overall utility budget. Mr. Scherping stated they are expecting it to stay around the same with the added square footage in the climate controlled areas, and the increased usage.

Commissioner Moore asked about the humidity issues, and utility rebates. Mr. Scherping said the humidity levels were severe enough to keep papers damp, and dehumidifiers needed to be emptied several times per day. He said utility companies have a system they use to determine the amount of rebates, if any, you receive, and it has yet to be determined for this project.

- D. Adjourn the first Public Hearing.

Commissioner Moore moved to adjourn the first public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

- E. Call to Order the second Public Hearing - Chairman Melton called to order the second public hearing. The purpose of the public hearing was to take

public comment on the proposed new road name, Henson Hideaway Lane. The public hearing was advertised properly in the Tryon Daily Bulletin.

F. Citizen Comments.

No citizens spoke during the comment period.

G. Commissioner Comments.

The Commissioners had no comments.

H. Adjourn the second Public Hearing.

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to adjourn the second public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Call to Order - Chairman Melton.

3. Invocation - Pastor Sean McKaig.

4. Pledge of Allegiance - Vice-Chairman Yoder.

5. Chairman and Commissioner Comments.

Chairman Melton welcomed the County Department Managers who were in attendance, and thanked everyone for taking time to come to the meeting. Commissioner Overholt thanked Mr. Greene and Mr. Scherping for coming to the meeting. He said the first high school football game was Saturday, and he knows the decisions the School Board and Mr. Greene and Mr. Scherping have to make everyday are tough decisions. He appreciates all they do, and is confident they always do what's best for the kids.

Commissioner Moore asked Mr. Greene when more restrictions would be lifted for school athletic programs. Mr. Greene stated they will be safe, and follow the rules, but the official ruling by the administration has yet to be made.

6. Approval of Agenda

A. Commissioner Moore moved to approve the agenda, seconded by Commissioner Yoder, and the motion carried unanimously.

7. Consent Agenda

Commissioner Overholt moved to approve the consent agenda, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

A. February 15, 20201 regular meeting minutes.

B. Tax refund requests through February 2021 in the amount of \$797.90.

C. Sheriff Department Monthly Activity Report for January 2021.

8. Citizen Comments Agenda Items.

No citizens spoke during the agenda item comment period.

9. Annual Sheriff's Report - Sheriff Timothy Wright.

Sheriff Timothy Wright said in an effort to be accountable and transparent to the citizens of Polk County, he will continue to submit a monthly activity report to the Commissioners. He said tonight he will present the Polk County Sheriff's Office Annual Report for 2020, a copy of which is hereby incorporated by reference into these minutes. He reviewed the report, discussing the many different divisions and programs within his organization. He said all the vehicles have standardized equipment, and the patrol zone system has been working to provide the best coverage for the County. The Sheriff commended his staff for their professionalism, and performance over the past year, and said he could not do his job without all of them. He then asked two members of his staff to speak.

Cindy Wicklund, Director of Community Outreach, said a main goal of the Sheriff is to increase communication with citizens by using social media, newsletters, and a new program called the Citizens Academy to help accomplish this. She explained the Citizen Academy Program, had its first graduating class of seven citizens, and they will begin another session in April, as well as other citizen involvement programs and community events.

John J. Sauve, Staff Attorney & Public Information Officer, gave an overview of areas they have been working to improve internally this year. He said they are fully staffed, have developed a sixteen week training program for all new employees, adjusted the pay classification system, incorporated a working record management system, and are continuing professional development for all employees. He said they will continue these programs, and many others mentioned in the annual report, and by the end of next year will have their comprehensive strategic plan completed.

Chairman Melton said he is grateful Timothy Wright is our Sheriff. Vice-Chairman Yoder thanked the Sheriff and his staff for their presentation. Commissioner Moore thanked the Sheriff for his report, and said he knows the citizens appreciate the transparency. Commissioner Yoder said having the Sheriff and his deputies in charge of the County's safety in an organized, professional way makes everyone in the community feel secure, and he appreciates all their hard work. Commissioner Overholt said the professionalism and transparency in the programs the Sheriff has implemented in our small community are making a big difference for the citizens of Polk County.

10. Resolution Making Certain Findings and Determinations Regarding the Installment Financing for the HVAC and other improvements project at Polk County High School for the County, and Requesting the Local Government Commission to Approve the Financing Agreement - To consider adopting the resolution subsequent to the public hearing. Chairman Melton will present the resolution.

Chairman Melton presented the resolution. Commissioner Moore moved to adopt the Resolution Making Certain Findings and Determinations Regarding the Financing of School Improvements Pursuant to an Installment Financing Agreement and Requesting the Local Government Commission to Approve the Financing Arrangement, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

11. 2020 Uncollected (Delinquent) Tax Report.

Melissa Bowlin Tax Administrator said the tax department has collected 90.59% of the 2020 taxes levied, which is right on track with last years rate of 90.27%. She said the North Carolina General Statutes require the governing body to charge the tax administrator to advertise uncollected taxes each year. Chairman Melton asked her how the tax department collects the unpaid taxes. Ms. Bowlin explained the process. She said they mail written notices, try to contact the citizen to explain there are some options to help them, such as payment plans. She said if they are unable to contact the taxpayer, they then move to other measures such as garnishment, debt set off, bank attachments, and other means available. Commissioner Yoder moved to charge the Tax Administrator to advertise and collect the 2020 unpaid taxes by any and all means, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Proposed New Road Name.

Commissioner Moore moved to approve the new road name Henson Hideaway Lane, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Resolution of the Boards of Commissioners of Polk County, the City of Saluda and the Town of Tryon Seeking an Act to Modify the Polk County, City of Saluda and Town of Tryon Occupancy Tax.

Attorney Berg said the County started working with the Town of Tryon, and the City of Saluda in 2018 then the State Legislature stopped taking new tourism bills and everything was put on hold. She said we have the opportunity to begin the process again, if they choose, however the deadline for submission would be March 11, 2021. She said if the Commissioners choose to move forward, and adopt the resolution, both Tryon and Saluda would need to adopt it as well. Commissioner Yoder asked why the Town of Columbus was not included. Attorney Berg explained Columbus has a unique bill which allows them more flexibility in how they may use their funds, and they have chosen to opt out of this change. Commissioner Yoder moved to adopt the Resolution of the Boards of Commissioners of Polk County, the City of Saluda and the Town of Tryon Seeking an Act to Modify the Polk County, City of Saluda and Town of Tryon Occupancy Tax, seconded by Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

14. Volunteer Board Application(s)

A. Commissioner Moore moved to appoint Michael Meissner to the

Recreation Advisory Board, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Citizen Comments Non-Agenda Items.

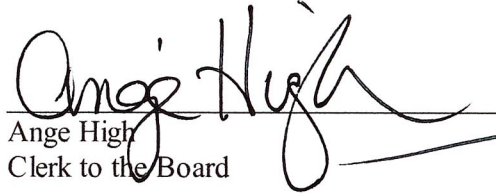
One citizen spoke on non-agenda items.

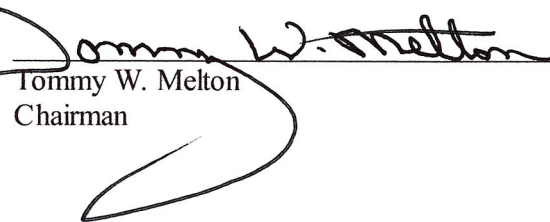
16. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved 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