

Surry County Board of Commissioners  
Meeting of September 21, 2020

The Surry County Board of Commissioners met at 6:00 p.m., September 21, 2020. The meeting was held in the Board Room, Historic Courthouse, Dobson, N.C., virtually via Zoom and YouTube.

Board members present for the meeting were Chairman Larry Johnson, Vice-Chairman Mark Marion, Commissioner Eddie Harris, Commissioner Van Tucker and Commissioner Bill Goins.

Others present for the meeting, at various times, were:

Chris Knopf, County Manager  
Sandy Snow, Assistant County Manager  
Rhonda Nixon, Finance Officer  
Penny Harrison, Tax Administrator  
Roger Bedsaul, Appraisal Supervisor  
Martha Brintle, MIS Director  
George Crater, Airport Manager  
Kristy Preston, DSS Director  
Susan Campbell, DSS Attorney  
Ed Woltz, County Attorney  
Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager  
Bryan Cave, NC Cooperative Extension - Surry County Center  
News Media

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Chairman Johnson called the meeting to order. Commissioner Goins delivered the invocation and led the Pledge of Allegiance.

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Chairman Johnson requested the Board review and approve the agenda. Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Commissioner Marion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the September 21, 2020 meeting agenda.

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Chairman Johnson requested the Board consider the minutes of the August 17, 2020 meeting as presented. Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to approve the minutes as written.

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Chairman Johnson requested the Board consider the consent agenda with the addition of a revised Hanging Rock Scenic Byway Resolution. Upon motion of Commissioner Tucker, seconded by Chairman Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the consent agenda as follows:

Requests from the County Manager:

- Approve the following from the Tax Department:
  1. Total releases for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$85,301.21.
  2. Total refunds for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$24,858.05.
  3. Total NCVTS tag and tax refunds for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$1,358.30.
  4. Total real and personal property discoveries for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$157,806.82.
  5. Total motor vehicle discoveries for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$0.
  6. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC additions for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$7.38.
  7. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC refunds for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$113.61.

- 8. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC releases for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$175.
- 9. Total EMS, EMD and EMS-MC collections for the month ending 8/31/2020 in the amount of \$28,769.15.

- Approve the submittal of a letter of support for the Foothills Arts Council’s Blue Ridge National Heritage Area grant application.
- Approve the submittal of a letter of support, dated August 31, 2020, for Surry County Schools’ U.S. Department of Education grant application.

Requests from the Assistant County Manager:

- Approve to reclassify position #531314 from a Human Services Planner/Evaluator II, Grade 70, to a Social Worker Supervisor II, Grade 70, with no additional funding required.
- Approve the Health and Nutrition Center’s purchase request for an immunization freezer for \$4,710.88, with no County funds required.
- Approve the Health and Nutrition Center’s purchase request for an exam chair for \$5,484, with no County funds required.
- Approve the Health and Nutrition Center’s purchase request of a City View Software upgrade for \$4,900 needed by Environmental Health, to be paid from Health Fund Balance.

Requests from the Finance Officer:

- Approve Budget Amendment #2, which follows, and authorize the Chairman or the County Manager to execute any agreements or contracts to add the Horne Creek project to the County’s existing project management arrangement with the Resource Institute:

					Change #2
The Board of County Commissioners approved an amendment to the FY2020-2021 Budget Ordinance at their meeting on September 21, 2020.					
ACCOUNT			PREVIOUS		REVISED
CODE		DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT	CHANGE	AMOUNT
<u>GENERAL FUND</u>					
<u>EXPENDITURES</u>					
<u>Horne Creek Project (NEW)</u>					
1054967	51720	Contracted Services	0	150,000	150,000
		Increase departmental total	0	150,000	150,000
<u>REVENUE</u>					
1044000	49900	Unencumbered Balance	7,491,423	150,000	7,641,423
		Increase fund totals.	74,783,952	150,000	74,933,952

Chairman Johnson declared the meeting to be an open forum and invited members of the audience to address the Board on any matters of civic concern.

There being no comments, Chairman Johnson closed the open forum.

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Chairman Johnson opened the public hearing for the 2021 tax revaluation process.

There being no comments, Chairman Johnson closed the public hearing.

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Penny Harrison, Tax Administrator, informed the Board that the tax revaluation books are available for review in the County Manager's Office until the Board's next meeting on October 19, 2020, at which time the Board will consider action.

Commissioner Goins requested that the documents be posted on the County website. County Manager Chris Knopf said staff will post the documents on the County website on September 22, 2020.

Mr. Knopf asked Ms. Harrison about the impact Surry County will see on its property values. Ms. Harrison said the County will experience an approximate 7 percent increase on property values.

Commissioner Harris asked Appraisal Supervisor Roger Bedsaul where he is seeing the most increases, to which Mr. Bedsaul said with single-family residential homes. Commissioner Harris asked Mr. Bedsaul if we are seeing a deviation in different locations, to which Mr. Bedsaul said the increases in single-family residential homes' property values is similar everywhere in Surry County. Mr. Bedsaul said the County needs more affordable housing.

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Bryan Cave, NC Cooperative Extension - Surry County Center, presented a storage building purchase request.

Mr. Cave said he identified a funding source to pay for a storage building, which will house equipment from the Cooperative Extension office that is now located in numerous places. The quoted price on the storage building is \$12,342 from Carport Central.

Commissioner Tucker complimented Mr. Cave on identifying funding.

The Board discussed with Mr. Cave the best locations for the storage building behind the Surry County Service Center and any possible water drainage issues.

Mr. Cave described what will be stored in the building.

Mr. Knopf and Commissioner Goins discussed any potential fire marshal issues. County Attorney Ed Woltz said the permitting process should determine the setback for the building.

As an aside, Commissioner Harris asked Mr. Cave details about Surry County's approximate \$269 million in farm income for 2019. Mr. Cave discussed farm income specifics, saying he anticipates a double-digit decrease in numbers for 2020 because of COVID-19. Mr. Cave said, however, that COVID-19 has shown the local farming industry more opportunities. Commissioner Harris requested a yearly presentation from Mr. Cave to the Board about farm income in Surry County.

Mr. Cave said that Surry County was 11<sup>th</sup> in the state in farm income for 2019.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to approve Mr. Cave's storage building purchase request, with no County funds required.

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Kristy Preston, DSS Director, presented her quarterly Director's Report.

Ms. Preston presented a thank you letter that was sent to Surry County DSS staff from the N.C. Social Services Commission, which is the State agency that develops administrative rules for the Division of Social Services. The letter thanked Surry County DSS staff for their hard work during COVID-19.

Ms. Preston also presented her department's recent performance measurement data.

Commissioner Harris asked if COVID-19 has exacerbated child abuse, neglect and foster care cases in Surry County. Ms. Preston said case numbers were down in these categories when children were not physically attending school or out for the summer, but foster care cases have risen considerably in the last six to eight weeks since school has reopened. She said the foster care case number is the highest it's ever been in Surry County.

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Mr. Knopf presented the Board a resolution approving the conveyance of a 2002 Red Jeep Grand Cherokee, Asset#51085, VIN#1J4GW48S72C263026, from Surry County to Bannertown Volunteer Fire Department.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Harris, the Board voted unanimously to adopt the resolution approving the conveyance of a 2002 Red Jeep Grand Cherokee, Asset#51085, VIN#1J4GW48S72C263026, from Surry County to Bannertown Volunteer Fire Department.

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Mr. Knopf provided an update to the Board about the COVID-19 Relief Fund. He discussed the following:

- Expanding expenses reserved for "Mass Testing," to include "Immunizations"
- "Telework Capabilities" increase
- "Law Enforcement Payroll" increase
- "Food Delivery" allocation removal from the COVID-19 Relief Fund and creating an allocation from the General Fund that meets DSS needs.

Mr. Knopf discussed how the funding has changed as the State has provided ongoing, updated guidelines.

Mr. Woltz discussed upcoming MOUs with Northern Regional and Hugh Chatham Memorial hospitals for testing sites in Surry County.

The Board also discussed the possibility of purchasing a full body scanner for the Surry County Detention Center, possibly with COVID-19 Relief Funds.

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Mr. Knopf presented the Board with the County Commissioners' Calendar for 2021.

Upon motion of Commissioner Marion, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the County Commissioners' Calendar for 2021.

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Mr. Knopf presented the Board's Legislative Goals for 2021-2022.

Commissioner Harris requested adding Broadband expansion and improvements in Surry County to the Legislative Goals.

Upon motion of Commissioner Harris, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to approve the Legislative Goals for 2021-2022 with revised text about needed Broadband expansion and improvements.

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Mr. Knopf presented a request for one ambulance chassis replacement, totaling \$126,260. The chassis replacement would be paid for with funding from the Provider Relief Fund (PRF).

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Marion, the Board voted unanimously to approve the chassis replacement with funding from the Provider Relief Fund (PRF).

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Mr. Knopf presented a lease amendment from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) for space at the Surry County Service Center.

Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Chairman Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to approve the lease amendment through December 31, 2020 and negotiate a new lease with a beginning date of January 1, 2021.

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Nathan Walls, Assistant to the County Manager, presented boards and commissions requests and updates.

Upon motion of Chairman Johnson, seconded by Commissioner Goins, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Dr. Drew Nowlin to the Board of Health.

Upon motion of Commissioner Marion, seconded by Chairman Johnson, the Board voted unanimously to reappoint Barbara Long to the Board of Health.

Mr. Walls informed the Board that Joan Vasata, who had served on the Animal Control Committee, had passed away and that Lt. Abraham Doby is looking for a replacement.

Mr. Walls also informed the Board that Dr. Richard Merlo had resigned from the Partners Behavioral Health Management Board.

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Mr. Knopf informed the Board that the Surry County Service Center will not be available for virtual public comments during the October 19, 2020 Board meeting because the building will be used at that time for early voting.

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In General County Business, Chairman Johnson said Dr. Myra Cox of Elkin City Schools will be on the October 19, 2020 Board meeting agenda to discuss the Elkin gym project.

Chairman Johnson also said that design updates for the new Surry County Detention Center could possibly be presented on October 19,

2020. Commissioner Tucker suggested holding the detention center agenda item after COVID-19 numbers have improved and capacity for public meetings increases. The Board discussed which meeting was appropriate to schedule the detention center agenda item.

Chairman Johnson said he is encouraged by County retail sales tax revenues that were reported in the agenda packet's Informational Items. Mr. Knopf discussed the details of the statistics by county and said that Surry County property tax collection percentages in July and August were good. Mr. Knopf also said that Ms. Harrison and Finance Officer Rhonda Nixon will discuss property tax collection figures and sales tax revenues at the October 19, 2020 Board meeting.

Mr. Knopf reminded the Board about the upcoming Airport Authority meeting on Thursday, September 24, 2020.

Commissioner Goins encouraged the public to use the Bean Shoals Access and said he appreciates Commissioner Tucker's efforts with keeping the vehicular road open. Commissioner Goins recently visited and there were many people there enjoying themselves. Commissioner Tucker provided an update on a recent meeting and discussions with State officials on hopeful improvements at Bean Shoals Access, as well as the likelihood of the park's vehicular road remaining open.

Commissioner Marion complimented the Health and Nutrition Center, County and custodial staff who have been working hard on keeping people healthy and keeping buildings clean during COVID-19.

Chairman Johnson discussed two recent ribbon cuttings - the first was for the new Surry-Yadkin EMC electric vehicle fast car charging station on Zephyr Road at Interstate 77 and the second was for the new Westfield Volunteer Fire Station.

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Upon motion of Commissioner Goins, seconded by Commissioner Tucker, the Board voted unanimously to adjourn at 7:43 p.m.

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Nathan Walls  
Clerk to the Board