

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Regular Meeting
March 29, 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. Commissioner Yoder participated remotely.

1. Call to Order - Chairman Melton
2. Invocation - Vice-Chairman Beiler
3. Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Overholt
4. Chairman and Commissioner Comments

Chairman Melton called attention to the Sheriff's Annual Report. He said the document was presented at the last meeting, and was full of information on the responsibilities, and accomplishments of the Sheriff's Department. He encouraged citizens to review the information which is available online, or they can contact the County Administration office to access a copy.

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

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to approve the agenda as written, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

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

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

- A. March 15, 2021 regular meeting minutes.
- B. Tax refund requests through March 2021 in the amount of \$113.45.
- C. Sheriff Department Monthly Activity Report for February 2021
- D. Authorization for County Manager to sign Memorandum of Understanding with Henderson County regarding shared radio communication.
- E. FY 2022 NCDOT Grant Certs & Assurances (approved 10/5/2020).
- F. Budget Amendment to appropriate \$15,000 fund balance to increase the EMS part-time salary line due to the need of part-time coverage of full-time staffers that were out on FMLA unrelated to COVID.

7. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items

One citizen spoke during the agenda item comment period.

8. Community Child Protection Team (CCPT) Annual Report & April 2021 Child Abuse & Neglect Prevention Proclamation.

Lynn Barnette, a member of the Polk County Community Child Protection team(CCPT) presented the annual report. She said the report includes the team's findings from case reviews, listing contributory factors, identifying gaps or barriers in services, and strategies to address them. Ms. Barnette explained the Polk County Division of Social Services (DSS) received three hundred and fifty-four reports of child abuse and neglect involving children and families during 2020, with forty-six children currently in foster care.

She then presented the proclamation declaring April 2021 Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month.

Commissioner Overholt moved to approve the CCPT annual report, and adopt the proclamation declaring April 2021 Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

9. Windstream Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF) Expansion.

Sarah Hardin, Vice President State Government Affairs Windstream, said they received a grant through the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF). She explained this is a federal grant program administered by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to expand rural broadband throughout the country. The eligible areas for the expansion were determined by the federal government through information received from the census on unserved areas. She said Windstream won, through a reverse auction, census blocks in Tryon, Green Creek, and Columbus, totaling one hundred and eighty locations (households or businesses). Ms. Hardin said the total time they have to complete the project is ten years, but they will have build out requirements to meet at the three and six year marks County Manager Pittman asked her the amount of investment Windstream would be making in Polk County for this project, and she said she did not have an exact number, however, Windstream will be matching the federal governments support at over fifty percent.

10. St. Luke's Contract for Employee Services

Tommy Oakman, Human Resources Officer presented an agreement for consideration between the County and St. Luke's Hospital to provide employment services that are currently being conducted outside the county. He said he worked to find a competitive bid to keep the services needed for county employees in Polk County. Mr. Oakman said the County Manager, and County Attorney have both reviewed the agreement.

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to approve the agreement between Polk County and St. Luke's Hospital for the provision of out patient services, seconded by Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

11. April 2021 Spring Litter Cleanup Proclamation.

Commissioner Moore presented the proclamation. He then moved to adopt the proclamation declaring April 2021 Spring Litter Cleanup Month, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

12. Kudzu Grant Update.

Jamie Davidson, a volunteer on the Polk County Appearance Commission, thanked the Commissioners for approving the 2021 Spring Litter Cleanup Proclamation.

She said she was also appointed to the Kudzu Committee which was formed as a sub-group of the Appearance Commission in September 2020 after they were appropriated \$8,500.00 to be used exclusively for kudzu eradication in a matching grant program.

Mrs. Davidson reviewed each project below, and said all, except for two which are pending (City of Saluda and Lake Adger Property Owners Association), have been approved. She further explained since the first grant was issued to the Town of Tryon for the Harmon Field project, the Kudzu Committee has created guidelines, and policies and procedures for applicants to follow. It is now determined no grant will be awarded for more than \$2000 (\$1000 match).

Town of Tryon – Harmon Field: sprayed along N. Pacolet River at Harmon Field – approx. 4 acres-Final Report received – money distributed in the amount of \$1650 Project completed.

Town of Tryon - Vaughan Creek: Vaughan Creek is a 24 acre site with a mile of there and back trail. Park Staff and supervised volunteers will cut, spray and daub vines with chemicals where kudzu climbs and girdles the trees obscuring native trees and a view of the river. Work has begun.

Conserving Carolina – Requested a backpack sprayer to be used on land protected by Conserving Carolina in Polk County including, but not exclusive to Normal Wilder Forest and Melrose Falls.

Saluda Community Land Trust – Reclamation Park - Part of a 4 year process to eradicate kudzu on a 7 acre property of an abandoned neighborhood on Hwy 176 west of Green River BBQ that was once a self-sufficient residential area for Black residents from the early 1900's until 1980. In 1930's over a dozen families lived here. SCLT will cut vines out of the trees, dig the kudzu crowns, and spray in the spring, cutting vegetation during the summer with the weed-eater and then spraying again in the fall.

Lake Adger Property Owners Association – The Board of Directors have applied for a grant to have a landscaper spray kudzu in the main marina area, and along Lake Adger Road between the roadway and Panther Creek. These are common areas owned by the Property Owners Association. Pending.

Conserving Carolina: In 2019-2020, with the assistance from the Polk County

Appearance Commission's Beautification Matching Grant, Conserving Carolina successfully treated one of four kudzu monoculture areas identified on the Melrose Falls Property. At that time, kudzu grants were not available. Approximately 1.2-acres of Kudzu along 830 linear feet between Hwy 176 and the North Pacolet River have been treated – Area 2.

Conserving Carolina – Kudzu Removal in Area 2 (approximately 1 acre) along Hwy 176 and along the Pacolet River. This grant will provide funding for a second spraying at this location.

Conserving Carolina – Kudzu Removal in Area 3 which is 2 acres along Hwy 176 & Pacolet River using mechanical and chemical spraying.

Conserving Carolina will use paid staff, volunteers and a contractor to provide the services to spray and mechanically remove kudzu.

City of Saluda – Dog Park – on Chestnut Street in Saluda - Chemical removal of kudzu along the boundary and fence at the Dog Park will allow for better visibility, safety, and air flow at the park. They will be using City staff to do the spraying. Pending.

Mrs. Davidson said with the projects discussed, there will be \$1886 remaining for additional grants, and she believes more applications will be forthcoming to deplete the budgeted amount. There was a question about ground stability when the kudzu is removed. Mrs. Davidson said the areas should be replanted with native species of plants, such as grasses to help with erosion control.

13. General Statute 160D Land Use Ordinance Update Timeline and Public Hearing Requirement .

Cathy Ruth, Planning Director said a new chapter, 160D, was created in the North Carolina General States to update development regulations, and to organize them more logically. She said the new law does not create major policy changes, or shift the scope of authority granted to local governments. However, it does provide many clarifying amendments and consensus reforms that are required to be incorporated into local development regulations by July 1, 2021. She said over the past several months, the Planning Board, County Attorney, and staff have been reviewing the ordinances, and have some additional recommendations. She presented a timeline for the Commissioners' to consider for scheduling a work session to review all the proposed changes, and to give their final approval. Highlighted ordinance drafts are available for review on the Polk County website.

Commissioner Yoder moved to approve 160D timeline, and schedule a public hearing on Monday, May 3, 2021 at 4:00 pm to take citizen comments on changes to the Polk County Ordinances as required by General Statute 160D, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

14. Resolution Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of an Installment Financing Agreement, a Security Agreement, an Escrow Agreement and Related Documents in Connection with the Financing of School Improvements for the County of Polk, North Carolina - (Lowest Proposal Bank of America, 2.186%) Chairman Melton will present the resolution.

Chairman Melton presented the resolution.

Commissioner Moore moved to adopt the Resolution Authorizing the Execution and Delivery of an Installment Financing Agreement, a Security Agreement, an Escrow Agreement and Related Documents in Connection with the Financing of School Improvements for the County of Polk, North Carolina, seconded by Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Volunteer Board Applications

- A. The following applications were presented for consideration: Appearance Commission - Kristen Powell; Isothermal Community College Board of Trustees- Don Hofmann; Library Board of Trustees - Theodore Hiley.

Commissioner Overholt moved to appoint all applicants as presented, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

16. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items

No citizens spoke during the non-agenda item comment period.

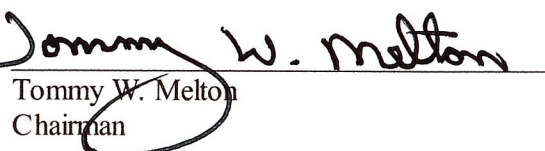
17. Adjournment

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Commissioner Moore and the motion carried unanimously.

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS


Ange High
Clerk to the Board


Tommy W. Melton
Chairman