

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**Monday, May 5, 2003****7:30 P.M.**

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and at the above stated time in the Dempsey B. Herring Courthouse Annex Building located at 112 West Smith Street, Whiteville, North Carolina, for their regular scheduled meeting on the first Monday.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

C.E. "Gene" Wilson, **Chairman**
 Bill Memory, **Vice Chairman**
 David L. Dutton, Jr.
 Kipling Godwin
 Sammie Jacobs
 Amon E. McKenzie
 Lynwood Norris

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Billy Joe Farmer, **County Administrator**
 James E. Hill, Jr., **County Attorney**
 Darren L. Currie, **Assistant County Administrator**
 June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 7:30 P.M., Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order. The invocation was delivered by Commissioner Memory. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Agenda Item #3: BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL:

Commissioner Norris made a motion to approve the April 21, 2003 Board Minutes as recorded, seconded by Commissioner Memory. Commissioner Dutton stated he was listed as being absent in one (1) location on the Draft copy of the April 21, 2003 Minutes and he was present. June B. Hall, Clerk to the Board, stated the correction would be made on the final print of the Board Minutes. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #4: CHAF PROGRAM UPDATE:

Tammy Jones, The Adams Company, Incorporated, presented the following update on the Columbus County CHAF Program for Floyd Adams who could not attend the meeting.

Columbus County Summary Sheet**CHAF Program****Previous
April 17, 2003**

TOTAL HOUSES				491		
Houses Inspected				491		
Replacement			295		295	
Repair			196		196	
Repair Work			196			
Work Write-up	0				0	
Bids Complete, Not Awarded	0				0	
Board Awarded, No Construction	7				18	
Title Opinion NOT Requested		0				0
Waiting on Title Opinion		0				0
Waiting on Prom.Note/D.O.T.		3				3
Waiting on Contractor		4				15
Under Construction	35				25	
Complete	154				153	

Replacement Work			295			
Work Write-up	0				1	
Board Awarded, No Construction	19				26	
Title Opinion NOT Requested		3				6
Waiting on Title Opinion		8				5
N.O. E. Not Sent		3				4
Waiting on Client		5				11
Under Construction	90				83	
Complete	186				182	
Not Visited				0	0	
Legal Work						
Total Titles NOT Requested	3				6	
Total Titles Requested	488				485	
Titles Requested, Not Complete	8				5	
Preliminary Title Complete	45				70	
Prom.Note/D.O.T. Requested, Not Signed	54				34	
Prom. Not/D.O.T. Recorded	381				376	

Commissioner McKenzie asked Tammy Jones if they would be finished by the June 30, 2003 deadline. Ms. Jones replied stating the repairs would be completed by June 30, 2003 and the replacement would be completed by the end of August, 2003 but everything would be under contract by the end of June, 2003.

Direction on two (2) Repair Contracts:

Tammy Jones stated there were two (2) replacement contracts that needed County direction on how to handle. They are as follows:

1. **Rosa Mince:** Original bid at - **\$25,950** (bid as a stick-built brick house, but upon examination it was discovered to be a double wide mobile home with brick underpinning)
Rebid and lowest bid came in at **\$60,000**
2. **David Parker:** Original bid at - **\$33,275** (brick 2-story house in floodplain that must be elevated)
Rebid and lowest bid came in at **\$107,100** (it would cost \$242,000 for replacement)

We took this matter to Dave Kelly with the State for his advise. He recommends repair and not replacement.

After lengthy discussion among the Board members on the pros and cons of these two (2) matters, Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to approve these two (2) repair contracts at the last low bid received, seconded by Commissioner Memory. The motion so carried.

2003-2004 Concentrated Site Housing Needs Grant (CDBG # 03 - C - 1089):

Tammy Jones informed the Board the deadline for returning this paperwork to Raleigh was May 12, 2003 and she wanted to know the Board's decision. The paperwork to be signed and returned is as follows:

1. Sample F, North Carolina Department of Commerce, Request for Release of Funds and Certification, Environmental;
2. Environmental Review Record for the County of Columbus;
3. Environmental Reviews at the Community Level; **and**
4. Agreement for 2003 CDBG Administrative and Housing Services Between the County of Columbus and The Adams Company, Incorporated..

James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, stated he was working on a letter for Floyd Adams and Columbus County to sign, certifying to us that all the environmental issues have been handled and the conditions met for this grant and then Columbus County will certify to the environmental issues.

Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to approve the 2003-2004 Concentrated Site

Housing Needs Grant (CDBG #03 - C - 1089) for the Adams Company, Incorporated, contingent upon the letter being prepared by James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, is signed by The Adams Company and Columbus County related to the environmental issues. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Godwin. The motion so carried. The above listed documents will be kept on file in the Administration Building in the office of the Assistant County Administrator for review.

Agenda Item #5: SOCIAL SERVICES - 2003 - 2005 Work First Plan:

Mary Thompson, representing Marva Scott, Director of Social Services, requesting Board approval of the following State recommended revisions to the 2003 - 2005 Work First Plan.

COLUMBUS COUNTY

A. Revisions/clarifications Required

1. Please make the following corrections to Emergency Assistance, on page 11:
 1. Change the second bullet, "Be a United States Citizen or legal alien" to "Meet the citizenship/immigrant requirements of Work First Family Assistance."
 - In the third bullet, replace the phrase, "related by blood, (brother. ..first cousin, etc.)" to "who meets the kinship rule for Work First Family Assistance.
 - In the last bullet, change "net income" to "gross income."
2. Please submit a more complete description of services to low-income families (under 200% of poverty). As described in the Work First Manual, Section 003, IX. B., please include:
 - Income limits (no higher than 200% of poverty).
 - Benefit limits (for example, \$600 per application, \$1200 per year, etc.).
 - Services provided (for example, car repair, tools, uniforms, child care, etc.).
 - All other locally set requirements or limits (for example, resource limits, etc.).

B. Comments (Revision Not Required)

- Medicaid. We want to remind all counties that anyone expressing a medical need has a right to apply for Medicaid on the day they appear at your office. Please be sure that you preserve this right in situations where you may be delaying or diverting someone from applying for Work First Family Assistance. Also counties must take care not to allow the processing of a Medicaid application to be delayed due to any application requirements of Work First Family Assistance. Counties may need to develop a protocol for separating the Medicaid application from a Work First application in situations where processing of Work First may be delayed or may not be completed. As you know, it is critically important to evaluate the Medicaid eligibility of any family whose Work First Family Assistance is denied or terminated.

Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to approve the State recommended changes to the Work First Plan as presented by Mary Thompson, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #6: CONTRACT - APPROVAL of WORK CONTRACT BETWEEN the COUNTY of COLUMBUS and JOSEPH ETHERIDGE:

Darren Currie, Assistant County Administrator, is requesting Board approval of the following Contract for the Maintenance Program for Waccamaw River.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

C O N T R A C T

THIS AGREEMENT, entered into this the 5 day of MAY, 2003, between **COLUMBUS COUNTY**, sometimes hereinafter called *county*; and **JOSEPH ETHERIDGE**, sometimes hereinafter called the *contractor*;

WITNESSETH:

That Whereas, the Columbus County is prepared to contract for certain professional services for the benefit of the citizens of Columbus County and has determined that the contractor has the general reputation for being capable of fulfilling the required services; and

Whereas, the contractor has assured the county that the contractor is capable of rendering the required services in a workmanship manner and within acceptable standards within the contractor's particular industry;

Therefore, for and in consideration of the sum of ten (\$10.00) dollars per hour not to exceed four thousand (\$4,000) dollars within the 12 month period, paid by the county to the contractor, the receipt of which is hereby acknowledged and in the further consideration of the services to be performed by the parties hereto as herein set forth on the Specification Sheet, the parties hereto **CONTRACTED, AGREED and are BOUND ONE TO ANOTHER** as follows:

1. That the County of Columbus shall give to the party of the second part the sum of \$ 10 dollars per hour for the work to be performed by the contractor at such times as set out on the Scope of Work which is attached hereto and made a part hereof as if fully set out herein.
2. The Contractor shall preform all services as set out on the attached Scope of Work within 12 months. The Contractor shall not discriminate based upon sex, age, national origin, religion, or race.
3. In so far as it is legally authorized to do so, the said party of the contractor will indemnify and hold harmless the County of Columbus from any and all lawsuits, claims, damages, or liabilities which result from or injury to any person who is engaged in any activity as outlined on the attached scope of work, from any and all damages to any and all persons or loss or damage to any and all properties in such suits, claims, demands, liabilities arising out of or institute as a result of the contractor performing his, her or its contractual duties.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, this instrument has been executed in duplicate originals, one of which is retained by each of the parties hereto:

Contractor
by: _____

WITNESS

COLUMBUS COUNTY

By: _____
Chairman of the Board of Commissioners

(SEAL)
Attested:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to the Board

I, _____, a Notary Public for said County and State, do hereby certify that _____, personally appeared before me this day and acknowledged the due execution of the foregoing instrument.

WITNESS my hand and official stamp or seal this the _____ day of _____, _____.

(SEAL) _____
NOTARY PUBLIC

My Commission Expires: _____.

I, _____, a Notary Public, do hereby certify that **JUNE B. HALL**, who

being by me duly sworn, says that she knows the official seal of the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County, and is acquainted with _____, who is Chairman of the Columbus County Board of Commissioners, and that she, the said JUNE B. HALL, is the Clerk of said Board of Commissioners of Columbus County, and saw the Chairman sign the foregoing Contract, and saw the said official seal of said Board of Commissioners of Columbus County affixed to the said Contract in the presence of the said Chairman of said Board of Commissioners of Columbus County, all by order of said Board.

WITNESS my hand and official seal or stamp, this the ____ day of _____, 200__

(SEAL)

Notary Public

My Commission Expires: _____.

STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA
COUNTY OF COLUMBUS

CERTIFICATION

Gayle Godwin, Columbus County Finance Officer, certifies that _____ Provision for the payment of the monies to fall due under this Agreement, shall be made by application duly made duly authorized as required by the County Fiscal Control Act.

This the ____ day of _____, 20__.

GAYLE GODWIN, County Finance Officer

CERTIFICATION
County Attorney

I hereby certify that I have examined the foregoing instrument and approved the same as being legal and in proper form.

This the ____ day of _____, 200__.

County Attorney

**ATTACHMENT A
RIVER /STREAM MAINTENANCE PROGAM
COUNTY OF COLUMBUS
SCOPE OF WORK**

The scope of work for the river maintenance program for Columbus County will be to remove all trees and debris that block or impede water flow, as well as, small boat traffic. The method used will be the cut-and-toss method as defined by the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Services. This method states that any debris removed from the river/stream will be placed at least twenty (20) feet from the lowest river/stream bank and lodged in such a fashion that it will not be washed back into the river/stream. The debris cannot be placed in ditches, tributaries or other channels that may, in any manner, restrict the passage of water. These services will be performed in areas designated by Columbus County and will be subject to periodic inspection by employee(s) of Columbus County.

All work performed will be "Hand Work" unless otherwise approved by the County of Columbus. In areas identified as "Hand Work", only chainsaws, portable winches, block and tackles, hand tools, cables, log chains, hooks, axes, pry bars, clevises, etc. and manual labor are allowed to perform work. No other machinery may be used unless by written approval of Columbus County. Individuals may actually have to periodically work within the actual stream flow at all site locations.

Agenda Add-on (Item #1): RESOLUTION - REQUEST for LEGISLATIVE STUDY of TAX STRUCTURE:

The following Resolution was forwarded to Columbus County from Rutherford County for adoption by the Columbus County Board of Commissioners.

**REQUEST for LEGISLATIVE STUDY
of TAX STRUCTURE RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, Columbus County has experienced significant job losses for the past several years due to the loss of manufacturing jobs to foreign countries; **and**

WHEREAS, the loss of manufacturing jobs is a problem being experienced throughout the nation, but is more severe in North Carolina; **and**

WHEREAS, local and state governments have considered various incentives to attract new business and cause existing businesses to expand; **and**

WHEREAS, at the present time, commercial, industrial and residential property are taxed at the same ad valorem property tax rate; **and**

WHEREAS, if a differential rate was allowed wherein industrial and commercial properties were taxed at a lower rate, it would be an incentive to cause businesses and industries to locate in Columbus County; **and**

WHEREAS, the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County believes that it would help to attract jobs to Columbus County if a lower ad valorem rate for commercial and industrial property was allowed.

BE IT THEREFORE RESOLVED that the Board of Commissioners of Columbus County goes on record supporting a legislative study of the tax structure in North Carolina as it relates to businesses and industry; **and**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this study should include the potential effect differential ad valorem tax rates for industrial, commercial and residential property, thereby allowing rates for commercial and industrial to be lowered, would have as incentive for businesses to expand and locate in this county and state; **and**

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be forwarded to the North Carolina County Commissioners Association and Board of County Commissioners within the State.

ADOPTED this the 5th day of May, 2003.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

C.E. WILSON, Chairman

ATTESTED BY:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

After discussion was conducted by the Board members, Commissioner Norris made a motion to take this Resolution under advisement, seconded by Commissioner Memory. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #7: WATER DISTRICT II - REQUEST for FUNDS for EXPANSION:

Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, requested Board approval of the following correspondence to governmental officials requesting funds to add and/or connect lines in Water District II. This letter was mailed to Congressman Mike McIntyre, Senator R.C. Soles, Jr. Representative Dewey L. Hill.

May 5, 2003

The Honorable Mike McIntyre
7th Congressional District
228 Cannon House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

IN RE: Accessibility of Potable Water to Citizens

Dear Congressman McIntyre:

We have recently started operation of a limited water system for rural Columbus County

which entails the townships of Cerro Gordo, Chadbourn, Tatum and Fair Bluff. The original intent was to supply potable water to all of the rural citizenry located in these townships. This system was financed with the United States Rural Development and was contingent upon the usage by the citizens.

Geographically, rural Columbus County has few concentrated sites of housing developments and large wooded areas and sizable tracts of farming land, thus resulting in difficulty supplying water to all of the citizens that have expressed an interest in potable water.

Within the townships located in Columbus County Water District II, there are sixteen (16) hog farms with open lagoons, nine (9) swamps, six (6) creeks, seventeen (17) water branches and in addition, Lumber River serves as a natural boundary. This district encompasses heavy agricultural operations. It is an established fact that with open hog lagoons and existing swamp lands, the problem of fecal coliform is ever present. In addition, constant standing water is an ideal breeding ground for mosquitoes which may carry Eastern Equine Encephalitis. As a means of controlling insects, pesticides are being used heavily in the agricultural areas, thus resulting in runoff to the surface waters and natural streams located within.

Within the confines of this district, we have citizens who do not have accessibility to the County water system, thus resulting in usage of surface wells and outside bathroom facilities. To compound this problem, we are experiencing one (1) area of an old battery site which could easily contaminate an open water supply. In discussion with the citizens who have called the office, it appears they are utilizing shallow water wells some of which are only twenty-four (24') feet in depth.

In addition, we have numerous old dwellings with limited and failing sewer facilities, and due to economic hardships that are being experienced by many of our citizens, they have very limited funds to correct these problems. As time progresses, these conditions could easily lead to critical health problems.

CONGRESSMAN MIKE McINTYRE
May 5, 2003
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Additionally, by connecting the existing lines, we can eliminate the dead heads that have been created in laying the water lines in areas of high concentration, thus eliminating the possibility of THMs which results in chlorinated water being in contact with PVC pipe for an extended period of time. This will also allow us to supply our citizens with better service and may eventually lead to more economical water bills.

NAFTA has had a major negative impact on Columbus County along with the major limitations that are being placed on our tobacco farmers, thus resulting in the ever rising unemployment rate we are presently experiencing. These conditions result in a stringent money flow for our citizens resulting in money being expended only in the most critical areas. To add to the bad economic conditions that exist in Columbus County, we have a high populace of elderly citizens that are surviving on limited incomes.

From the above listed information, it is apparent we are experiencing difficult economic times, but as a government agency, we believe it is our duty to serve and supply our citizens with the best quality service within our power and means.

If additional funding could be located to aid Columbus County in connecting the existing lines, this would allow access to the potable water for many of our citizens who have expressed a strong need. By supplying good potable water to people, we would be serving those persons in high-risk areas, and eliminating the possibility of potential health problems developing from the use of untreated water.

We, as a government body, are requesting you to look for additional funding to aid us in expanding this limited system we have originally installed in order to supply the much-needed potable water to our citizenry.

Any attention and time you may expend toward this matter will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,
 /s/ C.E. WILSON, Chairman

COLUMBUS COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

CEW/jbh

Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to approve the correspondence to governmental officials requesting funds to add and/or connect lines in Water District II, seconded by Commissioner Godwin. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #8: CONSENT AGENDA ITEMS:

Commissioner Norris made a motion to approve the following Consent Agenda Items, seconded by Commissioner Godwin. The motion so carried.

A. Budget Amendments:

TYPE	ACCOUNT	DETAILS	AMOUNT
Expenditure	10-610-6065	CP&L Project Share	\$2,786
	10-610-6065	CP&L Project Share	\$1,774
Revenue	10-348-1660	CP&L Energy	\$2,786
	10-348-1660	CP&L Energy	\$1,774
Expenditure	10-630-0200	Library	\$16,000
Revenue	10-348-3100	State Aid to Libraries	\$16,000
Expenditure	10-700-9703	DSS-Work First/Employment Transp	\$2,611
Revenue	10-399-0000	Fund Balance Appropriated	\$2,611
Expenditure	54-510-7400	Capital Outlay (Truck)	\$14,700
Revenue	54-399-0000	Fund Balance Appropriated	\$14,700

B. Tax Refunds and Releases:**TAX REFUNDS (as submitted to Administration from the Tax Office):
May 5, 2003**

Request a refund in the name of Beck, Furnie Ray, 64 White's Crossing Plaza, Whiteville,, NC 28472. Refund the user fee. There is no trash can at this address. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 03-01602, Bill # 58739.

Request a refund in the name of Wilson, Edwina, 2985 Elizabethtown Rd., Lumberton,, NC 28358. Refund user fee deposit that was paid twice on same address. Refund should be made to Southeastern Home Sales. Amount \$132.75, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # N/A, Bill # .

**TAX RELEASES (as submitted to Administration from the Tax Office):
May 5, 2003**

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the Welches Creek Fire fee (2.08) and the Whiteville Rescue (.52) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$21.32, Value \$2,600.00, Year 1993, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 85928.

Release the Property Value in the name of Bullard, William. Release the value of a mobile home and the Whiteville Rescue fee. Home was traded for a double wide and listed on another account. Amount \$160.77, Value \$4,394.00, Year 2000, Account # 01-02845, Bill # 84046.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the Welches Creek Fire fee (2.80) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.70) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$30.80, Value \$3,500.00, Year 2001, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 9758.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the

Welches Creek Fire fee (2.80) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.70) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$28.70, Value \$3,500.00, Year 2000, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 8999.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the Welches Creek Fire fee (2.80) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.70) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$27.83, Value \$3,500.00, Year 1999, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 27470.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value the Welches Creek Fire fee (2.80) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.70) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$27.83, Value \$3,500.00, Year 1998, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 65148.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the Welches Creek Fire Fee (2.80) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.70) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$27.83, Value \$3,500.00, Year 1997, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 60040.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the Welches Creek Fire fee (2.08) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.52) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$22.88, Value \$2,600.00, Year 1996, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 61797.

Release the Property Value in the name of Simmons, Robert. Release the value of a mobile home that is double listed in the name of Robert and Billie Ann Simmons. Amount \$147.62, Value \$2,856.00, Year 2000, Account # 15-34001, Bill # 11313.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the Welches Creek Fire fee (2.09) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.52) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$22.36, Value \$2,600.00, Year 1994, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 45020.

Release the Property Value in the name of Simmons, Robert. Release the value of a mobile home and the Columbus Rescue fee that is double listed in the name of Robert & Billie Ann Simmons. Amount \$189.71, Value \$2,808.00, Year 2001, Account # 15-34001, Bill # 12167.

Release the Property Value in the name of Hewett, Freddie Lee Sr.. Release the value of a boat for the Town of Brunswick. Property is not inside the town limits. Amount \$2.66, Value \$440.00, Year 2002, Account # 01-01133, Bill # 4238.

Release the Property Value in the name of Day, Ron. Release the value of a mobile home and the Columbus Rescue fee. Home was repossessed in 1998. Amount \$509.00, Value \$41,500.00, Year 2002, Account # 14-04271, Bill # 65918.

Release the Property Value in the name of Day, Ron. Release the value of a mobile home and the Columbus Rescue fee. Home was repossessed in 1998. Amount \$497.00, Value \$41,500.00, Year 2001, Account # 14-04271, Bill # 88315.

Release the Property Value in the name of Day, Ron. Release the value of a mobile home that was repossessed in 1998. Amount \$423.80, Value \$41,500.00, Year 2000, Account # 14-04271, Bill # 88109.

Release the Property Value in the name of Day, Ron. Release the value of a mobile home that was repossessed in 1998. Amount \$388.43, Value \$41,500.00, Year 1999, Account # 14-04271, Bill # 7139.

Release the Property Value in the name of Day, Ron. Release the value of a mobile home that was repossessed in 1998. Amount \$388.43, Value \$41,500.00, Year 1998, Account # 14-04271, Bill # 45476.

Release the Property Value in the name of Bullard, William. Release the value of a mobile home and the Whiteville Rescue fee. Home was traded for a double wide and listed on another account. Amount \$212.49, Value \$4,032.00, Year 2002, Account # 01-02845, Bill # 61668.

Release the Property Value in the name of Bullard, William. Release the value of a mobile home and the Whiteville Rescue fee. Home was traded for a double wide and listed on another account. Amount \$202.58, Value \$4,270.00, Year 2001, Account # 01-02845, Bill # 84121.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the Welches Creek Fire fee (2.08) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.52) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$22.88, Value \$2,600.00, Year 1995, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 16484.

Release the Property Value in the name of Wilson, Irene (Heirs). Release the value of a house, the Welches Creek Fire fee (6.16) and the Whiteville Rescue Fee (1.54). Home burned in 1997. Amount \$244.76, Value \$7,700.00, Year 2002, Account # 14-17862, Bill # 99410.

Release the Property Value in the name of Simmons, Robert. Release the value of a mobile home, the Acme Delco Fire fee (3.18) and the Columbus Rescue fee (.53). The home is double listed in the name of Robert & Billie Ann Simmons. Amount \$203.79, Value \$2,646.00, Year 2002, Account # 15-34001, Bill # 90217.

Release the Property Value in the name of Suggs, Andy H.. Release the value of a boat and the Columbus Rescue fee. The boat was junked in 1999. Amount \$6.73, Value \$765.00, Year 2002, Account # 12-27103, Bill # 93778.

Release the Property Value in the name of Taylor, Donald P.. Release the value of a mobile home that was moved to Brunswick County in 1998. Amount \$114.38, Value \$1,880.00, Year 1999, Account # 15-36084, Bill # 33454.

Release the Property Value in the name of Taylor, Donald P.. Release the value of a mobile home that was moved to Brunswick County in 1998. Amount \$154.56, Value \$3,732.00, Year 2000, Account # 15-36084, Bill # 15123.

Release the Property Value in the name of Taylor, Donald P.. Release the value of a mobile home and the Columbus Rescue fee. The home was moved to Brunswick County in 1998. Amount \$196.79, Value \$3,613.00, Year 2001, Account # 15-36084, Bill # 16038.

Release the Property Value in the name of Taylor, Donald P.. Release the value of a mobile home, the Columbus Rescue fee (.67) and the Acme Delco Fire fee (4.03). The home was moved to Brunswick County in 1998. Amount \$211.00, Value \$3,360.00, Year 2002, Account # 15-36084, Bill # 94171.

Release the Property Value in the name of Wilson, Irene (Heirs). Release the value of a house, the Welches Creek Fire fee (6.16) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (1.54). Home burned in 1997. Amount \$188.14, Value \$7,700.00, Year 2000, Account # 14-17862, Bill # 20124.

Release the Property Value in the name of Wilson, Irene (Heirs). Release the value of a house, the Welches Creek Fire fee (6.16) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (1.54). Home burned in 1997. Amount \$232.76, Value \$7,700.00, Year 2001, Account # 14-17862, Bill # 21197.

Release the Property Value in the name of Richardson, Silas. Release the property value, the Welches Creek Fire fee (2.80) and the Whiteville Rescue fee (.70) that is double listed in the name of Terry Devon Matthews. Amount \$30.80, Value \$3,500.00, Year 2002, Account # 14-12605, Bill # 87784.

Release the User Fee in the name of Turbeville, Maggie. Release one of two user fees. Store no longer in business. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 16-16280, Bill # 95346.

Release the User Fee in the name of Soles, Elton H.. Release user fee. House is vacant. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 01-87140, Bill # 91579.

Release the User Fee in the name of Nobles, Gregory K.. Release one of two user fees. No trash can at camper. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 01-03616, Bill # 84095.

Release the User Fee in the name of Lowery, Moultrie. Release the user fee. House has been vacant since 1995. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account #

13-24521, Bill # 79908.

Release the User Fee in the name of Lowery, Moultrie. Release user fee. House vacant since 1995. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$165.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2001, Account # 13-24521, Bill # 1975.

Release the User Fee in the name of George, Titus R.. Release user fee. No trash can here. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 16-05027, Bill # 70308.

Release the User Fee in the name of Cribb, Benjamin P.. Release one of two user fees. One mobile home is vacant. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 09-05300, Bill # 65030.

Release the User Fee in the name of Backwoods Grill. Release user fee. Customer use's a commercial hauler. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 01-04534, Bill # 57667.

Release the User Fee in the name of Willis, Paul Curtis (Etal). Release user fee. House is vacant. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 06-43808, Bill # 99333.

Release the User Fee in the name of Coleman, Jack L.. Release user fee. There are no dwellings on this property. Approved by Chuck Stanley. Amount \$177.00, Value \$0.00, Year 2002, Account # 15-09610, Bill # 64055.

Agenda Item #9: COMMENTS:

B. Board of Commissioners:

Grass Mowing - Commissioner Bill Memory asked where do we stand on mowing grass. Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, requested Darren Currie report the status to the Board. Darren Currie, Assistant County Administrator, stated the Grounds Maintenance Contract was rebid on May 2, 2003 and Country Plants and Trim was not the low bidder. The low bidder was Brent Watts Lawncare at seventeen thousand and 00/100 (\$17,000.00) dollars. A letter of resignation was received from Gregory S. Nobles d/b/a/ Country Plants and Trim with two (2) months remaining on his current contract which expires June 30, 2003. Brent Watts Lawncare has agreed to perform the grounds maintenance for the remaining two (2) months for the flat rate of two thousand eight hundred and 00/100 (\$2,800.00) dollars.

After discussion was conducted among the Board members, Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to award the new Grounds Maintenance Contract to Brent Watts Lawncare in the amount of seventeen thousand and 00/100 (\$17,000.00) dollars which James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, is preparing, and for Administration to work with James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, to prepare the necessary paperwork required for Brent Watts Lawncare to perform the grounds maintenance for the remaining two (2) months on the current Grounds Maintenance Contract for the cost of two thousand eight hundred and 00/100 (\$2,800.00) dollars. This motion was seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

Mosquito Problem: Commissioner McKenzie stated that many areas of the County were experiencing severe problem with mosquitoes. He stated this was due to the excessive rainfall we have been experiencing and if we are spraying for mosquitoes, we need to improve our spraying techniques.

Darren Currie, Assistant County Administrator, stated that the County has three (3) spraying units and mosquito spraying is being done regularly.

It was recommended that more frequent mosquito spraying was needed to help control the mosquito infestation.

Community Improvement Committee: Commissioner Jacobs stated he had received an invitation to a meeting to be held on May 6, 2003 at 7:00 P.M. at the Ransom Township Community Center from Reverend Charles H. Jacobs, Jr. and encouraged all the Commissioners to attend.

Other:

Senior Annual Picnic: Ed Worley, Aging Director announced the Senior Annual Picnic would be held Tuesday, April 13, 2003 and extended an invitation to everyone who could to attend.

RECESS REGULAR SESSION and enter into CLOSED SESSION:

Agenda Item #10: CLOSED SESSION:

At 8:11 P.M., Commissioner Norris made a motion to recess Regular Session and enter into Closed Session in accordance with N.C.G.S. §143-318.11, seconded by Commissioner Godwin. The motion so carried.

No official Action was taken.


ADJOURN CLOSED SESSION and resume REGULAR SESSION:

At 9:19 P.M., Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to adjourn Closed Session and resume Regular Session, seconded by Commissioner Dutton. The motion so carried.


Agenda Item #11: ADJOURNMENT:

At 9:20 P.M., Commissioner Godwin made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

APPROVED:



JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board



C.E. WILSON, Chairman

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS**Monday, May 5, 2003****6:10 P.M.**

The Honorable Columbus County Commissioners met on the above stated date and at the above stated time in the Economic Development Conference Room at the Administration Building, 111 Washington Street, Whiteville, NC 28472 for the purpose of holding a Workshop to receive a presentation on the Columbus County Courthouse and for the discussion of the Columbus County Water Districts.

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT:

C.E. "Gene" Wilson, **Chairman**
 Bill Memory, **Vice Chairman**
 David L. Dutton, Jr.
 Kipling Godwin
 Sammie Jacobs
 Amon E. McKenzie
 Lynwood Norris

APPOINTEES PRESENT:

Billy Joe Farmer, **County Administrator**
 James E. Hill, Jr., **County Attorney**
 Darren L. Currie, **Assistant County Administrator**
 June B. Hall, **Clerk to Board**
 Gayle B. Godwin, **Finance Officer**

Also in Attendance:

Shelia Pridgen, Clerk of Court
 Frank Ballard, Architect for Ballard Architects
 Dixon Medlin, Water Department Director

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 6:10 P.M., Chairman Wilson called the Workshop to order and requested Frank Ballard, Architect with Ballard Architects, to make a presentation on the Columbus County Courthouse.

COLUMBUS COUNTY COURTHOUSE PRESENTATION:

Mr. Ballard stated he had forwarded the following letter to Billy Joe Farmer bearing date of April 4, 2003, regarding his findings at the Columbus County Courthouse.

April 4, 2003

Mr. Billy Farmer
 Columbus County Administrator
 111 Washington Street
 Whiteville, NC 28472

Re: Columbus County Courthouse National Registration Date 1979

Dear Mr. Farmer:

Having gone through the Courthouse and done sketches of new second floor areas, I think that we have about maximized our usefulness of each area in the building. Some major issues that should be addressed are:

1. The judges have no direct secured office to go to during a recess/trial.
2. No handicap toilets exist for public or employees, male and female alike. New building codes require a minimum of 5x5 turning radius and stalls.
3. The criminal clerk of court area cannot expand and one toilet serves all these ladies. If the criminal clerk of court vacates its present space adjacent to the elevator, then it would allow for a bank of toilets to possibly be positioned in that area, but it's not an ideal situation.
4. The civil department and child support can not expand and appear to be filled to capacity.

5. Judge Hooks' office is directly off a main public area and is unsecured.
- 6 Estate and Mrs. Pridgen are back to back and no conference room exists for either to use.
7. A fireproof vault can only be accessed through Mrs. Pridgen's office.
- 8 The public toilet for men on the west corridor is in bad shape and not accessible to the handicap.
9. The juvenile area needs to be associated with Child Support.
10. The present elevator does not meet ADA requirements.
11. Storage for all departments is at a minimum.
12. The open floor area of the lobby is not conducive to a secure courthouse.
13. Corridors up to judges' offices and courtroom can not be secured.
14. The general public is bothersome to 2nd floor courtrooms.
- 15 There is no secure area for prisoners other than a holding cell and they have to use a judge's toilet directly behind a courtroom.
16. All door hardware needs to meet handicap requirements.

Scheme 2 Comments

- 1 Relocate criminal section of Clerk of Court to second floor - payment counter and secretaries to remain in existing space (approximately 400 s.f.).
- 2 District Attorneys moves out into another building (approximately 300 s.f. (±) on second floor).
- 3 Reduce the size of Superior Court from 2200 s.f. to 1036 sf(±). This frees up an additional 650 s.f.
- 4 Add (2) smaller courtrooms on second floor.
5. Need to add a jury selection room to hold (60) people seating.
6. Need to find space for a public unisex handicap toilet - first and second floors.
7. Provide handicap water foundations on each floor.
- 8 Relocate Mitchell Tyler and Judge Hooks' offices to another building (approximately 400 s.f.)
9. Need to secure all entrances to courthouse.
- 10 There is an additional 650 s.f. that is currently being used as a lounge and old cashiers office that can be used for another function.

This is a beautiful government building, on the National Register and also serves as a symbol and landmark of Whiteville and Columbus County.

I have a meeting scheduled Monday, April 7th at 12:30 p.m. with the Registers of Deeds, Kandance Whitehead.

Sincerely,
 BALLARD ARCHITECTS, ALA, INC.
 /s/ Frank I. Ballard, Jr.

Frank Ballard, Architect for Ballard Architects, AIA, Incorporated, presented the following information to the Board of Commissioners on the Columbus County Courthouse.

1. I visited the New Hanover County Courthouse in order to get some ideas regarding the upgrade of the Columbus County Courthouse.
2. I have met with Shelia Pridgen, Clerk of Court, and discussed many issues with her.
3. I have with me tonight drawings of the first floor and the second floor inclusive of the suggested changes that could be made to create more space.

First Floor:

4. I have move the DA's office out which has opened up a lot of space.
5. We have created more rooms in the space available.
6. We have created more up-to-date bathrooms.

Second Floor:

7. Created a central corridor.
8. Reduced the size of the Superior Courtroom.
9. District Court will be moved back.
10. Trying to meet handicap codes.

11. No increase in security for Judges.

After Mr. Ballard had finished his presentation, the following alternatives were discussed in lieu of remodeling the existing Courthouse:

1. Relocating to Sheriff's Department as part of their add-on; and
2. Using the soon-to-be Tax Office and going up with the building.

Darren Currie, Assistant County Administrator, informed the Board of the utilization of a card reader system that would beef up security greatly.

HILL'S BUILDING BRIEF PRESENTATION:

Frank I. Ballard, Jr., stated he had prepared a preliminary drawing for the vacant Hill's Building which I have with me. This is an easy building to work with. I will be happy to meet with each of you at any time you should request.

WATER DISTRICT I, II AND III:

Dixon Medlin, Water Department Director, handed out the following Memorandum to everyone in attendance.

MEMORANDUM

To: The Board of Commissioners

From: Dixon Medlin

Re: Financial State of Columbus County Water Districts I, II, III

Date: May 2, 2003

Cc: Billy Joe Farmer

Preface

The following is intended to be a management synopsis for the Columbus County Water Districts budget of 2003-2004. This is intended to be a policy making tool, with not going into much detail.

A budget has been drafted for Water Districts I, II, and III and each budget has been broken down in two categories: operations, maintenance (O&M), principle, and interest (P&I).

District I

District I has an **O&M** of \$250,051 but \$80,000 of this is bulk water purchases, which leaves an O&M of \$170,051. The **P&I** for this District is **\$75,535**. Total yearly expenditures are \$325,586. Based on a current average bill of \$21/month and 980 customers the estimated yearly revenues should be \$246,000.

In order for this district to operate, it will take an average water bill of \$28/month.

Users Percentages (April 2003)

0 -2000 gallons	452	46.12%
3000-5000	346	35.31%
6000-10000	138	14.08%
11000-999999	44	4.49%
Total Customers	980	100%

Summary

Expenditures	\$325,586
Revenues	\$246,000
Difference	-\$79,586

District II

District II has an **O&M** of \$227,249 and a **P&I** of \$425,751 for a yearly total expenditure of \$653,000. As of April 2003, this District has 1287 total customers and only 682 are actually using water. Our current average bill including flat rate charges for April 2003 \$25/month. Based on April 2003 figures our revenues were \$31,634 this figure over 12 month period totals \$379,608. We have around 600 residents with water availability in this District.

Example: If we had all 1287 customers, using average 5,000 gallons/month @ \$32/month our yearly total revenue would only be \$494,208. Based on this we would need a flat rate of \$30/2000gallons.

In order for this District to operate, it will take an average bill of \$40-\$45/month.

Users Percentages (April 2003)

0-2000 gallons	832	64.65%
3000-9999999	455	35.35%
Total:	1287	100%

Summary

Expenditures	\$653,000
Revenues	\$379,608
Difference	-\$273,392

District III

District III has an O&M of \$192,159 and a P&I of \$318,845 a yearly total expenditure of \$511,104. As of April 2003, this District has 714 total customers and only 254 are actually using water. The 254 customers that are using water got their first water bill this month. Some have been using water for 6 months. Based on 254 customers @ \$34/month our average monthly revenues are \$8,128. Starting **June 1, 2003** the flat rate will begin for those not hooked up at a fee \$22/month. Based on the customers we have now, our total revenue will be \$213,456. We have around 600 customers with water availability in this District.

Example: If we had all 714 customers, using an average 5,000 gallons/month @ \$34/month our yearly total revenue would only be \$291,312. Based on this we need a flat rate of \$48/2000gallons.

In order for this District to operate, it will take an average bill of \$60/month.

Users Percentages (April 2003)

0-2000 gallons	489	68.49%
3000-9999999	225	31.51%
Total:	714	100%

Summary

Expenditures	\$511,104
Revenues	\$213,456
Difference	-\$297,648

**Financial Summary
(2003-2004)**

The financial breakdown for the three districts in Columbus County is as follows.

Total O&M Co	\$669,459
Total P&I Cost	\$820,131
Total Yearly Expenditure	\$1,489,590
Total Customers Base	2,981
Total Cost per Customer	*\$499/ Per Year
Average Bill	*\$42fMonth

*** These numbers are for informational purposes, each District must stand independent financially, and no District may subsidize another District.**

As you can see, the problem is that we do not have the customer base to support each District. The options are mandatory hook up, availability charge and/or a rate increase to each District. We, however, need to concurrently evaluate each District and make decisions on rate increases/decreases as needed.

As I stated the customers with water availability are as follows: District II is 600 and District III 600. Even with an availability charge, it, alone, will not help the financial state of the districts. Enclosed a mandatory hook-up policy done by Brunswick County, which is a rural county just as us. In addition, we need to address the issue of water services on empty lots.

After lengthy discussion among the Board members, the following alternatives were suggested as a means to make these water districts operable:

1. Enforce a utility charge to each customer;
2. The possibility of raising the water rates;
3. Mandatory hookup; and
4. Utilize a Utilities Board (LCFWS) as a last resort.

ADJOURNMENT:

At 7:20 P.M., the Workshop was adjourned.

APPROVED:



JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board



C.E. WILSON, Chairman