

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
Public Hearings and Regular Meeting Agenda
September 20, 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. Public Hearing

- A. Call to Order - Chairman Melton. The purpose of the public hearing was to take public comment on the FY 2023 NCDOT Section 5311 (ADTAP), 5310, 5339, 5307, and applicable State Funding Community Transportation Grants. The public hearing was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin. Katelyn Earley Transportation Manager was present and said these are the annual grants that fund the administration costs and some capital expenses for the transportation department. A complete copy of the grant application was made available for public review.
- B. Citizen Comments. There were no citizen comments.
- C. Commissioner Moore moved to adjourn the public hearing, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.
- D. Call to order - Chairman Melton. The purpose of the public hearing was to take citizen comments on amending the lease with St. Luke's Hospital. The public hearing and intention to amend the lease was properly advertised in the Tryon Daily Bulletin. Attorney Berg explained this is a change to the current lease with St. Luke's Hospital. She said there had been previous addendums made to the lease which were incorporated into this one document, The other changes were adding insurance and indemnification terms, and changing the reference to the general statute to reflect the 1985 changes in the general statutes.
- E. Citizen Comments. There were no citizen comments.
- F. Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to adjourn the public hearing, seconded by Commissioner Overholt and the motion carried unanimously.

2. Call to Order Regular Meeting - Chairman Melton.

3. Invocation- Vice-Chairman Beiler.

4. Pledge of Allegiance - Commissioner Overholt.

5. Chairman and Commissioner Comments.

Chairman Melton said there are many volunteer opportunities in the county, and he encouraged anyone interested to complete an application. He then read the following: *I have been getting a lot of feedback from the community about the Polk County School Board becoming a partisan office. While I believe that the School Board is doing a great job of educating our children, I cannot dismiss requests from the community to make an elected body partisan. I would like for the board to entertain, via consensus, to direct the County Attorney to put a draft of a referendum together that asks the citizens of this community whether or not they want the school board to become a partisan office. I would like for this to be considered on the ballot at the general election in November. Gentlemen, do you agree with this direction to the County Attorney? If so, she can bring this back to us at a meeting in October to vote on.*

The board's consensus was for Attorney Berg to gather and bring back to the following meeting information on putting a partisan school board referendum on the ballot.

Commissioner Yoder said that when we look at governing boards, we want to know their principles and where they stand as elected officials.

Commissioner Moore said his mother-in-law had a horrendous fall over the weekend and is now in Mission Hospital. However, she was first treated by EMS and St. Luke's Hospital. He said she received outstanding care by both, and the Doctor at St. Luke's came out to the parking lot to speak to them in person instead of calling them, which showed a level of care above and beyond what was expected. Chairman Melton said St. Luke's Hospital is an exceptional facility he has personally used during a medical crisis. He said their role is to stabilize patients and determine the proper care and treatment needed, and he is very proud to have them in our community.

6. Approval of Agenda

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

7. Consent Agenda - Motion to approve the consent agenda.

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

A. Amendment to the Recruitment and Retention Resolution.

B. Sales Tax School Capital Set-aside in the amount of \$39,955.

C. Sheriff Department Monthly Activity Report for August 2021.

- D. Declare surplus assorted modular metal shelving units, four module customer service desk (one module to be conveyed to Polk County Schools are taking) four study carrels (two singles, one double, one quad) from the Polk County Libraries to be sold electronically by public auction.
- E. 2022 Polk County Local Government Holiday Schedule.
- F. Declare a 2013 Ford Explorer Sheriff's vehicle surplus to be conveyed to Isothermal Community College, a non-profit agency, for use in Basic Law Enforcement Training.
- G. FY 2022 Rural Operating Assistance Program Application for Polk County Transportation.

8. Citizen Comments on Agenda Items.

There were no citizen comments on agenda items.

9. Lake Adger Sand and Gravel Mine Proposal.

Warren D. Eadus, President, Quible, and Associates, said there are two main issues at Lake Adger regarding sedimentation, what is already in the lake, and what is coming down the Green River to the lake. He explained the proposed concept is that a private entity will enter into a contract with the County to operate a sand and gravel mine on County-owned property. The contracted private entity will be responsible for permitting, constructing, maintaining, and operating the facility for the life of the contract. In return, the County will receive the benefit of reduced sediment going into Lake Adger.

Commissioner Yoder said he had been working towards this goal since he was first elected. Chairman Melton said he was on the Board when they purchased the lake for \$1.6M in 2008 and asked how much dredging costs?

Manager Pittman said it's costly, and it's been estimated up to one million dollars per foot. He said the project NC Wildlife is doing at the Lake Adger Marina would cost approximately two million dollars. He said this proposed project would be in addition to the Marina dredging project.

Commissioner Moore moved to approve the Quible Agreement for Professional Services proposal, seconded by Commissioner Yoder, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Yoder moved to approve the budget amendment to appropriate \$22,500 from the Capital Reserve Fund Balance (Dam) and transfer it to the Water Capital Project Fund, seconded by Commissioner Overholt, and the motion carried unanimously.

10. Purchase Order Request Sole Source Vendor for Courthouse Thermal Security Scanner.

Sheriff Wright said no other vendors could be located with products that had the required functions needed. Manager Pittman said the new security system would take temperatures as people walk through, and ARPA funds will be used to purchase the equipment.

Commissioner Overholt moved to approve the purchase order to Security Detection Inc., seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler and the motion carried unanimously.

11. Joint Funding Request Sheriff Department and Health and Human Services Division of Social Services (DSS).

Kim Wilson, Senior Program Manager, Department of Social Services (DSS), and Sgt. Pam Cannon came to present a joint request to establish a forensic interview & investigation protocol in Polk County. Ms. Wilson said the two agencies would use the \$15,000 to purchase the necessary recording equipment and secure 24-hour access to a facility where the interviews can be conducted and store the equipment.

Sgt. Cannon said from January 2019 to June of this year, the Polk County Sheriff's Department had investigated thirty-two cases of child sexual abuse. Ms. Wilson said from January 2021 through August of 2021, DSS received twelve reports of alleged sexual abuse. She said currently, law enforcement and DSS must travel to Buncombe County to obtain forensic interviews, which may cause a wait time of up to two weeks for an appointment.

They shared the goals for creating a forensic process in Polk County:

1. To provide a safe, neutral setting appropriate for conducting forensic interviews in a centralized location.
2. To conduct only one interview of a child who is alleged to be sexually abused so that the child is not traumatized by having to tell their story more than once.
3. To use a forensic interview protocol that conducts interviews legally sound and is of a neutral, fact-finding nature.
4. To record these interviews with audio and video to aid Law enforcement and the District Attorney in the decision-making process regarding the prosecution of these types of cases.
5. To lessen the stress and trauma for the family by having to travel outside the county or having the child wait several weeks to be interviewed.

The Commissioners thanked them for the tremendous work they do for the children and families of Polk County, and all fully supported their efforts to improve and expedite this process.

Commissioner Moore moved to approve the budget amendment to appropriate \$15,000 from contingency and transfer it to the DSS Fund, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

12. FY 2023 NCDOT Community Transportation Grants & Resolution – To

consider approval of NCDOT Section 5311 (ADTAP), 5310, 5339, 5307, and applicable State Funding Community Transportation Grants subsequent to the public hearing.

Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to adopt the resolution and submit the FY 2023 grant application, seconded by Commissioner Yoder and the motion carried unanimously.

13. Citizen Comments on Non-Agenda Items.

There were four citizen comments on non-agenda items.

14. 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. Vice-Chairman Beiler moved to return to open session, seconded by Commissioner Yoder, and the motion carried unanimously.

Commissioner Overholt moved to approve the Mallinckrodt Bankruptcy Plan as a claim litigant in the National Opioid Litigation, seconded by Vice-Chairman Beiler, and the motion carried unanimously.

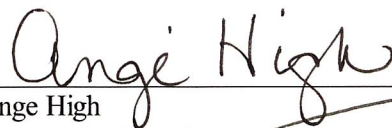
Commissioner Moore moved to approve the Memorandum of Agreement between Polk County, as a litigant in the National Opioid Litigation, and the North Carolina Department of Justice, and the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners, seconded by Commissioner Yoder, and the motion carried unanimously.

15. Adjournment

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

Attest:

POLK COUNTY BOARD OF
COMMISSIONERS


Ange High
Clerk to the Board


Tommy W. Melton
Chairman