

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

Monday, August 18, 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 third 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**

Agenda Items #1 and #2: MEETING CALLED TO ORDER:

At 7:30 P.M., Chairman Wilson called the meeting to order and Commissioner Sammie Jacobs delivered the invocation. Everyone in attendance stood and pledged Allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America.

Agenda Item #3: BOARD MINUTES APPROVAL:

Commissioner Jacobs made a motion to approve the following minutes, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

- A. August 4, 2003 Regular Session; **and**
- B. August 4, 2003 Columbus County Water and Sewer District III Authority Board.

Agenda Item #4: CHAF PROGRAM UPDATE:

Floyd Adams, The Adams Company, Incorporated, presented the following update on the Columbus County CHAF Program.

Columbus County Summary Sheet

CHAF Program

Previous
08-01-2003

TOTAL HOUSES				491		
Houses Inspected						
Replacement			296	491		296
Repair			195			195
Repair Work			195			
Work Write-up	0			0		
Bids Complete, Not Awarded	0			0		
Board Awarded, No Construction	1			1		
Title Opinion NOT Requested		0			0	
Waiting on Title Opinion		0			0	
Waiting on Prom. Note/D.O.T.		2			2	
Waiting on Contractor		0			0	
Under Construction	6			8		
Complete	188			186		
Replacement Work			296			
Work Write-up	0			0		
Board Awarded, No Construction	0			0		
Title Opinion NOT Requested		0			0	
Waiting on Title Opinion		0			0	
N.O.E. Not Sent		0			0	
Waiting on Client		0			0	
Under Construction	64			67		
Complete	232			229		

Not Visited				0	0	
Legal Work						
Total Titles NOT Requested	0				0	
Total Titles Requested	491				491	
Titles Requested, Not Complete	0				0	
Preliminary Title Complete	24				26	
Prom. Note/D.O.T. Requested, Not Signed	47				45	
Prom. Note/D.O.T. Recorded	420				420	

Mr. Adams stated they had completed four hundred twenty (420) and had seventy-one (71) left to do and these are the most difficult.

Mr. Adams stated that Commissioner Dutton had asked the question at the last meeting as to whether a tract of land that had been deeded to Columbus County could be purchased by a church to be used for a parking lot. I have researched this matter again and the answer I was given by the State is that a church is not in the group of non-profit organizations who would be eligible and this cannot be allowed. From what I can understand, another county or municipality is the only non-profit group who would qualify for this.

James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, asked Mr. Adams if Columbus County could lease this property to a church and in addition, Mr. Hill requested Mr. Adams to check into the question that if there is a non-profit corporation within the church, could this property be deeded to that non-profit organization.

Update on Scattered Site Housing Program:

Mr. Adams stated he would deliver an update on the Scattered Site Housing Program. The update is as follows:

1. We had a monitoring visit from the State;
2. The meeting with the State was a very good meeting; **and**
3. The next step in this process is to bid out these houses and bring the results back to the Board of Commissioners.

Agenda Item #5: RENOVATION of HILLS BUILDING:

Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, requested Board approval to utilize Ellin Wood Design and Associates as the architectural firm for the design, bid administration and construction administration for the renovation of the Hills Building. A letter from Lee D. Dixon, AIA, with EDA bearing date of August 12, 2003 regarding the Adaptive Reuse of Old IGA Grocery Store into County Offices reads as follows.

Our understanding of the scope of work is as follows:

- Old Grocery Store: approximately 15,500 SF to be renovated into the following departments:
 - Tax Department
 - Register of Deeds
 - GIS
 - ITS
 - Purchasing
- As we understand it, there is asbestos in the floor tiles, which will need to be removed. We can possibly encapsulate or you can have these tiles removed before construction begins, which is advisable.
- It is quite possible that a new roof or roof repairs be performed as well as the following systems:
 - Electrical System
 - Plumbing with new toilets, etc.
 - New HVAC System
 - Fire Sprinklers (if required)

We propose the following Architectural and Engineering services:

- Schematic Design
- Design Development

- Construction Documents
- Bidding Negotiation
- Construction Administration

For the above outlined services we propose a fee of 8% of construction costs (not to exceed \$65,000.00).

Excluded from this proposal are the following:

- Survey/TOPO - to be provided by Owner
- Asbestos Survey or Abatement
- Furnishings
- Utility Extensions
- Stormwater or Erosion Control Permitting

AGREED and ACCEPTED BY:

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

Commissioner Memory asked Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, why this company was being utilized in lieu of Ballard Architects who had presented the schemes earlier. Mr. Farmer replied stating Ellin Wood Design would provide the design, bid administration and construction administration for eight (8%) percent of the total construction costs, with a maximum ceiling of sixty-five thousand and 00/100 (\$65,000.00) dollars. It has been my experience if you don't have a ceiling amount, you are asking for unwanted expense. If we utilize Ballard Architects, they will only furnish the design at seven and one-half (7½%) percent of the total construction costs, therefore, all the remaining costs would be added to this, resulting in a much higher percentage of the total construction costs.

Commissioner McKenzie asked Mr. Farmer what the current intentions for the Hills Building were. Mr. Farmer replied stating the plans were to house the following departments: Register of Deeds, Tax Office, Central Purchasing, ITS and GIS.

Commissioner Dutton made a motion to approve the use of Ellin Wood Design and Associates as the architectural firm for the renovation of the Hills Building, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #6: EMERGENCY SERVICES DEPARTMENTAL UPDATE:

Ronald Hayes, Emergency Services Director, presented the following departmental update to the Board.

August 15, 2003
Columbus County Board of Commissioners

Gentlemen:

This is a report on the progress of the Emergency Services Department of Columbus County. I have much to report in my short time of my employment with Columbus County. My first day of employment was June 16, 2003 with your county. Since that time I have attended several classes in the Eastern Branch Office of Emergency Management for the State. I have learned that if a storm or major event were to happen, which required the opening of the EOC (Emergency Operation Center) that we would have to be self sufficient for 3 - 5 days. We will also be responsible and accountable for all the equipment and supplies furnished to our county during a state of emergency. Since we have learned of this, Mr. Currie and I have been working with Phil Edwards to use the county airport as our central receiving and distribution point, in the event of EOC activation. We have also received an EOP Grant from the state which will allow us to update our EOP (Emergency Operations Plan) to include weapons of mass destruction and update to new state requirements. This grant will also allow us to purchase a laptop computer to assist in our day to day operations. We have also received 2 Emergency Management Performance Grants that totaled just over \$22,805.32. We are also in the process of obtaining 2 Weapons of Mass Destruction Grants which could possibly total over \$222,000. Since my date of hire I have responded to a water spout on Lake Waccamaw. This caused minor damage to two residences. I have also responded to several motor vehicle accidents, which involved chemical spills.

The Communication Committee and the staff of Emergency Services have been working on obtaining a tower in the Cherry Grove area of our county to improve the communications problem in

the county. The Sheriff and I are also talking on how to improve the communication problem that the Sheriff's Office is experiencing. My staff is also working with the Lumber River COG in trying to obtain a grant from their office to improve our communication problems. Communications in this county are in great need of improvement and we are striving to improve it.

From January 1, 2003 to July 31, 2003 the Central Communications Center has received a total of 224,810 phone calls which resulted in 28,197 service calls having to be dispatched. Of these services calls 23,516 were law enforcement calls (which includes all county law enforcement agencies, animal control and public works calls), 4,068 were EMS, and 1,242 were fire calls. These numbers of calls are being handled by 4 shifts of 4 telecommunicators, providing that no one is out sick or on vacation. When this happens there are only 3 to staff the Center. We are in need of some additional employees to handle the phone call volume and the radio traffic which is required to dispatch these high numbers of calls. As of August 15, 2003 our Center has staffed giving Emergency Medical Instructions over the phone to callers before the arrival of EMS. This can and will save someone's life but it also requires the telecommunicator to give more time to each and every emergency medical dispatch call. This will increases the work load of the telecommunicators. I would like to invite all members of the board to visit our facility at any time for a tour.

The EMS side of my position is going very well also. I have a great working relationship with the Medical Director. I feel that with the guidance of this board and the help of the volunteer departments in Columbus County, we will be able to offer citizens better service in the future. The State has effectively done away with the certification of Emergency Medical Technician Defibrillation, which many volunteers held as a certification. The Medical Director is in the process of reviewing these new state requirements so we can update all the volunteers in the county. I feel that the patient care being provided is improving greatly with the help of Dr. Obrecht and the commitment of the volunteers.

From the stand point of safety for county employees and citizens, I am still in the learning stage. I feel that this is a great responsibility not only to the employees and the county, but also to the citizen that visit every county office. I am working with the members of the safety committee to improve our safety program, procedures, and training for all employees. In time I hope to have a one of the best safety programs as well as the least amount of accidents in the area.

/s/ Ronald Hayes
Emergency Services Director

Commissioner McKenzie informed Mr. Hayes this was a very good report and asked him if there was any area where he needed help. Mr. Hayes replied stating he badly needed more employees to answer calls. Mr. Hayes stated he only had three (3) employees on each shift to handle the multiple calls that are received which is too many for only three (3) people to manage effectively.

Agenda Item #7: PROCLAMATION - LITTER SWEEP 2003 by the BOARD of COMMISSIONERS of the COUNTY of COLUMBUS:

Chuck Stanley, Solid Waste Officer, requested Board approval and adoption of the following Proclamation.

**LITTER SWEEP
2003
BY THE COUNTY OF COLUMBUS
A PROCLAMATION**

WHEREAS, the County of Columbus annually organizes a spring countywide roadside cleanup to ensure clean and beautiful roads in Columbus County; **and**

WHEREAS, the spring 2003 "**LITTER SWEEP**" roadside cleanup will take place April 10, - April 30, 2003 and we encourage local businesses, civic and professional groups, churches, schools, families and individual citizens to participate in the Columbus County cleanup by organizing cleanups in their communities; **and**

WHEREAS, Adopt-A-Highway volunteers, Department of Transportation employees, Department of Correction inmates and community service workers, community leaders, local government agencies, community and civic organizations, businesses, churches, schools and environmentally concerned citizens annually conduct community cleanups during "**LITTER**

SWEET” and may receive certificates of appreciation for their participation; **and**

WHEREAS, the “*Litter Sweep*” cleanup will be a part of educating the children of our great County regarding the importance of a clean environment to the quality of life in Columbus County; **and**

WHEREAS, the great natural beauty of our County and a clean environment are sources of great pride for all Columbus Countians, attracting tourists and aiding in recruiting new industries; **and**

WHEREAS, the cleanup will increase awareness of the need for cleaner roadsides, emphasize the importance of not littering and encourage recycling of solid wastes; **and**

WHEREAS, the 2003 spring cleanup will celebrate the 15th anniversary of the North Carolina Adopt-A-Highway Program and the thousands of volunteers who contribute their labor and time year round to keep our roadsides clean.

NOW, THEREFORE, we, the Columbus County Board of Commissioners do hereby proclaim April 10 - April 30, 2003 , as “**LITTER SWEEP**” time in Columbus County, and encourage citizens to take an active role in making their communities cleaner.

ADOPTED this the 7th day of April, 2003.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
/s/ C. E. Wilson, Chairman

ATTESTED BY:
/s/ JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

Commissioner Norris made a motion to approve and adopt the Litter Sweep 2003 by the Board of Commissioners of the County of Columbus, seconded by Commissioner McKenzie. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #8: WATER DEPARTMENT - UNIFORM RULES for all WATER DISTRICTS:

Dixon Medlin, Water Superintendent, requested Board approval and adoption of a set of Uniform Rules for all Water Districts.

Commissioner Norris made a motion to table the Uniform Rules for all Water Districts until the next meeting to allow enough time for James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, to review the contents and allow for some revisions to be made, seconded by Commissioner Godwin. The motion so carried.

AGENDA ADD-ON:

Item #2: RESOLUTION - NORTH CAROLINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT DEBT SETOFF PROGRAM RESOLUTION:

Commissioner Godwin presented the following Resolution for approval and adoption by the Board to run parallel with the Ordinance Authorizing Columbus County to Attach Personal Property, Garnish Wages and Place liens on Certain Real Property to Collect Unpaid Fees for Water and Sewer Services.

**NORTH CAROLINA LOCAL GOVERNMENT
DEBT SETOFF PROGRAM RESOLUTION**

WHEREAS, NCGS Chapter 105A, Setoff Debt Collection Act, authorizes the North Carolina Department of Revenue to cooperate in identifying debtors who owe money to local governments and who qualify for refunds from the Department of Revenue; **and**

WHEREAS, the law authorizes the setting off of certain debts owed to local governments against tax refunds; **and**

WHEREAS, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and the North Carolina League of Municipalities have jointly established a clearinghouse to submit debts on

behalf of Columbus County, as provided by law.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the Columbus County Board of Commissioners that Columbus County will participate in the Debt Setoff Program and hereby designates _____ as the person to hold hearings and conduct necessary proceedings.

The Board Chairman and the County Administrator are hereby authorized to execute such documents and agreements as necessary to participate in the Debt Setoff Program.

ADOPTED by the Columbus County Board of Commissioners on the 18th day of August, 2003.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
/s/ **C.E. WILSON, Chairman**

ATTESTED BY:
/s/ **JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board**

Commissioner Godwin stated this was an attempt to collect this money from the citizens of Columbus County before attaching personal property, garnishing wages and placing liens on certain real property and the Ordinance would be effective if this attempt failed to do so.

Commissioner McKenzie stated the Board had not heard a better option from the public to solve the deficit problem regarding the water districts. The Board members have to make a decision for the betterment of the people. We have a responsibility to handle this matter and we are appealing to the citizens of Columbus County to help us with this problem.

Commissioner Godwin made a motion to approve and adopt the North Carolina Local Government Debt Setoff Program Resolution to be in conjunction with the Ordinance Authorizing Columbus County to Attach Personal Property, Garnish Wages and Place Liens on Certain Real Property to Collect Unpaid Fees for Water and Sewer Services, seconded by Commissioner Memory. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #9: ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING COLUMBUS COUNTY to ATTACH PERSONAL PROPERTY, GARNISH WAGES and PLACE LIENS on CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY to COLLECT UNPAID FEES for WATER and SEWER SERVICES (SECOND READING):

Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, requested Board approval and adoption of the following Ordinance upon its **second reading**.

ORDINANCE for COLUMBUS COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

ORDINANCE AUTHORIZING COLUMBUS COUNTY TO ATTACH PERSONAL PROPERTY, GARNISH WAGES AND PLACE LIENS ON CERTAIN REAL PROPERTY TO COLLECT UNPAID FEES FOR WATER AND SEWER SERVICES

Article A.

Section 1: Purpose

It is the purpose of this ordinance to allow Columbus County to place a lien on personal and real property and to garnish wages or attach personal property for charges of water and sewer services, which are unpaid for a period of ninety (90) days or more.

Section 2: Authority.

This ordinance is adopted pursuant to the authority vested in Columbus County by its charter and the General Statutes of North Carolina, particularly Session Law 2003-270, House Bill 469 (Session 2003).

Section 3. Jurisdiction.

This ordinance may apply to all unpaid water and sewer bills in Columbus County and which the County of Columbus provides or makes available water and/or sewer services to its citizens or

taxpayers. This ordinance shall apply to all areas which are allowed under Session Law 2003-270, House Bill 469.

Section 4. Effective date.

This ordinance and its provisions governing the attachment of personal property, garnishment of wages, and the placing of liens on certain real property to collect unpaid fees for water and/or sewer in Columbus County shall become effective from and after its passage.

Article B.

Section 1. The Board of County Commissioners, sitting as the members of the Board of County Commissioners and the Columbus County Water and Sewer District I Board and the Columbus County Water and Sewer District II Board and the Columbus County Water and Sewer District III Board and Columbus County Water and Sewer District IV Board do hereby enact this ordinance.

Section 2. All fees for water and sewer which are charged by Columbus County or any political subdivision thereof and remain unpaid for a period of ninety (90) days may be collected in any manner by which delinquent personal and real property taxes can be collected. The delinquent fees are a lien on the real property owned by the person contracting with Columbus County for services and the appeal of this lien shall be in accordance with the following:

All appeals of these liens from a decision of the Columbus County Water Department shall be first to the Columbus County Water and Sewer Advisory Committee and then to the Columbus County Administrator, 111 Washington Street, Whiteville, NC or his then designated office and thereafter to the Columbus County Board of Commissioners at a Special Meeting established quarterly to hear any and all appeals which may have arisen since the last meeting. These quarterly meetings of the Board of Commissioners shall be at 6:30 PM on the second Tuesday night during the months of January, April, July, October of each year. The purpose of the appeal is to hear and decide any alleged errors made by the officials of Columbus County or any officials of its political subdivisions. The Columbus County Administrator and the Board of County Commissioners of Columbus County may, so long as in conformity with the terms and conditions of this Ordinance, reverse or affirm in whole or in part any of the prior decisions of the officials of Columbus County.

Section 3. The lien shall be valid from the time of the filing in the Office of the Clerk of Superior Court of Columbus County of a statement which contains the name and address of the person against whom the lien is claimed, the name of the county, the water and sewer district, county service district, or municipality, whichever applies and claiming the lien. The statement shall also provide for the specific service provided, the amount of the unpaid charge for the service and the date and place of furnishing the service.

Section 4. No lien shall be valid unless filed in accordance with Session Law 2003-270, House Bill 469, after ninety (90) days of the date of the failure to pay for the services and within one hundred (180) days of the failure to pay the services. The lien may be discharged as provided in NCGS 44-48.

Section 5. The reference to county shall include a county, a county water and sewer district created under Article 8 of Chapter 162A of the North Carolina General Statutes, a county service district created under Article 16 of Chapter 153A of the North Carolina General Statutes, or a municipality located wholly or partly within Columbus County.

ARTICLE C.

Section 1. This act shall not apply to fees collectable under Articles 9A and 9B of Chapter 44 of the North Carolina General Statutes, G.S. 153A-293 and G.S. 160A-314.1.

Approved and adopted by the Board of Commissioners this the 18th day of August, 2003.

/s/ **C. E. WILSON, Chairman of all above listed Boards**

ATTESTED TO:

/s/ **JUNE B. HALL**

Clerk to all listed Boards

Approved as to Form
by: /s/ **JAMES E. HILL, JR.**
Columbus County Attorney

Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to approve and adopt the Ordinance Authorizing Columbus County to Attach Personal Property, Garnish Wages and Place Liens on Certain Real Property to Collect Unpaid Fees for Water and Sewer Services upon its second reading and to be in conjunction with the North Carolina Local Government Debt Setoff Program Resolution, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #10: RESOLUTION - RESOLUTION in SUPPORT of U.S. GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES:

Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, requested Board approval and adoption of the following Resolution.

**COUNTY of COLUMBUS
The State of North Carolina
RESOLUTION IN SUPPORT OF
U. S. GOVERNMENT POLICY CHANGES**

WHEREAS, the unemployment rate in Columbus County currently stands at 9.7% for the month of June 2003, up from 8.1% in May 2003, the third highest county increase in the State of North Carolina for June which represents 2,154 individuals unemployed; **and**

WHEREAS, we believe the 9.7% represents only those still “on the books” and does not represent the hundreds, if not, thousands more unemployed or underemployed and it is conceivable we could reach an unemployment rate of 15% or more; **and**

WHEREAS, this unemployment rate is wreaking havoc upon the residents of Columbus County; **and**

WHEREAS, we believe this havoc is being caused by the general trade policies of the United States Government and the currency manipulation by most Asian countries which create an extremely unlevel playing field; **and**

WHEREAS, these unfair trade practices have not only caused direct harm to people in Columbus County, it has caused indirect harm because it has affected the financial participatory level from our State to county governments in providing services dictated by the very government body which mandates those services be provided; **and**

WHEREAS, Columbus County is heavily dependent on industries due to the diminishing agricultural livelihood being presently experienced, we are unduly affected by the policies of the United States Government and the currency manipulation by the far eastern countries; **and**

WHEREAS, while we believe in a free market throughout the globe—we do not believe there is any such thing as free trade when it comes to American workers and businesses; **and**

WHEREAS, we endorse the idea of a one-for-one tariff with any trade partner.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED , the Columbus County Board of Commissioners encourages the United States Government to:

- Consult with G-7. (Japan is the only G-7 country that has brought the issue of Chinese currency manipulation up.).
- Begin bilateral consultations with China with the objective of bringing China into a banded floating exchange rate (set the high and the low levels the currency can float between), and then transition the band wider until the currency is freely floating (market determined).
- Consult with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Trade Organization (WTO) and ask the US Congress to press the current administration to recognize that this issue must be dealt with now!

ADOPTED this the 18th day of August, 2003.

ATTESTED BY:

/s/ **JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to the Board** /s/ **C.E. WILSON, Chairman, District II**
/s/ **BILL MEMORY, Vice Chairman, District IV**

/s/ **AMON E. MCKENZIE, District I**
/s/ **SAMMIE JACOBS, District III**
/s/ **LYNWOOD NORRIS, District V**
/s/ **KIPLING GODWIN, District VI**
/s/ **DAVID L. DUTTON, JR., District VII**

Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to approve the Resolution in Support of U.S. Government Policy Changes, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #11: RESOLUTION - RESOLUTION of EXEMPTION for ORTHOPHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES:

Darren Currie, Assistant County Administrator, requested Board approval and adoption of the following Resolution.

**RESOLUTION OF EXEMPTION REGARDING
ORTHOPHOTOGRAPHY SERVICES**

WHEREAS, pursuant to GS 143-64.32, Columbus County can exempt various projects from the provisions of G.S. 143-64.31 upon stating the reasons therefore and the circumstances attendant thereto, **and**

WHEREAS, Columbus County desires to use aerial photography to upgrade the tax maps and orthophotography of Columbus County, **and**

WHEREAS, the orthophotos developed under this project will follow North Carolina Land Record Management Mapping Specifications, **and**

WHEREAS, Columbus County has obtained orthophotos in the past using the North Carolina Land Records Management Mapping Specifications, **and**

WHEREAS, a number of mapping firms have experience using the North Carolina Mapping Specifications, the County believes that it is in the best interests of the County to exempt this project and request that prices be included with the response to the Request for Proposals (RFP), **and**

WHEREAS, costs may be one of a number of considerations used in selecting a vendor for the project, the qualifications and competence of the vendor will be the paramount considerations in the selection process, **and**

WHEREAS, Columbus County does not believe that exempting itself for G.S. 143-64.31 will have a negative impact on the health, safety, and welfare of the citizenry.

NOW THEREFORE LET IT BE RESOLVED by the Columbus County Board of Commissioners that the othophotography project be exempt from G.S. 143-64.31 and that Columbus County, through request for proposals, select the most qualified firm to provide Columbus County with orthophotography services.

ADOPTED this the 18th day of August 2003.

COLUMBUS COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
/s/ **C.E. WILSON, CHAIRMAN**

ATTESTED:

/s/ **JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board**

Darren Currie, Assistant County Administrator, stated that Brunswick County and Brunswick Electric Membership Corporation were willing to join us in this effort. This will exempt Columbus County from having to accept the lowest bid on this service. Mr. Currie stated the cost for this type of orthophotography would be in the range of one hundred fifty thousand and 00/100 (\$150,000.00)

dollars to two hundred thousand and 00/100 (\$200,000.00) dollars for each entity.

Richard Gore, Tax Administrator, stated he had received bids at a lower cost of one hundred fifteen thousand and 00/100 (\$115,000.00) dollars to one hundred twenty thousand and 00/100 (\$120,000.00) dollars.

Commissioner McKenzie stated he would approve this Resolution on the basis there would be no cost to Columbus County.

Commissioner McKenzie made a motion to approve the Resolution of Exemption Regarding Orthophotography Services, seconded by Commissioner Norris. The motion so carried.

Agenda Item #12: COMMITTEE APPOINTMENT:

Columbus County Water and Sewer Advisory Commission:

Commissioner Memory nominated Donald Marks, 1375 Fertilizer Road, Riegelwood, North Carolina 28456, Telephone: (910) 655-3215 (H), to be the at-large member for the Columbus County Water and Sewer Advisory Commission.

Commissioner Norris made a motion to appoint Donald Marks to serve on the Columbus County Water and Sewer Advisory Commission, seconded by Commissioner McKenzie. The motion so carried. The Bylaws have been established for this committee but the length of term has not been determined.

Agenda Item #13: CONSENT AGENDA ITEM:

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

Budget Amendments:

TYPE	ACCOUNT	DETAILS	AMOUNT
Expenditure	10-604-1100	Communications & Postage	\$1,500
	10-604-3200	Printing & Binding	\$1,000
	10-604-3300	Service Related Supplies	\$2,626
Revenue	10-336-1000	Columbus County Partnership for Children / Breast-feeding Grant	\$5,126
Expenditure	10-605-1410	NC State Travel	\$510
Revenue	10-348-0010	NCSU Travel	\$510
Agenda Add-on:		Motion by Commissioner Norris, Seconded by Commissioner McKenzie, and Motion so carried	
Expenditure	10-611-0100	Child Care / Smart Start	\$440,836
Revenue	10-348-2130	Child Care	\$440,836

Agenda Item #14: COMMENTS:

A. Public:

Chairman Wilson opened the floor for any comments or discussion from the public. The following people spoke.

1. **Doug Kler (District II):** I have addressed this Board before on this matter. I will have to abandon my house and move into an apartment because I can't pay water bills. You do not need to put water at my house because I will not be there to use it.
2. **Gene (Farmers Union Resident):** how can you expect people to pay water bills when they

are losing their houses due to the fact they are losing their jobs?

3. **Roscoe Edwards:** my situation has developed into a personal issue in lieu of a Board issue. I will not bother anyone here but will elsewhere.
4. **Wade Hedgepeth (District II):** I am totally disabled and on Social Security. I would like to recommend to you that you handle your money problems like I do mine and that is to pay your present bills before you make more bills to be paid.
5. **Edwin Butler (District II):** I have a two hundred twenty, plus, (\$220t) dollars water bill and another person in my neighborhood has a bill for seventy and 00/100 (\$70.00) dollars and fixing to lose their job. We simply can not afford to pay water bills like this. If you would come down on your price where we can afford it, we could pay. The price started at \$10-\$12, then \$12-\$17, then \$17-\$20 and now it's \$20 - \$22.50 dollars per month. The majority of the people just cannot pay bills like this.
6. **William Thompson (District II):** from the statistics I have seen, sixty-six (66%) percent of the people in this district have signed up for this water, thirty-four (34%) percent did not sign up. You have stated the engineering firm supplied incorrect information to Columbus County in the formative stage of this water district. Is there any way Columbus County could recoup some of this money from the engineering firm in lieu of passing this cost onto the citizens in this district?

James E. Hill, Jr., Columbus County Attorney, replied stating that possibility has been looked at and some other things.

Chairman Wilson stated the engineering firm based their information on eighty (80%) percent participation of the people in the district.

Commissioner Memory stated the estimated cost of the operation and maintenance for this district was grossly under estimated by the engineering firm.

7. **Ray Priest:** I have received incorrect information about this water system from the County Commissioners and from the engineering firm during this entire process. I will be forced to lose some of my land due to these water bills. This is not fair and I am very upset.
8. **Judy S. Bullard (Campground Road):** I did not vote for this water and I do not want this water. Why don't you take the money you are spending on the Hills Building and pay this deficit in lieu of passing the costs onto the citizens? I simply cannot afford to pay a water bill every month.
9. **Terry Green:** I would like to know if you plan to install more water lines in addition to the ones that are in the ground?

Commissioner Memory replied stating there would no more water lines installed in these districts. He added we are working on a grant for additional lines in District III but before these lines are even considered to be installed, it would be determined they would be feasible and workable financially.

Mr. Green stated he needed clarification on a form from the Solid Waste Department where it was listed that a twenty-five and 00/100 (\$25.00) dollars charge would have to be paid if Solid Waste personnel came out to check to see if anyone lived in a building where an electrical meter was installed. I have an empty dwelling which I keep the electrical meter for easy access to electrical power and it has been vacant for years. I do not want to pay the one hundred seventy-seven and 00/100 (\$177.00) dollars Solid Waste Fee for this building and yet they want to charge me twenty-five and 00/100 (\$25.00) dollars to come out and check this building for verification that no one lives in it.

Chairman Wilson informed Mr. Green this would be looked into and if the form needed to be revised, it would be.

C. Administrator:

Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, stated he had three items for discussion. They are as follows.

3. Motion to Accept Low Bid and Notice to Proceed for Seaside Construction:

The bids were received for the additional tapons for **Columbus County Water and Sewer District II** today, August 18, 2003 at 3:00 P.M. as follows:

NAME/ADDRESS	5% CHECK or BOND	TOTAL BID AMOUNT
Seaside Construction 202 Fore Lane Swansboro, NC 28584	Bond	\$473,600.00
Hardee's Electric & Plumbing 1697 Jim Jolly Road Clarendon, NC 28432	Check	\$619,520.00
T.A. Loving Company 400 Paletown Road / Drawer 919 Goldsboro, NC 27530	Bond	\$480,000.00

The bids were received for the additional tapons for **Columbus County Water and Sewer District III** today, August 18, 2003 at 3:00 P.M. as follows:

NAME/ADDRESS	5% CHECK or BOND	TOTAL BID AMOUNT
Seaside Construction 202 Fore Lane Swansboro, NC 28584	Bond	\$229,400.00
T.A. Loving Company 400 Paletown Road / Drawer 919 Goldsboro, NC 27530	Bond	\$232,500.00

As is apparent, Seaside Construction is the low bidder for both districts, and I need a motion to accept the low bid and a Notice to Proceed for Seaside Construction.

Commissioner Jacobs made a motion to accept the low bid for the additional talons for Columbus County Water and Sewer District II from Seaside Construction at four hundred seventy-three thousand six hundred and 00/100 (\$473,600.00) dollars, seconded by Commissioner Memory. The motion so carried.

4. Questions on Columbus County Website:

I would like to inform the Board that each County Commissioner can have a link for their e-mail on the Columbus County Website if so desired. It was the general consensus of the Board that no one was interested.

5. Payment being requested from engineers for Columbus County Water and Sewer District V:

We are receiving pressure from Hobbs, Upchurch and Associates, engineering firm, for the payment of the invoice we received in the amount of two hundred twelve thousand and 00/100 (\$212,000.00) dollars. I would like to inform the Board I have set up meetings with this firm to discuss this and attempt to negotiate this amount.

Status of Water Right Now:

Multiple citizens in the audience, speaking at the same time, asked the status of the county water at this time. Billy Joe Farmer, County Administrator, replied stating that no additional lines were being installed with the exception of the lines which would be covered with grant monies.

Agenda Item #15: ADJOURNMENT:

At 9:07 P.M., Commissioner Godwin made a motion to adjourn, seconded by Commissioner Jacobs. The motion so carried.

APPROVED:

JUNE B. HALL, Clerk to Board

C.E. WILSON, Chairman